

# Strengthening Women's Representation: Affirmative Action Policy of 30% Quota in the 2024 Election in Buleleng Regency

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**Abstract.** The simultaneous elections in 2024 still leave crucial issues regarding women's representation in the regions. In Buleleng Regency, in the 2024 election DPRD member seats, only five women (11.11%) were elected legislative candidates from 45 seats. This study aims to determine the implementation of women's representation in legislative nominations based on Law No. 7 of 2017 in the elections in Buleleng Regency and efforts to realize gender equality for women through elections in Buleleng Regency. This study uses *socio-legal research* to obtain concrete and relevant data on the still limited participation of women in elections. However, in conditions in society, women's involvement in the 2024 elections is still not fully optimal. The study results show that the implementation of women's representation in the PKPU of 30% has had a minor impact on the final results. From the affirmative action policy, it is only understood as an aspect to fulfil administration, not to strengthen women's rights towards gender responsiveness.

**Keywords:** election, women, Buleleng

## 1 Introduction

Elections are the gateway to democratic governance today in Indonesia. They involve political parties individuals, and even women. This has been guaranteed by enacting laws and regulations that accommodate the role of women, who have the same rights, especially in politics [1].

Since the 1955 general election, women in Indonesia have been actively involved in politics. However, there still needs to be a gap in women's participation, which has prevented women from playing a role in government. A breath of fresh air in women's involvement in politics, especially elections, is realized through affirmative laws and regulations for increasing women's representation as has been stipulated and ratified in Law No. 12 of 2003 Article 65 paragraph 1, which has now been amended to Law No. 10 of 2008 concerning the election of the DPR, DPD and DPRD. The article clearly states that "Every Political Party Participating in the Election may nominate candidates for DPR, Provincial DPRD, and Regency/City DPRD for each Electoral District by considering women's representation of at least 30%." There is also Law No. 7 of 2017 [2] concerning General Elections Article 173 paragraph 1e, also states that

"include at least 30% (thirty per cent) female representation in the management of political parties at the central level".

By examining the provisions of Law No. 7/2017, which accommodates representation for women, it is evident that a policy has been implemented to increase the representation of women. This policy involves the provision of provisions and policies in the form of laws and regulations in each election regulation and political party regulation participating in the election to ensure that women are represented by at least 30% in the nomination of candidates for members of the DPR, DPD, and DPRD. One of the stages in mobilizing women to participate in political contestation in the election and occupy a seat in the legislature is the establishment of a policy. Nevertheless, the number of women who pursue or participate in the nomination of representation is impacted by a multitude of issues, including those posed by individuals and external parties [1]. It is widely recognized that the objective of a minimum of 30% women's representation in legislative elections at the central, provincial, and district/city levels has not yet been achieved.

The elections that have been completed in Indonesia in 2024, in reality, still need to improve regarding women's representation in the regions. As happened in Buleleng Regency, in the 2024 election DPRD member seats, only 5 (five) women or 11.11% [2] were elected legislative candidates from 45 seats.

The existence of affirmative policies for women in the democratic party in Indonesia still needs to be a concern for the parties, especially the government and political parties. Especially in the participation of women in regions or districts. Sometimes, representation, as regulated in Law No. 7/2017, is only used as a requirement for political parties to pass their parties, without seeing the essence of the influence of women's representation in the government field, especially as policymakers in the legislature.

This issue needs to be addressed at the regional level. As in Buleleng Regency, the representation of female legislative candidates that has not yet reached 30% still requires study and improvement efforts so that in the future it can play a role in creating regulations related to strengthening women's rights. This study will examine 2 (two) problems, namely how to implement women's representation through the 30% quota affirmation policy in legislative nominations based on Law No. 7 of 2017 in the 2024 election in Buleleng Regency and how to realize gender equality through the 30% quota affirmation policy for women's representation in the election in Buleleng Regency in 2024?

## **2 Method**

The type of research used in this case is empirical legal research or *socio-legal research*. *Socio-legal research* is a study that looks at the social science discipline on the working process or influence of law in social life [7]. Therefore, *socio-legal research* is intended not only to consider normative legal problems ( *law as written in a book* ). So, in the study, researchers conducted direct studies (*field research*) in order to obtain concrete and relevant data on the limited participation of women in elections as stipulated in the regulations. However, in conditions in society, women's involvement in elections in 2024 is still not fully optimal.

### **3. Results And Discussion**

#### **1. Implementing women's representation through the 30% quota affirmative policy in legislative nominations based on Law No. 7 of 2017 in the 2024 elections in Buleleng Regency.**

The guarantee of Human Rights is inextricably linked with the implementation of democracy in Indonesia, as outlined in Article 28D Paragraph of the 1945 Constitution of the Republic of Indonesia[3]: "Every citizen has the right to equal opportunities in government.". This equal opportunity needs to be realized so that political parties can provide women opportunities to become parliament representatives. This is necessary considering that philosophically, the existence of women is the other side of the existence of men created by God Almighty. Thus, representing 30% of women in parliament can provide fresh air in the general election and strengthen gender equality in the political field later [4].

The affirmation of women's political rights is proven by the ratification of The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) [5]. The convention's provisions govern women's political rights as outlined in Articles 7 and 8, which assert: 1. The right to vote and to stand for election; 2. The right to engage in the development and execution of governmental policies; 3. The right to occupy governmental positions and perform all governmental duties at every level; 4. The right to participate in non-governmental organizations and associations pertinent to political and public affairs; 5. The right to represent the government internationally; 6. The right to engage in the activities of international organizations.

Following the reform, the focus on women's political rights in relation to CEDAW prompted the government to reassess its policy on women's involvement in parliament. This was propelled by the diligent efforts of activists and women's organizations in Indonesia advocating for their rights. A successful initiative involved eradicating all sorts of prejudice against women through affirmative action.

Affirmative action *is* a particular action of correction and compensation from the state for gender injustice [4]. The essence of *affirmative action* is a structural intervention that must be carried out as an emergency measure to correct existing inequality in a short time. If not, we must earnestly wait for natural changes; it takes years and several generations.

The opportunity for women to be involved in politics in Indonesia was wide open when the *affirmative action policy* was implemented. The direction of this policy requires a quota that political parties must meet in compiling a list of legislative candidate members of 30%. This regulation is then further regulated in various regulations, namely Law No. 7 of 2017 concerning General Elections and Regulation of the General Election Commission (PKPU) No. 10 of 2023 concerning the Nomination of Members of the DPR, Provincial DPRD, and Regency/City DPRD.

The implementation of affirmative action policies for women in politics commenced following the enactment of the 1945 Constitution, namely with Law No. 12 of 2003 about the Election of the DPR, DPD, and DPRD. Efforts to enhance women's representation involved mandating political parties engaged in the Election to ensure that at least 30% of its nominated candidates for DPR, DPD, and DPRD positions are women. Article 65, paragraph (1) of Law

No. 12/2003 stipulates, "Every political party engaged in the Election may nominate candidates for the DPR, Provincial DPRD, and Regency/City DPRD members for each electoral district, ensuring a minimum representation of women at 30%."

Occasionally, affirmative action for women in politics has become progressively sophisticated. The passage of Law No. 7 of 2017 concerning General Elections by the DPR established a simultaneous election system in Indonesia. Article 173, paragraph (2), letter e stipulates that "...a minimum of 30% (thirty percent) of women's representation must be included in the management of political parties at the central level." This policy asserts that political party institutions must ensure a minimum of 30% participation of women in its creation and management at the central level through affirmative action. The affirmative action policy in election law mandates a minimum quota of 30% for women's representation among election organizers, including the KPU, Bawaslu, and KPPS. Law No. 7 of 2017, Article mandates that the list of potential candidates established by political parties must include a minimum of 30% representation of women.

Women's representation in politics and elections has not been maximized over time by the use of affirmative action. This application transpires in both densely populated regions with volatile political climates and in smaller areas with relatively stable political situations, exemplified as the Province of Bali. The statistics acquired concerning women's representation in politics in Bali is as follows.:

**Table 1:** Percentage of Women's Involvement in Parliament in Bali Province by Regency/City in 2022/2023

Regency/City	Percentage	
	2022	2023
Jembrana	17.14	17.14
Tabanan	25.00	25.00
Badung	22.50	22.50
Gianyar	12.50	12.50
The city of Klungkung	16.67	16.67
Bangli	10.00	10.00
Karangasem	6.67	6.67
Buleleng	17.78	17.78
Denpasar City	8.89	11.11
<b>Bali Province</b>	<b>16.36</b>	<b>18.18</b>

Sources: Central Statistics Agency of Bali Province

Data shows that *affirmative action regulations* in Bali show progress, but cannot yet be said to be optimal and tend to stagnate in the last 2 (two) years. Buleleng Regency had the third most considerable political participation rate in women's involvement in parliament in 2023. Still, in the 2024 democratic party, the DPRD member seats produced elected legislative

candidates from women from a total of 45 seats that managed to pass only five people or 11.11% [6]. This is based on the results of an interview with the incumbent 2024 DPRD Member from the Indonesian Democratic Party of Struggle (PDIP) Kadek Turkini, who stated:

*“ ... The implementation of women's representation that has been regulated in the PKPU of 30 percent, has not had a big impact on the final result. "Women in politics still encounter many obstacles. From the affirmative policy for example, the party has only understood it as an administrative aspect to fulfill the needs of the law. The regulation on determining the ballot number and women's movement is also not strong," explained the PDIP Srikandi from Kalibukbuk Village, Buleleng District/Regency. She also mentioned that there are several things that also make female candidates less competitive in the general election than male candidates. Turkini said that the patriarchal system that is very strong in Bali is detrimental to female candidates. ”*

Furthermore, in a quote in *online mass media*, former chairman of the Buleleng Regency DPRD, Gede Supriatna, stated [6]:

*“ The decline in the number of women's representation in the Buleleng DPRD is one of the impacts of the open proportional system. This system creates a free fight for all cadres and legislative candidates. This free fight is detrimental to female candidates with limited space, time, ability and also financial capital. So this is our common thought to find a solution, so that in the future female cadre friends can keep up with male candidates. ”*

An imperceptible issue within Indonesia's electoral architecture hinders the effectiveness of affirmative action in promoting women's participation in parliament. Political parties must nominate a minimum of 30% female candidates on their nomination lists. Through an open proportional system, voters possess the authority to elect candidates for council positions. The electorate can directly select their preferred candidates, regardless of gender. Moreover, in a persistently patriarchal society, female applicants will encounter challenges in competing against their male counterparts. Voters will continue to choose male politicians perceived as more competent in leadership and decision-making. The perception that women are unworthy of participating in politics also affects voters' choices in selecting candidates. Candidates compete not only against other parties but also against fellow candidates within their own party. In the realm of female candidates, political parties are inclined to nominate individuals who are artists or own substantial economic capital. Due to significant economic inequality in Indonesia, female candidates from grassroots backgrounds would undoubtedly face more challenges in participating in this expensive competition[7].

Women's political participation has experienced massive degradation and reduction. Women's activity space is limited to the domestic sphere and is positioned subordinately. However, in general, the reasons used by women not to enter the world of politics are that women are seen as a source of temptation and slander and can also trigger social conflict. In addition, there is also an assumption that women's political tasks are very easy and that they can bear them because women's minds and strength are considered weak [8]. In other words, courage is what has caused women to not want to step into the world of politics to be equal to men.

## 2. Efforts to Realize Gender Equality Through Affirmative Action Policy of 30% Quota for Women's Representation in Elections in Buleleng Regency in 2024

Women's involvement in the political arena is based on several driving factors. Among them is the awareness of political rights as citizens, to actively participate in various aspects of life, including the life of political organizations. Awareness of political rights is also reinforced by the reality of the lack of representation of women in the political arena and the lack of echoes of women's voices or those who speak up for women in various political arenas. Such a reality is very ironic if associated with government programs that always discuss equality, equality, gender bias, and equal partnerships. About this, the issue of women's empowerment or how women are placed in national life is again important to continue to be raised, especially since we are at a crossroads that can bring women's positions in two opposite directions [9].

The representation of women in parliament is crucial for public decision-making, as it influences the quality of laws enacted by state and public institutions. Furthermore, it will provide women with an alternative perspective for addressing various public issues, since women tend to adopt a more holistic and gender-responsive approach. The participation of women in parliament would significantly influence the development of policies, legislation, and regulations within the national agenda, hence facilitating the implementation of Gender Mainstreaming.

Gender is a dimension that must be incorporated into all policies, as well as in planning and development processes, as it aids in the comprehension of the attitudes, needs, and roles of women and men in society in accordance with social factors. The issues outlined above demonstrate that the text, context, and meaning that result from this are inequitable, and it even leads to multiple interpretations of the role of women in the political arena, resulting in unclear guarantees of the fulfillment of women's rights [10].

Borrowing Scott's idea [11] women's resistance follows the pattern of the losers, against the winners, namely men. It is time for women to demand their rights from men. It is also time for women to demand gender equality. Do not assume that women are weaker and lower than men. Women have the same abilities as men. Women can do anything that men can do. The aspirations of women for equality with men in all spheres of life, particularly in politics, have been acknowledged by the government and parliament through the stipulation that each political party must ensure a minimum of 30 percent representation of women when nominating candidates for the DPR, Provincial DPRD, and Regency/City DPRD in each electoral district. The directive outlined in Article 65, paragraph (1) of Law No. 12 of 2003 regarding General Elections (for the 2004 Elections), along with Article 53 of Law No. 10 of 2008 concerning General Elections (for the 2009 Elections), subsequently became recognized as the "30 percent Women's Quota."

Unfortunately, until now, the fulfilment of quotas and the quality of human resources have not had a significant effect. This is due to several things, including **the fact that** the number of women's representation in district and city parliaments in Indonesia is still low and there is inequality between regions. Of the total 514 districts and cities, 59.8% have less than 15% female representation, including in Buleleng district which only reached 11.11% in the 2024

legislative election. **Second**, women in parliament are often not in strategic positions as policy makers. For example, a study conducted by Puskapol UI showed that around 40% of female parliamentarians have never been involved in budget preparation. It is natural that it is very difficult for women to be involved in determining a budget that is pro-women and children. This lack of involvement is not always related to the quality of female members but because of the strong patriarchal culture. **Third**, personally, the quality of the elected legislative candidates also affects their performance. Many female legislative candidates who are elected are those who have kinship or reference power with the political elite, or those who are successful because of financial capital and popularity alone. The low quality of female legislators, of course, greatly affects the low impact of women's representation on improving social policies, especially those related to gender equality between women and men [12].

In Buleleng Regency, as has been discussed, women's representation in legislative elections has not been fully optimal. Seeing this, it will certainly be further away from gender idealism, which wants equal rights for both men and women. Efforts are needed to realize gender-responsive conditions, especially regarding women's representation in politics. Efforts to optimize women's participation in legislative candidacy are expected to result in a gender-responsive policy. So through optimizing affirmative action policies, it is hoped that it can have an impact on accommodating the need to resolve gender bias issues, especially with the many cases of discrimination against women[13].

The impacts of *affirmative action policies* include [14]:

1. Increasing Women's Participation: This policy can encourage more women to participate in politics and run for DPRD members. With a quota that guarantees a minimum of 30% representation of women, political parties will be more inclined to seek female candidates and provide greater opportunities for women to be involved in the political process.
2. Changing Priority Issues: With more women elected to the DPRD, issues relevant to women and girls are likely to receive greater attention in the policy-making process. The involvement of women in decision-making can bring new perspectives and help create more inclusive and diverse policies.
3. Gender Equality: This policy is a concrete step towards achieving gender equality in politics. By increasing women's representation, women's opportunities and access to play a role in public decision-making can be improved.

For women in Buleleng, in the last ten years, their role in the political arena seems to have begun to develop. Women who enter the political arena generally have a fairly adequate level of education, at least graduating from high school/vocational school; even those who occupy the party management structure all have a college education background. This indicates that women who are involved in formal politics have sufficient human resource potential, have a strong academic foundation, and, of course, also have quite good critical analysis skills. This can be seen, for example, from their attitude towards differences of opinion, they generally greatly appreciate differences of opinion that are based on clear, healthy thinking and strong arguments. Such perceptions will certainly be a significant force in building a healthier democratic life. Likewise, their ideological orientation has an ideological orientation that sides

with the public interest and is very aspirational towards issues of poverty, employment opportunities, morals, and the environment.

Names such as Ni Luh Hesti Ranitasari, Luh Gede Herayanti, Kadek Turkini, Tutik Kusumawardani, Luh Sri Seniwi and Gusti Ayu Aries Sujati can be put forward as the success of Buleleng women in the local political arena. Another woman's name that cannot be separated from the hustle and bustle of the Buleleng political stage is Tutik Kusumawardani. She is a Democrat Party politician who once served as a member of the Bali Provincial DPRD, the Indonesian House of Representatives, and once ran as Buleleng Regent in the 2017 Pilkada, competing with the incumbent candidate Putu Agus Suradnyana. Several years ago, there was the name Luh Tiwik Ismarheningrum, who once served as Chair of the Buleleng Regency Golkar Party DPD. The emergence of Mbak Tiwik as Chair of the Buleleng Golkar Party DPD was initially quite surprising, because previously she was only known as a businesswoman. However, after approximately 3 (three) years of leading the Golkar Party in Buleleng, Mbak Tiwik was able to give a different colour to political life in Buleleng. Not infrequently, her presence in the midst of the masses or in forums involving political party figures, NGOs, and community figures (such as in the Communication and Consultation Forum between Buleleng Political Parties), was able to provide a cool, harmonious atmosphere, full of jokes and friendliness. On every occasion, she always wanted to highlight and show that the presence of women on the political stage is not taboo, but rather the presence of women will be able to change the image of politics from something cruel, dirty, full of intrigue, to something full of harmony, coolness, brotherhood, and friendliness. The next name that is currently able to make herself reckoned with on the Buleleng political stage is Ni Kadek Turkini. Currently, she has just been inaugurated for the second term ( *incumbent* ) as a member of the Buleleng Regency DPRD for 2024-2029 from PDIP and has a great opportunity to become the chairman of the Buleleng Regency DPRD. It is hoped that this is only the initial stage of the recognition of women's abilities to play a role in the political arena.

In the future, it is hoped that it will not only be limited to "only" 30 per cent but a larger quota for women to become members of parliament. In fact, women's representation in parliament will not occur because of a quota, but because of the ability of women themselves to compete with men to occupy important political positions such as President, Governor, Regent, or other political positions. Thus, women will be actively involved in the decision-making process, including providing considerations that prioritize equality / equal partnerships. This is possible considering the increasing level of women's education. In the end, women's struggle towards gender equality and equality with men can be realized. However, to realise all of the above, optimal efforts are needed, including developing women's political awareness, developing a wise political culture, seeking support for the development of a wise political culture from various existing social networks, and forming and functioning women-based organizations [9].

Lastly, it is imperative that the public be informed about the significance of women's participation in politics. This function necessitates not only the active participation of political parties, but also the implementation of political literacy regarding the importance of women's representation in parliament, in addition to the work of election organizers. If awareness has



been established, the public has the ability to impose sanctions on political parties that do not intend to promote women's representation by refraining from voting for them.

#### **4 Conclusion**

The implementation of affirmative action for women in politics and elections has not been able to optimize women's representation over time. In Buleleng Regency, it was proven that in the 2024 legislative elections, women's representation only reached 11.11%. The positive policy mandating 30% representation, as stipulated by Law No. 7/2017, has not significantly influenced the final outcomes. Turkini said that the patriarchal system that is very strong in Bali is detrimental to female legislative candidates. On the one hand, Buleleng women, in the last ten years, seem to have begun to develop their role on the political stage.

Women who enter the political arena generally have a fairly adequate level of education, at least graduating from high school/vocational school, even those who occupy the party management structure all have a college education background. This indicates that women are also increasingly aware of their role in social life including in politics. The affirmative action policy is hoped to be a concrete step toward achieving gender equality in politics. Women's opportunities and access to play a role in public decision-making can be increased by increasing women's representation.

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