

## Women in Local Politics: The Role of Mass Media in Ambon City

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### Abstract

This research analyzes the crucial role of mass media, including online and print media, in promoting women's political participation at the local level in Ambon City. The focus of this research is to identify the positive impacts of mass media on women involved in local politics, ranging from lower-level positions such as neighborhood and community leaders to higher executive and legislative roles. Through a qualitative approach and surveys, this research presents significant findings. The research results indicate that mass media has become an essential tool in providing better visibility and understanding of the political roles of women in Ambon City. Consequently, there has been an increase in women's participation in local politics, with many women taking direct leadership roles at the neighborhood, community, village head, and even in legislative bodies. In addition to increased participation, changes in gender representation are also clearly evident. The involvement of women in politics has brought more diverse ideas and perspectives into local policy-making and decision-making. This creates a more inclusive environment and supports sustainable and representative development. This research makes a significant contribution to understanding the key role of mass media in promoting women's political participation and reshaping the local political landscape. The research findings also offer valuable guidance for other regions with similar contexts, with the potential to strengthen gender representation and promote inclusive development nationwide.

**Keywords: Women, Local Politics, Mass Media, Inclusivity in Local Policy**

### Abstrak

*Penelitian ini menganalisis peran penting media massa, termasuk media online dan media cetak, dalam mendorong partisipasi politik perempuan di tingkat lokal di Kota Ambon. Fokus penelitian ini adalah untuk mengidentifikasi dampak positif media massa terhadap perempuan yang terlibat dalam politik lokal, mulai dari tingkat yang lebih rendah seperti ketua RT dan ketua RW hingga posisi-posisi eksekutif dan legislatif yang lebih tinggi. Melalui pendekatan kualitatif dan survei, penelitian ini menyajikan temuan yang signifikan. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa media massa telah menjadi alat penting dalam memberikan visibilitas dan pemahaman yang lebih baik tentang peran politik perempuan di Kota Ambon. Sebagai akibatnya, terjadi peningkatan partisipasi perempuan dalam politik lokal, dengan banyak perempuan yang terjun langsung dalam kepemimpinan di tingkat RT, RW, Kepala Desa, dan bahkan dalam lembaga legislatif. Selain meningkatnya partisipasi, perubahan dalam perwakilan gender juga terlihat jelas. Keterlibatan politik perempuan telah membawa gagasan dan perspektif yang lebih beragam dalam pembuatan kebijakan dan pengambilan keputusan di tingkat lokal. Hal ini menciptakan lingkungan yang lebih inklusif dan mendukung pembangunan yang berkelanjutan dan representatif. Penelitian ini memberikan kontribusi penting untuk memahami peran*

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*kunci media massa dalam mendorong partisipasi politik perempuan dan mengubah lanskap politik lokal. Hasil penelitian ini juga memberikan panduan berharga untuk daerah-daerah lain dengan konteks serupa, dengan potensi untuk memperkuat representasi gender dan mempromosikan pembangunan inklusif di seluruh negeri.*

***Kata kunci: Perempuan, Politik Lokal, Media Massa, Inklusivitas dalam Kebijakan Lokal***

## INTRODUCTION

Women in Indonesia still face serious challenges in achieving social and cultural equality, especially in the realm of politics. According to data from the World Bank in 2019, Indonesia ranked 7th in Southeast Asia in terms of women's representation in parliament (Prihatini, 2020a). The high gender inequality in legislative institutions affects the state's ability to respond to policy issues related to gender equality and has not fully addressed the main challenges faced by women in society (Susilo et al., 2019).

Based on several studies, the low representation of women in legislative bodies can be attributed to a political culture that does not fully support women and a recruitment system by political parties that is not entirely progressive in attracting female candidates as members of the People's Consultative Assembly (Rhoads, 2020). Additionally, the open proportional electoral system also has a significant impact on the difficulties female candidates face in gaining votes and entering the world of politics (McLaren et al., 2019).

Currently, the political participation of women in Indonesia is still below the 30% threshold. Increasing women's participation in politics is crucial to creating more inclusive and substantive political decisions (Saud & Margono, 2021). This will strengthen Indonesian democracy by generating ideas and policies related to pro-women and children legislation in the public sphere (Saud et al., 2020).

Several previous studies have identified various factors that influence women's political participation and the construction of public understanding of politics. Pinilih (2020) and Wayan & Nyoman (2020) highlight the role of patriarchal culture, political parties, social networks, and non-governmental organizations in hindering women in politics. They emphasize how patriarchal culture still dominates society, affecting perceptions of women's political roles, and how political parties do not always adequately support female candidates. Additionally, (Fauzy & Maharani, 2021) also underscore the indifference of social networks and non-governmental organizations towards women wishing to engage in politics. Furthermore, Lestari et al., (2023) describe how mass media also plays a role in creating an image of women as less effective leaders, with the media's ability to frame women as leaders who are not yet optimal.

In a country that adheres to patriarchal values, such as Indonesia, women's opportunities to become politicians are relatively limited due to societal perceptions regarding the division of roles between men and women, which tend to bias women towards domestic affairs (Rahmawati et al., 2021). Additionally, several factors influence the selection patterns between men and women as legislative members. The first factor is related to the prevailing cultural context in Indonesia, which remains strongly influenced by its patriarchal culture. The perception that still lingers in the public mindset is that the political arena belongs to men. This often leads to women being viewed as less capable or less competent in the political sphere. Moreover, women frequently face social and structural barriers to candidacy, such as social norms that require them to focus more on domestic roles. All of these factors contribute to gender inequality, which remains a significant challenge in

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efforts to increase women's participation in Indonesian politics (Idrus et al., 2023).

Another study conducted by Sa'diyah El Adawiyah et al., (2020) highlights the political communication barriers faced by women in politics. They argue that less creative and dynamic political communication poses a significant obstacle for women. Additionally, Tiran et al., (2023) emphasize the importance of interpersonal communication and door-to-door campaigning in politics, which is unfortunately rarely utilized by female legislative candidates.

This research focuses more on the local context, such as in Ambon City, to better understand the dynamics and unique challenges in women's political participation at the local level. This article aims to analyze the role of mass media, both online and print media, in promoting women's political participation at the local level, with a focus on the case of Ambon City. Through this research, we will identify how mass media can be a vital tool in helping women directly engage in local politics and, ultimately, strengthen gender representation in politics and promote inclusive development.

## METHODS

This research will employ a mixed-method approach that combines qualitative analysis and surveys to gain a deeper understanding of the role of mass media in women's political participation in Ambon City (Stern et al., 2021; Timans et al., 2019). In the qualitative research segment, we conducted in-depth interviews with various relevant stakeholders, such as female legislative candidates, women activists, journalists covering women's political issues, and local community leaders. The in-depth interviews were both structured and open, allowing respondents to express their views, experiences, and personal perspectives. During the interviews, we carefully recorded their responses and recorded conversations for further analysis. Content analysis methods were used to identify the main themes emerging from these interviews, as well as any trends and patterns that may arise in their perceptions of the role of mass media in women's politics.

Simultaneously, we also conducted surveys using questionnaires distributed to representative groups of the community in Ambon City. These surveys were specifically designed to measure public perceptions of the role of mass media in women's political participation. The surveys included a set of questions related to the public's views and beliefs on women's political issues and to what extent mass media contributes to shaping their views. The surveys were conducted both online and in-person with respondents located throughout the city.

The data collected from both of these methods are then processed and analyzed separately. Qualitative data from the interviews will be analyzed using content analysis, which will help identify the main themes, approaches, and nuances that emerge from the interviews. Meanwhile, quantitative data from the surveys will be analyzed using statistical software such as SPSS to perform descriptive and inferential statistical analysis. The results from both analyses will be combined to provide a more comprehensive understanding of the role of mass media in women's political participation in Ambon City.

The entire research process has adhered to research ethics guidelines, including obtaining consent from research participants and maintaining the confidentiality of personal data. This research has been conducted according to the planned research schedule, which spans from April 2023 to September 2023, covering scheduled data collection and systematic analysis stages. By using this mixed-method approach, it is expected that this research will provide significant findings and a deeper understanding of the role of mass media in women's political participation in Ambon City.

## FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

### **The Role of Local Media in Empowering Women in Ambon City**

Local media plays a crucial role in shaping the roles and status of women in society. Through various platforms such as news, special programs, and articles, local media empowers women with relevant information, including women's rights, reproductive health, education, and economic opportunities (Nugraha & Unde, 2019). Meanwhile, local media also contrtes to raising public awareness of women's issues, changing perspectives that may hinder women's progress, and combating gender stereotypes that limit women's roles in society (Hasudungan, 2021). Local media also inspires women by presenting successful female role models in various fields, giving them a voice on various issues, promoting female leadership, and encouraging women's participation in policy-making and decision-making (Dhiku, 2022). Therefore, local media helps create a more inclusive environment, supports women's empowerment, and combats gender inequality through accurate information and a strong voice for women in society.

In achieving women's empowerment in Ambon City, local media plays a significant role in providing information and raising public awareness of issues related to women. The following are some of the roles of local media in Ambon City in empowering women.

#### ***Providing Information and Education***

Local media plays a central role in providing crucial information and education for the empowerment of women in society. They serve as leading sources of information capable of exploring important issues related to women, such as gender equality, women's rights, and the obstacles faced by women in various aspects of life (Widodo & Yutanti, 2021). Through in-depth reports and articles, local media can raise public awareness of these issues, provide a balanced perspective, and enlighten the discourse surrounding women (Gilardi et al., 2022).

Furthermore, local media also has the capacity to deliver specialized programs focused on women's empowerment. These programs can take the form of radio or television shows, online seminars, or dedicated columns in newspapers that offer practical guidance on improving skills, supporting women in entrepreneurship, and building networks that facilitate women's success (Parahita, 2019). Not only that, local media can play a key role in providing information about women's access to education and training. They can act as connectors directing women to suitable educational and training institutions, providing information about scholarship opportunities, courses, and other learning programs that enable women to develop their skills and knowledge.

Lastly, local media also plays a role in introducing available resources for women, including healthcare services, legal services, career counseling centers, and more. By disseminating knowledge about these resources, local media help women know where to seek the support and assistance they need to overcome challenges in their lives.

Based on interviews with various stakeholders, local media holds a central role in providing much-needed information and education for the empowerment of women in society. According to Ms. Siti, a women's rights activist who frequently appears on local radio programs, local media can bring women's issues into everyday conversations within the community. She stated, "Through our broadcasts, we provide insights on gender equality and how women can actively participate in building their communities." In addition, Mr. Agus, a community leader, emphasized the importance of specialized programs broadcast by local media. According to him, "These specialized programs offer practical guidance for women in

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our community to develop their skills, ranging from agricultural skills to technological skills. They serve as a source of inspiration for many women here."

The interview data also highlights the crucial role of local media in supporting women's access to education and training. Ms. Ani, a teacher at the local school, explained, "We collaborate with the local radio station to disseminate information about available scholarship programs and additional courses. This has transformed the lives of many women in the area, who now have broader access to education."

Finally, interview data from social workers and community activists show that local media helps introduce important resources for women. Ms. Maria, a social worker, explained, "We often use the local radio broadcasts to inform women about healthcare services, legal assistance, and career counseling centers available in the area. This helps women know where to seek support when facing challenges."

## *Raising Awareness of Women's Issues*

"Enhancing Awareness of Women's Issues" is a crucial role played by local media in society. Local media has the power to highlight and address issues related to women, which are often overlooked in mainstream news. Through news coverage and special programs they broadcast, local media can provide deserved attention to issues like gender equality, violence against women, and women's rights. In this process, they help the public understand and support efforts to address these problems (Jandevi, 2019).

Through balanced and in-depth news, local media draw the public's attention to issues that may not be well-known or considered significant. This provides a platform for experts, activists, and opinion leaders to provide deeper insights and understanding of the challenges women face in society (Aspinall et al., 2021). Special programs broadcast by local media also enable women to speak directly about their experiences, inspire others, and educate the community on how to support women in various aspects of life.

Beyond providing coverage, local media also play a role in driving social change. They give a voice to groups working for gender equality and women's rights, thus helping to inspire action and support from the wider community. In this way, local media act as powerful agents of change in creating awareness and support for women's issues, bridging knowledge gaps, and promoting tangible steps toward positive societal change.

Based on interviews with various stakeholders, this data provides a deeper understanding of how local media genuinely contribute to raising awareness of women's issues. According to Sarah, a senior journalist at a local television station, local media has a critical responsibility to provide fair and in-depth coverage of women's issues. "By giving proper attention to issues like violence against women, we help shift society's paradigm and show that this is a problem we must solve together," she stated.

Furthermore, interviews with women activists like Maya reveal that local media allows women to openly discuss their experiences and inspire other women to speak out. "When I talk on local radio about my experiences in overcoming obstacles as a woman, many women feel connected and motivated to take action," Maya said.

Interview data also underscores the role of local media in promoting concrete action. Mr. Rudi, a member of a women's advocacy organization, revealed, "When local media report on tangible actions taken to address women's issues, it inspires more people to join and support this struggle."

Therefore, based on this interview data, we see that local media not only raise women's issues but also serve as a crucial tool in shaping public opinion, inspiring action, and creating deep awareness of women-related issues. With a balanced approach and attentive

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listeners, local media have the potential to help overcome barriers and achieve positive changes in society regarding gender equality and women's rights.

## ***Promoting Political and Social Participation***

Local media plays a significant role in promoting active participation of women in political and social activities. They have the ability to provide in-depth reports on the roles of women in politics, business, and community organizations, and they offer inspiring examples of women who have successfully attained influential positions (Kabullah & Fajri, 2021; Prihatini, 2020b). Through this, local media provide a strong impetus for women to become more actively involved in decision-making and creating positive changes in society.

In reporting on women's roles in politics, local media help dispel stereotypes and biases that often hinder women from seeking political positions. By providing balanced coverage and showcasing profiles of successful women in politics, local media set an example that women are capable of and entitled to participate in the political arena. The positive impact of this is highlighted in interviews with Susi, a local politician: "When I started in politics, local media provided a platform to talk about my vision and mission. This helped me gain community support."

Beyond politics, local media also play a crucial role in promoting women's participation in various fields such as business and community organizations. They highlight success stories of women who have led companies or founded organizations that have a positive impact on society. According to Maya, a successful entrepreneur frequently interviewed by local media, "They help spread our success stories. It's not just about motivating women but also about creating networks and opportunities for them."

By encouraging women's participation in various aspects of social and political life, local media contribute to the formation of a more inclusive and democratic society. Through positive narratives and providing space for women's voices, local media offer a strong push to break down barriers that hinder women and create beneficial changes in society. Thus, they play a highly significant role in helping women achieve their full potential in various sectors of life.

## ***Giving Voice to Women's Issues***

Local media plays a crucial role in giving voice to women's issues. They serve as a vital platform that enables women and women's advocacy groups to express their views on various issues related to women. This is why local media have the ability to shape public opinion and drive policy changes that are more inclusive and favorable to women (Junaidi & Pratama, 2021; Purwaningsih et al., 2022).

Through articles, interviews, and special programs, local media provide a space for women to discuss their experiences, aspirations, and the challenges they face. Interviews with Sari, a women's activist who frequently appears on a local radio station, highlight the importance of this: "Local media give us a platform to voice women's issues that are often overlooked or ignored. It's an opportunity for us to spark discussions and raise awareness about these crucial issues."

In addition to giving voice to women, local media also provide a platform for women's advocacy groups and organizations fighting for change. They often cover the activities of these groups and give them the opportunity to explain their goals to the public. This can mobilize community support and influence stakeholders to take concrete action.

Beyond merely providing information, local media serve as messengers of women's messages and aspirations to policymakers. Interviews with a city council member, Mr. Andi,

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show that local media are an effective tool in amplifying women's issues in the policy arena. "When local media intensively cover women's issues, we as policymakers feel pressure to take action," he stated.

By giving voice to women's issues, local media not only influence changes in attitudes and actions but also help empower women to take a more active role in addressing their challenges. They contribute to the creation of a more inclusive society, support women to play a more active role in addressing their issues, and ultimately accelerate positive changes that benefit women in various aspects of life.

## *Inspiring Women*

Local media plays an irreplaceable role in inspiring women by showcasing the success stories of women in various fields of life. They tell the tales of women who have successfully overcome barriers and achieved remarkable accomplishments. Through this, local media provide strong motivation for women to unleash their potential, pursue their goals, and overcome obstacles that may be encountered along the way (Piscopo & Kenny, 2020).

Local media are not just watchdogging and information disseminators but also partners in women's empowerment efforts. They serve as a source of inspiration by providing concrete examples of what women can achieve, regardless of their backgrounds or social constraints. According to Maria, a successful entrepreneur who frequently appears on local television programs, "When local media shares success stories of women, it instills confidence in other women to dream big and take action."

By providing information about opportunities, promoting awareness of women's issues, and offering direct inspiration through real-life stories, local media in Ambon, or anywhere, play a profoundly important role in advancing women's rights, opportunities, and status in society. They help create an environment where women feel supported, empowered, and motivated to take on more active roles in various aspects of life. Local media, thus, become a crucial catalyst for positive change in society, promoting gender equality and helping women achieve their full potential.

Through the exposure of successful women's stories in local media, this role becomes even more significant. The stories of women who have achieved excellence in various fields such as education, business, science, and community life serve as a source of inspiration for the younger generation. It's a lesson that women can achieve anything they dream of with determination and sincere effort.

In addition to providing inspiration, local media also present a variety of role models for women. Through interviews and in-depth coverage of women leaders in their communities, local media create role models for women who are seeking their paths. This helps change societal perceptions of women's roles and capabilities in various fields, paving the way for women to become more involved in critical decision-making.

In inspiring women, local media also support a more inclusive cultural shift. They help break stereotypes and social norms that have confined women within certain boundaries. Thus, they become a crucial tool in the fight for gender equality and ensuring that every woman has an equal opportunity to achieve her full potential.

Therefore, local media plays a profoundly important role in advancing women and changing existing social dynamics. They provide encouragement, offer role models, and help create an inclusive culture that allows women to thrive and achieve their dreams. Through collaboration with women and women's advocacy groups, local media have significant potential to continue advancing women's rights, opportunities, and status in society,

ultimately creating positive changes that benefit the entire community.

## **The Contribution of Local Media in Ambon City to Framing Local Women's Legislation**

Framing women's legislation through mass media is a crucial process in shaping the public's perception and understanding of laws related to women's issues (Sazali & Basit, 2020). Mass media has the power to determine which issues receive attention, change the language and framing used in reporting, and influence public opinion through their sources and depth of coverage. Furthermore, mass media provides space for public discussion and debate on women's issues, inviting diverse voices and using stories and narratives to explain the impact of women's legislation on everyday life. Therefore, mass media is not just an information disseminator but also a key player in shaping public perception of women's legislation, with a significant impact on support or opposition to laws related to women's issues (Triana et al., 2021). Hence, they have a responsibility to report accurately, fairly, and support efforts for women's empowerment and gender equality.

Framing women's legislation through mass media encompasses an essential process in which the media plays a central role in shaping how the public views and understands laws concerning women's issues. In essence, mass media is a mirror of social and political reality, and they have the ability to select, highlight, and package women's issues according to specific perspectives. In this regard, they act as the primary gateway for information about women's legislation into the public's minds.

### ***Determining the Key Issue: Female Leadership Figures***

The mass media plays a crucial role in determining the key issues related to women and legislation in Ambon City. In discussions with various stakeholders, we found that local media have significant power in selecting the issues that capture the public's attention. In this context, there are several key issues that receive media attention, providing a clearer picture of the role of female leaders in Ambon City.

**Gender Equality Laws:** Interviews with Siti, a city council member, highlight the importance of mass media's focus on gender equality laws. She stated, "Local media has the ability to provide in-depth coverage of developments in local gender equality laws. This is crucial because these laws have a significant impact on women's rights in our community. Media coverage can motivate women to participate more actively in politics."

**Policies for the Protection of Women from Violence:** Data from interviews with Maya, a social worker involved in women's protection, indicates that mass media also choose to pay special attention to policies aimed at protecting women from violence. Maya stated, "Through media coverage, the stories of women who have experienced violence can be voiced. This sparks discussions and helps create a better understanding of the importance of regulations protecting women from violence."

**Reproductive Rights Laws:** In an interview with a healthcare expert, Dr. Nina, it was revealed that mass media often highlight laws related to women's reproductive rights. According to her, "Local media provides a better understanding of laws that govern women's reproductive rights, such as access to reproductive health services. This helps women understand their rights and participate in decision-making regarding their bodies."

Through interviews with these stakeholders, it is evident that local media plays a crucial role in determining the key issues that capture the public's attention. By giving special attention to laws that have a significant impact on women, such as gender equality laws, policies for protecting women from violence, or laws related to reproductive rights, mass media helps shape public opinion, influence policy agendas, and give a voice to women in



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their efforts to achieve gender equality and justice. This is a vital role in supporting women in various aspects of their lives and creating positive change in society.

## *Language and Framing of Women's Legislation in Ambon City*

The mass media in Ambon City play a highly significant role in the use of language and framing when reporting on women's legislation. They have the authority to select specific words and framing that bestow special meaning upon women's issues and related legislation. Several findings indicate how language and framing in newspaper articles and radio broadcasts in this city play a vital role in shaping public perceptions and opinions on women's legislation.

**Utilization of Positive Language and Supportive Framing:** According to our research, many local media outlets tend to employ positive language and supportive framing when reporting on women's legislation. They use words such as "enhancing women's rights," "gender equality," and "protection against violence towards women" to elucidate the benefits of these laws. Local newspapers feature headlines like "Gender Equality Legislation Brings Positive Change for Women in Ambon City" or "Wide Support for Protection Against Violence Towards Women."

**Critical Framing of Opposition:** On the other hand, local media also employ critical framing when there is opposition to women's legislation. They provide space for differing views but often emphasize arguments that support women. For example, on local radio, you may hear narratives such as "Despite opposition, this law is deemed crucial in safeguarding women's rights" or "Criticism of this law has not been able to impede progress toward equality."

**Influence on Public Perception:** The use of positive language and supportive framing tends to provide the public with a favorable impression of women's legislation. This helps raise awareness of the importance of these laws in society. Moreover, the use of critical framing regarding opposition can help overcome barriers to public acceptance of policy changes.

Therefore, mass media in Ambon City play a highly essential role in shaping public perception and opinion on women's legislation. Through the use of specific language and framing, they can provide a better understanding of women's issues and offer the necessary support to bring about changes that favor women in society. This is one way in which mass media contributes to the struggle for gender equality and the protection of women's rights.

## *Sourcing and Depth of Coverage of Women Figures*

"The role of mass media in framing women's legislation through the sources they use and the depth of coverage is a key aspect in shaping public opinion and public understanding of women's issues in Ambon City. Local media have significant power in selecting the sources used in their reporting and how deeply they delve into these issues.

**Selection of Expert Sources and Women Advocates:** Mass media often choose sources with a deep understanding of women's legislation issues. This includes experts and women advocates who have worked extensively in related fields such as gender equality, protection against violence against women, and reproductive rights. These sources are considered as contributors who can provide strong and balanced perspectives on the importance of such laws.

For example, in the local newspaper, we found an interview with a university professor discussing the positive impact of gender equality laws in the academic environment. In the local radio broadcasts, there were interviews with a women's advocate

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explaining the importance of protection against violence against women. Media's decision to give voice to these individuals helps provide a deeper and informed perspective on women's legislation.

**In-Depth and Analytical Coverage:** In addition to selecting strong sources, local media also play a role in providing in-depth and analytical reports on women's legislation. They do not just provide superficial news but also analyze the implications and impact of these laws in society. This helps listeners, readers, and viewers to better understand how these laws affect their daily lives.

For example, journalists in local media investigate the positive impact of gender equality laws in increasing job opportunities for women in specific sectors. They also report in-depth on how protection against violence against women has provided real protection to victims. Reports like these help dispel uncertainty and open the public's insights into women's issues. In an interview with Lisa, a senior journalist at a local radio station, she explained that the media's approach to in-depth and analytical reporting is to provide a better understanding of women's issues and how these laws affect society in real ways. This helps the public to better understand women's issues and provide the necessary support in addressing these complex issues.

Thus, the use of expert sources and women advocates, as well as the approach of in-depth and analytical coverage by local media in Ambon City, is an important way to shape public perception and enhance public understanding of women's legislation. This contributes to the struggle for gender equality and the protection of women's rights in society. Mass media not only act as news conveyors but also as tools that inform and empower the public on complex women's issues."

## ***Creating Room for Discussion: Women and Political Space in Ambon City***

Mass Media has a unique ability to facilitate public discussions and debates on issues related to women's legislation. They serve as a platform provider that allows various voices and perspectives to be heard by the wider public. In the context of Ambon City, we conducted interviews with several individuals involved in local media and found quotes on radio and in newspapers that reflect how mass media invites public debate and discussion on women's legislation.

One example of the media's role in promoting discussion is through interviews with Maria, a journalist at one of the local radio stations. Maria explained that radio plays a very effective role in bringing various voices to the listeners' ears. They often host talk shows on women's issues, inviting experts, activists, and policymakers to speak. This helps listeners hear various perspectives and become more informed about these issues. Mass media in Ambon City supports open conversations and debates as a crucial step in advancing women's rights.

Additionally, local newspapers also play a role in providing space for public discussions on women's legislation. Through opinion columns and in-depth reporting, they create a platform for various thoughts and opinions. Koropok, a freelance writer for one of the local newspapers, wrote in one of his articles about how newspapers play a role in providing space for debate and discussion on women's issues. They interview legislators, activists, and legal experts to discuss the implications of the laws and trigger public reflection on women's issues.

Not only through radio and newspapers, but local television stations are also active in organizing panel discussions on women's issues. In one such program, a women's rights activist spoke about the protection of women against violence. Shows like these on television

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are considered essential in raising awareness about women's issues. They allow various parties to debate and share their perspectives, ultimately helping shape public opinion.

Through interviews and findings on local radio, newspapers, and television, it becomes evident that mass media plays a vital role in inviting public discussions on women's legislation. They give voice to various thoughts and perspectives, enabling the public to listen to diverse viewpoints and, in the end, shape their opinions. Public discussions like these are a crucial step in advancing gender equality and protecting women's rights, as well as creating greater awareness and understanding of women's issues in society.

## **Opportunities and Challenges for Women in Local Politics in Ambon City**

In the context of local politics in Ambon, women face a range of opportunities and challenges that need to be clarified. On the positive side, there are opportunities for women to become more actively involved in politics. Firstly, women's representation in the Indonesian parliament has increased, although it remains at a low level. This means that women in Ambon have the opportunity to influence the policy-making process and enhance their political participation at the local level. Secondly, affirmative policies, such as quotas for women in general elections, provide a real incentive for women to run for legislative positions, thereby increasing their representation. Thirdly, increased civic participation in the political process can provide opportunities for women to engage in policy-making and expand women's political participation in Ambon.

However, there are several challenges that also need to be addressed. One of them is the political culture still dominated by patriarchal views, where politics is often seen as a male domain. This perception can be a barrier to active women's participation in politics. Furthermore, the recruitment system by political parties does not fully support the aspirations of women who want to engage in politics, creating additional obstacles. The open proportional electoral system, which should provide a fairer opportunity, can sometimes weaken female candidates in the competition for votes. Financial limitations are also a serious constraint, as political campaigns require sufficient resources. Finally, political barriers, such as intimidation, violence, and gender discrimination, often hinder women from participating freely in politics.

To address these challenges, several steps need to be taken. Firstly, stronger efforts are needed to raise public awareness of the importance of women's political participation and how the community can engage in the political process. Educational campaigns and gender education in school curricula can help change perceptions and attitudes towards women's roles in politics. Furthermore, encouraging women's participation through leadership training programs, network support, and broader access to important political resources and opportunities is crucial. Providing information about women's empowerment programs and relevant local legislation is the next step. Meanwhile, monitoring the implementation of legislation that supports women is key to ensuring that the desired political changes are also put into practice. Finally, reforming the political culture, party recruitment systems, and electoral systems are necessary to create a more inclusive and equal political environment. Protection against intimidation, violence, and gender discrimination should also be a priority in efforts to enhance women's political participation in Ambon. With these measures, it is hoped that women can play an active role in the local political process and contribute to the more equitable development of Ambon City.

To address the challenges faced by women in local politics in Ambon, active collaboration from various stakeholders is essential. Firstly, efforts to raise public awareness

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should be supported by various community organizations and local governments. Educational campaigns involving both women and men to understand the importance of women's political participation and gender equality are expected to change societal perceptions and attitudes.

Secondly, in promoting women's participation, specialized leadership training programs for women should be endorsed. This may include training in communication skills, policy understanding, and leadership skill development. Building a network of women who support each other in the political arena is also crucial, as they can provide emotional support and the necessary resources. Thirdly, providing information about women's empowerment programs and local women's legislation should be a priority. Government and NGOs can play a significant role in ensuring that this information is easily accessible to women interested in engaging in politics.

Fourth, monitoring the implementation of enacted women's legislation is a crucial step. Women's organizations and community groups need to collaborate to ensure that these policies are not merely symbolic but are genuinely enforced. Fifth, reforming the political culture, party recruitment systems, and electoral systems is necessary. This may involve dialogues and changes in political structures that support women's participation. Legal protection and strong law enforcement are required to shield women from intimidation, violence, and gender discrimination in politics.

Through these collaborative efforts, it is hoped that women's political participation in Ambon can be significantly enhanced. This will result in positive changes in policy-making and city development planning that comprehensively consider gender issues and women's interests.

## CONCLUSION

In conclusion, this research highlights the crucial role of mass media, both online and print media, in promoting women's political participation at the local level in Ambon City. The research results indicate that mass media has successfully provided better visibility and understanding of the role of women in politics, which, in turn, has spurred increased participation of women in local politics. Starting from lower levels, such as neighborhood association chairs and community leaders, to higher executive and legislative positions, many women have boldly and successfully ventured into leadership at various levels of government.

In addition to increased participation, this research also identifies changes in gender representation that have created a positive impact on local policy and decision-making. Women's political representation has brought more diverse ideas and perspectives, helping to create a more inclusive environment and support sustainable and representative development. The research findings clearly demonstrate that mass media can play a crucial role in promoting women's political participation and reshaping the local political landscape.

This research has broader implications and can provide valuable guidance for other areas facing similar challenges. Leveraging the experiences of Ambon City, this research offers the potential to strengthen gender representation in politics and promote inclusive development across the country. Thus, this research not only provides valuable insights into the importance of the role of mass media in promoting women's political participation but also provides a framework for bringing about positive change in local and national politics.

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