

Social and Development Criticism through Music

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Society has an important role in development because their participation is the prerequisite to a development process. Participation can be done through deliverance of aspiration by society to the realities they are facing. Related to this matter, popular culture becomes one form of media that is generally utilised by the society. One of these is music. Through music, lyrics, performance and certain symbol, society may articulate initiative and social criticism for development process.

In Indonesia, various genres of music, such as *dangdut*, *campursari* or *hardcore* have long been used as social criticism media and development. Indonesian music content progresses along with social realities that exist.

Dr. Hempri Suyatna, Head of Center for Development Studies (Sodec), PSdK, at Faculty of Social and Political Sciences UGM, accepts the fact. Music genres such as *dangdut* and *campursari* can inspire many people to deliver social criticism and protests.

"*Dangdut* and *campursari* have the identity to deliver criticism for development. These types of music are close to the people," he said at a National Seminar themed *Music: Social and Development Criticism*, held at Digital Library of the Faculty on Wednesday (5/4).



According to Hempri, many songs were composed to criticise the construction and social problems that exist. *Dangdut* and *campursari* became of media for social criticism that are close to the grass roots. *Dangdut* music not only entertains its audience but also comes to the political stage such as shown by top musician H. Rhoma Irama with Unity and Development Party in Elections 1977 and 1982.

"Until today, there's no other musician that can replace the charms of criticism written by Rhoma Irama," he said.

The Seminar aims at observing the role of music in society as media of criticism articulation, demand, and initiative in the attempts to lead social change and development.

Apart from presenting Dr. Hempri Suyatna as speaker, the seminar also presents Prof. Andrew N. Weintraub from University of Pittsburg who discusses *dangdut* and democracy, and Rizky Sasasoni, S.S that discusses Indie music and social criticism.

Prof. Andrew N. Weintraub added during the New Order, some songs of Rhoma Irama were banned from circulation as they were considered as disrupting national stability. At that time *dangdut* music became the symbol to resist the New Order military regime.

"So was Iwan Fals. Both Iwan Fals and Rhoma Irama made criticisms. Iwan's song, although he did not come from the grassroot class, his songs are for them. While Rhoma Irama, despite being made an enemy, but his songs can form a society which is observable in the lyrics he wrote under the condition of that time," he said.

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