

Soekarno's Perception on Discrimination Against Women in His *Sarinah* (1947) Memoir

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DOI: <https://doi.org/10.52403/ijrr.20241243>

ABSTRACT

This study aims to describe and explain Soekarno's perception of discrimination against women in his memoir *Sarinah* (1947). In this aspect, the role of women and Soekarno's hopes for the latest developments are blended in the role and discrimination against women. The material object of this study is a memoir entitled *Sarinah*. The formal object of this study is all of Soekarno's perceptions in Indonesian. Data collection was carried out using reading method developed with note-taking techniques and literature studies to collect data on social identity, knowledge, and beliefs of the author and literature searches to obtain data on situations in which the memoir was born. Data analysis was carried out by data reduction, data display, data verification, and conclusion of the results. The development of feminist movements in Europe, America, and other countries can benefit for the stimulator of Indonesian women that there would not a struggle without scarification. There is an important problem of Indonesian women, between their role in the period of colonialism and after national independence.

Keywords: perception, discrimination, women's roles, Soekarno's hopes.

INTRODUCTION

A work, whether a memoir or a literary work, is a reflection of the socio-cultural conditions of the time when the work was created and of the author's views on events, like discrimination. When the social and cultural environment consists of hegemonic practices of one group over another, including gender hegemony among men over women; all is recorded in the work. However, a specific study of the memoirs of a great figure like Soekarno needs to be studied. The author's perception is a combination of the views of the time, the views of men, and the traditions of the time in treating women. The aims of Soekarno in writing this novel were to uplift the position of women who were oppressed by ancient cultures.

The *Sarinah* [1] memoir written by Soekarno said that the position of Indonesian women in the period of Dutch colonialization was repressed by the awkward culture and all this resulted their underdevelopment at the time being. This was the reason why he wrote the memoir which was meant to raise the spirit of Indonesian women to fight for their rights like that of men. Soekarno deliberately gave the examples from women movements in Europe and America that women were capable in doing something

useful and could contribute their works for the development of their nation and state like men did. He also underlined good and suitable lessons from the feminist movements from other countries that could be transformed into Indonesian culture. In the era of colonialization, Indonesian women did not have the freedom to develop but lived in oppression.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Discrimination against women may occur any time and, then, brings forth heroine to fight for such hostility since woman and man are born equal and have equal right. Raden Ajeng Kartini, Javanese noblewoman, was able to strive for discrimination on woman. At the age of 12 she was fortunately educated at school like her brothers. This was extraordinary because, at that time, school education for woman was reckoned as a taboo and woman was regarded as the one who was responsible for doing duty as housewives and children educator.^[2] In Bengkulu, Soekarno directly saw the distressing event for women and the people there were known as modern ones and considered woman as “pearls” although, in reality, they were not respected. This statement was supported by Sapiro,^[3] that “man is by nature a political animal or that other think of man as basically aggressive and competitive and need of a regulation by social and political but women exist in and represent not the political world of competition but the private world occurrence.” Hertz said, “that America was settled by men who fled from the feudal land oppression of the world.”^[3] The quotation also underlined that the discovery of the continent of America was men. The above suppositions made women underdeveloped; actually, women could do the same thing but with the different opportunity to work. In America, we could also see the same thing in the era of colonialization where women functioned as the keeper of siblings, husbands, as said by Ulrich in her book “Good Wive”^[4] but this could not stand any longer because the time

have changed and there were many women who took part in fighting for their rights that at the time oppressed by the conservative culture and also the appearance of woman patriots that fighting against colonials to support the movements.^[5] There were many women leaders who sacrificed both morally and materially. Although feminist movements have emerged but women should realize their position that they should not forget about their nature, keeping from the decrease of their motherhood and their nature of responsibility toward their family.

MATERIALS & METHODS

This paper uses qualitative methods and the research was conducted in library. To obtain data, researchers directly involved in the reading process. This research used linguistic approach and the data sources for this research consisted of primary and secondary data. The methods involved observation; observation included the process of reading the memoir. A literature study was carried out to collect data from literature reviews related to the research problems.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

1. The Role of Women

Soekarno believes women could do whatever done by men although men actually did the hard, dangerous tasks and responsibilities physically; meanwhile, women could also do the same as they gave birth to their babies. Both of these tasks are hard and need morale and material sacrifices. Soekarno said that women could not be separated from a country because they are civilized. A civilization consisted of men and women, and both could not oppress each other if they were to conduct their own duties according to their nature. A moral person is the one who is no hurting the other people as long as he/she is not going against his/her conscience and as long as he/she remains true to him.^[6]

In the 19th century women's emancipation became serious movements and had undergone a systematic challenge from

men.^[7] American as nation made a sabotage towards women in fighting for the equality of rights and men also continued their battle to prove their lives.^[7] From this quotation we see that women always find very hard hindrances from men. In Indonesia women's emancipation movements began in 1921 in the era of Dutch colonialization when Kartini fought for women rights by means of their letters and education, much that she gained from her life. She oscillated among her western culture. All of these could not break her spirit to realize her ideals although by means of hiding and she wanted her efforts to become a reality. ^[2] Kartini's efforts were emphasized by Soekarno that women could develop as men could, provided that they were given the same opportunity.

At the time being the opportunity was only given to men so that men held the light of science more than women and according to Soekarno's opinion the brilliance of men's brain is the same as women's.^[1] The growth of people where there are racial and gender discrimination would make the position of women become weak. They become a minority group that attract Walker's concern through her Black Women and examined the fate of black women among white women so protested: She had gone, during the Depression into town to apply for some surplus food at the local commissary and been turned down in particularly humiliating way, by the white women in charge.^[8] The Socio-economic situation in America gave a little insight towards Black Women to take a position in the state. Walker realized that how intense the struggle of feminist movements against the discrimination but the discrimination against black skins still existed and Walker herself disagreed with the attitude of black people who did not want to emerge themselves into the fighting for freeing themselves from the jail of civilization structure.^[8] From the above explanations, we concluded that women could also have power as men did.

^[1] In Netherland everything is provided, and

this is the reason why we lived in Europe.”^[2]

In the above quotation freedom is needed by women in order to study so they can develop themselves as men can. This is strengthened by Carol Hymowitz who asserted, “Scripture told women that she, like man, was created in God's image, and to this degree scripture recognized a spiritual equality between the sexes.”^[5] Yet throughout Old and New Testament literature women was also told that it was her duty and responsibility to be subservient to me. In Genesis, God spoke directly to Eve, assigning her the unique punishment of being ruled by her husband.”^[5]

As far as Soekarno's concern, the cause of women inferiority was that they were not given the opportunity, in nearly almost any field they were inhibited and monopolized by men. This was unfair, they were not allowed to participate in the field of politics, education, parliamentary membership, lawyer profession, and so on. All of these would oppress women. So, they should be fought in order to realize the ideals of women.^[1]

People's belief should be changed by changing the women's ideologies about how to improve the fate of women by developing themselves using all of the opportunities like men did. Women not only should beautify themselves, but also, they cook, raise their children, and conduct social activities like those said by Ulrich but they also should be capable to compete with men and fight to get their rights although they have to sacrifice in doing the opposition action.^[4] So Olympe de Gouges was welcomed by Mary Wallstonecraft in England. ^[1] Women's movements, whatever small, always give an indication of the existence of a wider transformation. Although they were not too big but they were quite shaking. The wave of transformation will stimulate the growth of woman experts who will open the opportunity in the new area of politics.

Beecher was also involved in the activity that enforced the reformation of health by

showing the high levels of health obstruction and types of disease that occurred in the middle class women who were very busy with their own health problems and with psychological stresses that occurred because of their task in domestic works and taking care of a romantic family. All of these might cause diseases that regarded as a social flight from the burden of emotional responsibility.^[9] By the right guidance, the same opportunity will be created between men and women like those written by an author in Godey's Lady's Book.^[9]

Women were continuously struggling by conducting protests to look for the way out for singing their voice. Booklets, pamphlets were still flying in the blue sky. National Assembly became harder, more react, more anti-women. National Assembly decided to ban the appearance of women in any general assembly even women were prohibited to gather in a group more than 5 persons. This showed that how big the influence of the movements toward people and that how frightened men of the progress of women that could set aside the position of men and even their working opportunities. This could be seen from the function of women in the southern area in the era of civil war where husbands leaved their farm land because they had to go to war so that women in the area had to take over the position and work usually done by men and worked outside the house to support their families.

When their husbands went home from war, their conditions could not permit them to work hard so that the position of women in the southern was not only as domestic workers but also as double – role women. “The female head of household acted as doctor or nurse more often than she did patient for it was her task to supervise the medical care of her families, white and black, she oversaw the daily dispensation of medicine and tended all the slave ailment; physician called only when the white family's needs had exhausted the plantation mistress's curative powers”.^[10]

Thus, women could take over the position of and the works that usually done by men. The transformation had a very big impact on the civilization and became a big problem because it had many relationships with economic and psychological problems in a family. In other words, Civil War is a very big influence on women in the southern. Alice Walker also rejected the discrimination between male and female.^[8] “She refuses the statement that women have not created as fully as men because one she has a child a woman cannot give herself to her work the way a man can” (1983 – 368).^[8] Walker also argued, especially women in the southern, they had life experience that they believed that the wealth of experience of black skinned writers in the southern could also be noted and she also strengthened that before black people could be free, black woman had to be free from discrimination.

Soekarno argued that women should be freed so that the country would progress and be wealthy. It will become a peaceful, stronger, wealthier country if the women are included in the making of law and government and it will not occur many cruelties. All of those proved that the role of women is very important in a country and it determines the progress of a country and its stability. These can be proved by seeing the southern region and we can find that there are similarities on the life of women with those in other regions. “After a short while, women of the middle class in other cities, like their friends in the northern cities, at last could get a greater power of their property and successfully established organizations and charity boards”.^[9]

This was also stated by Gordon who said that women could compete against men in the quotation: “beside the women's intellect development can prove that they are able to compete with men for jobs. By the 19th century the feminine emancipation had been being seriously and systematically struggled. They felt even-though they are attaining their success that had been traditionally defined by men. It seemed

American Society had made sabotaged women's struggle for equality and difference from its inception and men also continued to resist their effort to improve their lives".^[7]

The development of feminism movement was started from the women encounter of knowledge because since then they wanted to look for their identity and personality. American women took part in the struggle of ideology and their leader, Martin Otis Warren who was the sister of James Otis at the time invited all of woman leaders throughout America. She was more radical than man leaders who were more consequent. She had cried for full freedom of America. However, by the emergence of a movement led by Warren and Adam, although failed, the movement had lit the fire to burn their spirit from a passive movement in ideological process of France Revolution into an active power that burned the human struggle to seize more fair human rights. This statement was supported by Sutrisno in her book "Kartini's letters" stated that conservative culture blinds the eyes of women from the development of women.^[2] Actually they want a freedom and want to become educated in order to be freed from the jail that makes women are situated in the darkness. She also stated that our women have a perfect sight but they do not see the beauty.

Thus, they need to see the imperfection in order to realize their potentials. So, men and women each has positives and negatives, both can grow provided that there are no hindrances in front of them. This is highlighted: "everything has already been available, there is no impossible thing if there is an opportunity fill our mind with many kinds of knowledge that there is no barrier to do this. If we want to be it will be."^[2] The struggle of women has suffered many barriers and at last it would add the significance of women as the producers of societies. In the period of war, they would give the start of a winning for them. On 9 December 1918, women conducted a huge meeting in the very wide Queen's hall.

Emmeline Parkhurst stated her happiness that women have got the right of representative and she was proud because in the period of war women have played a very important role.

In Seattle, Washington, an aviation company, Boeing, made a big advertisement that stimulated women to work in the company.^[9] From the above statement, we see how the role of women in industry while it would not decrease the womanhood nature.

The context of women before and after the war is very different. The context of women in the period of war set aside some barriers of law and culture. To employ housewives in 1960 in the United States of America, the amount of woman proportion who looked for Master's degree have begun to increase and give result of agitators who cried for their last agitation in Women Equity Action League. Since then it became possible for women to gain the opportunity resulted from their success. This is proved by Evans in 1972, the emergence of women studies.^[9] In 1970, there existed feminism in the period of a dramatic change and intense social conflicts. In 1910, 5.5% of women worked outside their home.^[9] In 1910, it was established an international woman congress that demanded the occurrence of International Woman Day. They also demanded the right of choice in a general election.

In Berlin in 1911, the International Woman Day became a very big demonstration. It was not surprising that Berlin became an important city at that time. As we know Berlin is the city of Clara Zetkin, Rosa Luxemburg, Louise Zietz, Kathe Duncker, and so on. Their knowledge, dynamic personality, brevity, optimism, skill, and especially their organization talent was not under the ability of man leaders (Ir. Sukarno 209).^[1] Inspecting some of the above names surprised international world whereas there were still many more of names of woman leader names that have not been mentioned yet, this proved that women can have roles like men can if they are given an

opportunity like those that given to men such as highlighted by Soekarno before.

In Europe, there is an International Woman Days that their names are printed in big cases of newspapers from London to Petersburg such as, Clara Zetkin, Rosa Luxemburg, Louise Ziets, Emma Ihrer and Kathe Duncker. Whereas in Austria there were Adelheid Popp, Therese Schlesinger and Emmy Freudlich, in Italy there were Anna Kulishoff, Angelica Balabanoff, and in Scandinavia there were many others. Under their leadership the awareness of lay women became the principal and radical awareness so that from the side of men, there emerged anxiety. They were afraid of the existence of their party. It happened that in the campaign in 1912 they got 110 chairs of Reichstag. It was not surprising that always bitterly criticize men in order not to turn away from their principal way. However, they became stronger, louder in fighting for their rights of voting.

Victory, sometimes, makes the spirit become satisfied and then lower. We often see in the history of the struggle of parties that parties which in the first time intensified their struggle in a radical way, after getting a strong position in a parliament, 110 chairs, then they would become moderate. In 1914, Rosa Luxemburg, by the brilliance of her brain, predicted that no sooner it would emerge a very severe world war and her prediction came true. At that time the position of women was very hard, woman movements were in the blow of tornado but Clara Zetkin with her brevity published a magazine "Die Gleichheit." She highlighted the international relation should be maintained as good as possible. ^[1] They insisted to the government affairs. At last the old generation could not stand offending them anymore. Some of leaders of U.S.P.D. were involved in the ministry and the representative right of women was established so that women at the age of 20 since then had the right to vote in the general election, either passively or actively. The tens of years of struggle, an unintermittent activity, the perseverance in

their sufferings, the commitment to their ideology, at last gave a good result as a very bright victory.

The victory in general election was not the one towards the final objective but, according to Soekarno, it merely was a means of the struggle in reaching a higher objective, that is, socialism. The means of struggle later would be snatched by the hands of lay women. Hitler who viewed women merely in the light of wives and motherhoods and threaten the existence of women in the field of politics was opposed by Soekarno because Hitler's opinion was in a contradiction with the women's rights that actually the same as men's. Women had the same potential as men and had provided that there was not discrimination in the side and they were given the same opportunity.

Clara Zetkin, Rosa Luxemburg among others did not stay in their place, instead of quit from the struggle, even they used their struggle to become a bigger battle, that is, to fight capitalism, to make a new structure of society which was fairer. Luxemburg was killed by her enemies at the age of 49 years old. She passed away as a heroine and also as a leader of all socialism movement and also as lioness in the social revolution. She was not only as a warrior but also well-known theoretician of "Spontanitorists theorie," concerning socialism.^[1]

Bardina said, "I never oppose the right of choice even I bravely says that I defend individual rights that each individual fully has the right of their work and the result of their work" (Soekarno, 225).^[1] From the above statement Satja highlighted that each individual has their rights to own the employment and to taste the result of the work and each individual has the rights to get the employment regardless their sexes. This shows that women participated in eradicating poverty. By working outside they can lighten the burden of their family. This happened in the period of war when wives took over the position of their husbands in supporting the family economy. But in its further development in parallel with the growth of woman institutions, there

were significant changes in pattern of working among women. The meaning of pattern of working among women was the change from their main duty as housewives into outside workers. If it is related with one of women feeling such as feeling of independence, then its change was one of its reason. Thus, the occurrence of a new highlight towards the domestic function and traditional role in the decade of baby boom was just not permanent. In 1960s and 1970s there were many women who were involved in the workforces by radically struggling, such as the demand of women in Women Equity Action League and the Women's Political Caucus under the leader of Friedan, Bella Abzug, Gloria Steinem, and Fannie in 1970s.

Those dilemmas were experienced by women in the USA. They had pair of choices between traditional and modern roles, between dependence and independence, the two sides that were contradictory at each other and never blurred in parallel with time leap. Two novels that focused on the problem of morality were "The Million the Floss (1890) and The Waterfall (1969). One of the success of women's movements were the legalization of abortion by the Supreme Court. Gilligan said that the separation and the increase of biological and psychological needs developed in our young generation as the symbol of their identity and love and developed in our adult as love and work. [1]

The above statement showed that men and women had the same need that is the biological need that became an attachment psychologically. This developed into the attachment of loving. Gilligan added that the problem itself was a conflict between perfection and tenderness faced by men and women in the time of transition into their adulthood. The concern was the meeting of the two different ideologies in the two different moralities and this showed that men and women are need each other and also in an employment both of them can work together.

Gilligan also commented about the big success and motivated the character from the life of men and produced the equality and understanding are centred on sincerity, while morality and responsibility came from the concept of justice, the introduction of the differentiation of needs. Whereas the difficulty towards the rights were a manifestation towards the same respect. In line with the demand of women or women emancipation, now high-class women deliberately go out of their jail, go out to school to study, become doctors, teachers, typists. Thus, woman movements are so far enough in stepping their feet that all of the brilliances have to be taken aside because they have to take their part. [6]

In the era of Dutch colonialism, the results gained by the Indonesian Woman Movements were very small. In 1941 it was held the right of choice for a very restricted haminte by using "vrije augnifte" regulation. The result was very small compared from Germany was like a cat versus tiger. At the moment Indonesia has already taken its independence, we have already had a country, a Republic. The struggle of woman movements in Indonesia is so rapid that every woman leader of Indonesia is hoped to become aware to participate, neither one of them should be left behind. Lenin said, "every cook has to be capable to operate politics." The meaning of the above statement is all of Indonesian women have to take part in the struggle and they should have guidelines in their struggle. This is highlighted by Dolores Ibarouri, in the Spain Revolutions she cried, "0 Spanish women, be revolutionaire women, and there is no revolutionaire woman unless there is a revolutionaire guidelines." Thus, to be revolutionaire is an utterance of a revolutionaire action. The theory needs action so that it becomes directed.

In 1908, in Indonesia there was established Budi Utomo by the national intellectual people to promote the love of their nation. On the other hand, Tjokroaminoto and his friends established Dagang Islam with the

feeling of love for their country. After a while the movement was changed into Serikat Dagang Indonesia and then it was changed again into Serikat Islam. Together with Partai Nasional Indonesia, they became parties that were loved by Indonesian people. At last on 17 August 1945 with a whole and hard determination they founded Republic and now they have to defend the Republic of Indonesia by their slogan: "Once independent, forever independent." By the flood of spirit in their heart and the very deep love towards their country and nation that cannot be rubbed out of their heart, they would create social welfare and rub out everything that was smelled to be capitalistic and blow out all feudalistic practices and turn them into socialistic nature.

In this context, the meaning of socialist society was to produce collectively, to conduct collective education. Socialism had the meaning that there would be automobile tyres, radios, telephones, telegraphs, trains, electricity, aeroplanes, books and libraries. In other words, all of the facilities that could be used by people were provided. In the broad sense, socialism included the satisfaction of all people needs by the use of a collectivized modernization. Thus, the conclusion was the satisfaction and provided that there was engineering equipment that was available to be used "socialistically." A society that had not fulfil the technical requirements up to its certain minimum level, was impossible to make a socialism.

The progress of our society and the freedom of our politics provided technical requirements to reach the "minimum" level. Thus, at the prepared social phase, capitalism machines should be destroyed, social welfare machine should be built, and elements built at the previous phase, national phase, should be maintained. There was not any separation among phases, national phase and social phase occurred at once. And there was an utterance which its content was to fire the spirits to conduct a social revolution from mark. However,

Mark never said that revolution was not a social process that was fired by the people themselves but it occurred from the power that was immanent in themselves. We could try to accelerate the rate of a certain revolution stage then continued by other stage of revolution.

Ir. Sukarno highlighted that an independent nation had not saved from outside exploitation like Iran and Siam. Political independence was an absolute requirement to enable a nation to offend the outside exploitation so maximally that National Revolution was not the only stage that necessarily existed. ^[1] In the development of community, it also became a necessary step of defence for counter – attacking the dangers that came from the outside. Thus, strictly speaking, we are not just independent, struggling to establish a National Country throughout Indonesia and this is not just an idealism but this is something that grew from the need of the development of our society.

In all Indonesian archipelago, one part needs other part, all of them could become an economic basis for industrialization provided that each part is economically related with the other filling, helping each other to develop a solid industrialization so that the evolution of society became clearer. This was a certainty and a must in the perspective of socio – economics and politics. Industrialization would transform the structure of society especially woman society and produce billions of labours. Women and men hand in hand actively raised to take their guns attacking and fighting against colonialist to make their idealism become a reality.

2. The Hope of Sukarno and the Current Situation of Women

Soekarno hoped that Indonesian women can participate in every human life; thus, they have to be aware of grasping their ideals and catching their lacks so far that have become a very serious problem for them. He stated, "if our woman is not participated, our cargo will be cracked in a big stone, our national

Garuda will be clung in earth. Try to understand that woman problems are our important concern. Try to study to weigh women as an absolute element in our struggle” (Sarinah: 320).^[1]

From what he stated the roles of women are important and hoped that men should understand and appreciate them to move freely in fulfilling their country and nation. It is impossible to gain the ideals of women movements if there was no national independent. He suggested that we made a relationship with overseas countries so that our struggle became stronger and we got help from all over the world.

From Soekarno's explanations, it is clear that he watched the development of women movements in Europe and America and received women's complaints from many regions. Soekarno added “Remove all soul disasters inherited from the colonial slavery hundreds of years ago named inferiority complex, offensive soul, attacking spirit, brave spirit, giving spirit, positive spirit that do not depends our fate on others”.^[1]

The women struggle was a part of independence struggle and in parallel with the world revolution. Soekarno hoped to fulfil the requirement of National Revolution by strengthening the State and also hoped to establish a Nation and achieve the ideals of a National State that was 100% of sovereignty. National Revolution containing ways for socialist community as the only community that can give an opportunity for them to get happiness was a socialist idea. Hence, Soekarno said: “A hidden prescription for Indonesian women to become member of “Socialist Party” will not pretend to hope women to move but it is not a propaganda of a party.”^[1]

He also hoped that Indonesian women think socially, understand socialism and have socialist knowledge in order to achieve their ideals. This became the guidelines of struggle by cultivating and understanding knowledge that would be practiced for burning their struggling spirit for achieving a big result by sacrificing moral and material property. It needs to be understood

that by this means women would unify against discrimination. All women have to have awareness to fight together with every group and understand that National level is an absolute level to have freed into a national independence. Indonesian women at the moment have gained the position that was idealized by Ir. Sukarno where women can sit in a position as men can. There will be the same opportunity for either men or women to develop their potentialities.

CONCLUSION

From reading Sarinah, it can be concluded that by knowing the development of feminist movements in Europe, America, and other countries, we can take their benefits for the stimulator of Indonesian women that there will not a struggle without scarification. There is an important problem of Indonesian women, between their role in the period of colonialism and after national independence. In the period of colonialism, Indonesia women were jailed by traditional culture tended towards the main duties of women (breast – feeding, clothing their siblings and fulfilling the needs of their husbands). In the modern era, it is tended to their readiness and willingness to participate in out-of-home works even involved in their husbands' offices such as Dharma Wanita and other duties outside their house. Either women or men depend on each other. Women can have a role or have the same position as men have provided that they are given the same opportunity.

Declaration by Authors

Acknowledgement: None

Source of Funding: None

Conflict of Interest: The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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How to cite this article: Risnawaty, Sri Wahyuni Zuhri, Ihsan Fadilah, Annim Hasibuan, Liesna Andriany, Effendi Barus. Soekarno's perception on discrimination against women in his *Sarinah* (1947) memoir. *International Journal of Research and Review*. 2024; 11(12): 395-404. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.52403/ijrr.20241243>
