

THE EFFECT OF IRRIGATION SOCIALIZATION ON WOMEN IN INDONESIA

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ABSTRACT

Since 2001, an irrigation project has conducted research in several provinces and then provided necessary information from a gender perspective. Until now, there have been 5 provinces involved East Java, Central Java, West Java, Special District of Jogjakarta, and South Sulawesi. Although there are unique provinces in their own way, they refused at first to involve women in the irrigation project. As an example, in Situbondo regency, they initially rejected the idea of involving women in irrigation activities, which they considered uncommon and "illegal". Finally accepted them and joined the program. The Bupati's wife, also chief of the local women association of Situbondo, supported the program enthusiastically. She even recommended that sub-district and village heads as well as their wives involvement in irrigation socialization program in their districts. In Pehngaron, Mojokerto regency, the Farmer Association of Water-users has achieved great progress by winning in the 2002 national irrigation contest. In East Java and West Java, irrigation from a gender perspective is finally well addressed. The change is that those women are partially involved in organization management and irrigation activities. Finally, they are aware that irrigation is not only men's responsibility but also women's.

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The implementation of the irrigation project in Indonesia has somewhat changed gender behavior. This is interesting because irrigation, which used to be men's job, now has become one of women's jobs.

Since 2001, the irrigation project has conducted research in several provinces, followed by the provision of necessary information from a gender perspective. The opening of new areas for industrial factories and settlement caused a decrease in the water-supply, i.e. $\pm 30\%$. So the new constitution USSDA No.7.2004 not only regulates irrigation problems but it also handles more complex ones, such as, water resources, water supply and the distribution of drinking water.

Until now, there have been five provinces --East Java, Central Java, West Java, Special District of Jogjakarta and South Sulawesi used as samples for the dissemination of information related to irrigation problems and activities. These

provinces each have their own unique points. However, at first, all of them refused to involve women in the irrigation project.

Although the Situbondo regency first rejected the idea of involving women in irrigation activities, which they considered uncommon and "illegal", they finally allowed women to join the program. The Bupati's wife, being the chief of the local women's association of Situbondo, also supported the program enthusiastically. She even recommended that sub-district heads, village heads and their wives become involved and push irrigation program in their districts. The sudden change is very obvious. After receiving the necessary information, women started hoeing and irrigating their own rice fields. They also became partially involved in organization management.

In Pehngaron, Mojokerto regency, the Farmer Association of Water-Users has achieved great progress by winning in the 2002 national irrigation contest. One change, which is really felt, is that women are now partially involved in organization management and irrigation activities. And they are fully aware that there should be no garbage disposal into irrigation canals.

In the Central Java province, namely, Magelang and Tumenggung regencies have a greater chance for a better future because cooperation between local government staff and farmers is good. Gender presence in the irrigation area is well responded to. The latest development shows women's involvement has changed from $\pm 5\%$ to 23.8%. In addition, there are five women who are involved in management. The activities shared by women are --irrigating their rice fields, controlling and maintaining irrigations and preparing food for workers in the fields.

In West Java, the case is similar to that in Central Java, namely in Majalengka and Tasikmalaya regencies where women have been involved in irrigation activities. Yet, this has not been publicly admitted. After growing rice, and while waiting for the harvest, their husbands usually go to city to work. It is during this time that the wives take care of the fields: weeding and irrigating. It is clear then that women share their husbands' jobs in the fields. The women's participation related to irrigation activities is: distributing water in field beds (13.7%); cleaning garbage in the canals (11.8%); paying contribution for P3A (27.5%); irrigating the fields (5.9%) and attending meetings (5.9%).

The picture is different in South Sulawesi, i.e. the Goa and Pinrang regencies.

Whereas in the beginning they were only involved in preparing food for the family workers, women in these areas are now involved actively in many aspects of life including the irrigation program. They play a role in managing and organizing (+8.33%); maintaining the drainage system (16.87%); collecting contributions (37.5%) and delegating authority in P3A (8.33%). However, the presence of a gender perspective in the irrigation process receives a good response both from the local government as well as farmers. The women's role in seeding and harvesting as compared to men is 50%-50%.

In the special district of Yogyakarta, involving women in irrigation activities is difficult, because they consider that (1) the business of irrigation is susceptible to conflicts and women are considered to be unable to solve the problems, (2) women are already burdened with domestic activities. However, men and women farmers should realize that irrigation is their responsibility.