



Jugun Ianfu: The Construction of Students' Awareness on Gender

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Abstract

In 1993, the Minister of Social Affairs of the Republic Indonesia, Inten Suweno, issued a mandate to find the victims of Japanese colonialism. One of the Japanese colonialism victims was women who became *Jugun Ianfu* (comfort women). The practice of *Jugun Ianfu* in Indonesia was undercover, but it legalized by the Japanese colonial government with a reason to meet the sexual needs of Japanese army in their colonies. In Japanese colonialism era, women considered as the second line and their body was free to use for meeting the sexual desire. Even, many of *Jugun Ianfu* had physical injuries due to the cruelty of the Japanese army when having a sexual intercourse. The *Jugun Ianfu* should observe as a study on gender, especially in the educational field where the reproduction of knowledge happens. The lack of awareness in the students on the issue of gender equality brings about the reasons on the implementation of history learning using the sources of *Jugun Ianfu*. The students' gender awareness built when they analyze the sources of *Jugun Ianfu* and write an essay in a gender perspective. The discourses constructed by the students on the history of *Jugun Ianfu* are different. There are considerations that the history of *Jugun Ianfu* is categorizes as a sexual violence, gender injustice and human rights violation.

Keywords: *Jugun Ianfu*; gender; sexual violence; learning; students

Introduction

In July 1992, the former Chinese and Korean *Jugun Ianfu* held protest and asked compensation to the Japanese government (Bernas, 17 November 1997). Inten Suweno, who was the Minister of Social Affairs of the Republic Indonesia, asserted that the Indonesian females who once felt as *Jugun Ianfu* had to found and listed (Tahiro, 2003). The Yogyakarta Legal Aid Institute began to conduct a research and opened a reporting from the former *Jugun Ianfu*. Moreover, the members of Japan Federation of Bar Association helped the former *Jugun Ianfu* to demand compensation from the Japanese government.

During April to September 1993, the Yogyakarta Legal Aid Institute (LBH Yogyakarta) overwhelmed by tens of thousands compliments from former *romusha* and hundreds of former *Jugun Ianfu* (Hartono & Dadang J, 1997). About 1156 former of *Jugun Ianfu* from Yogyakarta, Central Java and

East Java reported to the Yogyakarta Legal Aid Institute (Tahiro, 2003). The number did not include all former *Jugun Ianfu* in Indonesia. Some of the former *Jugun Ianfu* chooses to be silent rather than uncover their past disgrace. Besides, many former *Jugun Ianfu* had passed away. The Yogyakarta Legal Aid Institute became the centre for study of *Jugun Ianfu*. Those institute also accompanying the former *Jugun Ianfu* to obtain their rights (Kompas, 1997). The struggle of the Yogyakarta Legal Aid Institute was not half-hearted. Even, a lawyer from the Yogyakarta Legal Aid Institute, Budi Hartono, often accompanied the former *Jugun Ianfu* abroad to strive for justice.

In the historical perspective, male and female have an equal status. The evidences come from the history of the Indonesian national struggle, particularly in the movement era. The Indonesian women were not idle because many of them who supported for the independence of Indonesia. The condition was different from the Japanese colonial era, in which the dignity of women was in a very low level. The sexual slavery conducted by the Japanese military on the Indonesian women was very amoral. Therefore, it was reasonable that *Jugun Ianfu* demanded responsibility from Japanese government. The contribution of Indonesian government in solving the case of *Jugun Ianfu* is very important, because *Jugun Ianfu* is not a national disgrace, but a crime conducted by the Japanese military.

In the perspective of gender, the *Jugun Ianfu* problem could observe as marginalization of the women. Gender is as a set of role like costume and mask in a theatre to convey that we are feminine or masculine (Mosse, 2000). Therefore, things that makes us as feminine or masculine is a combination of biological building blocks and biological interpretation shaped by our culture. Actually, the gender difference is not a problem as long as it does not create injustice between men and women. Nevertheless, in the fact, the gender difference creates many injustices because gender is a system and a structure in which the men and women become the victims of the system. Similarly, the women marginalization does happen in a workplace, society, and it had happened since they have been in a household.

The history of *Jugun Ianfu* becomes important in order to analyse the construction of the students' gender awareness in these days. The importance of the construction of the students' gender awareness to be studied lies in the development of gender theory in the modern era, thus, the students will give a discourse from their perspective on the gender awareness in the case of *Jugun Ianfu*. The researcher used a method of history research in reviewing the results of the students' essay on the gender construction. The stages of the history research method were determining the theme, heuristic, verification, interpretation and historiography (Supardi, 2011). Therefore, in the process of the history writing, it must consider the things, which become the characteristics of history.

The process of history learning for increasing the gender awareness conducted by making a design of learning model, which is implemented through the sources of *Jugun Ianfu*. Through the analysis of the sources of *Jugun Ianfu* and the understanding on the gender theory, the students will construct his mind and turn it into writing. In the process of writing the history, the students will use the stages of history research methodology. The students' understanding related to gender observed from the assessment on the students' writing results.

Jugun Ianfu in the Indonesian History

The *Jugun Ianfu* or comfort woman is a concept, which develops recently. This concept refers to the women who considered as the victim of Japanese army's sexual lust during the colonialism (Hartono & Dadang, 1997). *Jugun Ianfu* was not a choice of profession, which done voluntarily. Generally, *Jugun Ianfu* did their profession forcedly and no choice to refuse. During dozens of year, the case of *Jugun Ianfu* not monitored by the outside world. The discovery of documents in 1991 proved that the Japanese army had recruited at least 200,000 women in their colonial countries who made as *Jugun Ianfu* during the

World War II (Tahiro, 2003). Most of *Jugun Ianfu* recruited by Japan, worked forcedly and due to the deception using job or scholarship enticements.

The problems of *Jugun Ianfu* in Indonesia arose on the surface again after the coming of the members of The Human Rights Committee from Japan Federation of Bar Association (*Nichibenden*) in April 1993. The purpose of *Nichibenden* was to find the concrete data of *Jugun Ianfu*. The data obtained brought as the discussion material of a yearly symposium of *Nichibenden* (Bernas, 1997). The purpose of the Japanese advocates to Indonesia was to find the concrete data of the former *Jugun Ianfu* in Indonesia, not to give compensation fund. The Yogyakarta Legal Aid Institute, which appointed as the help desk of *Jugun Ianfu*, had concrete data from the reports of former *Jugun Ianfu* and a direct research. It seemed that the Yogyakarta Legal Aid Institute kept insisting on obtaining an official apology and compensation fund from the Japanese government.

In 1996, Mardiyem and the Yogyakarta Legal Aid Institute came to Tokyo to file an official complaint about the Japanese military crime to *Nichibenden* (Jateng Pos, 2000). Mardiyem is one of former *Jugun Ianfu* from Yogyakarta. The response given by *Nichibenden* was limited only on taking the data of Japanese war crime victims in the colonies. There was never promise to give compensation fund for the former *Jugun Ianfu*. The response of former *Jugun Ianfu* about the presence of *Nichibenden* was that there would be an official apology and compensation fund.

The Indonesian government had indifferent attitude on the issue of former *Jugun Ianfu*. One of fundamental reasons was the position of Japan as a country that had the biggest investment in Indonesia (Hartono & Dadang, 1997). The investments invested by Japan in Indonesia were nearly in all sectors. Many buildings built by Japan in Indonesia. Japan also began to introduce their culture to Indonesia. The Indonesian did not mean to quit of striving for the demand of the former *Jugun Ianfu*, but in that moment, the Indonesian economic situation is more important to be saved, therefore, to keep a good relationship with the Japanese government is the principal thing.

The demand, which continued to strive for, was an apology from the Japanese government officially to the former *Jugun Ianfu*. Japan should put the issue of *Jugun Ianfu* into their history and the compensation fund as the responsibility of the Japanese government to the former *Jugun Ianfu* (Kedaulatan Rakyat, 2007). Mardiyem strived for more than dozens of years, but not all demands met. It seemed that the Japanese government still viewed the Indonesians; especially the women of former *Jugun Ianfu*, like the time when they colonized this country, in which the Japanese side did not respect Indonesians as human beings anymore, even, millions of people had become the victims either as *Romusha* or as *Heiho* for the sake of Japanese interest.

In 1997, Budi Hartono said that the Japanese government had delivered apology to the former *Jugun Ianfu*. The Japanese government begged pardon with the deepest regret to all former *Jugun Ianfu* (Kompas, 2007). Mardiyem's struggle in demanding Japan began to gain a return. Budi Hartono told that the international world had given acknowledgement. The sexual crime victims of Japan were not only in Indonesia, but also in China, The Philippines, Korea, and Australia. In the national level, *Jugun Ianfu* considered as the victims of the Japanese army's organized crime. Nevertheless, the international acknowledgement did not directly make the Japan agree the demand from the Indonesians *Jugun Ianfu*.

Responding to the persistence of struggle by the *Jugun Ianfu*, on 18 July 1995, the prime minister of Japan Tomiichi Murayama had said apology officially for the sexual slavery conducted especially by the Japanese army (Tabloid Adil, 1997). It was unfortunate that the apology was not for the former Indonesian *Jugun Ianfu*. This condition made the former *Jugun Ianfu* more disappointed. Their struggle years had not yielded in a return. Furthermore, the Indonesian government had no intervention in responding to the issue of *Jugun Ianfu*. It was true about the fact the Japanese government supported the national development with an investment value of more than US\$ 17 million (Tabloid Adil, 1997).

Actually, the humanitarian reason should prioritize. The Indonesian government should be more explicit because the case of *Jugun Ianfu* related to the state honour that must strived.

The Asian Women's Found (AWF) is a private institution appointed by the Japanese government to distribute the fund for the former *Jugun Ianfu*. Unfortunately, the fund not gave directly to the former *Jugun Ianfu* because there had been a consensus between the Indonesian government and AWF to develop the old age homes or nursing homes (Kedaulatan Rakyat, 1997). Actually, what needed by the former *Jugun Ianfu* in the old age was not a nursing home, but a life cost to live near their family. If there is any compensation fund, it used by the former *Jugun Ianfu* to fund their elderly life because there were many former *Jugun Ianfu* who lived in poverty and physical wounds they bore until the end of life.

The cruelty of the Japanese soldier and army had become a typical characteristic that concluded from the stories told by the former *Jugun Ianfu*. Under the Japanese colonialism, the Indonesia women dignity was betted (Mariana, 2015). In the military world, committing rape against *Jugun Ianfu* women was a legal thing. The Japanese military that made the woman's body as a lust satisfier was a part of their efforts of conducting terror and controlling a colony.

The Students' Discourse on Jugun Ianfu

Through the *Jugun Ianfu*-sources based history learning, it can be viewed the results of writings on the discourse constructed by the students. Before displaying an essay, the students conduct an analysis on the sources and construct their mind related to the history of *Jugun Ianfu*. Here, we will explain about several perspectives constructed by the students related to the history of *Jugun Ianfu*. The discourses constructed by the students on the history of *Jugun Ianfu* are different. There are considerations that the history of *Jugun Ianfu* is categorizes as a sexual violence, gender injustice and human rights violation. Here are the categories of essay from the students' works.

The perspective on gender injustice constructed by the students that the practice of *Jugun Ianfu* committed intentionally by the Japanese government showed how the position of women which was very low under the domination of men. The Japanese men when colonized Indonesia had a belief that there was no problem about sexual intercourse outside the marriage. It was due to the far distance in the colony between the Japanese men and their wives; therefore making women as the lust satisfiers was a need. *Jugun Ianfu* alienated from the surrounding society and placed in the brothels built by the Japanese military. Their task was only satisfying the sexual desire of the Japanese men who visited them.

The perspective on violence constructed by the students as a discourse that there was force, even, physical violence against women who made as *Jugun Ianfu*. The force conducted by the Japanese men against the women who made as *Jugun Ianfu* accompanied by threats and terrors. The position of women much oppressed because the women must give their body to the Japanese soldiers and military in Indonesia. Providing women as *Jugun Ianfu* in Indonesia much violated the social norms and included in the sexual violence. The Japanese men in the colonies viewed sex as merely a fun. The native women recruited forcedly to be *Jugun Ianfu* and treated arbitrarily, made as the lust satisfiers and physically tortured.

The perspective on the human rights violation, Japan plundered the human rights as well as the dignities of thousands of women who made as *Jugun Ianfu* because the women treated as the sexual slaves. The recruitment of *Jugun Ianfu* conducted undercover through many deceptions and job or scholarship enticements. The policy of providing *Jugun Ianfu* legalized by the Japanese government and assisted by the local village officials.

The constructed gender identity functions as technology in societal norm and rule formation, which separates the categories of female and male (Wieringa, 2003). As the example, a woman usually has a task to manage the household, meanwhile, a man has an obligation to find livelihood. Besides, the concept on gender is an inherent characteristic in men and women which is constructed either socially or culturally (Fakih, 2013). One's identity is shape by the factors of race, class, age, ethnic, and sexual choice.

Violence is a way of solving the problems in life by creating an infliction against others (Mulkan, dkk, 2002). The sexual violence against *Jugun Ianfu* in Indonesia conducted to meet the sexual desire of the Japanese military and soldiers in the colonies. Before providing *Jugun Ianfu*, there were many Japanese men found to have sexual diseases because too often found the lust satisfiers in the legalized prostitutions. According to Weberian, the ruler is as the legal authority holder in committing violence.

According to Charlotte Bunch, actually, the women's rights had been violating through many ways. The plundering against the Indonesia women's bodies made as *Jugun Ianfu* categorized as violation against the women's rights. In the case that the women were as the victims of violence committed by men, in a stereotype way, men considered themselves as the stronger class, and as such, they consider themselves as having more power than the female class (Savitri, 2008).

The Japanese assumption is there is similarity between the sexual intercourse before or after marriage. Enjoying a sexual intercourse by giving payment for the service considered as taboo (Oktorino, 2014). The Japanese men have a high sexuality level. Before starting the practice of *Jugun Ianfu*, the Japanese military committed rape against women in villages brutally. The intention of the Japanese government to provide women of *Jugun Ianfu* in the colonies was to avoid the Japanese military and soldiers from sexual diseases.

Based on the results of the students' essay works, it can be drawn conclusion that most of students viewed the issue of *Jugun Ianfu* from the perspective of gender injustice. Nevertheless, several students viewed the issue of *Jugun Ianfu* from the perspectives of human rights violation and sexual violence. The discourse on gender injustice from the perspectives constructed by the students is viewing the treatment of the Japanese government that legalized the recruitment on women as *Jugun Ianfu* and made those women as the lust satisfiers. Such condition made the position of women was far below the men.

Women in the Modern Construction

The issue of *Jugun Ianfu* had just been voiced in the reform era and supports from many parties helped to strive for and to restore the name and the dignity of the former *Jugun Ianfu*. The discourse of gender viewed women as equal to men. According to Scott (1989), gender is an element, which shapes the social relation based on differences, which underlined, by the relation of gender, and the prominent way that signifies a power relation. The social relation established between the Japanese military men and the women of *Jugun Ianfu* in the war era is like a relation between rulers and slaves.

In the modernism, there are fundamental values such as equality, liberty, and fraternity principles. Those values contradicted the practice of *Jugun Ianfu* in the Japanese colonial era in Indonesia. The practice of *Jugun Ianfu*, in a wider context, viewed as oppression between the ruling class and the ruled class, not only oppression against the Indonesian women.

The history noted that in every social life ordering rests on the control on women body and sexuality. Women should give a respect and not be made as the sexual slaves who are recruited forcedly to meet the sexual desire of the Japanese military and soldiers in the colonies. In the family life level, harmony is entirely on the woman's hand (Permanadeli, 2002). The family management is on the

woman's hand that is to educate children and accompany the husband toward the top of success are the woman's tasks.

Types of oppression against women always changes time after time. The dominance of female sexual capacity and reproduction by male becomes a model for the types of oppression against other societal groups (Blackburn, 2007). In the case of *Jugun Ianfu*, women were under the category of subaltern. The women of former *Jugun Ianfu* marginalized from the social relation. They labelled by the society with a negative stigma as the Japanese rations. The existence of the former *Jugun Ianfu* considered as the national disgrace, they did not have any space in the society.

The social representation has a concept on a social communication in which every societal member makes, receives, utters, and brings the concept into reality in the daily life practices, therefore a mutual knowledge on something is emerged (Permanadeli, 2002). The concept on representation focused on the dynamic aspect of society, an individual was not merely born as a mediator between a stimulus and a response, but he/she provided as *Homo sapiens*. The ideal model of modern Javanese women is those who have a sense of motherhood and have higher education.

Conclusion

The history of *Jugun Ianfu* in Indonesia is an interesting incident studied from many perspectives; one of them is from the perspective of gender. Gender does not care one as male or female. *Jugun Ianfu* is women made as sexual slaves by the Japanese soldiers in their colonial era in Indonesia. Most of *Jugun Ianfu* recruited from female villagers through many deceptions, because the practice of *Jugun Ianfu* not conducted openly. Nevertheless, there was also *Jugun Ianfu* who found as prostitutes. After the independence of Indonesia, the fate of former *Jugun Ianfu* disregarded, until 1993, there was a mandate from the minister of social affairs of the Republic of Indonesia to find former *Jugun Ianfu*. The Yogyakarta Legal Aid Institute (LBH Yogyakarta) started to conduct a research and open a complaint post (help-desk) after a long struggle from the former *Jugun Ianfu* and LBH Yogyakarta, finally, one of Japanese private institutions AWF said an official apology and gave compensation from AWF. Strangely, the compensation not given to the former *Jugun Ianfu* directly, but allocated to build nursing homes by Inten Suweno.

Injustice was not only felt by the former *Jugun Ianfu* when they were treated as the sexual slaves by the Japanese soldiers, even, after the former *Jugun Ianfu* strived for obtaining an apology from the Japanese government, there was no support and help from the Indonesian government. The compensation from AWF should be able to enjoy by the former *Jugun Ianfu* to fund their elderly life and to fund the recovery due to the physical wounds of the Japanese soldiers' cruelty, but in the fact, it allocated to build the nursing homes.

The historical sources on *Jugun Ianfu* collected and used in the process of learning history through a project-based learning. In the learning process, the students will display an essay on the history of *Jugun Ianfu* based on several perspectives. From the learning process and the analysis of the sources of history, the students will find the gender injustice and here, the students' gender awareness constructed. The evidence that the students have understood the gender equality viewed from the results of the essay.

The social representation built by the society on the modern Javanese women is very sociable. The ideal model of Javanese women is those who have a sense of motherhood and have higher education. Besides, although women work as professionals, they must be responsible for their family life.

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