

UN Women's Role in Addressing Gender-based Violence in Indonesia during the Covid-19 Pandemic: Norm Entrepreneur Analysis

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Abstract

This study analyzes UN Women's role as a norm entrepreneur in addressing gender-based violence (GBV) in Indonesia during the COVID-19 pandemic. Using a qualitative approach and literature review, this research explores UN Women's steps in promoting norms of gender equality, women's empowerment and the elimination of gender-based violence. The COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated the situation of GBV in Indonesia due to mobility restrictions, socio-economic pressures and patriarchal culture. In response, UN Women launched initiatives such as the DELILA reporting system, online counseling services in collaboration with Yayasan Pulih, and community education campaigns. The study concluded that UN Women's efforts significantly contributed to social change and accelerated the achievement of sustainable development goals (SDG 5). However, challenges such as the digital divide and patriarchal norms require further efforts to ensure sustained program effectiveness.

Keywords: *Gender-based violence, UN Women, COVID-19 pandemic, Gender equality, Norm Entrepreneur*

1. INTRODUCTION

The Covid-19 pandemic, which became a global health issue, began to spread in early 2020. Until finally, the World Health Organizations (WHO) categorized this problem as a global pandemic. As a result, various regulations were issued by the government to limit the spread of the virus, ranging from Work From Home (WFH), Physical Distancing, to distance learning. As a result, people's activities are disrupted. This has resulted in many economic, political, social, and violence against women problems. In 2019, there were 299,911 cases of violence against women reported in Komnas Perempuan's Yearbook. Previous studies have suggested that a lack of legal awareness and the persistence of a patriarchal culture that places women below men are the main causes of violence against women. Not to forget that financial factors such as lack of economic readiness and structural poverty are one of the factors that influence this (Ridawati Sulaeman, 2022) These factors are exacerbated by the emergence of Covid-19.

Violence against women has reportedly increased during the pandemic according to the WHO. In 2020, UN Women noted that three in ten women had been victims of domestic violence. Countries such as France and Argentina reported an increase in violence against women by almost 30%, which is an increase from the previous year's record (Hariyadi, 2015). Violence against women can be experienced anywhere, including in public spaces. Based on Komnas Perempuan data, there were 46,698 cases of violence against women from 2011 to 2019. A total of 23,021 cases of sexual violence occurred in the public sphere, 2,861 cases of sexual harassment, and 91 cases of internet crime (UNDP, 2020).

The spike in domestic violence during the pandemic is the result of society's limitations in carrying out economic activities. Limited employment opportunities, soaring prices of goods, and termination of employment are the results. Women as a disadvantaged entity in a patriarchal culture, especially in Indonesia, receive a harsh impact in this problem. In addition to domestic violence, women also receive unpleasant behavior in cyberspace. The number of online-based sexual violence received by women includes cyber grooming, doxing, spreading personal photos, and cyber bullying.

In response to this, UN Women as one of the international organizations that oversees issues related to women's issues in life is one of the leading entities dealing with this issue. As an international organization, UN Women makes various efforts to solve the problem of gender-based violence through cooperation with the government, establishing empowerment programs, and contributing to creating social norms to increase public awareness of women's issues.

2. RESEARCH METHOD

This research tries to examine the role of UN Women in handling cases of gender-based violence in Indonesia during the Covid-19 period through qualitative analysis using literature reviews that discuss related issues, such as journal articles, annual reports, and trusted news sites as primary data sources.

Norms influence state behavior at a massive level (Hapsari, 2022). Constructivism has been studied in International Relations since the late 1980s. It is in this study that the topic of norms began to be explored. This approach tries to understand the behavior of actors in international relations as a result of the norms they create themselves. Although norms determine the behavior of actors, the behavior of actors over time also creates the development of new norms in accordance with changes in their behavior.

In the study of International Relations, the influence of norms plays a major role in navigating the direction of a country's politics and foreign policy. Constructivism studies have helped IR studies in analyzing norms in the context of change, adjustment, and the formation of new norms. This process is known as the concept of "Norm Entrepreneurship". This study focuses on the actor-centered level of analysis.

International norms are a multidimensional topic of discussion involving many actors as well as social, cultural, political and historical concepts. The behaviors as well as the habituation and penetration of outsiders in instilling norm ideology are very complex. However, there is a habit in analyzing the source of norm emergence, which is then expressed as “Norm Life Cycle”. (Sikkink, 1998) The understanding of this pattern comes after further reviewing the relevant literature and analyzing one of the global political events that affected the world at the time, namely decolonization. One of the effects of the evolving international norms at the time was the development of the ideal that colonial states should fulfill the universal right of colonized countries to sovereignty and freedom of self-determination (Kleibrink, 2011). Thus, this became a turning point in the renewal of “ideal” behavior for nations at that time. The process of conveying and habituating decolonization norms starts from the emergence, the process of developing, to the habituation of norms as a “norm life cycle” process which is divided into three stages.

The first stage of the Norm life cycle is “Norm Emergence”. Basically, norms are constructed. That is, the emergence of norms cannot be separated from the motives of the desires and goals of actors who play a role in promoting norms. The second is “Norm Cascade”, the process by which norms begin to be accepted in the international scope. In the transition period between the first period to reach the second period, there is a crucial period determined by the reaction of the norm receiving country that determines whether the penetration of the norm can continue or not. This transitional period is called the transitional momentum or “Tipping Point”. After the state begins to open up and accept the entry of the norm, the norm can reach the “Internalization” process, where the norm has been adopted as a standard of conduct in carrying out international interactions.

The urgency to propose new standards of behavior to the international system is initiated by actors called “Norm Entrepreneurs”. Norm Entrepreneurs raise the issue of urgency about a certain matter, because it is related to the desire to create conditions where the international community can move towards a pattern of behavior that benefits them. Norm Entrepreneurs have the power to create a moment of urgency through striking, critical and dramatic efforts. This ability is called “framing”. This condition is crucial for Norm Entrepreneurs because it facilitates the process of promoting norms that are considered to have urgency.

International Organizations are one of Entrepreneur's Norms that play an important role in creating international norms and customs. International organizations are a forum for countries to channel their interests. As a third party that bridges cooperation between states, international organizations have the power of legality that binds states in the norms and regulations that have been set (Barnett, 1999). These norms then become provisions that influence how states and other actors act, become an “ideal” standard and become a reference in making policies. In addition, the networks of international organizations include not only

state actors, but also international institutions and non-state actors, so this will support the process of dissemination and norm framing. International organizations are often a forum for countries to achieve common interests, so norms can be used as one of the tools to achieve these interests. Through the availability of abundant resources, as well as adequate capabilities and legal frameworks, international organizations can become actors that actively disseminate international norms.

3. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

UN Women is a United Nations (UN) entity established in 2010 to accelerate progress in achieving gender equality and women's empowerment worldwide. The organization focuses on a range of issues, including increasing women's participation in politics, eliminating gender-based violence, and equal access to education and employment (Agustin, 2023). UN Women also plays an important role in advocating for policies that support women's rights, providing technical assistance to governments, and mobilizing the global community to achieve sustainable development goals (SDGs), especially SDG 5 on gender equality. Gender equality and women's empowerment are issues that have attracted global attention, given that almost half of the world's total population is made up of women. The causes of inequality and violence against women involve complex and diverse contributions from various dimensions. These include social, cultural, economic and political dimensions.

As an organization that actively promotes gender equality and women's empowerment, the process of spreading international norms carried out by UN Women can be analyzed through the Norm Life Cycle theory. The steps taken in building framing and promotion of policies based on gender principles are a common urgency that is voiced through educational programs and trying to build the idea that this issue has an important urgency to run. As an entity under the auspices of the United Nations, the interests carried by UN Women are certainly a common concern. Gender equality and the provision of equal opportunities for men and women are enshrined in the UN Charter, as rules that bind member states to comply and follow them. In addition, gender equality is contained in the fifth point of the Sustainable Development Goal (SDGS). Although the issue of gender equality and women's empowerment has become an international problem that requires immediate resolution, no concrete steps have been taken by countries in the world in a collective effort to solve this problem. Therefore, UN Women is the representation of the UN in voicing this issue more vocally, and is expected to contribute to realizing SDGs number 5.

Gender-based violence (GBV) cases in Indonesia are increasing as a result of restrictions on community mobility, economic decline, and the psychological and social pressures created. Not surprisingly, these have been implicated in the soaring number of GBV cases. UN Women identified several challenges faced in GBV

cases during the pandemic. During a pandemic that applies physical distancing rules, in addition to the limited mobility of victims of violence, some victims in cases of domestic violence and sexual violence are also forced to live with the perpetrator. This not only has an impact on the psychological condition of the victim, but also increases the intensity of the recurrence of violence. In addition, factors such as the digital divide, lack of access to social institutions, and patriarchal norms and culture are also inhibiting factors in helping to eliminate gender-based violence in Indonesia during the pandemic.

To overcome this, UN Women takes various preventive measures that can eliminate the access of victims of gender-based violence to assistance. Through collaboration with the government and local non-governmental organizations, UN Women provides various programs such as complaint services, Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) during Covid-19, and also initiates social advocacy movements and training. This activity is a response to women's limited access to information and resources during the pandemic, as well as a form of support for women to get their rights amid the patriarchal culture of Indonesian society. UN Women plays a large role in fostering gender equality norms through empowering women and disseminating information through social media and direct advocacy to the community.

A. Advocating for Victim Protection

Victims of sexual violence, domestic violence, and cyber bullying experienced by women throughout 2020-2022 continued to increase. According to the Komnas Perempuan report, the dynamics of direct complaints to Komnas Perempuan, service institutions and Badilag were recorded. There were 338,496 cases of gender-based violence against women with details, complaints to Komnas Perempuan 3,838 cases, service institutions 7,029 cases, and BADILAG 327,629 cases (Bayang-bayang Stagnansi: Daya Pencegahan dan Penanganan Berbanding Peningkatan Jumlah, Ragam dan Kompleksitas Kekerasan Berbasis Gender terhadap Perempuan, 2022).. This is very concerning considering that gender-based violence has not become a concern in the community, considering that during the pandemic they are faced with social and economic issues. So that assistance and protection for victims of gender-based violence such as domestic violence and sexual violence is minimal.

For this reason, UN Women seeks to provide preventive services to address the issue of limited access to victims of GBV. Among them is by working with the Indonesian Positive Women's Association to launch the DELILA reporting system (Dengar, Lindungi, Laporkan). This initiative is a database that aims to protect the reporting of gender-based violence against HIV/AIDS positive women. In the 2023 period, DELILA has successfully recorded reports of gender-based violence against women in 10 provinces totaling 54 cases. According to its records, the reported

cases include dismissal for being HIV/AIDS positive, sexual violence, and forced labor.

In analyzing this case, DELILA is in the Norm Emergence stage. Through collaboration with the HIV / AIDS survivor community in Indonesia, DELILA tries to reach the widest possible victims of gender-based violence in Indonesia. This initiative was established on November 26, 2021, as a response to the increase in gender-based violence. DELILA tries to instill norms regarding how society should act in overcoming the situation. First, when a case of GBV occurs, many victims and surrounding people are afraid to report because they feel that no one takes sides, no one listens. So, the first thing to do is **Listen** (Dengar). Second, **Protect** (Lindungi) is also the main focus of the DELILA program, where survivors must be protected and given protection, including social protection and protection from the perpetrator. So, when they feel safe and ready, they can proceed to the **Report** (Laporkan) stage.

B. Local Network Empowerment

One of the main obstacles in overcoming gender-based violence during the pandemic is limited access to victims due to physical distancing regulations (PLFJ, 2023). Most cases of gender-based violence occur in the victim's immediate environment, such as the home environment which includes domestic violence, the work environment, and the educational environment. Access to assistance for victims is also disrupted by the closure of public facilities such as Komnas Perempuan services and government facilities, making it difficult for victims to make reports and get assistance. The victim's lack of access to this exacerbates the feelings of isolation and helplessness suffered by the victim, so sometimes cases of gender-based violence are often not reported.

To address this, UN Women needs an approach that can reach all levels of society in all places. There is a need for safe houses for survivors of gender-based violence to minimize cases that are not exposed. Therefore, many non-governmental organizations have collaborated with UN Women to spread offline complaint points and provide safe spaces for survivors. (UN Women, 2021)

One of the non-governmental organizations that received support in collaboration with UN Women during the pandemic was Yayasan Pulih. Yayasan Pulih is a non-profit non-governmental organization that seeks to help victims of gender-based violence from a psychological and social side. They focus on preventive movements and initiatives that seek to provide counseling services for trauma recovery efforts and psychological conditions for victims. To date, Yayasan Pulih has offline service branches in South Jakarta and Banda Aceh. However, it also has online services that actively help survivors of gender-based violence. Through collaboration with UN Women, Yayasan Pulih seeks to provide remote counseling services targeted at survivors of gender-based violence. During the Covid-19

pandemic, Yayasan Pulih has managed to help nearly 500 survivors by providing a safe space. Survivors of gender-based violence are provided with remote counseling services via Online Conference applications such as Zoom and WhatsApp. UN Women provides assistance in the form of providing operational costs for Yayasan Pulih to carry out its activities. Together, UN Women and Yayasan Pulih spread the campaign against gender-based violence through social media.

The patriarchal culture that is still strong in Indonesian society, especially in rural areas, is an obstacle to the realization of gender equality. Therefore, UN Women tries to provide a safe space for all victims of gender-based violence to get psychological help through indirect consultation. The norm that is tried to be instilled here is the Women's Empowerment and Anti-Gender-Based Violence Movement to educate the public through social media campaigns. Not only to reduce the number of gender-based violence during the pandemic, but this norm also aims to provide a safe space for women to be aware of the fulfillment of their rights. So that this step can be a preventive movement to prevent cases of gender-based violence in the future.

4. CONCLUSION

UN Women has demonstrated a strategic role in addressing gender-based violence (GBV) in Indonesia during the COVID-19 pandemic with a comprehensive and collaborative approach. One of its initiatives is the DELILA reporting system, designed to support victims of gender-based violence, particularly women with HIV/AIDS, through the DELILA (Listen, Protect, Report) approach. This system instills new norms in the community about the importance of hearing and protecting victims before reporting cases, thus providing a sense of security for victims to speak up.

In addition, UN Women is working with Yayasan Pulih to provide psychosocial counseling services for survivors of gender-based violence. With UN Women's support, Yayasan Pulih managed to reach hundreds of victims through online services during the pandemic, while also disseminating the anti-gender based violence campaign through social media. This approach not only helps victims get protection and recovery but also educates the public about the importance of supporting the anti-gender based violence movement more broadly.

The patriarchal culture that is still strong in Indonesian society, especially in rural areas, is a major challenge in achieving gender equality. Therefore, UN Women seeks to instill new norms that encourage women's empowerment and the elimination of gender-based violence. This effort is carried out through advocacy, empowering local networks, and educational campaigns, which aim to create collective awareness of the importance of fulfilling women's rights at all levels of society

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