

JAVA DELI (JADEL) WOMEN'S CONTESTATION IN THE STRUCTURE OF THE PATRIARCHY SOCIETY IN THE DELI OF NORTH SUMATERA

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Abstract:

This research aims to see how the position of the Java Deli women in the structure of the patriarchal society in North Sumatra which was formed from the socio-cultural world of plantations. The method used is the literature method by triangulating sources through interviews. The results presented in this paper show that plantation life has positioned Deli Javanese women to be subordinated and marginalized so that they have an impact on stigmatizing their domestic and reproductive roles.

Keywords: Java Deli, Contestation, Women, Plantation, Patriarchy

Introduction

In patriarchal culture, men and women are structurally and culturally positioned dichotomically; masculine and feminine. Masculinity intended for men places men as those who have strength, charisma, physical prowess so that they are considered worthy of power. Meanwhile, women are positioned as weak people who deserve to be the subject of hegemony of the ruling groups (men). The social and cultural construction of society that views the position of men as being higher than that of women results in stereotypes of women who only have reproductive roles, namely sexuality and household.

Primordial constraints that show the discriminatory cultural norms of society in seeing the role of women in the family can be seen through the limited (even absence) of access in the public sphere which includes education, employment, and even access to inheritance rights (Irianto, 2005). Culturally, this structure legalizes the position of women to remain marginalized and inferior. For liberal feminists, women must be able to compete for equal rights that are fought for through education and the economy. Education is one way to free women from male power. As in the tradition of liberal feminism which considers that the oppression of women is caused by the lack of opportunities and education for them individually and in groups (Ollenburger and Moore, 2002). In the Toba Batak ethnic gender ideology in North Sumatra, for example, education is only allowed for men, while girls have to help their mothers cook in the kitchen, look after younger siblings, collect firewood, fetch water and help in the fields. The division of labor shows that the job qualifications of Batak Toba women are feminine. Limited access to education results in women's economic access becoming increasingly limited and unable to compete.

As time goes by the process towards modern life, the division of labor and the role of women (based on gender) which is preserved through traditional wisdom which is considered natural experiences a transition to a process of liberation, which is often referred to as emancipation. This

can be seen from the educated groups that express their ideas, ideas, and works through special media for women in North Sumatra which are carried out by groups of educated women. In North Sumatra since 1919, special women's newspapers and magazines have been published which show the emergence of a modern, educated and able to express themselves and their community through special newspapers. There were eight newspapers and magazines identified: Mobile Women (Medan, 1919-1920), Parsaoelian Ni Soripada (Tarutung, 1927), Soeara Iboe (Sibolga, 1932), Beta (Tarutung, 1933), Keoetamaan Wife (Medan, 1937- 1941), Poetri Tower (Medan, 1938), Boroe Tapanoeli (Padang Sidempuan, 1940), Women's World (Medan, 1949-1980s). The media used by women in North Sumatra (host population: Batak Toba, Melayu and Mandailing) represent women's struggles to dare to fight against male power control. Then what about Javanese women who are a group of migrants (called Jawa Deli) in North Sumatra? How did the Javanese Deli women fight for equality and emancipation as a group of migrants in North Sumatra?

Literature Review

Deli Javanese women (hereinafter referred to as Jadel) is a term used to refer to women who are former coolies on plantation contracts and their descendants. The existence of Jadel women cannot be separated from their arrival as coolies on plantation contracts (Breman, 1997; Stoler, 2005; Pelzer, 1985; Said, 1977, Geertz 1976; Lulofs, 1985). Their status and role are the same as that of male contract coolies, they work with the division of labor established by the plantation. The women who work on tobacco plantations as coolies on their contract are employed as caterpillars, tending tobacco plants, and working in tobacco drying and milling wards.

Coolie women in the plantation colonialism system in Deli were a scarce resource, only 10-20% of the total workforce 55,000 workers (Stoler, 2005). The coolies who are employed on plantations as contract coolies are still young and they are recruited by brokers from Java Island. They are required to serve the sexual needs and general domestic services of male workers and management. In addition, their wages in 1894 were only half of the wages received by male coolies and not sufficient to meet their daily needs. In addition, female coolies were used as bait to tie male workers to Deli (Stoler, 2005).

The contract coolies live and live in plantation barracks. Most plantation workers live side by side with their spouses without being bound by a marriage institution (uninstitutional marital). Women are selected and given to workers who are considered to have worked for a long time and are deemed worthy of getting a "wife". There is an imbalance between the number of male and female workers so that women become the object of sexual exploitation which is carried out in rotation. Uninstitutional marital in the family system of contract coolies during the colonial era of plantations increasingly positioned women in legalizing the role of sexuality. As stated by Stoler (2005), married and unmarried women prostituted themselves, cooked for single workers, or served as "bed maids" for white colonial staff. Women are often the targets of mistreatment as experienced by their male colleagues.

The application of the labor system to Javanese women in medical plantations discriminated against and oppressed Javanese women in Deli. This oppression was deliberately designed to perpetuate labor politics in Deli, because women became the bait for male workers to come to Deli. The entry of women into the labor sector is also considered to be beneficial to the capitalist system (Fakih, 1997). Javanese women who are coolies of plantation contracts in the view of Marxist feminists are structurally oppressed by the capitalist system which exploits women not only as cheap labor but also exploitation through means that are "legalized" in the marital uninstitutional system.

Economic factors have shaped the social structure and the lives of women during the colonialism of the plantation in Deli, which stigmatized and marginalized women laborers on plantation contract labor. In the plantation world, women coolies on contracts are not only subordinated and

marginalized by the plantation system, but are also “legalized” for their traditional roles which include sexuality and household roles. The traditional role of women, which was reproduced by the colonialism system of plantations in Deli, resulted in the formation of fatalist and inferior attitudes towards Jadel women.

Method

The method used in this research is the library research method. Sources of data used in this writing are sourced from documents that come from books and archives. The process of collecting documents is carried out by collecting data from articles, books, photos, pictures, and data from various reliable sources. This is done on the basis that the central study through the analysis of documents, archives, and photos has answered the problem of questions or phenomena that must be answered. (Zed, 2004). Triangulation of sources was carried out through the process of interviewing informants who had been acculturated in the Javanese Deli social-cultural space.

Result and Discussion

If in the 1900s the women in Deli from the Toba Batak women's group, Malay women and Mandailing women were able to fight back through contestation of ideas in the form of movements in women's newspapers, but in those years women Jawa Deli still faces social and cultural stigmatization constraints. No longer being in plantation huts and under the colonial rule of plantations did not necessarily eliminate the inferiority and stigmatization of Javanese women. Colonization (both physically, as well as socially, mentally, spiritually, mind and culturally) has resulted in Javanese contract workers (especially Javanese women) into a community that is structurally very helpless.

The stigmatization as a result of the life of Javanese women on the plantations meant that Deli Javanese women had to be "saved" from conditions that made them separated from the structure of Javanese culture. Concern about this condition is expressed in an article in the *Soera Djawa* newspaper as follows:

“Dari keadaännja perampoean koeli contract jang djalan djahat ada terlaloe banjak, kita orang bisa sangka perampoean-perampoean koeli contract itoe, banjak sekali jang ampir-ampir berubah ia orang poenja ingetan... ini perkara kita bisa saksikan dengan betoel di waktöe hari vrij dan gadjihän di Deli, (hari 16 dan 1) bermatjem-matjem pakean dan tingkah lakoenja perampoean itoe ... Sedang di tanah Djawa tidak bisa. Biasa naik kreta angin sepandjang djalan raja, berdjalan berganding-gandingan serta goejon dengan lelaki jang soedah tiada maloe lagi di lihat orang” (*Soera Djawa* 1 Juni 1916)

The expressions shown by Javanese women show that the new social space (outside the plantation) becomes a stage for contestation. Through the social space outside the plantation, this expression is an attempt to manifest its existence to be recognized by groups and social spaces in Deli.

Jadel women not only strive to eliminate stigmatization that positions themselves as helpless, weak, and marginalized, but Jadel women must be able to strive to give up traditional inscriptions. The condition of the helplessness of the former Jadel contract women still "ensnares" them so that it is difficult to escape from the snare of a long history of tradition and the plantation system even though they have lived in an urban-industrial society like today.

The plantation system has changed a lot, but they still identify as “orang kebon”. Although at this time they are no longer tied to the plantation contract system because most of them have retired, and even their descendants are no longer working in the plantation sector and prefer to work in the industrial sector, but stereotyping of plantation people still appears today.

The struggle of Jadel women to achieve a better status and competitiveness in the social world is

constrained not only by stigma from outside the group, but also by inscriptions from among their own groups. Inferiority attitudes result in self-distrust in their group. The educational paths offered by liberal feminist groups in an effort to achieve economic access experience obstacles from within the Deli Java family and social groups. Despite experiencing obstacles, women who have the persistence and desire to compete and gain economic equality continue to struggle against the inscription, legalization, and stigmatization that have been pinned on them. The forms of struggle can be seen from the results of an interview with Mrs. Warno, who is a descendant of a former plantation contract worker, she recounts:

“...namanya juga “anak kebon”, bisa sekolah keluar sampai ke Medan merupakan suatu mukjizat. Untuk bisa mencapai sekolah saya mendayung sepeda sejauh 18 km. Waktu itu saya sekolah di SPG Negeri 2 tepatnya di Jalan Wahidin Medan. Bagi mereka para kuli yang anak-anaknya tidak melanjutkan sekolahnya, lebih memilih bekerja mencari uang disekitar desa ini juga. Kebanyakan tetap menjadi buruh atau kuli perkebunan, dan yang lainnya memilih di sektor pertukangan seperti tukang bangunan. Semua orang ketika itu lebih memilih untuk bekerja daripada harus melanjutkan sekolah ke luar desa. Dengan bekerja mereka akan mendapatkan penghasilan dan dapat membantu para orang tua mereka. Dulu para kuli bodoh-bodoh, hanya dimanfaatkan tenaganya, ditipu orang-orang pintar. Tapi mereka gak ada yang berontak, semua menurut saja...”.

The persistence to stay in school in order to change their fate has encouraged the Deli Javanese women who are only descendants of the kebon people to be persistent even though they have to row a bicycle for 18 km. The decision to go to school also has an impact on social relations among fellow contract coolies, because with the determination of those who are children of contract coolies who continue their studies, they get an underestimated response, ridiculed and get ridicule among fellow contract coolies themselves. As disclosed as follows:

“...alah... anak wedok (anak perempuan), sekolah adoh-adoh tekak Medan arep dadhi opo (sekolah jauh-jauh sampai Medan mau jadi apa)”. Dan orang tua saya selalu di cemooh dan di olok-olok dengan kata-kata “alah... direwangi gemih orah sugeh” yang artinya, diusahakan hemat untuk menyekolahkan anaknya juga tidak akan kaya. Tetapi saya tetap bertekad untuk menyelesaikan sekolah saya. Harapan kami hanya bertumpu pada hewan ternak yang dimiliki, kerana itu satu-satunya harta yang dijadikan sebagai penopang hidup, terutama untuk menyekolahkan anak-anaknya”.

This is the view of fellow Javanese people who reflect their lack of confidence in changing one's destiny. The shackles of the humble, poor contract laborer life have formed an identity that sees themselves as an inferior group. So when there are children of contracted coolies who oppose the keenness of their life only in the garden and work in the villages as masons or laborers in the industrial sector, allusions emerge that reflect their self-distrust.

In its development, currently when the Javanese Deli women have been able to show their success (economically), which is fought for through increased education can slightly open the awareness of the Javanese Deli community. Thanks to the efforts and achievements obtained from the struggle to escape structural and cultural stigmatization, Jadel women were able to exist and began to be freed from domestic roles so that many began to enter the public domain in the context of manifesting hidden contestations. Contestation is not only openly expressed. As stated by Scott (in Moore, 1998), the rejection by women farmers in Scott's study is through the collective deviation which is instantaneous and characterized as "common weapons" from relatively defenseless groups. Resistance by women does not constitute direct confrontation, because women understand their weak position (Moore, 1998).

Conclusion

In the plantation world, women coolies on contracts are not only subordinated and marginalized by the plantation system, but also stigmatized as a helpless group. The traditional role of women, namely the role of sexuality and household and the absence of an unsinstitutional marital which continues to be reproduced by the plantation colonialism system in Deli has resulted in the formation of fatalist and inferior attitudes towards Jadel women.

Those who are no longer tied to the contract system and no longer work in the plantation sector and have been freed from domestic roles and reproductive functions are still "confined" in the insurance formed by their social environment. Transformation both socially and economically has not been able to become an arena for negotiations in self-contestation. Jadel women are still "trapped" in the legacy of the patronage relationship of their social structure that places women as subordinated and inferior. However, there is a tendency for women of Jadel descent to be more courageous in showing their existence in public spaces. The courage of the descendants of former contracted coolie women in several ways, apart from increasing their education (HR) and economic capacity, has also begun to open up (the permissiveness) of society to the progress of women who are former Jadel descendants who are increasingly open and or needed by society.

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