The Implementation of Feminist Values in Srikandi (Woman Figure on Wayang Story): A Concept to Develop Gender Equality in Java, Indonesia

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Abstract

The purpose of this research is to analyze and implement feminism values of woman figure in wayang story as character education for Javanese woman to develop gender equality in Java, Indonesia. The method in this study is descriptive analysis with qualitative approach which uses library research for collecting data. The result of this study indicates that feminism values in wayang are depicted in figure of Srikandi as famous woman knight. Gender equality in Srikandi describes about an emancipation fighter woman who was able to fight for her kingdom with her tenacity and courage. She emphasizes about equality of role, skill, and achievement between men and women. Those values can be implemented as character education or role model for Javanese woman’s life today, so that they can break the negative social structure on society and dare to express or contribute more for society.

Keyword: Implementation, gender equality, feminism, Srikandi, Java

1. Introduction

Wayang is one of Indonesia’s local culture which has existed and lasted from the time of the ancestors. As a culture and art, the function of wayang is not only for spectacle or entertainment, but the character and behavior in wayang’s figure also can be used as reflection or role model to have a certain attitude in this era. One of the values that can be learned from wayang is showed by Srikandi figure that is known as woman knight and brave archer in wayang history. Srikandi’s characteristic indicates the existence of gender equality where the dominance of power is not only belong to men like the stereotype of society. It is showed by Srikandi’s good skill in archery and being a leader which idiomatic with men’s ability. The existence of Srikandi is a representation of emancipation woman based on Javanese culture who has courage to defend her citizenry and kingdom. Srikandi also shows that women have the same abilities and roles as men.

Feminism in Srikandi can be imitated and used as role model and character education for Javanese girl to achieve gender equality. Javanese culture is often called as patriarchal culture. The definition of patriarchy according to Bhasin (1996) is a system of men domination and superiority, system to control women, and control over the women. In the 18th century the existence of women in Javanese royal government were known as kanca wingking or women who served in the kitchen (Fenanie, 2000 in Uyun, 2002). While man was imagined whose characteristic is powerful, handsome, supernatural, and has many wives (Darwin and Tukiran, 2001 in Uyun 2002). Those social structure show that gender equality in Java is still low and harming to women or girls. Patriarchy concept is considering harmful to women because it becomes a system of social structures that make men be dominate, suppress, and exploit women. (Walby, 1990, in press; Azisah, Mustari, & Himayah, 2016). So it is necessary an innovation to equalize gender, one of the ways is by making feminist values on Srikandi as one of the examples and character education that can be implement to motivate present-day Javanese women in breaking social structure in Javanese society.

2. Limitation of Study

Limitation of study is needed to avoid the extent of discussion, so that the research will not deviate from the main purpose. There are two version of Srikandi story in wayang, those are Javanese version and Mahabarata version. In this study, the researcher only uses the Javanese version to find the feminist values on it.

3. Literature Review

The research about gender equality and feminist values in wayang has been done by some researches before. These are some of previous research that discuss about gender and feminist values on wayang: Sofiyana (2015) on her thesis which title is ‘Relasi Gender Dan Kuasa Dalam Penokohan Wayang (Srikandi Dan Dewi Kunti Dalam Perspektif Islam’ (Gender and Power Relations in Characterizing of Wayang Story (Srikandi and Dewi Kunti) Based on Islam Perspective) explained about Srikandi role in joining war show about the ability of women in defending the country, while Dewi Kunti who acts as head of household who could educates and takes care her children without the intervention of man show about the equality of role in household. Sofiyana called those
feminist values as liberal feminism. Beside that, Sofiyama also explained that gender relation in Java is as same as Islamic gender perspective which gives equal role between men and women. The difference between this study with Sofiyama’s thesis is the object and focus of study. Sofiyama’s thesis object study is on the feminist values that exists in two characters of wayang (Srikandi and Dewi Kunti), and her focuses is about gender relation in Javanese feminism and Islamic gender perspective. Meanwhile in this study, the researcher’s object is only focus on Srikandi’s feminist values and expaline about how the implement those values in this era to get gender equality. Dewi, Andayani, & Wardhani (2017) on their journal which title is ‘Woman Emancipation Image on Mahabarata Story: Amending The Meaning of Freedom and Role for The Modern Woman’ explained that Mahabarata as wayang story describe about woman emancipation. Some of the emancipation values are the equal which is not only on concerning self-equal between men and women, but also the equal of fulfilling a task in the realm domestic and psychological etc. Dewi, Andayani, & Wardhani’s research is discuss about feminism on wayang story in general (there’s no specification to which story or character), meanwhile in this study the researcher is only focus on Srikandi story.

4. Methodology of Study
Methodology of study is a method that used in study to analyze and get answers about the problems of study. In this paper, the researcher uses descriptive analysis method with a qualitative approach. According to Nawawi (1996) Descriptive method is a method that describes research objects based on facts as they are. This method is suitable be used in explaining the concept of gender and feminism in Srikandi’s figure.

Data sources that used in this study are books and scientific journals which are related to wayang, Srikandi, feminism, and gender. The data source is got from library and some journals in repository and digital platforms. The data collection technique that used is library research by reading, writing, and analyzing some journals and books which are related to the object. The researcher decided to use library research because it can help to get the answer of problem by referring to the previous relevant theory and research result. Besides that, it can help the researcher to get deeper information about the topic. In getting data sources, the researcher uses some criteria, those are searching relevant literature about wayang, gender in Java perspective, and Srikandi story which became symbol of feminist. For analysis the data, there are three technique that used by the researcher. The first is data reduction which means that the researcher focuses on choosing important things from literature review to get conclusion or summarize about the object of research. The second is data display which is done by grouping data in accordance with its respective sub-chapters in narrative. The last technique is conclusion drawing, which means the conclusion about the result of study that is analyzed.

There are twelve sources of literature that used in this study, eight of them describe about gender and feminism, one of them reveal a chronicle of Srikandi in Javanese wayang story, two of them discuss about wayang, while one of them is about applied research. All those literatures were analyzed by using descriptive methods get answer about feminist values in Srikandi as a concept of gender equality in Java, Indonesia.

4.1 Wayang Culture
Wayang is one of Indonesia's cultural heritages. The history of wayang relates to the worship of ancestral spirits (hyang). There are some ways to respect and worship the ancestral, one of them is by performing hayang-bayang (Sunarto, 1979 in press; Anggoro, 2018). After that, during the spread of Hinduism in Indonesia, the hayang-bayang performance was known as wayang. As a part of spread Hinduism, wayang story which originally told about the ancestor’s adventures and heroism changed to the stories of Mahabarata and Ramayana (Marina, 2008 in press; Anggoro, 2018). Not only a part of spread Hinduism, but wayang also was used by Sunan Kalijaga (a member of walisongo) to spread Islam in Java. Because of that wayang is identic as Java culture. The word of wayang comes from Old Javanese language wod and yang which mean repetitive and irregular movements. Wayang is a shadowy form that always moves with an irregular place (Marina, 2008 in press; Anggoro, 2018). Bastomi Suwaji (1993) in press; Anggoro, (2018) explained that wayang is story about living habits and human behavior which started from birth, life, death in natural processes. Therefore, wayang can be a suitable medium in displaying images of human life.

Sunarto (1989) explained that wayang has several types, such as wayang purwa, wayang pedalangan, wayang kaper, wayang kidang kencana, wayang ageng, wayang madya, klitik wayang, wayang beber, and wayang golek. The difference types of wayang are based on the material of making, the shape of wayang, the stories that told, and the period of wayang.

4.2 Gender Inequality in Javanese Culture
Gender is the difference between men and women who is classified socially and culturally related to roles, behavior, and traits (Azisah, Mustari, & Himayah, 2016). In Indonesia, gender discussions includes in INPRES No. 9 year
2000 about Gender Mainstreaming in Global Development of President Republic Indonesia. It states that gender equality is a general condition for men and women to get same opportunities and humans rights, can play roles and take part in political, economic, sociocultural, defense, national security, and in enjoying the results of development. However, even though it regulates in written laws, gender equality in Indonesia especially in Java has not been fully realized because the society upholds patriarchal values.

The position of women in Javanese culture always be second class after men’s position. Javanese women do not have equal position as men (Sarjono, 1992 in press; Ariani 2016). There are a lot of advices in Javanese culture that make women position are lower that men. Those advices are such as kancawingking; swarga nunut neraka katut; masak, macak, manak; and dapur, sumur, kasur. Kancawingking (women have position in the kitchen) means that women as wife only have position to manage household affairs, especially in taking care her children, cooking, and washing clothes etc. Swarga nunut neraka katut generally means that husband is the one who determines the wife will go to heaven (swarga) or hell (neraka). If the husband goes to heaven, it means that the wife will also go to heaven (nunut); but if the husband goes to hell, the wife will go too although she has right to go to heaven because of her good deeds (katut). This advice emphasizes that woman only depend on her husband in all aspects.

Masak, macak, manak describes that woman should able to cook (masak), always dress up for her husband (macak), and able to give offspring (manak). Dapur, sumur, kasur describes that women have domestic role to manage all things related to household such as cooking, washing clothes, washing dishes, cleaning up the house, and taking care for her children.

Those advices emphasize that Javanese women do not have same power and dominance as men. Thus means women's movement are limited, one of example is the Javanese culture which prohibits women from free activities and requires women to accept their destiny with willingness (Uyun, 2002). Patriarchy concept which is still developing in society led feminism movement to fight for gender equality. Feminism is an ideology about women's freedom with the belief that women feel injustice in all aspects because of their sex (Hum, 2007, in press; Wiyatni, 2012).

Based on data in 2017 West Java was on twenty second position, East Java was on sixteenth position, and Central Java was on eleventh position as Gender Development Index (IPG) in all provinces of Indonesia (Badan Pusat Statistik, 2018, in press; Soelistyowati, 2018). It means that gender equality in Java is still need to be increased.

4.3 Srikandi on Feminism Perspective

The name of Srikandi is an icon about the strength woman who is heroic, strong, full of enthusiasm, and never give up (Ariani, 2016). That is because Srikandi is known as woman knight who is brave and has a good archery skill in wayang history. She became a good example or role model for women soldier in wayang. Srikandi succeeded to save Pancala kingdom and all of her citizenries when Prabu Jungkungmardeya from Paranggubarja kingdom came to propose marriage her. The king gave a threat if Srikandi did not accept his proposal, so he would destroy the Pancala kingdom. The fate of all Pancala’s citizenries was on Srikandi’s decision. But Srikandi did not want to give up; she fled for a moment to Madukara (Arjuna’s kingdom) to learn archery with Arjuna in order to fight Prabu Jungkungmardeya. After having a good skill in archery, Srikandi bravely battled Prabu Jungkungmardeya and all of his gardarwa to save her kingdom and citizenries. Finally, Srikandi won that warfare without any injury at all and Prabu Jungkungmardeya was killed

Srikandi is also known as a brave leader in Bharatayuda war. In the war which battle to Resi Bhisma, Srikandi was appointed to be senapati or leader to replace Resi Seta as the previous leader who has been killed. With the hrasangkali arrow, Srikandi was success to kill Bhisma.

Srikandi’s attitude when learning archery, her prowess in war, and her ability to defeat Prabu Jungkunmardeya show that the society’s perception about women is wrong. The Directorate of Community Education Development (2010) in (Syafeëi, 2015) stated that women is defined as being weak, unable to lead, and whiny. Those perception make women often numbered after men. But that assumption is broken in the Srikandi figure. She is one of the representatives of women who have ability to fight and shoot like a man. So that, Srikandi's story when against Prabu Jungkunmardeya is describe about liberal feminism, which is proof that women also can contribute to politics. Beside that, her success in saving citizenries and Pancala kingdom also shows that women can take hand to action in defending the country.

The epithet as knight woman also shows that power is not only belong to men according to masculine concepts, but women also have the equal power. In Indonesian culture, especially Javanese culture, the knights are always identical with men who are portrayed as strong, wise and courageous. Women are only considered as someone who can only dwell in their homes, kitchens and serve their husbands (Sofiyana, 2015). But in Javanese wayang story, Srikandi was not only being a mom, but also she could be a leader in Bhatarayuda war. Srikandi shows that woman could equal their position same with men without forgetting their obligation as a household (Sofiyana, 2015)
4.4 The Implementation of Feminism Values in Srikandi for Gender Equality in Indonesia

The feminism values in Srikandi which has described before can be implemented and used as character education for motivating Indonesian woman, especially in Java. One of the ways is by including these values in school as character education for young generation through Javanese language lessons which are used as compulsory subjects in Java. Javanese language teacher not only explain about wayang story, but they also explain that Srikandi’s characteristic can be used as role model for woman in attitude. So that, woman will not be confined to the negative stereotypes of society. If these values can be implemented well, the number of gender equality will increase and women will not be underestimated.

Some of the values of Srikandi feminism that can be applied as character education for gender equality in Java are:

1. Mastering Skill which are Identc as Man’s Skill
   Expertise about military, archery, war, and being a leader are very identical to men. But, in wayang story Srikandi shows that she could master the skill that is even difficult to beat by anyone. So that, this value can motivate women to break the ‘society standard’ which said that women are weak and unable to lead. Women can emulate Sinsandi’s feminine values to rise up and give the best contribution to society.

2. Ability to Defend the Country
   Srikandi story when fought against Prabu Jungkunmardeya to save her citizenry and Pancala kingdom can be used as motivation that women also have ability and obliged to defend the country. If Srikandi defended the country physically by fighting, then women today can do it in non-physical way. One of the examples is increase the love of the homeland by giving achievement in various things, such as science, social work for the society, or give another contribution that can make the country proud.

3. Able to Perform Multiple Roles
   Behind her success in becoming a leader of Bharatayudha war and being the responsible safety of Madukara kingdom, Srikandi did not forget her obligation as a mother. This value can be a role model that woman can perform two roles in the same time, those are a role as a household and role as career woman. The implementation of this value can break the woman figure in Java which said that the woman obligate are just serving their husband and children. In fact, women can also contribute to society and nation without forgetting their obligate as household.

4. Being Independent and Active to Learn
   Srikandi’s expertise in archery is the result of her learnig with Arjuna all day long every day. She never gave up before her goal was reached. She was an independent woman too. Those characteristic can be example that as a woman we should be independent and always to learn to reach the goals.

5. Conclusion
   Srikandi story that used as object in this study is Srikandi on Javanese culture. The feminism values in Srikandi describe about equality between men and women or girls. The feminism values are shown through her courage, expertise in archery, her effort to save her citizenry and Pancala kingdom, and her ability in leading Bhatarayuda war. Srikandi emphasizes about equality of role, skill, and achievement between man and woman. These feminism values can be implemented in today’s life as motivation, character education and guideline for Javanese women or girls to get up and break the negative social structure in society which underestimated woman. If these values can be implemented well, the number of gender equality in Jawa will better and women will get the same justice as men.

References


