

Women's Organizations in Indonesia's New Order:

Pressing Needs and Strategies for Survival

by


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### ABSTRACT


This study presents a survey and analysis of non-government organizations for women in Indonesia. Independent women's organizations are successfully working toward social change in a political climate that is inherently discriminatory toward women. The New Order government developed a series of initiatives that legitimize State Ibuism, an ideological construct that excludes women from power and decision making processes. Independent women's organizations have emerged to challenge this dominant social paradigm of gender inequality by addressing issues such as violence against women, the marginalization of women in the labour force and gender-based social disparities. The study provides an analysis of the activities, objectives and ideological foundation of the groups and examines the methods employed to achieve social change. In order to be effective, women's NGOs adopt a series of strategies of resistance which allow the organizations to pursue goals of gender equity without placing themselves at high risk of government intervention.

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## INTRODUCTION

### **Independent Women's Organizations and the New Order in Indonesia**

Throughout the twentieth century, women's NGOs (non-government organizations) have stimulated the Indonesian women's movement and presented an ideological alternative to government sponsored initiatives for women. Contemporary women's NGOs challenge the dominant social paradigm for separate gender roles by addressing issues such as oppression, violence and the stereotyping of women. Operating within the context of a repressive government and a social climate that is inherently discriminatory toward women, women's NGOs have continued to undertake progressive initiatives to gain support for gender equality. Despite stringent government regulations and various forms of social opposition, women's NGOs provide a voice for those Indonesian women who do not accept a government-constructed mother/wife identity. This identity, referred to as *Ibuism* or State Maternalism, follows from the ideological assumption that a woman's primary role is as a wife and a mother (Wolf, 1992).

The objective of this thesis is to present an initial survey of various non-government women's organizations which have arisen in Indonesia in the past two decades. As comprehensive documentation of the activities, objectives and ideological starting points of independent women's organizations has not yet been published, the thesis will provide a useful contribution to existing literature in this field. The thesis will demonstrate how women's organizations operate within the context of a highly repressive political regime that values women as mothers and wives first and as women second.

The discussion will focus upon cataloguing the objectives and activities of independent women's NGOs in urban Indonesia. Comparisons will be drawn between women's NGOs and government women's organizations such as the Dharma Wanita and the P.K.K. (Pendidikan Kesejahteraan Keluarga) in order to demonstrate that despite the government's attempt to construct a role specifically for women, vast differences between government and non-government initiatives for women remain. The concluding chapters provide an assessment of the successes and limitations of the women's NGOs and comment upon the role of these organizations in the present and future women's movement in Indonesia.

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My research presents a survey and analysis of the objectives, activities and strategies of independent women's organizations. I chose to complete the fieldwork in Yogyakarta and Jakarta as these cities have the highest concentration of women-centered NGO activity. Independent women's groups generally focus their objectives upon specific issues, such as migrant labour, gender discrimination or domestic violence. Using a non-confrontational approach, women's NGOs engage in advocacy work and practical initiatives that challenge the state constructed identity for women. This enables the organizations to work toward improving Indonesian women's position, both inside and outside of the household, while their practical initiatives allow the groups legitimacy in the eyes of the government. The analysis of the work and achievements of urban women's NGOs highlights the progress and changes in the Indonesian women's movement.

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The research is important because it fills a gap in the literature. An extensive review of existing literature reveals the lack of published information about women's NGOs in Indonesia. While comments concerning the work of women's organizations such as YASANTI or Kalyanamitra may appear occasionally in the literature, a comprehensive survey and analysis of contemporary women's organizations in Indonesia has yet to be published. Throughout the study, I was unable to find documentation of the work of migrant labour groups or women's shelters and advocacy organizations for victims of domestic violence.

The issue of the government constructed gender identity is well-documented yet information concerning gender advocacy groups such as Sekretariat Bersama Perempuan Yogyakarta (SBPY, The Yogyakarta Joint Secretariat for Gender Issues), who challenge the construct of Ibuism, isn't available. Lembaga Bantuan Hukum (LBH) and other legal institutions provide legal advice, assistance and legal representation for people marginalized by poverty or gender. Although documented extensively in Bahasa Indonesia sources, the work of Indonesian legal institutions, particularly with respect to legal cases concerning women, are not well-covered by English sources, with the exception of P. Eldridge's work.

Indonesian government sources provide documentation of early women's groups as well as discussing women's role in the revolution (Department of Information: 1994i, 1994ii and 1968, Office of the State Minister for the Role of Women: 1996i, 1996ii, 1995; 1991). These sources however, limit coverage of women's organizations to those groups which meet the approval of the government. For example, Gerwani, the largest and arguably one the most

influential women's groups in Indonesian history, is rarely mentioned in the above sources and only within a negative context. S. Wieringa (1997; 1995; 1993; 1992; 1988) provides an analysis of the politically active and distinctly feminist Gerwani and traces the development of women's organizations in Indonesia in the early and mid 20th century.

Wieringa (1995) provides an analysis of the shift in objectives and activities of popular women's NGOs from early groups, which encouraged the development of educational opportunities for women, organizations which promoted the nationalist movement and left-leaning feminist groups such as Gerwani, to current women's organizations such as the P.K.K. and Dharma Wanita that are an extension of the government and support the concept of Ibuism.

P. Eldridge (1995) provides an excellent overview of NGOs throughout Indonesia, highlighting the political and social context in which the groups operate. Each chapter of the book provides an overview of NGO activity in a specific area. For example, Eldridge's book covers religious, environmental action, legal, women focused and high-level political organizations. Eldridge discusses issues such as the organizations' activities, funding and legalities of Indonesian NGOs and discusses the influence the Indonesian government has on the organizations.

Of special interest is his chapter discussing women's organizations. This chapter provides an overview of the structures of several influential independent women's organizations. My thesis expands upon Eldridge's discussion of well-known women's groups such as YASANTI and Kalyanamitra, as well providing

an overview and analysis of the objectives and activities of several other active groups, which include organizations working with migrant workers and victims of domestic violence. A detailed discussion based upon Beringhausen and Kerstan's (1992) work with the Productive Women's Program<sup>1</sup> (Pusat Koperasi Wanita Jawa Timur, PUSKOWANJATI) is provided. Eldridge discusses projects initiated by groups such as YASANTI and Kalyanamitra whose position on women's role in society is not congruent with the government. His analysis that the groups focus on goals such as improving the welfare of poor women, increasing education and employment opportunities for women, while avoiding highly contentious issues, supports the arguments made in my thesis.

As mentioned above, the diverse concept of gender in Indonesia is well covered in the literature. Scholars such as L. Sears (1996), N. Florida (1996), S. Atkinson (1990), N. Sullivan (1984 ) and S. Errington (1990) discuss representation of gender in Indonesia. N. Sullivan (1991) assesses Indonesian gender inequality in household and public spheres. She argues that the Geertz's and Koentjaraningrat's concept of separate roles and responsibilities but equal status is a myth. Sullivan's argument that the limitation of women's fundamental role to the household with the husband representing the family in the public sphere, is inherently biased against women (pages 73-75).

The book *Fantasizing the Feminine* (1996, ed. L. Sears) draws examples from women in the 19th and 20th century. The wide range of topics covered by the contributors illustrate the pressing need to deconstruct the ideology of the 'authentic' and singular identity of Indonesian women, as defined by the government's ideological assumption that Indonesian women obtain their

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<sup>1</sup> This group is no longer in existence.

identity from being wife and mother. The essays cover a diverse range of female images, from Javanese and colonial literature, to pop culture representation of women in television and theatre demonstrating the wide ranging scope of the concept of gender in Indonesia. For example, N. Florida's (1996) literary analysis of gender relations in the 19th century Surakarta courts provides a historical context for the construction of gender in Indonesia. While asserting that the majority of the literature during this time period was written for elite audiences, she notes that the texts frequently highlight the issue of male dominance and that the voices of men "provided lessons for women" on how to be good wives. Florida's examples of how women resisted the male hegemony in classical literature demonstrate that Indonesian women in the 19th century did not automatically accept a societal position inferior to men.

The concept of Ibuism is well documented by scholars such as J. Suryakusuma and M. Djajadiningrat-Nieuwenhuis. M. Djajadiningrat-Nieuwenhuis (1987) discusses the development of the concept of Ibuism in the Dutch East Indies, focusing on the priyayi class in Central Java. She asserts that Ibuism is a connotative term which refers to the ideological assumption that a woman's primary role is as a wife and a mother. J. Suryakusuma (1996) explores the government's manipulation and regulation of the sexual lives of civil servants and provides an analysis of the concept of Ibuism as a national identity. Grijns's (1987) research concerning the role of women in West Java's tea-picking industry asserts that the division of labour in the tea-picking industry is based upon the concept of Ibuism.

Issues of the construction of gender, government women's organizations, state supported Ibuism and the issue and outcomes of gender-based

discrimination are well-covered in the literature. However, the work of independent women's organizations, which engage in practical initiatives to challenge Islamism is not well recognized in scholarly sources. It is important to document the role of women's NGOs in the Indonesian women's movement because the work of these groups has on many occasions been the catalyst for change in several areas of society, such as public acknowledgment of the enormous issue of domestic violence, advocacy work for migrant labourers and educational initiatives for factory labourers. The research is timely because Indonesia has recently seen a great deal of change in these and other areas as will be discussed in the following chapters.

In order to understand the complex relationship between the government and NGOs, it is necessary to provide a clear picture of the socio-political dynamics in Indonesian society, beginning with the development of the Indonesian constitution. In the mid-1940s, Prof. Dr. Supomo, an advisor for the constitution and a famous expert in customary Islamic law, asserted that the structural framework of the constitution should combine both the Indonesian traditions and modern theories of state. The subsequent adoption of an integralistic-organic model for the state reflected the notion that "individuals can exist only in relation to the whole and that no conflict between individual and whole can be countenanced. Individuals and groups are dispensable in the interests of the state" (J. Suryakusuma, 1996: 92-3; D. Rahardjo, 1984:18).

After obtaining power in 1965, the New Order government developed the state ideology of *Pancasila*, a set of principles that the government put forth as the

"hallmark of Indonesian identity" (Mubyarto, 1985: 1). The five principals of Pancasila are:

- 1) The profession of religious beliefs;
- 2) Compassion and respect for human dignity;
- 3) National unity;
- 4) Representative government; and,
- 5) Social justice for all citizens

(Mubyarto, 1985: 1)

According to the state, Indonesians citizens are united by the shared identity of Pancasila ideology; to question these principals is considered to be treasonous (J. Suryakusuma, 1996: 92-3). The enforcement of *Pancasila* serves the dual purpose of uniting a nation with wide ranging cultural, political and religious beliefs and demanding obedience from all Indonesian citizens.

The state extended the concept of shared national identity to include women, by developing a set a principals to define the ideal Indonesian women. This identity is described as "State Ibuism". Within this ideology, the primary role of women is as wives and mothers. Within the concept of Ibuism, the fundamental objective of a woman's labour, paid or unpaid, is to improve her household and contribute to national development.

The physical action of work is veiled by the image of women as sweet, loving and caring mothers with fathers remaining as the ultimate authority: "bapak (father) has prestige and authority and the ibu (mother) acts". Ibuism is considered to be the path to power for elite women. Although the roots of

Ibuism are traced to the period of Sukarno's rule, Djajadiningrat-Nieuwenhuis asserts that the concept was developed in the late 19th and early 20th century, emerging from a combination of "traditional" Javanese roles and Dutch values (M. Djajadiningrat-Nieuwenhuis, 1987: 43).

In order to incorporate state ideology at all levels of society, the government established national women's organizations, the two most influential of which are the P.K.K. and the Dharma Wanita. These organizations, which will be further discussed in Chapter 3, serve the purpose of implementing state initiatives, such as the national family planning program, promoting state goals of modernization and development, maintaining administrative links at all levels of society and reinforcing state ideology.

The concept of State Ibuism works against women in several ways. The state asserts that women's primary function is within the household, as wives and mothers. This assumption prevents women from developing an identity outside of these parameters which would be accepted by the state. Although most Indonesian women engage in some wage generating activity due to financial need, women's role in the work force is not recognized within the principals of State Ibuism. As all activity outside of household responsibilities is considered to be secondary, the work of women outside of the home is considered to be less important than the work of the males in the household. Further, paying women lower wages than men or denying women advancement in the workforce can be justified by the ideology of Ibuism and reinforces gender inequality.

The term patriarchy is used in several areas of the thesis as it is a theoretically appropriate representation of the concept of Ibuism. Within the framework of patriarchy, the relationship between men and women is based upon power, with men having dominance over women in all areas of life, including sexual and familial relationships and the ability to access formal institutions of power (V. Bryson, 1992: 184; K. Millett, 1985).

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Following Suharto's seizure of power in 1966, the New Order government attempted to gain control of the women's movement. Beginning with the abolishment of Gerwani (*Gerakan Wanita Indonesia*, Indonesian Women's Movement), the government attempted to re-construct an identity for Indonesian women based upon the concept of State "*Ibuism*"<sup>2</sup>. This is evidenced by the development of government women's organizations, such as the Dharma Wanita and P.K.K., and gender specific legislation that legitimizes discrimination between men and women. For example, the Marriage Law of 1974 is the first piece of legislation that differentiates between men and women, legally documenting *Ibuism*. The government has achieved some degree of success in terms of influencing the women's movement, for example, several women's NGOs, particularly the larger ones, pursue objectives based upon the model of *Ibuism*.

Despite the massive enrollment of women in the Dharma Wanita and P.K.K., grassroots women's NGOs have emerged throughout Indonesia and have become increasingly influential in challenging the concept of *Ibuism*. Many of the

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groups are based upon models of gender equality, encourage solidarity for mutual empowerment and provide support to women marginalized by social and gender inequality.

The 1980's saw the development of groups that advocated an improvement of women's rights, particularly poor women. Without openly criticizing the government or engaging in "radical" activities, grassroots women's NGOs offer a gender equitable alternative to state women's organizations. However, a non-confrontational approach also entails adopting both government rhetoric and some development oriented goals. While this may be viewed as compromising the ideological platforms of feminist groups, women's NGOs use this approach to their advantage. For example, both YASANTI and Kalyanamitra use literacy projects as mechanisms to gain access to female factory labourers.

Organizations such as Kalyanamitra are highlighting gender inequalities and abuses of power by exposing issues such as the victimization of female factory laborers and other gender equity issues. With gender equity and social change serving as the broad ideological starting point for several of the groups, many NGOs target their objectives toward a specific issue. For example, several of the women's NGOs pursue projects that address the needs of female victims of violence, migrant workers and factory labourers. By carrying out 'social welfare' or 'helping' projects, the NGOs receive legitimacy in the eyes of government agencies.

Women's NGOs face many challenges while operating within the parameters of a highly structured legal and social system. The legislation concerning NGOs is somewhat ambiguous in terms of outlining what activities and objectives are acceptable. For example, all NGOs must be registered with government agencies and submit regular reports outlining all activity within the organization. This makes it quite difficult for organizations to undertake radical projects that may be classified as jeopardizing national stability. Further, the term NGO is somewhat ambiguous within the political context of Indonesia as many people interpret the term 'non-government' to be "anti-government". However, NGOs do not work specifically against the government but rather are calling for significant social change.

The thesis will provide historical background to the contemporary women's movement and will outline the role of women's NGOs in modern Indonesian society and the manner in which the government influences the activities of women's organizations. Using urban women's NGOs as a case study, the thesis will evaluate the success or failure of the government to influence women's organizations as well as the success of women's organizations in influencing both the people and the government. While government initiatives, such as gender specific legislation and compulsory membership in state women's organizations affect most women, independent NGOs present an ideological alternative to State Ibuism.

The government reluctance to permit an independent women's movement is demonstrated by its multi-faceted control of women's lives; as a result, independent women's groups utilize creative strategies in their pursuit of gender equality. A discussion of the methods of resistance utilized by the groups in Chapter five reveals that the work of independent women's organizations has been quite successful, despite

the limitations imposed by the government. Women's NGOs challenge popular gender assumptions, both within and outside of the public sphere so that Indonesian women are increasingly making their own choices as to what role they wish to play.

## CHAPTER 1

### **A Historical Overview of the Indonesian Women's Organizations**

Several scholars have argued that male and female roles in pre-colonial Indonesia were complementary, rather than favorable to men (van Esterik, 1982: I; Belo, 1949:14; C. Geertz, 1973:417-18). In comparison to women in other parts of the world, the position of women was relatively high (Ong, A: 1984: 294). Despite clear boundaries between labour roles, women had a prominent position both inside and outside of the household. Women maintained a substantial degree of economic autonomy (Reid, 1988: 162) through their prominent role in trade, agriculture and marketing (Koentjaraningrat, 1985, 167). Women and men during the sixteenth and seventeenth century had very different and specific roles; women's reproductive functions were considered to be magical and daughters highly valuable, "the more daughters a man has, the richer he is" (Galvao, 1544:89; cf. Legazpi 1569: 61; Reid, 146:1988). In early kingdoms, women from the elite classes were able to obtain positions of power and exercise authority throughout the kingdom. For example, women ruled the kingdom of Aceh from 1641 until 1699 (Jayawardena, 1992: 138)

Generally, women from all social levels were responsible for household finances and maintained control of any wealth accumulated prior to the marriage. As men and women were equally entitled to inherit wealth, property and titles, women were not considered to be a financial liability in marital relations<sup>3</sup> (Errington, 1990:3-4). However, despite a degree of equality in some

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<sup>3</sup>Very little, however, is written specifically about women in early societies because early scholars generally focused upon women's position in relation to men. Furthermore, as the status of Southeast Asian women was substantially higher than the status of Chinese or Indian women, the gender inequalities prevalent in early Southeast Asian societies received very little attention (Errington, 1990:3).

areas, men and women in both *priyayi* (Javanese white-collar civil servant) and peasant families, maintained specific and separate roles within the realm of gender relationships with value being placed upon the roles of both men and women (Koentjaraningrat, 1989: 101). While men and women were not equal, the responsibilities of men and women were quite different, both inside and outside of the household, were quite different. For example, women had a wide variety of functions including with agricultural responsibilities, marketing and weaving (Reid, 1988: 146-7).

In the mid nineteenth century, *priyayi* children, both boys and girls, began attending Dutch schools and the newly established Indonesian schools. During this period however, many families, particularly upper-rank *priyayi* families, considered education for girls inappropriate. Girls were forced to stay at home and learn skills such as household management and traditional education, which included handicrafts and literary training (Koentjaraningrat, 1989: 242-3). Women from elite classes lived by rigid standards; the influence of the Dutch, who asserted that women belong in the household as wives and mothers, combined with the Javanese traditions of secluding girls prior to marriage, made life quite repressive for many Indonesian women (Wieringa, 1995:260).

Raden Adjeng Kartini, one of the most notable early Indonesian feminists, expressed her opposition to the lack of educational opportunities for females as well as the inequalities in the colonial school system (Department of Information, Republic of Indonesia, 1968: 8)). Kartini, a Javanese woman from a *priyayi* family, addressed the repressed life of Javanese women through her letters to influential Dutch elites. Her letters included rich descriptions of Javanese and colonial interactions and provoked thought and reaction to class disparities and

social inequalities. Kartini was responsible for raising national awareness amongst the Dutch elite about the repressive societal conditions for upper class Javanese women.

With the support of the Dutch government, Kartini oversaw the establishment of several schools for *priyayi* girls and young women (MacFarland 194-5). While Kartini's education initiatives primarily benefited those from elite classes, her position on issues such as polygamy and her fight for reform in marriage laws set the precedent for other women's emancipatory efforts.

Many Indonesian and western scholars trace the roots of the women's movement to the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. The combination of Kartini's efforts, the growing nationalist movement and elite women's frustration with the gender inequality triggered a movement to increase women's position both inside and outside of the home. Women throughout Indonesia played an active role in the resistance against Dutch colonialism. For example, Tjut Nja Dien, a princess of Aceh in the late nineteenth century, fought in several battles against the Dutch (Jayawardena, 1992: 139).

Other well known female national figures from this period include: Martha C. Tiahahu (Moluccas), Rohana Kudus (Western Sumatra), Tjut Meutia (Aceh, North Sumatra), Maria Walanda Maramis (North Sulawesi), Dewi Sartika (West Java), R.A Kartini (Central Java), Nyai A. Dachlan (Central Java) and Haji Rasuna Said (West Sumatra) (Department of Information, Republic of Indonesia: 1984). These women have been recognized as national heroes because of their role in the nationalist struggle and the Indonesian women's movement. Dewi Sartika and Rohana Kudus shared similar views with Kartini, advocating an

increase in educational opportunities and marital rights for women (Wieringa, 1995: 261).

The Indonesian women's movement began gaining efficacy in the early twentieth century in response to gender inequality in the labour force and the government initiatives promoting women's role in the household. Women's active participation in the nationalist movement also created a political space in which the women's movement could flourish. The first women's organization, Putri Mardika (The Independent Woman), was established in 1912 in Jakarta. Putri Mardika was connected to the nationalist movement Boedi Oetomo (Noble Endeavor) which was founded in 1908 by students of the Stovia Medical School (Development Cooperation Department, Royal Netherlands Embassy, 1987).

Shortly after the establishment of Puteri Mardika, several other women's organizations emerged, including: Keutamaan Isteri (Accomplishments of Women) in Bandung, Wanita Hada (Efficient Women) in Palembang, Serikat Kaum Ibu Sumatera (Federation of Women's Associations in Sumatra) (Department of Information, Republic of Indonesia: 1984). Religious organizations for women emerged in the early 1920's; the most well-known are: Aisyiah, the women's section of Muhammadiyah, Ina Tuni of the Serikat Ambon (Ambon Federation), Wanita Katholik (Catholic Women) and Wanudyo Utomo of the Serikat Islam Indonesia (Indonesian Islam Federation). Other women's organizations established in the 1920's include: Wanita Utomo, Wanita Mulyo and Pikat (Pengasih Ibu kepada Anak Turunan, Mother's Love for her Offspring) (Department of Information, Republic of Indonesia: 1984). These groups largely focused upon raising awareness about issues such as polygamy, child marriage,

and labour issues within factories which often were staffed primarily by women (Wieringa, 1993: 262-3).

The 1920s saw the strengthening of the women's movement with Sukarno's speeches which advocated raising the status of women and encouraged women to join the nationalist cause. Women's branches were established within all nationalist parties and major political organizations, including leftist and Islamic groups. Women workers organized marches and political demonstrations to demand better working conditions and higher wages (Wieringa, 1988: 74). During this period, several of the women's groups published magazines in which issues concerning women and the emancipation of women were addressed. Literature which depicted the effects and implications of child marriage, polygamy and the lack of female education was widely circulated (Wieringa, 1995: 262).

To address an audience of indigenous women, Puteri Mardika published a weekly called *Surat Kabar memperhatikan pihak perempuan bumi putera di Indonesia* (Newsletter for Improving the Rights of Indigenous Indonesian Women). Other publications by women's organizations include: *Al-Sjarq* (The East), *Wanita Sworo* (Women's Voice), *Suara Perempuan* (The Voice of Women) and *Perempuan Bergerak* (The Active Women) (Department of Information, Republic of Indonesia: 1984).

Very few radical groups emerged during the early stages of the women's movement; the most notable was *Isteri Sadar* (Alert Wives), established by Suwarni Pringgodigdo in 1920. The group encouraged the active involvement of women in politics, more opportunities for females in the workforce and

campaigns for national education programs for women (Jayawardena, 1992: 150-1).

The first Indonesian Women's Congress took place on December 22, 1928, marking the beginning of a national women's movement. Approximately thirty women's organizations attended. The main issues on the agenda were polygamy and education initiatives for women (Wieringa, 1993: 263). All women's organizations attended the conference, with the exception of *Isteri Sadar* (Alert Wives) because the group felt that their views would not be represented at the conference (Wieringa, 1993: 264). Following the conference, Perserikatan Perkumpulan Perempuan Indonesia, (PPPI), The Federation of Indonesian Women's Organizations was established in order to unite all women's organizations under a single entity (Department of Information, Republic of Indonesia: 1984, 10).

PPPI was an extremely active group that promoted education for women and worked toward eradicating the trafficking of women (Wieringa, 1993: 263). In 1931, representatives from the PPPI attended the Congress of Asian Women Conference in Lahore, where a resolution against polygamy was passed. During this period, PPPI and the majority of other women's organizations operated under the assumption that women's role as wife and mother was not to be questioned.

The PPPI was originally called PPI (*Persatuan Perempuan Indonesia*, Indonesia Women's Federation) but changed '*perempuan*' (women) to '*isteri*' (wives) shortly after its establishment. Feminist scholars such as S. Wieringa have pointed out that the change is indicative of women's well-developed role in

the women's movement as wives rather than women (Wieringa, 1995: 263). While the concept of *Ibuism* had not been institutionalized, most women's groups supported the ideology.

During World War II, the Japanese Occupation of Indonesia (1942-1945) saw the banning of all women's organizations with the exception of the "Srikandi Troops"<sup>4</sup>, an organization for young women between the ages of 15 and 20 and Fujinkai. Both groups were established by the Japanese. (Department of Information, Republic of Indonesia: 1984). The activities and objectives of Fujinkai included the following:

1. Encouraging patriotism amongst Indonesian women;
2. Running public kitchens and Red Cross posts;
3. Fighting unemployment;
4. Increasing clothing and agricultural production;
5. Improvement of home industry;
6. Establishing literacy courses.

(Department of Information, Republic of Indonesia: 1984)

Members of the Fujinkai were primarily the wives of civil servants; a member's position in the group was determined according to her husband's rank in the civil service. The present day organization, the Dharma Wanita, a women's group for the wives of civil service, is also structured in this manner which suggests that the Dharma Wanita concept originated from the Fujinkai. Under the war slogan 'Greater Asia', Fujinkai encouraged the mobilization of 'voluntary' labour to aid the Japanese war effort (Wieringa, 1988: 75).

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<sup>4</sup>Srikandi is a female character from the wayang kulit (shadow theatre). She is Arjuna's wife, extremely independent, a good warrior and leads an exciting life. Sukarno has suggested that she was a male in earlier versions of the wayang. S. Douglas, "Women in Indonesian Politics: The Myth of Functional Interest." In: *Asian Women in Transition*, ed.. S. Chipp and J. Green, University Park and London, Pennsylvania State University Press, 1980, page 155.

The Fujinkai women were also taught military skills, skills which proved to be useful during the Nationalist struggles following the end of World War II and the disarmament of the Japanese (Department of Information, Republic of Indonesia: 1984). These groups were dismantled following Indonesian Independence.

In 1946, KOWANI, (Congress of Indonesian Women), emerged in response to the growing dissatisfaction with the subordinate position of women (Wieringa, 1988: 196). Initially, KOWANI represented the unification of women's organizations such as Perwari (*Persatuan Wanita Republik Indonesia*, Union of the Women of Indonesia). At present, KOWANI is an umbrella organization for all women's organizations, including religious, political, government and independent organizations (Jayawardena, 1992: 153). KOWANI has been described as "the most significant milestone in the history of the Indonesian women's movement" (Douglas, 1993: 196).

The goals of KOWANI are to increase social development within the community and establish more equitable marriage laws (Wieringa, 1988:198). For example, in their attempt to secure specific legal rights for women, KOWANI successfully secured women's voting rights and gender equity in the 1949 constitution.

## CHAPTER TWO

### **The New Women's Movement:**

#### **Gerwani versus Ibuism during the Sukarno Years**

The mid-twentieth century was a watershed in the Indonesian women's movement. The relative political freedom during Sukarno's rule was the impetus for the development of a wide variety of political and social movements. As discussed in Chapter 1, the links between the women's movement and nationalism allowed the development of a political climate in which women's organizations could be established with a limited set of goals. Following Independence, women's groups could more actively pursue goals of gender equality. Rather than following government approved objectives, such as in the pre-war period, social and political change was largely determined by the people.

While Sukarno's projects were largely instigated to encourage nationalism, the result was a climate of relative political freedom throughout Indonesia. His nationalist speeches encouraged both men and women to join the nationalist cause, claiming that gender equality was an necessary element of nationalism. Women had the opportunity to improve their position both socially and politically and to lobby for political change. Powerful women's groups such as Gerwani (*Gerakan Wanita Indonesia*, Indonesian Women's Movement) were established and obtained mass support across the nation.

Several women's organizations which emerged during this period can be differentiated from pre-war women's groups because the groups presented a challenge to the system of patriarchy. While pre-war women's groups, with the

exception of *Isteri Sadar*, did not question the dominant role of the men in the household, workplace and political realms, several women's organizations during Sukarno's rule were established to address the issue of gender inequality. This was a milestone in the women's movement because it marks the beginning of a mass movement of Indonesian women challenging the patriarchal system and lobbying for political and social change. The most notable group was Gerwani (*Gerakan Wanita Indonesia*, Indonesian Women's Movement), the most historically significant organization in the history of the Indonesian women's movement.

After branching off from the Gerwis (*Gerakan Wanita Sedar*, Movement of Alert Women), Gerwani was established in 1950. Gerwani began with only 500 members, but was extremely politically active from the onset. Cooperation with both Sukarno and the PKI (*Partai Komunis Indonesia*, Communist Party of Indonesia) allowed Gerwani the opportunity to broach issues of feminism and social disparities with government agencies. At the same time, however, Gerwani was highly critical of government economic policy which resulted in social disparities and rising food prices.

In the parliamentary elections of 1955, four members were elected. Following this success, and other political and social activist achievements, Gerwani's membership grew steadily. Between 1956 and 1961, Gerwani grew from 700 to over a million members. Gerwani's influence quickly extended to the outer islands; by 1957, 183 branches had been established. (Wieringa, 1995: 267).

As the organization was inclusive with both its membership and initiatives, the group became quite popular with women from a wide range of

socio-economic backgrounds. Gerwani actively pursued the interests of women in rural areas, for example, a liaison with the nationalist group Wanita Marhaen (Women Farmers) was developed in the 1950s; in 1961, Gerwani organized a seminar to address issues faced by women working in the agricultural sector (Wieringa, 1988: 78). Gerwani also provided a great deal of support to women workers, and helped to resolve conflict between peasants and landlords (Wieringa, 1992: 102). Participation with other women's organizations and movements, such as women worker demonstrations, kept Gerwani in the public eye throughout the nation. Gerwani fought alongside the women's secretariat of the trade union, lobbying for equal wages, addressing issues such as sexual harassment and demanding the implementation of labour laws (Wieringa, 1988: 79).

Gerwani directly addressed the issue of male dominated households, appealing for changes in the legislation pertaining to marital issues. The organization was completely opposed to polygamy and would not allow women to become members if they were second wives. Members who became second wives were obliged to resign from Gerwani. Further, Gerwani helped members who were first wives prevent their husbands from obtaining second wives (Wieringa, 1995: 269-71).

In addition to social and political activism, Gerwani developed practical projects that would help women in their everyday lives. Gerwani's various programs included income generating projects, literacy and financial math classes, and cooking and sewing courses. Gerwani was quite different from the majority of the other women's organizations. Gerwani members did not view women as extensions of their husbands but as strong individuals who could

contribute to nationalism and have equal roles, both within the household and society.

Perwari (*Persatuan Wanita Republik Indonesia*, Women's Association of the Indonesian Republic) was the only other women's organization of this era with views similar to Gerwani. For example, Perwari was highly critical of the Sukarno government, maintaining a strong stance against polygamy, even after Sukarno's second marriage (Wieringa, 1995: 271). Both Perwari and Gerwani encouraged critical thinking and generated awareness of the potential for social change, encouraging women to become political and social activists (Wieringa, 1992: 109)

Contrary to later government sponsored women's organizations such as the PKK and Dharma Wanita, which are organized according to a class based hierarchy, the leaders of Gerwani came from all social backgrounds. All members had the opportunity to obtain leadership positions. The demographics of Gerwani's membership were quite unique, as the majority were members from poor rural areas. This contrasted with other popular women's organizations such as Perwari that were not politically active and whose memberships were limited to wealthier women from middle-class backgrounds (Wieringa, 1995: 269-71).

Despite Gerwani's leftist tendencies and a complex and ambivalent relationship with the PKI, the two groups were never officially affiliated. Gerwani cadres were extremely loyal to the organization, dedicating their lives to the group's initiatives. Although active politically, priority was given to the organization's social objectives, which concerned women, rather than to its

relationship with government agencies. However, the military recognized Gerwani's growing influence and power and chose to define the group as communist in order to legitimize the eventual destruction of the group.

Gerwani was appealing to women because it didn't compromise family or religious values, while at the same time recognizing women as being valid, contributing members of a community that were equal with men. While Gerwani's assertion that polygamy be abolished limited their popularity with Islamic organizations, it was its broader feminist viewpoint, extensive influence and popularity that represented a threat to the government (Wieringa, 1996: 2).

On September 30, 1965, six conservative generals were killed after being kidnapped by middle-ranking army officers. The extent of the involvement of Sukarno, Suharto, the C.I.A. and P.K.I. remains unknown, yet Suharto pinned the blame on the PKI and Gerwani to justify the slaughtering of all alleged communists throughout Indonesia. Wild rumours were circulated throughout the nation claiming that Gerwani women had mutilated the generals' genitals. However, recent examination of the official autopsy report reveals no evidence of any sort of mutilation (Wieringa, 1997: 2). Rumours that Gerwani women were prostitutes and bad mothers who killed their children were also circulated. Gerwani was slandered in order to associate radical and perverse behavior with communism and socialist feminism. S. Wieringa describes this connection as the "mental transition to the New Order State" (Wieringa, 1997: 2).

Many Gerwani members were imprisoned without trial, or tortured and killed along with the 500,000 others with supposed left wing tendencies. With the exception of *Wanita Katolik*, no women's organization publicly denounced

the killing of Gerwani women or provided humanitarian aid to the women. Subsequently, after being thrown out of KOWANI in 1965 and officially banned in 1966, Gerwani was completely destroyed and the progressive women's movement came to an end (Wieringa, 1995: 271-5).

Throughout this reign of terror, and continuing through to the present day, a nationwide hatred against communism and all left-wing affiliates was encouraged throughout society. After the coup, many Gerwani women remained in prison up to twenty years. After their eventual release, Gerwani members and other political prisoners were marked with the stigma of communism and were subjected to close government surveillance throughout Suharto's rule. Further, the released prisoners were subjected to harsh government restrictions; former Gerwani members are essentially banned from most sectors of the labour force (Wieringa, 1997: 2).

Under Suharto, most independent mass organizations were eliminated and all leftist groups were purged from society. The combination of Suharto's GOLKAR and the army had complete control of society (Wieringa, 1995: 275). Following the events of 1965, the government encouraged women to 'protect' themselves from the dangers of communism by adhering to the feminine role of wife and mother.

## CHAPTER THREE:

### **The New Order, New Policies and New Roles for Women**

#### *Comparative Analysis of Sukarno's and Suharto's Influence on the Women's Movement*

Following the 1965 coup and Suharto's subsequent seizure of power, the women's movement changed in terms of its ideological platform, political involvement and practical initiatives. While the women's movement during the 1950s and early 1960s can be characterized as a period of relative freedom of speech and action, the Suharto years have been distinguished by repression of political activity and a women's movement based upon *Ibuism*.

The relationship between Indonesia's political economy and the women's movement is evident upon comparative analysis of the Sukarno and Suharto periods. Economic development, resource export and industrialization during Sukarno's presidency were limited due to recent national independence and the resulting political and economic turmoil as well as strained relations with outside nations. While Sukarno publicly supported a role for women modeled upon *Ibuism*, many independent women's groups continued to work toward gender equity with little repercussion.

During the period of Sukarno's Guided Democracy, women entered the realm of politics and became a part of the process of change, as is evident by the achievements of Gerwani and other women's organizations. Women's organizations were generally associated with political parties, either formally or informally, for example, *Sarekat Islam* (SI - Islamic Party), *Partai Komunis Indonesia* (PKI - Indonesian Communist Party) and *Partai Nasional Indonesia* (PNI -

Indonesian Nationalist Party) all had women's branches within the party. Membership in the parties' women's branches can be distinguished from women's involvement in politics prior to the Sukarno period because the divisions were comprised of women from provinces outside of Java as well as varying social and economic backgrounds, whereas prior to the Sukarno period, the women's movement was limited to urban based women's organizations with members primarily from the elite and middle classes (Wieringa, 1995: 266-7).

Sukarno's efforts were initially concentrated upon nationalism; following Indonesia's independence, Sukarno largely focused upon addressing issues such as the nation's economic instability, poverty, unstable relations with foreign nations and the power struggles between the national political parties, the PKI, PNI, Masyumi, NU and SI. This enabled the women's movement to pursue various issues and projects with relatively little interference from the government. Between 1950-59, women's organizations worked with government agencies to establish schools, healthcare clinics, banks and other public structures (Blackburn, 1989: 169-70). During the Sukarno years of Guided Democracy, the women's movement was allowed to develop with more freedom because the government didn't attempt to control the movement such as during the Suharto years.

Suharto's primary goals, however, were establishing an effective power-base following in the aftermath of the 1965 coup, economic growth, industrialization and social development. Unlike Sukarno, Suharto worked toward integrating Indonesia into the global economy and worked toward national development via export led industrialization. Indonesia's growth in the past thirty years is well-documented; rising GNP, economic expansion of

approximately 450% (Hill, 1994: xxv), high literacy rates and the extraordinarily successful national family planning project. While these improvements have undoubtedly raised the standard of living for many Indonesians, the price has been the political freedom of the people, severe income disparities between upper and lower classes and the repression of the role of women. However, the recent collapse of the Indonesian economy, a crisis that was largely due to corruption amongst the nations wealthiest citizens, demonstrates the precarious stability of an unjust and unequal society.

The New Order government recognized the integral role that women play in national development as well as the extent of the influence that women's groups could achieve if allowed to operate freely. Gerwani's legacy created the perception amongst top level New Order officials that large independent women's groups represent a threat to political stability. The government recognized that Gerwani was an influential organization with substantial political clout that quickly became powerful throughout the nation.

After the New Order government obtained power, the women's movement was incorporated into the government's realm of control in order to prevent the development of groups such as Gerwani. Government publications which provide historical accounts of the Indonesian women's movement rarely mention Gerwani's existence; if mentioned, the publications make vague references to a radical organization that was banned because of its associations with communism. For example, a government produced historical account of the Indonesian women's movement describes the women's movement in the 1960s as being "much influenced by the political situation in the country" and only once refers to Gerwani: "KOWANI had crossed out Gerwani as a member

because of their involvement with the Gerakan 30 September Movement (Department of Information, 1984: 16).

The New Order government banned Gerwani, implemented strict regulations concerning NGO activity, established a Ministry for Women and created several massive, national women's organizations. The women's organizations operate under the platform of *Ibuism* (State Maternalism) as well as having compulsory membership for women in many areas and for the wives of all public servants.

It is impossible to explain the platform of government sponsored women's organizations without first explaining the government endorsed concept of *Ibuism*. In order to maintain high female representation in the labour force, traditional gender roles have been re-constructed to incorporate the New Order government's goals of modernization and development. For example, the model for women's role in the work-force has been largely based upon the concept of State *Ibuism*.

*Ibuism* is a broad concept which addresses political, cultural and economic elements of Indonesian society. J. Suryakusuma states that *Ibuism* "defines women as appendages and companions to their husbands, as mothers and educators of children, as housekeepers, and as members of Indonesian society" (Suryakusuma, 1996: 101).

The connotative term *Ibuism*, or State Maternalism, is derived from the Indonesian word *Ibu* (mother) and refers to the ideological assumption that the primary role of women is as wives and mothers. Women are expected to adhere

to a pre-determined role, a function which largely excludes them from power and decision making processes. *Ibuism* has been defined by Madelon Djajadingrat-Nieuwenhuis as sanctioning any action providing it is taken as a mother who is looking after her family, a group, a class, a company or the state, without demanding power or prestige in return (Djajadingrat-Nieuwenhuis, 1987: 44).

Women are taught that their primary role is within the home, supporting their families, and that status and informal power can be derived from their household responsibilities. Acting with their "informal power", women are socially persuaded to engage in activities which benefit both the household and the state, and encourage economic growth (Wolf, 1992, 68-69). The concept of *Ibuism* is also evident in Indonesia's legislation: the 1974 Marriage Law defines the husband as the formal head of the household (Suryakusuma, 1996: 8).

Gender specific legislation was introduced with The Guidelines of 1988 (GBNH), which were the basis for the Fourth Five Year Development Plan. In GBHN 1988 the Guidelines for Women are listed as follows:

- a) "equal rights, obligations and opportunities for women and men in all aspects of civil life and in all development activities;
- b) women's harmonious role in the family and society;
- c) respect for women's dignity and protection of women's specific biological characteristics/reproductive function;
- d) develop a favourable socio-cultural climate to enhance women's capabilities for wider participation of women in development;
- e) encourage the active participation of NGO's, among others, in the Family Welfare Movement to promote family welfare".

(Directorate of Foreign Information Services, 1994: 2-3) (The Ministry for the Role of Women, 1996: 2).

In 1993, additions to the Guidelines for Women included: "the enhancement of women's mental and spiritual resilience; the development of women's capacity to face changes; enhancing the consciousness of women of their role in family education; and the enhancement of women's skills, productivity, welfare and protection of femininity" (Directorate of Foreign Information Services, 1994: 3-4). The ambiguity of the guidelines allows for wide-ranging interpretations on the part of power-holding agencies, such as the military, courtrooms, large corporations and factories, areas where women's rights are often ignored.

Women are encouraged to work outside of the home in order to increase their status and "improve" the household. Women are considered to be a fully developed person only after they are married and have children (Wright, 1997: 2). Although many women derive an identity and receive a sense of satisfaction from their work, the majority of women engage in wage labour out of financial need. Further, as men are considered to be the primary breadwinners and a woman's income is considered to be supplementary to the household, women generally receive significantly lower wages than men (Mardika, 1991: 2, Wright, 1997: 2-3). In the industrial sector, for example, the gendered division of labour within the factories is generally that males are supervisors and managers and females work in the low-wage menial positions, with little opportunity for advancement (Hall, 1994: 291).

Therefore, since paying women low wages is socially justified, women have also become agents of national development outside the home. A large, low-wage and efficient labour supply makes Indonesia attractive to foreign investors and has been a crucial component of Indonesia's export led

industrialization (Mather, 1983: 3). The government supports the presence of multi-national manufacturing companies such as Nike, because of the thousands of jobs the industry provides to the nation, thus stimulating the development cycle. As this process is highly dependent on the availability of a specific form of female labour, underpaid and performing repetitive tasks, the government implements ideological strategies to maintain control of the workforce. For example, women's organizations such as the PKK, which is present in most communities, promote ideologies and implement projects that reinforce a secondary role for women (Blackburn, 1989: 2).

In the workforce, gender discrimination is validated by legislation which denotes regulations and 'advantages' for women that are described by the government as "providing protection and taking women's special needs into consideration". For example, Ordinance No. 647/1925 and Law No. 1/1951 prohibit women from working at night. The laws are sexist in the sense that they assume that women should be home with their families in the evenings and that women need to be protected. Public Law No. 1/1950 entitles women to stay home from work on the first two days of their menstrual periods. The implementation of this right is a constant struggle in the Indonesian work-force, particularly with low-waged labourers who may not receive regular benefits such as sick-time and paid vacations.

The patriarchal implications of this law are two-fold: first, it implies that women are unclean when they are menstruating and should not be out in public; second, women are too weak to work when having a menstrual period. These laws disadvantage women because it provides justification for not hiring women for certain or jobs or denying them advancement due to their 'special needs'

(Directorate of Foreign Information Services, 1994: 11). While laws such as these were enacted during the Sukarno years, they were not actively enforced until the New Order government. Further, the laws are frequently manipulated in order to justify discrimination.

### *Government Infrastructure and National Women's Organizations*

The New Order government has maintained an active role in the women's movement. State women's organizations have been established and independent women's organizations must adhere to rigid regulations and state objectives. The government ideological platform for the women's movement is distinctly anti-feminist. The Department of Information stated in a publication about the women's movement that there is no need for feminism because women are guaranteed equality in Article 27 of the Republic of Indonesia (Department of Information, 1968:14). Feminism is associated with both communism and the west; government publications refer to the Gerwani phase as the "stage of feminism" and openly denounce western feminism, asserting that "Indonesian feminism differs from Western feminism. The latter was mainly aimed at opposing the efforts of the men, for the sake of the progress of women, such as the suffragettes movement in England, demanding rights for women" (Department of Information, 1968:10). While many Asian feminists assert that they do not fully support western feminism, particularly those feminist models which exclude men from the process, the principles of the "Indonesian feminism", as defined by the government, are incongruent with their goals.

The New Order government has contributed to the idealization of Kartini's work for women's initiatives to provide a national example of the focus for the Indonesian women's movement. While Kartini addressed issues such as the lack of educational opportunities for women, her methods for protest were not political, radical or obtrusive and she remained respectful of her father's wishes. While several areas of Kartini's letters demonstrate her opposition to a male-dominated society, the government frequently writes about Kartini's achievements in the advancement of women in education using a patriarchal, anti-western women and elitist slant: "

"Enlightened fathers, though reluctant at first, more and more gave their consent to their daughters to attend public schools. It was certainly a credit to these young ladies of the nobility that they had managed to preserve their femininity, their typical Indonesian traits of character amongst their European sisters...".

(Department of Information, 1968: 5)

S. Tiwon makes the argument that the government has juxtaposed Kartini and Gerwani as a model and a maniac to provide examples of appropriate and inappropriate behavior for women and for the public to associate politically active groups such as Gerwani as being sexually perverse and out of control:

"Kartini/Gerwani: the model/the maniacs. The model woman is the individual, her femaleness sequestered from other females by rank, by age, by social status. Her definition of Ibu controls her and fixes her within a hierarchical web of ties and responsibilities. The converse of this model is women in a crowd in which all rankings fall away, as do age, family ties, and social status: their femaleness thus augmented, they become channels for power. In a very real sense, then, political behavior is associated with sexual behavior: the one is presented as good and nurturing; the other is presented as a powerful but destructive and thereby evil force. It is this suppressed background of the maniac force of femaleness that may help to explain the function of so many women's organizations in

Indonesia, with their insistence on rankings, the emphasis on *Ibu* (mother) as the only appropriate title for women".

(S. Tiwon, 1996: 65)

The National Commission on the Status of Women was established in 1967, with the goal of advancing the status of women in the family and society. The Commission undertakes research in fields concerning women and makes recommendations to the government for policy or the development of new initiatives (Office of the State Minister for the Role of Women: 1991: 2). As the agency is comprised primarily of representatives from government women's organizations, it is hardly surprising that the Commission's requests and recommendations largely focus upon women's role in development and do not challenge government infrastructure concerning women.

In 1983, a State Minister for the Role of Women was appointed; the Office of the Minister advises and coordinates initiatives for women. For example, the Office maintains liaisons with the PKK and works closely with the National Commission on the Status of Women (KNKWI), develops policies concerning women and conducts research projects on women's issues, with a special focus upon women's role in development (Development Cooperation Department, 1987: 5). While the title and projects sound impressive, K. Robinson argues that the Ministry has very little power and scarce resources (Robinson, 1997: 152). Although the Ministry for the Status of Women may use language such as "gender responsive plans" in their publications, their mandate is based upon the 1988 GBHN guidelines and the Ministry is fully supportive of state initiatives for women, such as the PKK (Office of the State Minister for the Role of Women: 1991: 2- 4).

## The PKK

The Pembinaan Kesejahteraan Keluarga, abbreviated PKK (The Applied Family Welfare Program) was established in 1972 with the goal of involving women in national development strategies as well as promoting female empowerment and education programs (Development Cooperation Department, 1987: 4). However, this empowerment is primarily limited to women's role in the family. The PKK ideology provides women with enormous responsibility in the household and claims that a specifically 'female' role is indicative of improved status for women. Leadership in the PKK is dependent upon social rank in the community. For example, at the village level, the wife of the highest ranked man automatically becomes the leader of the village's PKK unit. All Indonesian women are automatically members of the PKK, however, a woman chooses whether or not she wishes to be an active member (Wieringa, 1993: 24).

While the Office of the Minister of State for the Role of Women (UPW) describes the PKK as a "major non-government women's organization," UPW determines the PKK's direction, objectives, activities and management. As a result, the principles of State Ibuism are clearly reflected in the PKK ideology and programs. The ten major programs of the PKK concern the following areas:

- "comprehension and practical application of the State Ideology;
- Pancasila education;
- fostering mutual self-help (*gotong royong*);
- food;
- clothing;
- housing and house arrangement;
- education and skills;
- health promotion of co-operatives;
- protection and conservation of the environment;
- sound domestic planning."

(Office of the State Minister for the Role of Women: 1991: 2)

PKK units are present in over 62,000 communities throughout Indonesia and membership is estimated at two million. National management of the organization is both consistent and highly structured. The PKK's organizational structure is as follows:

- 1) Household units are organized into groups of 10 - 20 called *Dasawisma*.
- 2) A chair-person oversees the *Dasawisma* and records and reports key social data about the household members.
- 3) PKK supervisors are present at the village, sub-district, district, provincial and national levels.

(Office of the State Minister for the Role of Women: 1991: 4)

The PKK encourages female participation in the modernization of the nation and has developed an ideology, the Five Ideals of Women, which outlines women's role in national development. Women are to place their husbands, families and the nation before themselves, focusing their lives on improving these areas. The PKK "ideals" for women are as follows:

- 1) Wives must be loyal to their husbands
- 2) Children must be produced for the nation
- 3) Educate one's children to be good citizens
- 4) A woman should always strive to improve her household
- 5) Be a good member of the community.

(Sullivan, 1983: 147-48)

With the exception of the last principle, all of the ideals of a "good wife" involve women's responsibilities within the household. This ideology reinforces

a secondary status for women and suggests that women should obtain their personal identities and empowerment from being a wife and a mother. The empowerment is primarily limited to women's role in the family. While education programs are offered, it is skills such as: hair-styling; cooking; sewing; flower arranging; and make-up application that are taught. The Five Roles of Women have remained a fundamental ideology of the PKK which the government continues to enforce.

Women's participation in the PKK has been officially incorporated into government development strategies. In 1977, all women were legally required to belong to the PKK, however, registered members of the PKK are not required to be active within the organization (interviews). Since the program was established, the organization has maintained the same philosophical base and continues to be managed by men, while the programs are carried out by women (Sullivan, 1983: 148).

However, the PKK does carry out programs which promote better health-care, increase educational opportunities for women and foster good community relations. Statistical data demonstrates that there has been substantial improvement in life expectancy rates, maternity and infant care, and other healthcare issues in both urban and rural areas. Despite these improvements in healthcare, the policies remain heavily focused on women's maternal role; little attention is given to the health of women outside of their reproductive role.

The extent of community involvement is largely dependent upon the interest of the wife of the top ranked community member as well as the number of women who choose to be members. For example, some communities do not

have any PKK programs where others may have extremely active programs (interviews). In areas of high PKK activity and other government sponsored NGOs, the development and influence of independent women's NGOs (Eldridge, 1995: 154) which operate under feminist platforms is extremely difficult.

### **Dharma Wanita**

The Dharma Wanita is the another government women's organization. It is the largest women's organization in Indonesia, perhaps because membership in this group is mandatory for all wives of civil servants. Unlike the PKK, wives of civil servants do not have a choice to be active or inactive. Essentially, the Dharma Wanita operates as a branch of the government; a woman's position in the group is dependent upon her husband's position in the government. For example, if a woman's husband is a low ranking, bottom of the pay scale civil servant with very little education, she will automatically be one of the lowest ranking members of the Dharma Wanita with very little power in the organization, regardless of her qualifications. Further, a woman's behavior in the Dharma Wanita can affect her husband's position in the government hierarchy in terms of wages and promotions. Women are expected to "support the official duties of their husbands by creating a harmonious home atmosphere in order to create a state official who is authoritative and clean" (Work Program of the Dharma Wanita, 1983-88:6; Suryakusuma, 1996: 6).

Women who are civil service employees are required to join the Dharma Wanita in their workplace; married female civil service employees must belong to their husband's office's Dharma Wanita unit as well. However, women are required to attend the Dharma Wanita functions and meetings at their husband's office, even if it means missing work. In her own workplace, a female married

employee is allowed to miss meetings and functions in her office's Dharma Wanita. This reinforces the principles of *Ibuism* and *Ikut Suami* (Follow your Husband), as it demonstrates that a woman's primary role is as a wife who supports her husband (Interviews, DW, Kaly, RA), not as a contributing member of a society.

Organizations like Dharma Wanita and the P.K.K. reflect the fact that stratification of society is based upon class rather than merit, and demonstrate the extent of government involvement in the women's movement. The groups implement programs and support ideas that are the practical application of the concept of *Ibuism*. For example, UPW describes Dharma Wanita as supporting "government social development programs such as courses on the comprehension and practical application of the State Ideology, Pancasila, functional literacy, family planning, health, nutrition, environmental preservation and cooperatives" (Office of the State Minister for the Role of Women: 1991: 4). As women are required to belong to these groups and most women are extremely busy working and taking care of their families, in a practical sense, there is very little opportunity to establish alternative groups.

The organizations also reinforce 'family principles' which define women in terms of both their relationship to men and their maternal role (Suryakusuma, 1996: 25). The government legitimizes itself through these organizations by initiating concepts and activities that appear to, and sometimes do, help women. For example, education programs and projects that provide aid to the poor.

While membership in the PKK and Dharma Wanita are extremely high and the programs are implemented throughout the nation, I will argue that the

groups have had only moderate success with implementation of government ideology. For example, many women are unhappy with forced Dharma Wanita memberships and resent the hierarchical structure of the agency (Interview, Director of Yogyakarta Language School, 18 September 1997). Many communities have very little PKK activity because the projects do not address the interests or relevant needs of the communities (Rifka Annisa interview, 26 September 1997; B. Buchori and I. Soenarto, 1996: 172-191).

## **Dharma Pertiwi**

The Dharma Pertiwi, a compulsory organization for the wives of armed forces personnel, was established in 1964 and is similar to the Dharma Wanita in terms of organizational framework and rank based upon husband's position. The activities of this group include: education, health, nutrition and social welfare (Office of the State Minister for the Role of Women: 1991: 4). As very little has been published about this organization, both the extent of its initiatives for women and its effects on the women's movement are unclear.

The size and political clout of government women's organizations hinders the development and influence of independent women's NGOs (Eldridge, 1995: 154) which operate from feminist platforms. KOWANI, which is both funded and controlled by the government, remains the administrative umbrella of all women's organizations (Blackburn, 1989: 176). KOWANI oversees the activity of all groups: approximately 20 million women are represented within its framework (Office of the State Minister for the Role of Women: 1991: 3). KOWANI's formal government connections have serious implications for independent women's organizations, as will be discussed in the following chapter.

## **CHAPTER FOUR**

### **A Survey of Independent Women's Organizations and Gender Initiatives for Women**

Since the mid 1980s, independent women's organizations have emerged throughout Indonesia and have presented a challenge to government sponsored initiatives for women. The need for non-government women's organizations can be identified through examination of gender related issues, such as inequities in the labour force, violence in household, gender specific legislation and development policies concerning women. Before providing specific information about independent women's organizations, Chapter four will outline the practical and ideological impetus for the establishment of contemporary women's NGOs.

As described in previous chapters, women's organizations in Indonesia have been an important social mechanism for women in the twentieth century. At the beginning and the middle of the century, women's organizations were used in part as a tool for achieving social and political change and operated with support from the government. In the early twentieth century, groups such as Putri Mardika and Aisyiah fought to end polygamy and child marriage; in the 1950s to mid 1960s, Gerwani's political feminism gained mass support throughout Indonesia. Though Sukarno supported a State Ibuism model for the role of women, he allowed politically active women's organizations to operate with relative freedom. With the rise of Suharto to power and the subsequent abolishment of Gerwani, the role of women's organizations significantly altered. Since the early 1970s, the women's movement has been largely influenced by government intervention.

Contemporary women's NGOs are faced with the challenge of providing gender advocacy and empowerment in a society dominated by a government promoting patriarchal values. According to state ideology, women are to have a specific role in society as a wife, mother and supporter of the husband. The government's position on women is clear in areas such as national development and development policies, legislation concerning women, marriage and labour, and government women's organizations. The underlying notion of these policies, that women are not equal to men, has perpetuated issues such as violence against women, a work-force with clear gender divisions and a male-dominated political economy.

Economic growth strategies and corresponding programs and policies reflect the government's perspective concerning the role of women, both inside and outside of the household, in the development process. The government developed an organizational framework in which women had a specific role in national development. While women's participation was to be non-political, their role in development was outlined in Law No. 5, 1975 (Nadia, 1996: 239-40). As stated in the previous chapter, the government established organizations for women in order to propagate the government's agenda and outline women's roles and responsibilities throughout society. The programs and principals of organizations such as the Dharma Wanita and the PKK re-enforce a role for women that is inferior to males and discourage women from critical thought and action.

Practices in the workplace also reflect gender inequality. Ambiguous legislation allows private companies the freedom to develop policies and

practices specific to the work site. Laws stating that women and men are "equal" but have separate roles, has serious ramifications in the labour force. For example, during my interviews, several women expressed anger over unfair policies in the workplace. Men, who are assumed to be the household heads, automatically receive bonuses and higher wages than women regardless of whether they are the household head, single, married or divorced. Female heads of households are generally not entitled to these benefits. As approximately 1/3 of all women in Indonesia are household heads or sole income earners in a family, this is inherently discriminatory toward women.

Women who work in the low-wage sectors of the workforce are especially vulnerable to gender specific legislation. In the past few years, women who work as labourers in factories or small business have received substantial coverage in western media. Reports of women being physically and emotionally abused, earning far below minimum wage, working in hazardous environments and other exploitative situations are regularly published. Indonesian migrant workers, women who travel to other nations to earn money to mail home, are frequently exposed to similar situations.

Sexual harassment in the workplace occurs in most sectors of the Indonesian workforce. Women are subject to verbal abuse, gender stereo-typing, unwanted attention from males and sexual assault<sup>5</sup>. Most women are reluctant to report sexual harassment because of fear of losing their job and the lack of recourse. Although women at all levels of the work force are exposed to sexual harassment, women with low wages and low status positions in the workforce

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<sup>5</sup> During an interview with a women's NGO in Jakarta, a woman reported to me that in the work place, men touching or brushing up against a woman's breast or buttocks is so common that it is not considered sexual harassment.

experience incidents with greater frequency and more extreme levels of violence. However, many people in management positions, particularly men, purport that sexual harassment isn't a problem and unwanted attention from men is often provoked by the women. While incidents of extreme sexual assault may occasionally be reported, the perpetrator is rarely punished; ironically, it is often the victim who suffers more than the abuser at the outcome of the trial, as will be outlined in this chapter.

Violence against women is a widespread problem in Indonesia, an issue that until recently, was rarely discussed. In several of my interviews, women reported that violence is a very common issue, one that is rarely discussed inside or outside of the household. Sadly, the women noted that women are pressured to stay quiet about violence in the home. The rationale behind the silence is that women are often ashamed to admit to being a victim and the fact that there are few choices and resources available to women who wish to leave an abusive relationship. Until the 1990s, there were no resources<sup>6</sup> available for victims of violence; this is quite shocking, considering the population of Indonesia is over 200 million and violence in the workplace and household is common-place. Violence, sexual harassment and discrimination in the workforce are only a few of the many issues that are faced by Indonesian women in contemporary society.

The government has generally been quite reluctant to take action against violence. For example, following the recent rioting in Jakarta, and the concurrent

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<sup>6</sup> Until recently, there were no women's shelters, hot-lines or counselors trained to provide care for victims. Community information, published statistics, literature, seminars etc. were not developed until the mid-1980s. Until 1992, Kalyanamitra in Jakarta and Rifka Annisa in Yogyakarta were the only women's groups who actively fought the issue of violence against women.

violence against Chinese women,<sup>7</sup> the government has long refused to admit that the rapes even occurred. Habibie, persuaded by women's organizations to make a public statement about the violence against Chinese women, did not admit that the rapes even occurred but made a few cursory comments concerning violence as an issue<sup>8</sup>. Although Habibie indicated that he "condemns violence", his failure to mention the specific crimes, despite the evidence provided by numerous human rights activists, suggest that he isn't willing to take more than a token stance on violence against women.

As issues of violence, discrimination and gender inequality are not adequately covered by legislation and are not considered to be a problem by the government women's organizations, independent women's organizations have emerged throughout Indonesia to address these problems and other issues. While these issues have been affecting Indonesian women for decades, it is the independent women's organizations who have publicly identified the problems, created networks of support for victims, initiated projects to stop discrimination and violence and have exposed these issues to the international community. Without the intervention of independent women's organizations, incidents of discrimination, violence and gender inequity would continue to occur without intervention from public agencies, as will be demonstrated with the case of the migrant labourers.

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<sup>7</sup>Women's organizations have estimated that several hundred women of Chinese descent were brutally raped, many of the rapes resulting in death. While activists subtly suggest that the military is behind the crime, it is unclear at this point who is responsible (Radio Netherlands, 1998: 2).

<sup>8</sup>Habibie's statement concerning the violence was limited to the following: " I, on behalf on the government, condemn the numerous cases of violence during the riots in several places, including the simultaneous violence against women" (AFP, 15 July 1998: 1).

The role of independent women's organizations has also shifted in the past decade. Women's groups that emerged in the 1970s and early 1980s were established by educated, wealthier individuals; the objectives of the groups were 'helping oriented', with a focus upon "progress, autonomy, self-help and eventually, 'independence'" (Mahasin, 1996: 3). While contemporary women's organizations continue to be established by educated middle class women, in recent years, the goals of the NGOs have shifted toward a stronger emphasis upon participation, development, equality, demands for human rights and the rights of women/children and workers (Mahasin, 1996: 5).

Independent women's organizations were established to address those institutions and discourses in Indonesian society that discriminate against women and perpetuate gender inequality. These groups can be distinguished from government supported women's organizations and development oriented NGOs because of the activities which the groups pursue and the ideological platforms upon which they are based. While independent women's NGOs may operate within the parameters of government legislation, which states that organizations may not pursue political agendas, the activities and objectives of the independent women's organizations are distinctly political.

The stated objectives and activities carried out by women's group must not be overtly political; YASANTI, a women's group working with factory labourers, would not state the group's objective as 'challenging the government to protect workers' and the group also would not organize workers to strike for better wages. However, women's organizations with general goals of education and social change pursue these objectives, in a non-confrontational manner in order to improve the lives of women and achieve social change. For example,

due to a lack of education and in many cases, illiteracy, the majority of factory workers are unclear about labour legislation and their rights within the constitution. Women's organizations such as YASANTI and Kalyanamitra offer literacy training to factory workers. Helping improve a worker's reading skills isn't considered to be political, however, the motive goes beyond the single goal of increasing literacy levels in factories. If female factory workers can read labour legislation and understand their rights within the system, there is a greater likelihood of the laws being enforced.

Independent women's organizations pursue goals of equity, justice and awareness without openly criticizing the government or venturing beyond legalities. Since government agencies, in particular, the police, military and higher echelons of the government often view NGOs as threatening to social stability and "trouble-makers", the NGOs are limited in the manner in which objectives and activities can be implemented. Using a non-political approach, such as literacy classes and women's advocacy groups, to pursue objectives, as well as maintaining a dedication to serving the interests of marginalized women, independent women's organizations take action on serious social issues without being openly critical about social and legal inadequacies.

Women's organizations work toward maintaining a positive, non-radical image within the community. Government officials are frequently invited to attend meetings in order to build relationships with government agencies as well as demonstrate that the groups are not carrying out any subversive or radical activities. It is this non-violent and non-confrontational approach that has

allowed the women's NGOs to operate with relative freedom<sup>9</sup> and slowly achieve the above mentioned objectives.

The manner in which Indonesian NGOs carry out their work is quite different than Canadian NGOs. In general, Canadian NGOs emerge to provoke public/government response to social issues. Usually, the government assumes responsibility or provides funding to non-profit societies such as poverty advocacy organizations, women's shelters, anti-racism groups, child care programs etc. (Ibrahim, 1996: xix). However, the groups remain independent in the sense that the government does not determine the agenda or objectives of the organizations.

In British Columbia, for example, funding is provided to non-government societies to manage women's shelters and safe houses for female survivors of domestic violence. Various ministries develop and implement programs and strategies to fight violence against women (Ministry of Attorney General, 1996, pg. 51). In Indonesia, however, the government does not take responsibility for the issues raised by the people. The government's reluctance to support the NGOs stems from its view of how to maintain its authority, national order and social stability. In general, the government views the NGOs/LSMs who organize protests and vocalize their criticism of the government as being subversive and threatening to social stability.

It is important to recognize, however, that the government is not necessarily against the goals and objectives of the women's NGOs; for example,

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<sup>9</sup>By "relative freedom", I mean the NGOs members are not high risk for being imprisoned, tortured or having their organization closed down.

the government does not advocate violence against women. Rather, it is concerned with non-government agencies struggling to make social and political changes outside the parameters of government control. For example, approximately two dozen human rights activists, whose methods of demonstration were considered too radical, mysteriously 'disappeared' prior to the May 1998 riots (Time, Kompas, Vancouver Sun). The government does provide funding to some non-government women's organizations, providing the activities of the group support government values and Pancasila ideology. For example, the Ministry for Women funds Planned Parenthood International. This groups administers family planning programs throughout Indonesia, particularly in poor, rural areas (Indonesian Planned Parenthood Association, 1995: 14).

Despite rigid regulations and close monitoring by the government, Indonesian NGOs have achieved moderate success in several areas. This is in part due to the action-oriented objectives of several groups, as well as close liaisons between a wide variety of organizations. A. Mahsisi notes that Indonesian NGOs undergo a collective learning process and maintain a "continual link between action and reflection". Political and social action is well-planned; the action responds to a specific area of concern, the action is reflected upon before further action is pursued (Mahasin, 1996: 1-2).

The manner in which independent women's organizations pursue their objectives parallels A. Mahasin's action/reflection theory. For example, *Yayasan Pemerhati Sosial Indonesia* (Social Concern Foundation of Indonesia), which is located in a very low income area on the outskirts of Jakarta, established a women's collective of home-workers so that the women in this area could

improve their economic security<sup>10</sup>. Prior to the establishment of the collective, women were invisible in the sense that there wasn't any social protection for them; no minimum wage laws, occupational health training or benefits. After the collective was formed, the women collaborated to determine how to improve their working conditions. The women decided that as a group, they could eliminate the 'middleman' and contract directly with the factories, thus receiving better wages and more flexibility with the terms of work. This action oriented approach has a positive impact on the household, community and indirectly, the national economy.

Chapter four will examine independent women's organizations in contemporary Indonesian society. Discussion will be focused upon independent women's organizations, that is, groups established by women to address specific social issues that affect women. The chapter will outline the ideological principals, activities, objectives and organizational structure of the groups researched and will provide examples of recent programs and initiatives carried out by the groups. The information for the discussion will be based upon interviews and surveys conducted in Yogyakarta and Jakarta between September and December 1996. For my fieldwork, I conducted interviews at over thirty organizations and obtained information from NGOs throughout Java and other provinces.

The chapter organizes the groups in terms of the functions they serve; the groups are categorized as follows: violence against women, legal aid, gender advocacy, labour groups and migrant labour organizations. Many of the groups

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<sup>10</sup> In 1996, the ILO adopted a Convention that recognized homeworkers as a part of the workforce and set minimum standards for pay and working conditions, to be translated at a national level into law (The International Network for Homebased Workers, 1996: 1).

serve several functions, for example, migrant labour groups support gender awareness and work with migrant labour victims of legal and physical abuse. However, for clarity, the groups are divided according to their primary function. While the groups outlined in this chapter are not a comprehensive list of all women's organizations, the majority of the groups located in Jakarta and Yogyakarta will be covered, providing an outline of the non-government resources available to women in urban areas. Also, Jakarta and Yogyakarta are the most active areas for women's groups, with respect to the number of groups in operation, membership and projects in progress.

The women's organizations discussed will provide an overview of the rationale for development, activities and objectives of independent women's groups. NGOs which are not specifically 'women's organizations' yet have significant projects for women will also be covered. Development oriented women's cooperatives, which are primarily located in rural areas and are initiated and funded by national and international agencies will be discussed briefly.

Independent women's organizations are wide ranging, in size, structure, objectives and activities. P. Eldridge estimates that there are approximately 2,300 women's organizations actively operating in Indonesia. The size of each organization is dependent upon factors such as: community interest; location, urban or rural; if the group is "radical" or neutral in its activities and objectives; funding; income level of community, and; other variables. Generally, groups are established by middle class women, yet membership is usually not limited to a specific class of women.

The NGO terminology used in P. Eldridge's book Non-Government Organizations and Democratic Participation in Indonesia can be applied to the classification of women's NGOs. Eldridge classifies Indonesian NGOs according to their size and relationship to the government and other public agencies: Government Organized Non-Government Organizations (GONGOs), Big NGOs (BINGOs) and Little NGOs (LINGOs) (Eldridge, 1995: 15). There are hundreds of small women's NGOs, which in Indonesia are referred to as LSM, *Lembaga Swadaya Masyarakat*, (Self-reliant Community Institution) (Eldridge, 1995: 11).

When translated into English, LSM has the same meaning as NGO, however, in Indonesia, the expression "NGO" has negative connotations, for it often is equated with "anti-government". LSMs are generally smaller community organizations, usually with less than twenty members; the groups often work with the poor or marginalized within a community. Larger NGOs, BINGOs, are referred to as LPSMs, *Lembaga Pengembangan Swadaya Masyarakat* (Institutions for Developing Community Self-Reliance) (Eldridge, 1995: 11-13).

While most large NGOs in Indonesia are not specifically for women, several LPSMs pursue objectives and maintain an ideological perspective that is favourable toward women. However, while many of the larger development oriented projects may purport to have gender equitable plans or programs to improve women's role in development, the activities pursued by the larger NGOs are generally initiated to stimulate economic growth and development. For example, in rural areas, it is common to have development initiatives that organize women agricultural workers. While the projects may have some benefits for the workers, the agency's primary motive for establishing groups

such as these is to increase productivity and stimulate economic development within a community.

In order to operate effectively, most women's NGOs are established to address specific social concerns and groups of women. The agendas of the NGOs that I visited varied but the most common groups were those that targeted their objectives towards the following issues: migrant labour, violence against women, gender inequality and awareness, and factory labour. While there are several religious organizations such as the Islamic and Catholic women's groups, such groups are not categorized separately because the activities of the women's religious groups are generally not limited to religious activism and membership isn't solely comprised of women of the same denomination. For example *Kelompok Perempuan Sadar*, KPS (Organization for Women's Awareness), is a Catholic women's organization that raises feminist issues within and outside of the church, and *Yayasan Kesejahteraan Fatayat Yogyakarta* (YKF - Organization for Women's Health) is an Islamic women's group that runs a birth control clinic within a multi-denominational community.

### **Legislation and Regulations concerning NGOs**

The legislation and regulations concerning NGOs reflect the government's interest in keeping a close watch over the NGOs. Policies regulating NGO activity have been developed to maintain the link between the government and the people, abolish groups that are critical of the government and to prevent establishment of large, left-wing organizations such as *Gerwani*. For example, the *Ormas Law*, passed in 1985, stipulates that all types of organizations, including religious and professional groups, must meet requirements such as:

- Registration with the appropriate government agency;
- Submitting regular reports stating all activity of organization;
- Being subjected to state supervision and control;
- Having to obtain permission for any foreign aid;
- Having Pancasila as their sole philosophical basis.

By enforcing legal connections with all NGOs, the government is able to propagate specific ideologies and development objectives to a large group of people. With respect to women's organizations, the government is not adverse to women obtaining a 'higher status' in society but is against any group that presents a potential threat to its power. The raise in status, however, is usually taken to mean that women's role in the household should be recognized as important and valuable; it is not seen as promoting gender equality.

While there is a great deal of variation amongst the goals, objectives and activities of Indonesian women's organizations, common trends can be identified in many of the groups. Before commencing with discussion of the objectives, activities and unique characteristics of specific women's NGOs, some general trends that were observed during my fieldwork will be briefly addressed. A detailed discussion of the trends will follow in chapter five.

- 1) Despite their work on increasing awareness of gender inequality, labour exploitation and oppression, independent women's organizations generally operate with very little opposition from government agencies. While advocating for social change, the groups do not openly criticize the government.

- 2) Most of the groups support notions of gender equality but are reluctant to call themselves feminists.
- 3) Most of the groups use similar mechanisms for disseminating information to the public. These methods include publishing literature, holding community information seminars at schools, universities and at other groups' meetings. Many of the groups regularly organize and participate in public forums.
- 4) The majority of the NGOs that I visited receive funding from overseas organizations such as the Ford Foundation and CIDA.
- 5) Active networking with other NGOs is very common amongst the women's organizations. For example, approximately 25 NGOs and women's rights activists have formed a movement to stop violence against women.
- 6) In most of the major cities, there are legal organizations that work with the local NGOs. These legal groups have become increasingly successful representing women in cases involving issues such as: rape, domestic violence and unpaid wages. In the past, these issues have received little legal attention.
- 7) The majority of the groups target a specific group of women in need, such as victims of male-violence, workers etc.

## INDEPENDENT WOMEN'S ORGANIZATIONS

### *Women's Shelters/Violence Prevention Advocacy Groups*

In the 1990s, several organizations have been established to prevent violence against women, provide help to victims of abuse and raise awareness within the community of the serious and common issue of violence against women. While violence against women in Indonesian households is a widespread and well-known issue, little has been done in the past to stop household violence, punish abusers and provide support, particularly emotional support, to victims of domestic violence. Local police often do not treat domestic abuse as a 'serious' issue. Women who seek help or advice are generally encouraged to stay in the home, rather than break up the family. Further, women, particularly those with children, have very few options if they choose to leave the household. If a wife leaves her husband, she will likely lose access to her children and may have difficulties obtaining employment, especially if she has been caring for the children rather than working.

Domestic violence is common to all levels of society and women are discouraged from seeking help or support. I attended a Gender Awareness Conference at the Universitas Gadjah Mada in September 1997. During the component on violence against women and infidelity, the representative from the Dharma Wanita said "*harus dirinya sendiri*" (have to take care of yourself) several times (Sept. 25, 1997, UGM). Incidentally, the representative also implied that gender discrimination and violence is a product of the individual, not a

society<sup>11</sup>. Many women's rights activists consider the government avoidance of the issue of violence against women as an indication that the government does not consider the issue to be a serious problem requiring intervention.

Non-government women's organizations throughout Java, on the other hand, have actively embraced the issue of violence against women. Several women's organizations have been established specifically to address this issue. A coalition of women's groups has also recently been formed, to increase solidarity amongst women's groups and strengthen the movement to prevent violence. Women's groups have emerged with objectives to eliminate all forms of violence against women: physical, emotional/psychological and sexual. *Rumah Ibu* (Women's House) in Jakarta and Rifka Annisa (Women's Crisis Centre) in Yogyakarta are the two largest women's organizations that address the issue of violence.

These organizations have a wide range of resources for victims of violence. Shelters for abuse survivors, counseling for victims, legal aid, information, mechanisms of prevention<sup>12</sup>, self-defense training and assistance dealing with the police and other public agencies. Both Rifka Annisa and Rumah Ibu run high profile campaigns and are well respected in the community. Both

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<sup>11</sup>On several occasions during my interviews, women commented to me on the superficial nature of the Dharma Wanita. Common issues such as domestic violence and infidelity are never discussed. Women "smile and talk about superficial things, as though nothing bad ever happens" (Sept.17. 97. Yogyakarta)

<sup>12</sup>"Mechanisms of prevention" are methods of deflecting violent behavior of husbands, physically protecting and defending oneself. This is an anomaly because it provides women with strategies to lessen the effects of abuse, thus suggesting that women should remain in violent households. In BC, for example, women's shelters are defined as "Transition Houses" because they are a safe place for women and their children to stay when they are leaving a violent husband/father to begin a new life.

organizations maintain connections with women's shelters from different parts of the world.

There are several other independent women's NGOs but the two mentioned above are the only women's organizations that have shelters for women. A few of the other groups, such as SIKAP (Information Secretariat for Victims of Violence against Women) in Yogyakarta and Mitra Perempuan (Women's Crisis Centre) in Jakarta operate as forums to raise awareness in the community. The groups have support telephone hotlines for victims, publish information for the public which addresses issues of violence, organize public lectures, seminars and discussions at high schools and universities. In addition to the support for local women, SIKAP and Mitra Perempuan maintain active liaisons with other women's shelters and women's rights organizations, such as Kalyanamitra.

### *Migrant Labour NGOs*

Indonesia's expanding workforce, combined with national unemployment and underemployment, has had a direct effect on women workers. As gender discrimination is common in the labour sector, and obtaining employment has become highly competitive, a large number of those unemployed or underemployed are women. In 1991, for example, only 22% of the registered 985,000 job seekers obtained employment (Asian Migrant Centre, 1994: 2). With the goal of generating capital, and alleviating burdens caused by unemployment, the government has become increasingly vocal in encouraging people to pursue employment overseas.

Women, in particular those who are poor, uneducated and low-skilled, are encouraged to work abroad with the intention that money will be sent home for their families. Due to the lack of employment opportunities at home many Indonesians, in particular women, migrate to other nations. Ministry of Manpower records indicate that Indonesian workers began migrating to outside nations in the early 1970s; it wasn't until 1983 that workers were officially sent abroad (Asian Migrant Centre, 1994: 2). Prior to 1983, migrant workers were not required to register with the Ministry of Manpower.

Migrant labour provides the government with an additional source of revenue as well as easing the burden of unemployment. Both Repelita IV and V, the fourth and fifth five year plans (1983-89 and 1989-94), cite migrant workers, particularly female domestic servants, as a means of providing capital for Indonesia's balance-of-payment deficit. In Repelita V, 500,000 women were targeted for migrant labour (Asian Migrant Centre, 1994: 6). The Central Office

of the Ministry of Manpower reports that between 1989 and 1994, 652,272 workers were working in foreign countries; 442,310 were women.

This ratio is a remarkable shift from Repelita II, when only 3,817 of the 17,042 workers were female (Krisnawaty, 1996: 252)<sup>13</sup>. The Asian Migrant Centre estimates that approximately one million Indonesian women are currently working outside of Indonesia, primarily in Malaysia, Singapore, Saudi Arabia and Hong Kong. The majority of the women, both illegally and legally, work as domestic servants in private households (Asian Migrant Centre, 1994: 6).

While Indonesian migrant workers have contributed toward alleviating national unemployment as well as easing the national deficit, the cost has been high for the workers themselves. In all capacities, from recruitment, "training" and placement in a foreign household, migrant labourers bear the brunt of the costs and little of the profit. The Asian Migrant Centre in Hong Kong, which was established as a resource centre for foreign domestic workers, has well-documented evidence of the spectrum of the migrant labour process. While the specifics of each worker vary, the general procedure and experiences are remarkably similar.

The workers are recruited through agencies, paying fees ranging from Rp. 250,000 to Rp. 3.5 million. As few migrant workers have the capital to pay the fee up front, the recruiting fees are deducted from their paychecks following the commencement of work in the foreign nation. The recruiters also collect fees from the placement agencies in the other countries. While the recruiters purport that the fees are to offset the cost of "training the workers", most migrant

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<sup>13</sup> Central Office of the Ministry of Manpower, Repelita V (Fifth five year development plan).

labourers receive little or no training. Those who do receive training, are placed in homes as domestic servants and do not receive wages. The recruitment agencies privately contract out the workers' labour and receive the workers' wages (Asian Migrant Centre, 1994: 16).

Upon arrival, the passports of the migrant women are confiscated, either by the contracting agency or the employer. As a domestic servant, a worker is generally responsible for the maintenance of a household, which includes cleaning, cooking and child care. Although it is illegal, employers often force the domestic servant to work in the family business or a factory, without extra wages. Often, workers are "loaned out" to other households, although this practice is also illegal (Asian Migrant Centre, 1994: 21).

In their overseas workplaces, women domestic servants are subject to abuse, exploitation and in some cases death. The Asian Migrant Centre has documented countless cases of women subjected to physical/sexual/verbal abuse, unpaid labour, forced labour outside of the household, passport confiscation, no rest days or statutory holidays and many other illegal abuses. There are several cases of Indonesian domestic servants being badly beaten, raped or dying under mysterious circumstances. For example, in first week of November 1997, four Indonesian migrant workers, all women, were discovered dead in the homes in which they worked<sup>14</sup> (Jakarta Post, 8 November 1997, Vol. 15, No. 194: pg. 2).

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<sup>14</sup> The women's deaths were under the following circumstances: Rita Kumalasari, hanged herself; Sri Lestari fell off a 13 story roof while hanging laundry; Syukriah was found dead with burn injuries; and, Ninis was found dead in her employer's apartment.

Workers who obtain overseas employment without appropriate documentation from the Indonesian government (illegal workers) are at extreme risk. As there is no record of their employment with the Indonesian Ministry of Manpower or the government of the country in which they are working, illegal workers are often placed in dangerous situations and horrible working conditions. Employers are not bound to a contract or legislation concerning treatment of workers. As a result, employers exploit and abuse migrant workers, particularly domestic servants, with relative freedom.

As many of the workers simply can not return home, it is difficult to estimate the extent of the exploitation and abuse occurring in other nations. The lack of government intervention in the migrant labour situation demonstrates the relative value the government places upon both the migrant workers' wages and their physical and emotional well-being. Both the foreign and the Indonesian governments benefit from the work of illegal workers and are dependent upon it. Approximately 1/3 of Saudi Arabia's population is comprised of foreigners, primarily poor; Saudi Arabia's economy is dependent upon migrant workers to provide cheap, low-skilled labour, such as domestic servants.

The Indonesian government has done very little to protect overseas workers, rather, efforts have been focused upon sending more workers overseas. In 1993, the Ministry of Manpower developed a policy concerning migrant labour which stipulates women should not work in the informal sector (entertainment, prostitution). Protection for the workers is not covered in this document. As the government places little value on women's household labour in Indonesia, it isn't surprising that the issues faced by overseas labourers are not considered to be "real" problems. Further, the migrant labourers are regarded as

somewhat of an embarrassment to the nation, as Indonesia has gained the reputation as being the "exporter of babu (maids)" (Krisnawaty, 1996: 254)

There are several migrant labour groups which have been established to provide advocacy, legal aid, emotional support and other support services to migrant labourers. The migrant labour NGOs share similar ideological principles with other labour rights activist groups, such as YASANTI, and lobby for the interests of this high risk sector of the labour force. Solidaritas Perempuan (SP, Women's Solidarity for Human Rights) in Jakarta, an independent women's organization established in 1990 is the largest and most influential group (Solidaritas Perempuan, 1997: 2). Solidaritas Perempuan has been extremely successful with their projects and is largely responsible for raising public awareness of the issues faced by migrant labourers.

Solidaritas Perempuan's ideological foundation begins with the concept that women are simultaneously victimized by economic policies and patriarchal culture. The group's goals are oriented toward providing migrant labourers with knowledge and skills that will provide the workers with a stronger bargaining position in their interactions with employers, contractors and government agencies (Krisnawaty, 1996: 249-51).

The organization campaigns on behalf of Indonesian women working overseas, primarily in Malaysia, Singapore, Hong Kong and Saudi Arabia, many of whom are exploited/abused by their overseas employers. Other activities of the group include: organization of conferences and seminars, research and publication, policy studies and training/advocacy. Solidaritas Perempuan also operates a shelter, House of Solidarity, for migrant workers who have returned

under difficult circumstances, as well as providing legal aid and counseling for the women. This LSM is extremely active and maintains active networks with other related NGOs all over the world. Solidaritas Perempuan provides Indonesian migrant workers with contact names of other migrant worker/human rights NGOs in foreign countries, in the event that a worker may require support while working overseas.

Other migrant labourer groups, such as the Centre for Indonesian Migrant Workers (CHIME) in Jakarta, share the same ideological principles as Solidaritas Perempuan but are more focused toward advocacy, rather than direct work with the migrant labourers<sup>15</sup>. The objectives of CHIME include strengthening the solidarity between overseas workers, increasing public awareness about issues faced by migrant workers, providing support services to women who experienced difficulties during their overseas work, and conducting research projects on Indonesian labour migration in the context of globalization. CHIME arranges legal assistance, advocates for legal rights for migrant workers and operates a shelter for victimized workers returning from overseas employment.

Sekretariat Bersama Perempuan Yogyakarta (SBPY, The Yogyakarta Joint Secretariat for Gender Issues) is an effective advocate for migrant labourers. The group maintains liaisons with legal institutes such as Yayasan Lembaga Bantuan Hukum (LBH, Legal Aid Foundation) and has campaigned on behalf of migrant labourers on numerous occasions. SBSY is a gender advocacy group that supports a wide spectrum of interests; the groups will be further discussed in the Gender Advocacy section of this chapter.

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<sup>15</sup>While the stated goals of CHIME appear to be similar to SP's in terms of being action oriented, the group is still relatively new. During my interview with CHIME, it was stated that the group is focusing upon advocacy until the organization is more well-established.

### *Workers' Groups*

Labour is a fairly sensitive issue in Indonesia and there are few NGOs actively supporting the interests of those women working in exploitative environments. In Yogyakarta, Yayasan Annisa Swasti (YASANTI) (The Foundation for Independent Women) is the largest and most well known group. Using education projects as a point of entry, YASANTI targets women who are socially and economically disadvantaged, such as factory workers, shop assistants and women working in the informal sector. YASANTI offers a wide range of programs for female labourers, such as: literacy classes, gender consciousness training, occupational health and safety information and the development of small cooperatives. In addition to projects working directly with low wage female labourers, YASANTI carries out a wide range of community awareness activities such as research, publication, seminars, workshops and public forums for discussion.

In Jakarta, Kalyanamitra is the only NGO that works specifically with women factory workers. Kalyanamitra is a dynamic independent women's organization that is extremely active and well known throughout Indonesia. Kalyanamitra addresses a wide range of gender issues including discrimination against women in the workforce, the marginalization of women (particularly poor women), issues associated with reproductive technology, and violence against women throughout all levels of Indonesian society. Kalyanamitra's staff regularly publishes journal and newspaper articles, books and information brochures for the public.

Kalyanamitra is highly visible in the community and maintains strong liaisons with activist NGOs, student organizations, Workers' Theatre groups and government women's organizations. At present, Kalyanamitra works primarily with female factory workers but is also involved with various other groups of marginalized women in Jakarta. The organization takes a very strong position against gender/human rights violations and undertakes research projects that expose gender abuses which are frequently overlooked. For example, Kalyanamitra provides education and alternatives on issues such as birth control that is given to economically disadvantaged women under coercive circumstances.

There are other NGOs that deal with specific sectors of the labour force such as agricultural workers or other labour intensive sectors such as the Yayasan Pemerhati Sosial Indonesia (YPSI, Social Concern Foundation of Indonesia). The goals of YPSI include improving the socio-economic status of disadvantaged families, strengthening community organizations, supporting community management and sustainability of local, grassroots NGOs. YPSI has several programs in the areas of education, health, economic initiatives, women's programs, environmental awareness and resource management. YPSI's largest project targets women home workers (women with low-paying piece labour contracts, where the labour is performed at home). The objectives of the project include the following: aiding women home workers in obtaining a higher level of social protection, increasing income potential and teaching the women new skills. YPSI's successes include the establishment of a cooperative, Women Home Based Workers National Network, that is collectively managed by the women in the Tangerang Community.

### *Gender Advocacy*

Gender Advocacy groups do not work directly with marginalized groups of women, rather the groups carry out projects with the goal of raising public awareness of specific issues, on community, national and international levels. Generally, advocacy groups maintain liaisons with other NGOs and disseminate information through public forums, media, and publishing.

Since advocacy groups are generally established by educated, middle-class individuals and do not work directly with the people, the organizations are sometimes criticized for being academic rather than active. However, advocacy groups are a crucial component of the process of change. The strategies undertaken by the advocacy groups, for example, publishing through academic avenues, lend legitimacy to the causes supported by the organizations. Further, advocacy groups frequently act as the liaison between government agencies and 'field' activists, ensuring that the activities of the active organizations are not misunderstood by the government.

The Sekretariat Bersama Perempuan Yogyakarta (SBPY, The Yogyakarta Joint Secretariat for Gender Issues) is one of the more well-known advocacy groups. SBPY's objectives focus upon the empowerment of women and the promotion of women's rights. SBPY's current activities include advocacy, education and outreach for women, particularly those women from marginalized socio-economic groups. The majority of SBPY's current projects involve the legal and social empowerment of migrant labourers, domestic workers and *Jugun Ianfu* (Comfort Women).

Lembaga Kajian dan Pengembangan Sumberdaya Manusia (LKPSM Institute for Human Resources Studies and Development) in Jakarta is a NGO that operates under the umbrella of the Islamic organization NU (Nahdlatul Ulama) and works toward increasing social justice, improving women's rights and community education. Currently, LKPSM is involved with projects that raise community awareness on issues such as gender equality and democracy. The organization regularly publishes books, journals and newsletters on a wide range of topics including religion, politics, gender issues and human rights.

Kelompok Perempuan Sadar (KPS Women's Awareness Organization) is a Christian women's organization based in Yogyakarta that addresses issues of violence against women, particularly, violence within the church. Although based in the Catholic church, KPS is an inter-denominational organization that welcomes women from any religious background. The group actively participates in gender issue education and publishes information to generate community awareness of issues of violence against women. KPS strongly opposes the dominant patriarchy in Catholicism and supports a more visible role for women in the Catholic church.

Yayasan Kesejahteraan Fatayat Yogyakarta (YKF) is an Islamic women's organization that operates under the umbrella of NU. YKF carries out projects that focus upon improving the health of women and children, education about health issues such as birth control, maternal and family health. The organization also publishes information which addresses issues that affect women's lives such as violence against women, gender discrimination, women's role in Islam and social inequalities.

Lembaga Studi dan Pengembangan Perempuan dan Anak (LSPPA The Institute for the Study and Development of Women and Children) is a dynamic organization operating in Yogyakarta. The group has recently changed its agenda to accommodate the concept of gender awareness. As an independent women's NGO, LSPPA's objectives and activities work toward the development of a democratic society based upon gender equity and social justice. LSPPA focuses upon empowering the lives of women and girl-children by strengthening the position of women's role in the household. The organization addresses issues of exploitation/marginalization of women and gender violence through research, community awareness seminars, publishing books, journal and newspapers articles, and liaisons with other social activist women's groups.

Yayasan Komunikasi Masyarakat (YAKOMA The Social Commentary Foundation) is a medium sized NGO in Jakarta which advocates 'people power', fair media, human rights, gender equality, social justice and humanitarianism. YAKOMA has its foundation in Christianity, but the organization does not use religion to appeal to supporters. YAKOMA is inter-denominational and has liaisons with other Christian activist groups throughout Indonesia. The group takes a great interest in gender issues, particularly labour/inequality issues faced by low-waged female labourers. YAKOMA publishes a monthly newsletter and posts flyers throughout Jakarta.

### *Legal Aid*

The success of independent women's organizations is largely dependent upon legal organizations. Legal Aid organizations function as the inter-mediary between marginalized groups of people and government agencies. Legal Aid groups are dedicated to upholding existing legislation and enforcing Pancasila democracy, the government has little choice but to support them.

Yayasan Lembaga Bantuan Hukum Yogyakarta (LBH Yogyakarta Institute of Legal Aid) is the umbrella organization, functioning as both an NGO and legal institution. LBH provides free legal services to economically disadvantaged individuals who are faced with social discrimination. For example, LBH frequently represents individuals with highly sensitive legal issues, such as victims of rape, single mothers, labourers and students. LBH provides legal services for many women through NGOs such as Rifka Annisa, SBSY and YASANTI (all in Yogyakarta). Several LBH lawyers volunteer at these organizations.

Lembaga Bantuan Hukum Asosiasi Perempuan Indonesia Untuk Keadilan (APIK Legal Aid Institute: Indonesian Women's Association for Justice) is a non-profit association that is connected to the legal foundation LBH. While LBH is a supporter of the interests of women, APIK deals with high profile and sensitive legal matters concerning women. APIK is a group of lawyers, both male and female, who are concerned with the issues of female marginalization, subordination and gender inequality. The group is extremely active and is very well known throughout the Indonesian NGO network. APIK operates a

community service that provides legal aid, assistance and education programs to women or groups of women, particularly those who are marginalized socially or economically. The objective of APIK is to work toward an equitable legal system in terms of power and relations within society.

The organization also provides legal support to women involved in politically explosive cases. For example, APIK is currently providing legal aid to an East Timorese woman who was gang raped and impregnated by Indonesian soldiers. Despite their involvement in controversial cases, APIK is well respected in the Indonesian legal system.

## **Liaisons between Women's NGOs and People's Organizations**

Women's NGOs frequently form liaisons to pursue common goals in an effective manner. Gerakan Anti-Kekerasan Terhadap Perempuan Indonesia (GAKTPI Indonesian Movement for Non-Violence Against Women), for example, represents a liaison of NGOs and women's movement activists who have united as a single organization to fight violence against women in Indonesian society. Based in Yogyakarta, the objective of the GAKTPI movement is to combat the various forms of violence against women which include: physical, psychological, social power and economic violence. GAKTPI proposes to raise social awareness about issues of violence and increase the resources available for women victims of abuse.

Women's activists and women's NGOs have recently formed a new movement concerned with the government's failure to assure supplies of milk and other basic food commodities in a consistent and affordable fashion. In August 1998, women's rights activists and women's NGOs formed another coalition, Suara Ibu Peduli (Voices of Caring Women), that reaches out to the victims of the violence during the riots and examines both the sources of the violence and the government's reluctance to react to the crimes.

## **NGOs and government agencies and other organizations**

As the variety and number of Indonesian NGOs and organizations is so vast, classification of the groups can be quite difficult. Several development

oriented NGOs undertake projects that are beneficial to women and increase solidarity amongst various women's groups and development organizations. The following list of organizations represents a cross section of Indonesian organizations that are sympathetic, or claim to be, to the interests of women.

Yayasan Kesatuan Pelayanan Kerjasama (SATUNAMA/Unity Service Cooperation Foundation-USC), isn't an organization specifically for women, but it operates with egalitarian and progressive fundamentals. SATUNAMA is a grassroots organization that was established by USC Canada. The group is currently in the process of becoming an independent Indonesian NGO but will maintain a partnership with USC Canada. SATUNAMA's objectives include the eradication of poverty, increasing gender equity, strengthening environmental awareness and encouraging community-developed/sustained development. Although not specifically a women's organization, SATUNAMA has several projects specifically for women, such as art cooperatives, gender awareness programs, and land ownership projects.

Some larger NGOs, such as Yayasan Penguatan Partisipasi Inisiatif dan Kemitraan Masyarakat Indonesia (YAPPIKA, Indonesian Foundation to Strengthen People's Participation, Partnerships and Initiatives), do not have specific gender initiatives or projects for women but use an integrated gender approach to carry out their projects. YAPPIKA was developed under the umbrella of the Indonesia-Canada Forum (ICF/YAPPIKA) but has recently become an independent NGO. YAPPIKA represents an alliance of Indonesian NGOs with the common goal of democracy and civil society. YAPPIKA's mission is to empower other NGOs with visions of democracy, provide education, advocacy for human rights and fight discrimination within the

community. The group is highly concerned with gender issues and several women's organizations, such as Kalyanamitra, maintain a membership in YAPPIKA.

Resource Management and Development Consultant (REMDEC SWAPRAKARSA) is an agency that provides consulting services for NGOs throughout Indonesia. The three divisions of REMDEC are: Organization and Development, Program Development and Strategic Development. A primary component of the Strategic Development division is the Gender Development program. REMDEC encourages all NGOs to undertake their projects with a gender perspective and has incorporated gender training into several NGOs. The group conducted a large research project on gender indicators in 1995 and ran a series of gender training workshops between 1995 and 1996.

Yayasan Kelompok Studi Pengembangan Prakarsa Masyarakat (KSPPM) Study Group for the Development of People's Initiatives is an affiliate of YAKOMA that undertakes community projects to serve the interests of the poor. The primary objective of KSPPM is the encouragement and development of human resources within communities. The projects undertaken by this organization include: legal awareness, environmental awareness, economic development, social welfare and special projects for rural women.

Larger NGOs are in a good political position because they have the support of both the foreign governments who provide funding for the projects and the Indonesian government for their development work in the poorer regions. Government projects, such as those funded by CIDA, focus upon areas

such as basic development programs, conservation, housing and basic infrastructure. While most of the projects and programs launched by these agencies are community development initiatives, an integrated gender approach, such as those developed by agencies such as REMDEC, is becoming increasingly utilized.

For example, Unity-Service Cooperation, Unitarian Service Committee of Canada (USC) Indonesian Field Office is an international development agency that is registered as a Canadian charitable organization. The primary objectives of USC Canada is to alleviate poverty and pursue humanitarian development in less developed countries. The organization has established NGOs throughout Indonesia and is involved with development projects that improve the lives of women, for example, land purchase, loan programs, cooperatives and education/literacy projects.

Within Jakarta's expatriate community, women have established a non-profit organization with the objective of raising money to fund projects for the poor. The Canadian Women's Association (CWA) is a women's association based out of Jakarta and is comprised primarily of expatriate wives. The group organizes charitable events throughout the year and channels the profits to social welfare agencies. The CWA takes a particular interest in projects that provide education, aid or employment for women and regularly funds seminars and projects for women's organizations in Jakarta.

OXFAM-Indonesia, based out of Yogyakarta, is similar to YAPPIKA in the sense that OXFAM no longer carries out projects launched specifically for women. Rather a 'gender lens' is applied to all programs to determine the impact

upon and the role of women within a project. The three main components of OXFAM-Indonesia are: development projects in Timor, Moluccas, Flores and Java and the Fair Trade/Bridges project; and the national advocacy program. Women play a large role in most of their projects. The Fair Trade project, for example, contracts networks of women to produce handicrafts for international sale. The proceeds of the work return to the women for initiatives within the community.

Lembaga Penelitian Pendidikan dan Penerangan Ekonomi dan Sosial (LP3ES) Institute for Social and Economic Research, Education and Information is a large, independent, non-profit organization with the objective of promoting economic and human resources development. LP3ES's activities include: research; training and education of farmers, field workers and community leaders; and consulting services for community development projects. The organization has carried out several programs specifically for women, for example, a five year project to benefit women in the agricultural industry was recently completed. Although there are no "women's" projects at present, LP3ES implements a gender perspective in most of their development projects.

United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) is currently developing the Gender Project which is a gender awareness training program to be implemented in various government ministries. The program will teach both men and women about gender issues with the objective of improving the position of women and increasing gender equality in the workplace. The UNDP does not run projects specifically for women in Indonesia but endeavors to undertake a gender perspective in projects carried out in Indonesia.

Asian-American Free Labour Institute (AAFLI) is a labour institute that represents Indonesian workers and addresses the labour related issues experienced by many Indonesian workers. AAFLI is particularly concerned with the rights (lack of ) of low-wage female labourers. The group is active in the NGO network as well as working with other labour organizations. For example, AAFLI recently completed a research project on female factory workers. This project was the joint effort of AAFLI and SPSI (the Indonesian government's worker's union). AAFLI also maintains a strong liaison with SBSI, the worker's union run by Mochtar Papahan that is unable to obtain trade union status in Indonesia.

### *Government People's Organizations*

Federasi Serikat Pekerja Seluruh Indonesia (SPSI) Federation of All Indonesia Trade Unions is the national trade union for Indonesian workers. The organization's mandate is based upon ensuring that existing legislation and Pancasila democracy is enforced in the Indonesian labour force. The Women, Youth and Children's Division of SPSI was established several years ago but in 1995 became an institution within SPSI. The division states that SPSI takes special interest in the welfare of the union's women workers. There is a representative from the Women and Children's Division in each of SPSI's thirteen sectors.

The Indonesian Planned Parent Association (IPPA) has twenty-two branches located throughout Indonesia. Millions of Indonesian women have participated in this program. IPPA's objectives are to increase community knowledge concerning reproductive health, prevention of pregnancies, abortions

and venereal disease, (including HIV/AIDS), increase participation in the national Family Planning program, and to increase and maintain gender equity in issues concerning reproductive health. IPPA conducts many research, education and community health projects and maintains a positive relationship with government agencies.

## Conclusion

Current independent women's NGOs have been established with objectives and have been able to survive despite excessive government regulations. Using a non-confrontational approach, women's NGOs have achieved moderate success in several areas. When Suharto was in power, the political climate was too repressive to allow radical social change to occur. However, women's organizations were generally safe from the threat of closure, providing the groups didn't pursue 'political' agendas, adhered to the laws and didn't engage in 'radical' activities.

As many of the groups have strong ideological platforms and clear goals for the future, women's organizations are well-placed to be the catalyst for future change in the women's movement, exercising social influence as broad as Gerwani's the 1950s to 1965. With Habibie currently in power and the forthcoming elections, it is likely that social change will occur but is difficult to predict the extent. While the Indonesian women's movement may be viewed as having minimal success in comparison with other nations, the ideological foundation and practical objectives of the organizations are well-suited for future progress.

## **CHAPTER FIVE**

### **Evaluation Women's Organizations in the 1990's: Survival Tactics, Achievements and Limitations**

Working with independent women's groups in Indonesia enabled me to gain first hand observatory experience of the Indonesian women's movement and provided me with the material to engage in research that became the basis for my M.A. thesis. Conducting interviews, reviewing the organization's literature and gaining knowledge of the groups' activities and objectives led me to challenge assumptions that I had made concerning the evaluation of the relative success of the work of women's NGOs. For example, I had expected that my research would lead me to a finite set of conclusions such as "based upon the advocacy work of YASANTI with female factory workers, x number of factories implemented employee regulations concerning sexual harassment in the workplace". My search for practical outcomes was based upon the premise that social change can only be measured by that which is tangible.

With respect to domestic violence, for example, it is impossible to read the minds of the people or have a knowledge of what goes on in people's homes. Rather, change is evaluated by measurable factors such as the initiation and implementation of policy, shifting demand for intervention based infrastructure<sup>16</sup> and a decrease in injury and death resulting from domestic violence. My initial focus upon documenting measurable successes may have prevented me from identifying the significance of those initiatives, such as advocacy oriented work which are extremely difficult to evaluate.

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<sup>16</sup> With an increase in public awareness of the issues concerning domestic violence, demand for intervention infrastructure such as women's shelters, police and legal services and general information increases. As the problem (hopefully) improves, the demand decreases.

Being both an outsider and a guest posed a wide-range of limitations for the research. Within this context, the women being interviewed may have expressed ideas and opinions that they thought I would like to hear. I had a close rapport and a basis of trust with the women's NGOs with whom I interviewed on several occasions, as a result, I was able to learn a great deal about their work. With the groups with whom only one or two interviews were conducted, however, the information covered in the interview was generally limited to the basic organizational structure, recent activities and fundamental objectives of the organization. In these situations, for example, responses to questions concerning challenges faced by the organization invariably were rarely openly critical of the role of the government. While these interviews may appear to be superficial, it remains necessary for the objectives, existence and work of these groups to be documented.

At times, the language barrier presented a bit of a challenge. While my Bahasa Indonesia is satisfactory, those interviews conducted in Indonesian were limited to the sharing of basic information rather than discussion of complex ideologies. The limited time to conduct my research resulted in many surface observations. While these observations are important and valid it must be recognized that the thesis only provides an overview and analysis of the work and objectives of the organizations based upon the information published by the groups and the interviews conducted. The groups may have several projects and initiatives that they chose not to discuss with me, therefore, the thesis may not provide complete representation of the work carried out by women's NGOs.

The thesis expresses what I concluded as the main trends amongst independent women's organizations. These trends were identified through my interviews and review of the literature produced by the agencies. The exclusion of rural based women's NGOs must be acknowledged. As the fieldwork component of the study was only fourteen weeks in length, time and travel constraints limited the research to urban based organizations. These limitations reflect the need for further studies in this area, particularly the work of NGOs in rural areas.

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### *Overview*

Chapter five will analyze how the activity of independent women's organizations has affected Indonesia's social and political structures and will identify how independent women's NGOs function in a climate that is resistant to social change. The New Order government has taken an active role in the women's movement and has established a wide-range of infrastructure that institutionalizes a specific role for women. While it is difficult to measure the extent of government program's effect upon individual notions of gender identity, it is clear that State Ibuism impacts several areas of women's lives, such as the workplace, governance over family issues and 'spare' time.

Women's NGOs try to counteract this influence by challenging the state constructed gender identity and offering alternatives to State Ibuism. Using advocacy work and practical projects that improve the lives of women, the organizations work toward altering deeply rooted gender constructs. As the principles of gender equality conflict with State Ibuism, women's organizations

must be extremely cautious with both their approach and projects. Various mechanisms are adopted by independent women's groups so that goals of social change can be accomplished without jeopardizing the existence of the group or their relationships with government personnel which are generally positive. For example, most organizations' activities and objectives are expressed in a manner that is consistent with state ideology and initiatives.

Chapter five will identify the survival tactics and achievement strategies adopted by independent women's organizations, and will provide an analysis of how these mechanisms enable the groups to operate within the context of a patriarchal society. The rationale that the groups use to determine objectives and activities as well as the mechanisms the NGOs adopt to deal with government suspicion will be examined. Examples of accomplishments and setbacks will be provided in order to highlight the relationship between government initiatives and NGO activity in the Indonesian women's movement.

Independent women's organizations face many challenges for survival in Indonesia. It is often quite difficult for women's NGOs to facilitate social change due to a wide range of barriers. The groups support women who are dealing with a variety of issues, such as domestic violence, abusive employment environments, gender discrimination and poverty. In order to achieve change in these areas, socially ingrained gender constructs must be addressed. This presents quite a challenge because gender discrimination is legitimized through state initiatives and legislation. Further, the women's NGOs are trying to work in a climate that is repressive to any kind of social or political movement. These two major obstacles, the history of legalized patriarchy and the fear of

independent movements, have left women's organizations in 1990s with practical and ideological challenges.

Despite the challenges, independent women's organizations in the 1990's, have achieved progress in several areas. While many of the achievements of women's NGOs may be considered marginal, the groups are confronted with extraordinary resistance from government. The role of the government in the women's movement has remained a fundamental barrier for independent women's NGOs. The state's thirty year campaign to legitimize a homogenous gender identity for Indonesian women has had serious implications for both the initiatives and the ideological foundation of women's NGOs. Government established infrastructure such as the PKK, Dharma Wanita and gender specific legislation, coupled with a political climate that is resistant to social change has largely affected the way in which women's NGOs can effectively operate.

As the activities, objectives and ideological foundation of grassroots women's groups were initiated independently of the state, government apprehension and opposition are frequently directed at the groups. Changes initiated by agencies outside of the government are frequently viewed with suspicion, particularly if the changes may pose a threat to the state's legitimacy. Vocal women's groups, such as Kalyanamitra, that address sensitive issues such as factory labour or women's reproductive rights are frequently labeled as 'western-style feminists' or in worse cases, as radical, left-wing or subversive. The legislation concerning NGO activity limits the activities of such groups so that women's organizations constantly face the fear of closure, the arrest of members, difficulties renewing permits and other problems of both legal and administrative natures if they do not conform to government standards.

For decades, the government has maintained its involvement in the women's movement in order to influence the role and activities of women as well as preventing the development of mass based social movements. In rural areas, for example, any kind of political organization is banned and women are encouraged to participate in the PKK units within their community. Wives of community civil servants and military maintain active involvement with the Dharma Wanita or Dharma Pertiwi. With the absence of independent women's groups offering alternative gender constructs, the women's movement in rural areas is limited to projects undertaken by the Applied Family Welfare Program, as discussed in Chapter three (Sullivan, 1991: 63).

Although liaisons with legal institutes and other NGOs are maintained, independent women's groups are essentially operating alone in a society that is inherently discriminatory toward women. While international support is received from large agencies such as the Ford Foundation and CIDA, it is still difficult for women's groups to operate under the narrow parameters of state control and government apprehension. As positive and non-threatening relationships must be maintained with the government, most independent women's organizations have developed tactics to ensure both survival and success within the context of a state controlled women's movement. Therefore, independent women's organizations in the 1990s are both careful and creative in their approach and activities.

### *Survival Strategies used by Women's NGOs*

In order to operate effectively and deal with government limits upon NGO activity, independent women's organizations have adopted a number of mechanisms that enable them to work toward their objectives of improving women's lives and creating a more egalitarian society without opposition from the government. These strategies are clever, wide-ranging and often covert, and are evident in the activities pursued, the approach used and the action taken by the group.

There are two components in the fundamental strategy which women's organizations must use: first, an approach that does not openly criticize the government, and second, engaging in projects and activities that can not be defined by the government as 'radical'. Several groups work to achieve moderate change in the areas of gender advocacy. To pursue this goal, the organization may cite specific components of the 1945 constitution and avoid legislation such as the 'separate but equal' laws concerning gender relations. For example, LKPSM-NU (*Lembaga Kajian dan Pengembangan Sumberdaya Manusia*, Institute for Human Resources Studies and Development) and YKF (*Yayasan Kesejahteraan Fatayat*, Institute for Health), state that their goals are based upon the Pancasila and 1945 Constitution (LSPSM-YKF Interfidei, 1997: 5 & 12).

Many independent women's groups undertake projects that address social needs or concerns that can not be blamed on the government or reflect government shortcomings. The government's neglect of key issues for women workers is rarely publicly addressed by women's organizations. It is more likely

that a problem will be associated with an agency or individual outside of the government, for example, a factory owner.

As noted above, the primary action that the groups must not take is being critical of the government, either publicly or through the pursuit of activities that demonstrate the flaws, corruption and mismanagement of the government. Tactics such as public demonstration and public debasement of the government or government related industry are generally not undertaken by women's NGOs. The NGOs generally do not attempt to challenge or dismantle government infrastructure, rather, parallel initiatives will be offered by the NGOs to provide women with choices and alternatives.

For example, the PKK has established units in the majority of Indonesian communities and undertakes projects with a State Islam oriented framework. REMDEC, a project consultant for NGOs, is currently working with Mitra Tani, a group of women farmers. The gender, environmental and social implications of the project were incorporated into the planning to ensure that these issues were being addressed. REMDEC, however, didn't criticize the impact that the PKK's projects have on women but provided an alternative approach without offending government agencies. The groups can accomplish more long-term progress in the women's movement by using a moderate, non-confrontational approach that keeps them in favor with the government and out of prison.

Another example of these kinds of strategies designed to avoid confrontation with the government can be seen in the work of migrant labour organizations such as Solidaritas Perempuan. This group provides aid and assistance to Indonesian domestic servants who are faced with many difficulties

in countries such as Saudi Arabia, Hong Kong and Malaysia. Advocacy groups such as SBPY lobby for compensation for the Jugun Ianfu (entertainment women), the women forced into sexually servicing Japanese soldiers during the World War Two occupation of Indonesia. In addition to highlighting the brutality and violence of other governments, these projects are outside of the realm of government interest in the sense that they do not interfere with government initiatives or challenge the concept of State Ibuism.

The approach to an issue is crucial to the success and survival of women's NGOs. Groups dealing with societal problems such as violence against women concentrate solely on the issue of violence rather than the lack of government infrastructure available to victims. The objectives of Rifka Annisa, for example, are to liberate women from all forms of violence, provide assistance and education for survivors of violence, increase the independence and self-esteem of women and increase public awareness of violence related issues. The group does not publicly criticize the inadequacies in public sector attitudes toward domestic violence or the way that victims are treated by the police. Nor do they mention the way in which the laws work for the perpetrator, not the victim. Rather, the organization provides immediate assistance for victims of violence and raises public awareness about the presence of domestic violence at all levels of society.

During an interview, Rifka Annisa's members pointed out the organization's objectives and activities are structured to accommodate Islamic values. The organization's mandate provides immediate assistance and subsequent support to victims of abuse, but does not attempt to change a victim's value system. While guidance concerning violence against women and gender stereotypes is offered, divorcing a violent husband is not encouraged (Rifka

Annisa interview, September 24, 1997). Therefore, the objectives and activities of Rifka Annisa accommodate Islamic values and the principles of the organization stay within the boundaries of Pancasila ideology and other state directives concerning women. The organization appears progressive in the sense that it addresses the long ignored issue of domestic violence, but the approach taken is far from radical.

A Rifka Annisa employee described the organization to me as being "evolutionary not revolutionary". This is a key point as it states that the group is struggling to improve the lives of women and change societal values concerning women, yet it isn't going to engage in 'radical' activities or undertake strong political action to achieve their goals. This is a fundamental mechanism undertaken by many grassroots women's groups for survival. Gerwani, for example was described as revolutionary; many contemporary women's groups must remove themselves from 'radical' activity and activities in opposition to the government in order to avoid being characterized as revolutionary or communist.

Rifka Annisa and other similar NGOs that address violence against women have successfully provided assistance to victims and are beginning to change public perception of violence against women. They are vocalizing the issue and lobbying to get domestic violence treated as a crime and as unacceptable, yet their principles remain in accordance with government and Islamic principles. For example, the organization places an enormous emphasis on family, with the male and female having equal status but specific roles (Sullivan, 1991: 74). Following a woman's recovery from domestic violence, she

is encouraged to return home to maintain harmony in the family (Interview, Rifka Annisa, September 23, 1997).

Counseling is provided for both men and women: the women receive counseling to address the emotional repercussions and social implications of violence. Counseling is strongly encouraged for the men but rarely taken. Violent men do not generally have to take responsibility for their violent behavior. If a woman is seriously injured<sup>17</sup> she may obtain a divorce, however, she runs the risk of losing her children. Further, as female wages are generally much lower than male wages it is very difficult for women to support themselves and their children on such a low wage. Therefore women experiencing domestic violence have very few options and generally return home due to lack of alternatives.

Since this is so, Rifka Annisa teaches women strategies for avoiding conflict and deflecting violence. This indirectly legitimizes violence as it gives the message that it is a woman's responsibility to maintain harmony in the household and avoid issues that may upset the husband. In addition to indirectly legitimizing violence in the household, the onus is on the wife to prevent her husband from becoming violent; this practice reinforces the concept of Ibuism, since it implies that a woman must put the needs of her husband before herself, such as adjusting her own behavior and actions to accommodate her husband's mood swings.

While the violence-related women's groups provide aid, education and assistance to women, both the root of the problem and men's role in the cure are

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<sup>17</sup>Seriously injured" refers to broken bones or other injuries requiring immediate medical care.

not addressed in the organization's mandate, mission statement, goals or stated objectives. This doesn't mean that the NGOs are not aware of this problem. The groups know the limits to which they may go while still staying within the parameters of government ideology and an Islamic framework. Further, as there is a lack of infrastructure in place for dealing with domestic violence, these NGOs are meeting immediate need and doing what they can to help the problem.

There simply aren't enough resources for NGOs to undertake all of the work necessarily to adequately address the issue of violence, nor is domestic violence taken very seriously by many people. By comparison, in the fiscal year 1995-6, the British Columbian government invested \$53.8 million CND in prevention and support services for victims of violence against women (Ministry of Women's Equality, 1996: 3). Throughout my research, I have not come across any evidence of the Indonesian government allocating any resources toward fighting, preventing or providing support services for violence against women.

In Indonesia, cultural, social and in many cases legal repercussions lead many women, in particular, married women, to remain silent about domestic violence. Due to the lack of government resources allocated to violence, an imbalance of power between men and women combined with the social pressure against disclosing 'family matters', the issue of violence against women is largely ignored in Indonesia society (Rifka Annisa publication, 1997:20).

At this stage, the women's groups are being as effective as possible by dealing with immediate needs and emergency concerns, increasing public awareness about long-silenced issues and maintaining a clear focus concerning

their practical and ideological limitations. Joint initiatives, resource sharing and collaboration between independent women's groups prevent redundancies and have resulted in solidarity amongst the groups. While the groups are extremely productive and efficient with their resources, violence against women is too wide-spread and socially ingrained to be ignored by the state. Government support is imperative to effectively address this issue.

Kelompok Perempuan Sadar (KPS) is extremely vocal in its criticism about violence against women in the Catholic church. KPS is a 'spiritual life movement' that provides a voice for women who have been abused in the church, engages in feminist theological studies and bridges together people from all religions. A book published by the organization's leader, Augustine Nunuk Prasetyo Murniati, *Kekerasan Terhadap Perempuan dalam Gereja (Violence Against Women in the Church)*, exposes incidents of harassment, assault and discrimination toward women within the Catholic Church in Indonesia. As the majority of government leaders are Muslim, it doesn't reflect badly upon the state and the group operates with no resistance from the government. However, according to members of KPS, the older, more traditional members of the church object to the work undertaken by KPS and dismiss notions of women achieving higher positions within the church.

In a country such as Indonesia, trade unions are not allowed to freely operate, people can not collectively bargain for their rights and existing labour laws generally neglect issues specific to women. To resist this, workers' NGOs and the workers themselves utilize strategies that are both creative and subtle. J.C. Scott has documented strategies of 'everyday resistance' used by people with very little power, for example, foot-dragging, smuggling, false compliance and

feigned ignorance. These strategies of class resistance may have an enormous effect when considered collectively, yet are only marginally detectable (J.C. Scott, 1989:5). In Indonesian factories, the factory labourers use a mixture of collective, planned and spontaneous efforts to improve workplace conditions. For example, in the 1970s to 1980s, incidents of "mass hysteria" amongst female factory labourers would occur as a method of protesting poor workplace conditions without making direct accusations against the government or the factory owner (Smith, I. and M. Grijns, 1997: 15).

Advocating a more direct approach to worker exploitation, women's organizations such as YASANTI and Kalyanamitra advocate for solidarity amongst the workers and encourage workers to understand and demand their rights. Practical directives, such as educating the workers about birth control and avoiding sexual relations with the male supervisors are also offered. Kalyanamitra encourages women to stand up for their rights. For example, in factories throughout Eastern Java, women are often denied *cuti haid*<sup>18</sup> unless they provide proof of menstruation to their often male supervisors (Smith, I. and M. Grijns, 1997: 15). Kalyanamitra encourages the factory workers, who are often young and shy, to do so in order to shame the supervisors and receive their entitled leave (Kalyanamitra interview, 1 December 1997).

Some groups have the freedom to be more vocal with their advocacy work. For example, the approach taken by the migrant labour groups is a lot more vocal about the exploitation and abuse of migrant workers because the main problems are occurring outside of the country. The advocacy work

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<sup>18</sup>Women's legal right to a two day menstrual leave from work

undertaken by TKW organizations such as Solidaritas Perempuan demonstrates considerable progress in publicizing the issue. In November and December 1997, The Jakarta Post published a series of articles addressing the plight of the migrant workers. Articles pointed out the role of the middle managers in Indonesia, who contribute to the exploitation of migrant workers, as well as the fact that the Ministry of Manpower is well-informed about the problems associated with migrant work but has taken no action to better the situation (The Jakarta Post, 15 Nov./97).

Other groups that work with significantly more freedom are the legal institutes that support the interests of the poor, in particular women. These organizations do not openly criticize the government or the lack of support for victims. The groups use existing legislation to provide legal aid and assistance to pursue social justice. LBH always has Pancasila principles and government legislation to support its cases. For example, LBH's mission statement ("LBH enforces truth, justice and law based upon Pancasila and the 1945 constitution" ) demonstrates that they are very much committed to staying within the realms delineated by the government.

Support of Pancasila democracy and the state allows these legal foundations to pursue cases that are extremely politically sensitive and often expose the shortcomings of the government, in particular the military. For example, the group is currently working with East Timorese women who have been raped by Indonesia soldiers.

APIK -LBH (Legal Aid Institute Indonesian's Women's Association for Justice) is set up using LBH's framework. The group emerged because of the

need to direct attention to the gendered inequalities within political, social and legal structures and the necessity of drawing attention to human rights abuses. As the group takes a feminist perspective towards the legal system, APIK-LBH is quite critical of the many laws which discriminate against women. While the legal institutions may represent the interests of the poor, justice isn't always served, particularly where women are concerned. For example, women pay a higher ratio of income tax than men. All women workers are taxed under a single tax bracket, regardless of the household's financial status, such as an unemployed husband<sup>19</sup>. Married men or men with children receive tax breaks<sup>20</sup> regardless of the financial status of their wives.

APIK-LBH uses existing legislation to further its pursuit of gender equality. For example, in 1997, APIK-LBH represented women who had given birth to illegitimate children and successfully forced the biological father to pay child support. However, while the interests of women may be represented by legislation, laws can always be manipulated to work against the victims. For example, there is legislation in place that allows for the men to retaliate and counter-sue for slander. In 1997 in Padang, a woman filed a case for her daughter who had given birth to an illegitimate child who was fathered by a prominent man in the community. After the case was completed, the woman was counter-sued for slander and received a four month prison sentence for slander. Cases such as this demonstrate why most women are reluctant to pursue justice in incidents of harassment, discrimination and sexual abuse cases.

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<sup>19</sup>Women receive tax breaks only if the husband is deceased.

<sup>20</sup>In the 1970's, the Ministry of Finance determined that married women were to use their husband's tax number and that only males were entitled to receive family benefits, housing support etc. The law no longer corresponds to reality as in 1990's, approximately 3/7 households do not have a husband.

Issues that are considered irrelevant from a western feminist perspective, such as a victim's sexual history, personal appearance and socio-economic background, are considered in court cases concerning sexual violence. As this information is easily manipulated, women, particularly poor women, are often unfairly represented in the legal system. However, Nursyahbani Katjasungkana, director of APIK-LBH reported to me that this is still considered a success since the cases are even being heard; it is thus viewed as a step in the right direction. Ten years ago, for example, cases involving issues such as the above would not have been heard in court.

There are a number of other practical strategies that women's' groups undertake to enable their survival within a patriarchal society. Several women's organizations, as well as a few grassroots human rights, environmental and development NGOs told me that it is common for the groups to produce several business plans and year-end reports. For example:

- a report is produced for the overseas funding agency that describes the activities and objectives of the NGO according to the interests of the funder,
- material for the government is written using government rhetoric that matches the NGO's activity to state objectives and,
- a 'real' report is written for the NGO's own use, which outlines what 'they really did'.

The objectives and activities of the group are often worded in such a way that the goals of the government are clearly reflected. In publications intended for public uses, NGOs are extremely cautious with the content.

Government rhetoric is generally incorporated into the organization's mission statement, objectives and projects. YAPPIKA, an umbrella organization for thirteen large NGOs, describes itself as "an Indonesian alliance for a civil society that has a common vision: the creation of a free, just and equal civil society" and state one of its objectives as "community based socio-economic development" (YAPPIKA, 1997).

Issues may be 'sugar-coated' and stronger terminology such as feminist, corruption and exploitation is avoided, especially with more sensitive issues such as labour. YASANTI, for example, works closely with low-wage women in the workforce; their initiatives are largely focused upon factory labour. Rather than associating the marginalization of factory workers with the lack of non-government workers' unions, corrupt factory owners and a manufacturing sector dependent upon the exploitation of female workers, YASANTI approaches the issue with neutral language and avoids denouncing any specific cause that can be traced to the government. Their information brochures states the primary objective as being "to carry out empowering activities for women". Empowering, in this case, means improving women's quality of life, both economically and socially (YASANTI, 1995).

Women's NGOs groups are extremely inclusive with their activities, particularly with public events. The groups are adept at maintaining positive relations with local military and police as well as with nationalist women's organizations, such as PKK, KOWANI and Dharma Wanita. Public servants are usually included at the women's NGOs major meetings, conferences and public events because it helps maintain positive public relations and keeps the government well-informed about the group's activities. Further, by actively

maintaining a role in the activities of the women's NGOs, albeit a perfunctory one, government representation lends legitimacy to the projects of the groups.

Rifka Annisa, for example, sponsored a three day gender awareness seminar at the University of Gadjah Madah in Yogyakarta. Representatives from the local PKK, Dharma Wanita and Dharma Pertiwi participated in the event. It is interesting that the presence of the government women's organizations did not prevent the discussion of the social implications of government initiatives for women. Issues such as stereotypes and problems caused by organizations such as the Dharma Wanita and PKK, products of a patriarchal culture and the social construction of gender were among the wide variety of topics discussed concerning gender<sup>21</sup>.

Kalyanamitra remains an anomaly amongst women's organizations because it addresses women's issues with an approach that is both direct and feminist. The group was established in 1984 with a concern toward women's issues. In 1990, Kalyanamitra's approach shifted from mainstream to a more feminist/radical approach. This shift, however, has been met with criticism. Assumptions about the word 'feminist' have led to the group being labeled as man-haters, lesbians, anti-family and "not substantial". Their goal over the past decade has been to raise awareness about gender issues in Indonesian society as well as in other countries, and to encompass women and men from all social levels to form a national women's movement. The group is quite different from mainstream organizations in terms of their activities, approach and position on

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<sup>21</sup>Discussion concerning these issues was quite varied. Many of the women didn't hesitate to discuss how the Dharma Wanita provides a negative gender image and works against women's equality. A high-ranking Dharma Wanita representative commented that 'women should take personal responsibility for their problems and not expect others to fix them'.

social issues. Kalyanamitra addresses highly sensitive issues that are often critical of the government.

The group is often described as "radical" because their analysis of gender is undertaken with a feminist perspective. Within a theoretical framework, Kalyanamitra's ideological starting point could be defined as radical feminist. Within this model, the state is not viewed as being the central agent for the oppression of women, rather the state is one component of a patriarchal society. According to V. Bryson, "legislation on its own can do little to improve the real situation of women, although it may disguise or legitimize their oppression by combining it with a formal equality" (Bryson, 1992: 1995).

While more mainstream women's organizations may work with a marginalized group of women, Kalyanamitra publicly addresses the issues upon which the marginalization of women is based. Kalyanamitra has a strong focus on the issues of poor women who are often invisible but whose issues affect everyone. The group publicizes issues faced by women such as gender discrimination, income disparities between men and women, rape and sexual harassment.

The sexual objectification of women in Indonesian society is an issue that Kalyanamitra addresses. The mainstream opinion of this, however, is that this is an issue whose realm of concern is limited to women activists and NGOs and is outside of men's or the governments interest and responsibility. Kalyanamitra has pioneered several gender based initiatives for women, for example, sexual harassment training and gender violence education which includes providing aid to women victims of reproductive programs.

Kalyanamitra's pioneering work in these areas, especially gender advocacy, has set a precedent for other women's groups, including government women's organizations. For example, in 1997, KOWANI representatives approached Kalyanamitra to produce a video for the government that provided an overview of gender related issues. While Kalyanamitra declined due to differences in the perspective to be undertaken, the fact that collaboration between the two ideologically opposed groups was put forward suggests that the work of gender advocacy workers is beginning to have an effect upon the government (Kalyanamitra interview, 1 December 1997).

### *Evaluation of NGO Initiatives*

The women's movement continues to be mainly limited to women's organizations and women activists. Despite women's organizations trying to integrate women's issues into areas affecting both men and women, such as legislation, the workplace and private households, women's issues continue to be compartmentalized and are dealt with independently or ignored. While a gender lens is being increasingly utilized by NGOs who receive funding from international donors, little research is available that evaluates the effectiveness and the impact of gender planning.

One of the problems associated with gender advocacy work is that it isn't taken seriously by men who consider the work to be a women's not men's issue. This can also be seen in the gender composition of the gender education initiatives. For example, the majority of students in the gender degree programs

are women. However, that is the case with most women's studies programs all over the world. Yet with the increasing focus on women educating their children about the construction of gender, it is hoped that this generation of young boys and girls will grow up recognizing and challenging gender stereotypes. While it is not likely that the current generation of men will change, there is hope that the future generations will be more aware.

Measuring social change and public perception concerning gender and patriarchy is extremely difficult. However, the effectiveness of women's NGO strategies may be evaluated by examining practical achievements that have occurred through the action and initiatives undertaken by the groups. While it may appear that women's NGOs have had very little effect upon altering the status quo, in fact, women's NGOs have made a significant impact in several areas.

The areas in which change is most evident are the establishment of infrastructure to support victims of domestic violence, gender awareness amongst women and to some degree in various government ministries, and an increase in public awareness regarding the conditions for overseas workers. For example, women's NGOs have been responsible for bringing home thousands of TKW women, establishing shelters, resources and information for women in other nations, developing liaisons with other NGOs, and alliances with legal organizations such as LBH.

Several women's groups in Yogyakarta and Jakarta have launched public awareness campaigns that address the issue of violence against women. While compared to the resources available for women in western nations Indonesia's

achievements may appear to be small. Yet when the starting point is examined, it is clearly evident that women's organizations such Rifka Annisa, Ibu Rumah and Mitra Perempuan have been highly successful with the efficiency of the programs and the speed of their development. Women's shelters, crisis lines and resources centres for victims have been established and a wide range of information has been made available to the public. Although the success the campaigns have had on the general public's feelings toward the issue of violence against women is difficult to evaluate, it is clear that resources such as women's shelters have significantly impacted the lives of hundreds of women. Women's groups addressing violence may only be affecting a narrow margin of the issue, however, as pioneers of the violence against women movement, they are setting a precedent for future work in this area.

With a population of approximately 200 million and an epidemic of violence against women, there is a severe lack of resources for victims. In Jakarta, there is only one women's shelter, yet it is estimated that there are thousands of victims. As discussed in the previous chapters, several women's groups and activists have formed a movement to demonstrate their support for addressing this important issue. Despite the support of the NGO community and an increase in public awareness, the issue of domestic violence remains prevalent and continues to be dismissed as a 'women's issue' by state representatives. While the attitudes of women may change concerning acceptable behavior in the household, domestic violence will continue until deep-rooted social constructs are addressed and effective legislation is implemented and enforced.

On the other hand, the issue of gender has become widely publicized in the past five years. Several universities now offer degrees in gender studies, development projects usually include a component that evaluates the impact a project will have upon women in the community and women's organizations with gender advocacy projects have developed. Reasons for the extent of gender oriented programs include: they are 'safe' and not hyper-sensitive, do not openly criticize government, and are fully supported by international donors such as CIDA, World Bank and the Ford Foundation.

With development funding from agencies such as CIDA, development projects, aside from major industrial projects, generally must have a 'gender lens', which is an analysis that evaluates the role in, potential of and impact on women associated, directly or indirectly, with the project. Whether or not this is window dressing isn't the issue. Women's groups throughout Indonesia have taken advantage of this opportunity to expand awareness of the issue and struggle to improve conditions for women.

Development/project management agencies such as REMDEC, based in Jakarta, demonstrate that funding and interest is being generated by gender issues. REMDEC's mandate is to provide NGOs with organizational skills and project development and implementation strategies. A primary component of REMDEC's project management agenda is to examine all potential programs and projects with a gender lens prior to and during all stages of activity. The group supports the notion that all NGOs, whether an environmental group or a farming coalition should be concerned with the interests of women. With international donors such as CIDA and the world bank stipulating that the interests of women be considered in the majority of the projects they fund, a demand has emerged

for services from groups such as the women-run REMDEC. While gender sensitive agencies such as REMDEC are not involved with the majority of projects, that gender issues are being considered outside of initiatives specifically for women, is a clear indication of change.

## CHAPTER SIX

### **Conclusion**

The thesis organized independent women's organizations according to the function that they serve because the groups that I worked with generally defined themselves in terms of their primary function. The organizational framework of the thesis was borrowed from P. Eldridge's *Non-Government Organizations and Democratic Participation in Indonesia* (1995) which similarly categorizes Indonesian NGOs in terms of the work carried out by the groups. I applied his function based model to my research so that the activities, objectives and strategies of women's NGOs could be evaluated in a consistent manner. Using this approach, the achievements of the groups could be analyzed in terms of specific goals in pre-determined areas.

While independent women's NGOs share the common goal of improving women's position in society, the groups effectively achieve this by focusing upon a specific set of objectives. For example, groups that work toward ending domestic violence also perform the service of gender advocacy. While the objective of their work is to have the dual outcome of providing aid to victims of violence and improving the rights of women in the household, it is through the group's work with domestic violence that the existence and legitimacy of the group may be justifiable to the government.

A function oriented organizational approach is limited in the sense that an organization's primary goal isn't always category specific. This limitation is quite evident in the categorization of Kalyanamitra as a worker's group. Kalyanamitra's activities are wide-ranging, particularly in the area of gender advocacy. I chose to define Kalyanamitra as a worker's organization because

they are one of the few groups that serve the interests of factory workers. A great deal of their advocacy work concerning reproductive technologies focuses upon the effects that family planning initiatives have upon poor women, particularly women workers. The group's efforts to fight violence against women include addressing sexual violence against female factory workers.

While this method of categorizing women's NGOs according to the functions served may be limited in some areas, it appears to be the most logical. All of the independent women's groups covered in the thesis support the notion of improving the position of Indonesian women. Organization by the group's primary objectives, as stated by the organization, lends legitimacy to the groups in a wide variety of spheres, such as local government, funding agencies and the groups which are supported by the NGOs work. Also, by having a primary function, work isn't overlapped between the groups, allowing effective collaboration amongst the groups and the sharing of resources.

I have organized the thesis according to the manner in which the groups have defined themselves. Independent women's organizations work toward different goals, such as providing aid to migrant workers, representing women's interests in legal matters and organizing women homeworkers yet the groups share the common goal of combatting discrimination based upon gender and poverty. This system of classification has allowed the specific successes of the women's groups to be highlighted, measured and analyzed within the context of the Indonesian women's movement.

The work of independent women's organizations has shaped the direction of the women's movement in the twentieth century. Kartini's pioneering work,

followed by the efforts of nationalist women's organizations, established a precedent for further development within the women's movement. In the 1950s and early 1960s, Gerwani's feminist objectives attracted close to one million members, securing mass support in urban and rural areas. Gerwani's political and social activism reached out to women throughout Indonesia, as the group fought for the rights of women and encouraged women to challenge gender inequalities. Following the 1965 coup and the destruction of Gerwani, both physically and historically, the New Order government introduced programs and utilized a wide-range of strategies in an attempt to control the women's movement. Parallel to state efforts to define women's identity and control women's lives, independent women's organizations emerged to challenge state initiatives, expose the implications and outcomes of gender inequality and provide a voice for the many Indonesian women who do not accept state initiatives that define gender .

Evaluation of the success of women's NGOs must begin with an examination of the political framework in which the groups operate. The starting point for the women's movement after 1965 was a climate in which all political activity was essentially banned and the women's movement was limited to government women's organizations. Thus, women's organizations are faced with wide-ranging limitations, the majority of which are based upon the government's attempts to control women's identities, lives and working environment. Although the government describes the women's movement as 'non-political', the state integrates both the public and private components of women's lives in its ideology and programs, attempting to influence women's role in the household, workplace and community. Legislation legitimizes these roles and allows the government to maintain a degree of control over the perceived identity of Indonesian women.

State Ibuism links work, social life and private life together, to form a government constructed identity for women. The good wife/mother paradigm can be applied to women's marriage, career and personal life because it is supported by the government through both its initiatives and its laws. The Office of the State Minister of the Role of Women is a clear example of how State Ibuism is legitimized through the State. Men's role in the family is consistently ignored. It is assumed that the husband is the breadwinner. While women's role in the household is both recognized and valued, the emphasis on a wife/mother identity undermines the advancement of women in other areas and disables the growth of a more feminist movement.

Initiatives carried out by government women's organizations are generally approached with top-down strategies. Projects are implemented specifically for women, but focus upon meeting a specific objective rather than examining how the initiative will affect the women. For example, for several decades, family planning has received a great deal of attention. Extensive projects have been carried out throughout Indonesia. The focus of the project is to reduce the number of births, not improve women's access to birth control. If the focus was upon women's reproductive freedom, choices such as the Pill, diaphragms and condoms would have been included. Rather, birth control choices in 'family planning' initiatives are generally limited to long-term and often dangerous methods such as Depra-Provera, I.U.D.s and Norplant, and are given to large numbers of women, particularly less educated women in the poorer areas (Widyantoro, 1994: 21).

Despite the fear, intimidation and heavy restrictions upon political activity, social change is occurring, both within the women's movement and within a larger political sphere. After thirty two years of rule, Suharto bowed to public pressure

and stepped down. Suharto appointed Vice-President Habibie as his successor<sup>22</sup>. During the four days of rioting, looting and protesting, the military showed remarkable restraint. While approximately 1000 died, the military and police refrained from shooting at the people, instead, focusing upon stopping the rioting through less violent means.

Suharto's resignation represents a victory for activists, however, it is unclear at this point, how Habibie's leadership will affect the well-established social and political structures. While Suharto's departure has been rationalized in several ways, including U.S. pressure, economic chaos and I.M.F. failures, it is generally agreed that the primary reason is the economic crisis combined with national discontent throughout Indonesia, particularly in Jakarta (McCarthy, 1998: 2-3)). It is uncertain if Habibie, Suharto's most trusted ally, will continue on the path of corruption, nepotism and collusion so carefully laid out by Suharto. Further, with General Wiranto maintaining leadership of the military, it is difficult to determine the future role of the military in politics (Spaeth, 1998: 1-2).

It is unclear at this point how Habibie's leadership will affect the women's movement. Recent events demonstrate that a new government may be more receptive to social change and listening to the popular demands. The government appears to be taking action in some areas, for example, Mochtar Pakpahan, several East Timorese freedom fighters and other political prisoners were allegedly released from prison in May 1998. Subsequent statements from the military indicate that the government may be more receptive to negotiations concerning special status for the

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<sup>22</sup>Habibie, a loyal twenty four year client of Suharto, had been appointed Vice-President only ten weeks prior to Suharto's resignation. It is ironic that Habibie, with a well-known reputation as a "free-spending eccentric", would be appointed to Vice-President during the worst economic crisis in modern Indonesian history.

Timorese. The government also appears to be taking responsibility for the crimes which occurred during the rioting: in July, 1998, seven elite Indonesian soldiers were arrested for their alleged role in kidnapping and torturing opposition activists (Time, 27 July 1998: 11). Whether the arrests are tokenism or a reflection of political change is unclear at this point.

Despite the government's multi-faceted control over women's lives and bodies, independent women's organizations continue to make progress in their movement for gender equality and social change. With Habibie in power, women's organizations may have the opportunity to become more active in the political sphere. For example, during the rioting and the aftermath, 168 women of Chinese descent were violently raped, allegedly by the military (Time, 1998:11). Twenty of the victims died as a result of their wounds. They were either murdered by their attackers or committed suicide (The Nation, 13 October 1998: A4). Several activists have pointed out that the pattern, similarities and systematic planning required for the attacks indicate that the military was behind the violence.

Activists linked the military to the rapes, stating the government's strategy was to shift the emphasis of public debate (and the meaning of the unrest of May 13-15 1998) from the people's demands for government restructuring, to racial tensions as the cause of the violence. Independent women's organizations such as Kalyanamitra were instrumental in exposing the incidents both nationally and internationally and pressuring the government to publicly acknowledge that systematic rapes were involved. Human rights and women's activists established the Volunteer Team for Humanity (Tim Relawan Untuk Kemanusiaan) to provide aid to the victims and document the incidents (Inside Indonesia on-line, Oct-Dec/98: 1).

Habibie established a task force comprised of representatives from the military, various government agencies and women's organizations to investigate the rape incidents and possible military involvement. Habibie also fired Lt. General Prabowo Subianto, the former head of the army's Special Forces (Kopassus) and Suharto's son-in-law, as well as two high ranking Kopassus officers because of their alleged involvement in the May riots and their abduction and torture of political activists (The Nation, 13 October 1998: A4).

Following Kalyanamitra's exposure of the rape incidents, the State Minister of Women's Affairs Hj Tutty Alawiyah confirmed that the rapes had occurred, stating that "the efforts to give a feeling of security to the victims are far more important than making an issue of proof". On July 1, 1998, KOWANI (The Indonesian Women's Congress), the government umbrella agency for all women's organizations, presented a signed statement demanding that the government take action toward locating the perpetrators of the crime (Kompas Online, 1998: 1-2). A help-line was established to provide aid to the victims, both by the Minister for Women and women's organizations, which also provided support and aid to victims and their families. The government's involvement in these initiatives demonstrates that the role of the state in the women's movement could become politicized in new and different ways due to pressure from women's organizations and other social organizations. While the actions of the above women's agencies may be standard from a western perspective, the public political actions undertaken by the groups represent a shift toward political openness in the women's movement.

Events subsequent to the rapes demonstrate that the political sphere is still not totally open to change, and that tactics of fear and brutal intimidation are still

utilized. Following the rapes and the subsequent involvement of women's NGOs, member began receiving death threats, obscene letters and telephone calls. For example, a Volunteer Team for Humanity member found a live grenade in her front yard. After continuing with her advocacy she received the following telephone message: "*Is a grenade not enough? I know where your children go to school and what time they come home*" (Inside Indonesia one-line, Oct-Dec/98: 3). The threats serve as a mechanism for silencing and intimidating activists.

Martadinata Haryono, a seventeen year old counselor for the rape victims, was found dead in her family's home after being brutally raped and murdered. The police blamed the murder on a neighbour, stating that a bungled robbery had occurred (The Nation, 11 October 1998: A2). The alarming speed in which the murderer was located is far from usual for the Indonesian police. Nursyahbani Katjasungkana, director of APIK-LBH described the motivation of the killing as "a form of terror against women activists" (The Nation, 11 Oct/98: A2). Incidents of violence that serve to intimidate and silence women's activists are not uncommon. Several factory labourers who demand the implementation of their legal rights have been killed in the past. These events demonstrate the danger involved with the work of women's organizations, particularly when sensitive issues involving government agencies are concerned.

While the government imposes heavy limitations upon the activities of women's NGOs, the groups have achieved progress for women in many areas. The strength of the women and their commitment to real social change is obvious when they continue to pursue their goals of gender equality, despite the danger. The strategies adopted by the groups such as working with rather than against the government, using legislation to their advantage, and carrying out political activities

using a non-political approach have allowed women's organizations to increase the democratic space for women and continue their pursuit of gender equality. Change is most evident in the initiatives and successes of the migrant labour groups, gender advocacy organizations, the anti-violence against women networks and the workers associations such as Kalyanamitra and YASANTI. Without the work of women's NGOs, crimes against women, such as the violence against Chinese women, would have received very little, if any, attention from the government.

While the government has avoided the issue of violence against women, women's NGOs have done an enormous amount of work in this area. Through a network of women's organizations, a number of public awareness initiatives have been launched that address the issue of violence against women. While domestic violence and sexual harassment may be dismissed as a women's issue, women's NGOs continue to fight for a society free from violence and have successfully established infrastructure to support their objectives. Women's shelters, crisis lines, support networks and advocacy groups have been established in several cities. The issue of violence against women remains an enormous social problem, yet women's NGOs have made extraordinary progress with a limited amount of resources.

An estimated one million Indonesian women are working outside the country as domestic servants, prostitutes or in other low-wage, high risk sectors. For years, the exploitation of these workers and the problems associated with their work was largely ignored. Solidaritas Perempuan and other advocacy groups for migrant workers exposed the plight of the migrant workers, lobbied for the implementation of appropriate laws, established global support networks and publicly question the lack of responsibility assumed by the Ministry of Manpower.

Gender advocacy has reached out to the public, urging people to question how gender inequality affects the lives of women. The development of liaisons between women's groups has opened up a wide political space in which gender advocacy work can be effectively carried out. The extent of activity carried out by the groups in areas such as public forums, lectures at universities, conferences and the use of a 'gender lens' in development projects has allowed the issue of gender to reach a wide audience of scholars, activists and government representatives, as well as the general public.

The achievements of Kalyanamitra, YASANTI and other women's NGOs working with women marginalized by poverty, discrimination and a work-force dependent upon low-wage female labour reflect, the strength of the Indonesian women's movement. Addressing highly sensitive issues such as the rapes of the Chinese women and the exploitation of factory workers, these groups continue to provide support and education to female workers, expose all forms of abuse against women, lobby for the rights of women and raise public awareness about all these issues. Kalyanamitra's feminist approach broadens the arena of gender analysis in Indonesia, encouraging discourse amongst women's groups about the construction of gender and the implications and effects of State Ibuism.

Changing the direction of social values, cultural beliefs and altering a gender ideology so strongly entrenched into a country with a population of 200 million is no small task. Operating within a system of harsh political repression and a nation with a collective memory of the events of 1965 places severe limitations on the work of women's organizations. Women's bodies are used as site of male struggle for power<sup>23</sup>: women have been murdered for vocalizing their labour rights, rape is used

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<sup>23</sup>Sariswati Sunindy, 22 September 1998, lecture at the University of Victoria.

as a political tool and violence against women is largely ignored by the government. Despite this climate, women's organizations are continuing to fight for social change and to improve the lives of all Indonesian women. Women's organizations such as Kalyanamitra, YASANTI, Rifka Annisa and Solidaritas Perempuan demonstrate the many areas in which independent women's NGOs have made progress for women and have set the precedent for future work in the women's movement.

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## Appendix 1

### Interviews and Literature Collected: Women's Organizations

#### **Women's Organizations/NGOs Sekretariat Bersama Perempuan Yogyakarta (SBPY) The Yogyakarta Joint Secretariat for Gender Issues**

Jalan Patehan Lor 2B, Yogyakarta, 55133

Telephone/Fax: (62-0274) 378652

Contact: Ibu Dian Gayatri

#### **Rifka Annisa Women's Crisis Center**

Jalan Kenari 10 Demangan Baru, Yogyakarta 55281

Phone: (0274) 518720 Fax: (0274) 566171

Contact: Ibu Yayuk

#### **Gerakan Anti-Kekerasan Terhadap Perempuan Indonesia (GAKTPI) Indonesian Movement for Non-Violence Against Women**

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