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Paper No. 6
Research Summary
The Impact of NCT on Women Empowerment
Indonesian Case

Introduction

Principally, this research tries to observe the impact of New Communication Technologies (NCT) on women's empowerment in particularly, and on democratization of the society in general. The empowerment in this case refers to the improvement of right and women role in society.

This research based on a hypothesis that all NCT equipments have a potency to influence women empowerment that have less position in society. This kind of hypothesis often found in literature that have an optimistic view about communication technology.

This research focuses on middle class society in Jakarta. A research survey was conducted on 331 residents of Jakarta and its environs which consists of 71 male and 260 female respondents. We chose Jakarta as a sample because we considered Jakarta the most representative town in Indonesia where the phenomena of NCT ownership occurs.

New Communication Technologies (NCT) included in this research are: Personal Computer, Internet, CD-Rom, Desktop Publishing, Facsimile, Parabola Dishes, handphone, Laser Disc, compact Disc, Video Compact Disc, and Teletext.

All respondents were asked to answer questions such as if they have all the NCT equipment, do they operate it by themselves, for what purpose they use it, who spend most time using NCT at home, their view about women capability in operating NCT in general, and their view about the impact of NCT on women empowerment. We also ask their opinion about women and family programmes on television which is more popular in Indonesia nowadays.

Besides research survey, in-depth interview were also conducted with 18 women figures which consists of professionals, teachers, mass media figures, NGO activist and parliament member. In addition of the above issues, we also discuss about the impact of communication technology on lower class and suburb society as well as the impact of communication technology on democratization. To accomplish the research, we also held Focus Group Discussion with some 20 years aged women with different background of works.
The Fading Away of Male Domination in Mastery of NCT

We hypothesize that in line with gender structure in Indonesia, there is also a gap in mastering NCT between man and women. A thought that man is better in mastering technology as well as a gap in education investment between man and woman lead us to a hypothesis that male also dominate in mastery of NCT.

This research shows that although man domination phenomenon is still occur, the gap between man and woman is closer and it leads women are not far behind anymore.

The research survey shows that there is no difference between men and women in mastering NCT. Most of the women respondents admit that at home they usually operate all NTC on their own. Most of respondents, either man or woman (80% - 90%), also consider that gender has nothing to do with mastering NCT.

However, the data show that there is still man domination phenomenon in office. Most of respondents admit that, if needed, man helps in operating NCT in office - PC, Internet, CD ROM, Desktop Publishing -.

The result of in-depth interview and Focus Group Discussion show that man is still considered better, both in mastering the technical aspects of NCT (e.g. in repairing NCT equipment) and also in operating it. This kind of though exist both in family and work environment and admitted prevent woman’s creativity in mastering NCT.

It seems weird if women, either at work or family environment, is trying to tinker with or trying to find out how to operate electronic equipment: from laser disc up to computer. Even if there is a woman who masters some new computer software, her man colleagues would be reluctant to ask to her. Woman who has interest in mastering communication technology often considered “not feminine”. Therefore there is a tendency that women will prefer to adjust themselves with their man colleagues’ demand. Because it is hard to defeat man’s pride, therefore, to be able to learn, woman will be “humble” so she would not be considered as man’s rival.

Segregation in Work Environment As An Obstacle Factor

The result of in-depth interview and FGD shows that there is still a segregation between men and women in work environment. There is still an opinion that women is better in kind of work which needs hospitality and attractive physical appearance or kind of work which needs more carefulness and patience. This kind of view is disinsentive to women employee to learn communication technology. However, it must be admitted that in the same time there is a tendency to leave the old work division. This is triggered by the existence of
women figure who could reach the position which was filled by men. And this achievement is obtained with hard effort.

In-depth interview and FGD also show that the obstacle upon the effort to ease segregation is still occur, either from men or women. The outcome of FGD shows woman is demanded to prove two things to reach the higher position in work environment; those are she has to prove that she has the same right with man and as an employee she has a right to have that higher position.

Research survey shows that for statement "Mastery on computer gives woman more chance to develop herself", 86% male respondent and 91% female respondent agree with that statement.

However, only 67% male respondent and 73% female respondents agree with the statement "Mastery on computer gives more chance to be equal with man".

Even for internet technology, 73.1% male and 88% female agree with the statement "Mastery in internet gives woman more chance to develop herself". While only 53.8% male and 64% female agree with the statement "Mastery in internet gives more chance to be equal with man".

Thus, although most respondents believe that the existence of NCT has an impact on woman development, however, that belief is fading when it is related to the possibility for women to compete with men.

Women Interested in NCT

The research shows that middle class women in Jakarta are interested in mastering communication technology and have a tendency not to depend on other people in mastering technology.

One main factor that trigger women to have that kind of interest is a believe that in the future communication technology will play more important rule in work environment, while most of them prefer to have a career outside home.

The result of in-depth interview and FGD show that informants deny the assumption which states that range of NCT variation which is dominated by men is wider than the one which is dominated by women.

One of the main factors which influences women's capability in mastering some NCT is their professional status.

An informant says that she masters internet better than her male colleagues as her profession demand her to look for a lot of information from abroad.
On the contrary, those who have profession as housewives seem not to be interested to master NCT as they do not have a direct need, especially with the kind of NCT that have a line with work (e.g. computer, internet, etc).

Thus, study shows that the wider of chance for woman to have a job and segregation in work environment is fading, then woman will be triggered to master communication technology. In other words, not communication technology that leads woman into a better position but change of culture that gives woman more change to master communication technology. Mastering communication technology will give a woman the easier way to be considered equal with her male colleagues.

The Difference With Former Generation

The outcome of in-depth interview and FGD show that young women have a tendency to master NCT. This is a changing of old pattern that could be found within the former generation.

The 60 aged informants admit that they tend to ignore the technical aspects of new communication equipment that they have. For example, some informants who are still active working could not operate facsimile machine which is available in their house. It will be different with 20 - 30 years aged women who state that they are more active in looking for new information how to operate communication technology.

There are some reasons that could be given for the difference between those two generations. They are:

• First, today generation - either men or women - are more interested in mastering technology than former one.
• Second, there is a fading away on view of segregation between men and women in the society. Slowly but sure, it leads to a view that women are no longer considered not appropriate to master technology. As stated before, this segregation view is still exist but slowly is fading away.
• Third, there is a growing tendency that more women are entering work environment and it leads women to feel necessary to master technology knowledge as much as they could to increase their possibility in getting better position in work environment.

Widen Point of View

It was hypothesized that by the existence of NCT, women could access all development around the world and it could widen their point of view. It could be done in front of computer of television at home without going out of the house.
Going out of house issue should be emphasized since for all this time women in developing countries (especially in Islam countries or country that most of its citizen are moslem) have a difficulty to go to public area.

Women not only can access but also involve to participate in self development or women right, for example by participating in electronic discussion through internet.

In general, the informants who are interviewed have more than enough NCT that are listed in form. However, they also admit that not all NCT has a role in developing their view.

In general, they doubt that technology such as laser disc, video compact disc or satellite television could have impact on women empowerment as they are usually used for entertainment.

One special attention should be given to the existence of private television that has been developed in Indonesia since 1989. In the last few years, five private television stations compete to offer various family and women programme which are presented in the morning. At prime time in the evening, there are talk show programmes presenting issue that related with women such as prostitution, sexual harassment, rape, etc.

Research survey shows that most respondents (70.3% male and 65% female) “agree” with the question “Do woman programme in television empower the idea about woman on her own”.

However, the result of in-depth interview and FGD is a little bit difference. The informants says that the television programme does not contribute significantly for the empowerment of suppressed women. In their point of view, there are career women who are presented in the programme, but most of the contents of the programmes are actually strengthen the women domestic image or kind of works that appropriate to be done by women such as cooking, floral arrangement, raise children, keep body in good conditions or tricks for communication among personal in the office.

Moreover, these programmes rarely present story of middle and low classes women who struggle harder as a result of being suppressed women. The informants admit that talk show programme in the evening present more issues about suppression of women. However, they thought that the presenting issues such as second wife, prostitution, family harassment, etc just to have sensational rather than to improve women status.
The informants admit that internet makes easier in doing job and looking for information. But, they also admit that the existence of internet has not given the possibility for women to have career without leaving home.

NCT Has Less Advantages on Low Class Society

The in-depth interview and FGD shows the scepticism about the role of NCT in improving the prosperity of poor society. This is related to the high price of NCT and qualifications needed to master it.

The informants worry that the development of NCT will widen the gap between the have and poor society in Indonesia which are already wide nowadays. That kind of worry occurs as mastering on NCT become a condition in work environment while it is more in middle and high class' hand.

NCT Has An Impact On Democratization

On the other hand, there is an optimistic view about the role of NCT in improving openess and democratization in Indonesia. In general, they refer to internet capability to break through the countries that caused Indonesian citizen have a possibility to have alternative information.

However, in the same time, there is a concern that information explosion will caused information disorder, meaning it is difficult for society to test the truth of that information. In this case, some informants prefer to release censor on mass media rather than to count on internet that could not be controlled at all.