

National Fashion Image of Indonesia's First Lady

Suciati^{1*} Agus Sachari²

1. Education Program Dressmaking, Indonesia University of Education, FPTK Building 2nd Floor, Jl. Dr. Setiabudi No. 207, Bandung 40154, Indonesia

2. Research Group Design and Visual Cultural, Faculty of art and design, The Institute of Technology Bandung, Jl. Ganesa No. 10, Bandung 40132, Indonesia

Abstract

Since its independence to its reformation era, Indonesia has had five first ladies comprising Fatmawati, R. Ay. Siti Hartinah, Hasri Ainun, Sinta Nuriyah, and Kristiani Herrawati. Since then, the first lady's fashion has been recognized as Indonesia national fashion through presidential decree No.18 year 1972, national fashion workshop in 1978 in Jakarta, and also Indonesia's constitution No.9 year 2010 stating that national fashion is one of the compulsory items in national events. Fashion image of the first lady is not only considered good looking yes it has also cultural and philosophical values, appears to be lady-look, and has good characters. This article discusses the appearance and philosophical aspects of Indonesia's first ladies' fashion and how the fashion represents the graceful image of a first lady. Visualization of the first ladies is identified using historical method while their national fashion is studied through content analysis. Having analyzed the data collected, this study finds out that each first lady's fashion kept changing from one to another. The changes are not only influenced by the era each first lady was leading and which culture they came from but also from how they understand their position as the first lady; either when they have to meet their citizens or when they interact with fellow first ladies from other countries. Finally, this study concludes that first ladies' fashion contains a lot of political and cultural messages as an effort to preserve the national identity.

Keywords: National fashion, Image, First Lady, *Kebaya*, Lady-look, Identity

1. Introduction

First lady is an honorable title given to a president's wife. Sometimes a first lady is also called *national lady*, *nation lady*, and so on; however, first lady is not just a name; it consists of certain duties to dedicate and to have loyalty to the nation (*White House*, 1987: p.162-165; *White House*, 2007: 164-180; *World Book*, p. 291). First ladies have multiple roles such as a wife, a mother to their children, and a citizen who is expected to have big contribution to the nation. According to Uno (2014), first ladies are those who are able to: 1) have high spirit and become a role model for the society; b) cope with social issues; c) monitor and control the president's dynamic activities as the head of the nation; d) be the ambassador of culture and design; e) play the role of soft power; and f) promote her nation politically and promote local retailers. In the same time, first ladies have to be an inspiration for women in her country and for first ladies all over the world. Thus, first ladies are usually center of interest either within their countries or overseas. One of the focuses is about their fashion.

First ladies have such a big responsibility for their nation and society. Their life becomes important information for people. This might have something to do with the fact that they are married to the president. One of the most important roles of first ladies is to welcome governmental guests on behalf of each first lady's nation. Consequently, they have to put national issues over their personal staff. Considering those responsibilities of first ladies, it is understandable that they are honored in national events such as ceremonies. Not only do they gain respect in terms position, but their fashion is only one thing the government, Indonesia in this context, respects.

In Indonesia, almost all first ladies wear *Kebaya*, a traditional blouse-dress combination, as a representation of national fashion. This proves that *Kebaya* is Indonesia national fashion; however, as time goes, *Kebaya* also has its transformation. The transformation is commonly on the variation of its sleeve, top front cutting, front cutting, the front bottom part of the top, its length, and its bottom. Regarding the bottom of *Kebaya*, it usually has something to do with its materials and its length, whether it uses regular *Kain* (a traditional material that is like a skirt) or *Jarik* (a combination of several traditional fabrics). National *Kebaya* (Musa Widyatmodjo, 2017) is considered as fashion icon that can promote Indonesian beauty in both national and international levels whose journey of design is as follows 1) in Indonesian women journey, it appears as national fashion; 2) based on their own awareness, it becomes local convention of the nation; and 3) in a national scale, *Kebaya* is formally recognized. *Kebaya* is getting more popular as national fashion day by day since it is believed to represent the beauty of Indonesian women in such factors as its curviness, fitting to the body, elegance, and other specific aspects from head to toe. This can be seen as a part of national culture of Indonesia.

National fashion, particularly *Kebaya*, has several aspects influential to the image of its owners. The image is believed to be affected by *Kebaya*'s special characters; traditional and modified (Rifaah, 2011). Types or models of *Kebaya* are parts of cultural and ethnical development, especially in Sundanese culture (Russanti, 2007). It also appeared to be a power symbol (Septiani, 2012). In terms of *Kebaya* as national fashion, one of the

important considerations is the materials or the fabrics (Kiromah, 2007). Another important factor is the technique of making that can possibly affect its image (Andriati, 2012). *Kebaya* as the image of national fashion of Indonesia needs further studies as a conservational effort in today's era (Triyanto, 2008). Some studies try to related fashion to semiotics. One by Micklewright (2000) reveals that in the nineteenth century, Ottoman women's fashion played an important role of social communication on gender relation in the palace. In the meantime, Aryanti (2015) found out that *Hijab* had been proven to strengthen the identity of a village in Yogyakarta, Indonesia, called Kauman. She further explained that despite of the very important position of a first lady, very little we know of how her appearance has contributed to the construction and preservation of women's identity in her country.

This study is trying to identify elements of fashion of Indonesia first ladies ranging from the first up to the fifth first lady. The first ladies to be studied are Fatmawati (1945-1966), R. Ay Siti Hartinah (1966-1996), Hasri Ainun (1998-1999), Sinta Nuriyah (1999-2001) and Kristiani Herrawati (2004-2014). Specifically, this study investigates the image each first lady wants to show in relation to the national fashion they wear. The method used by this study is design historical study and content analysis that put focus on the development of Indonesia especially its national fashion as an identity that plays an important role in empowering women. To be clearer, the content analysis is carried out through visualization of the fashion the first ladies wear.

1.1 Fashion, Identity, and Image of National Fashion

Relationship between national fashion and national identity does not merely lie on its role as a communication tool for the nation (Nugraha, 2007). It is further a promotional way of how Indonesia women are. Garment of national fashion of Indonesia is an important part of national identity as well since traditional society has their social role and rules that are relatively standardized.

National fashion as an identity or a means of communication is a cultural phenomenon that is understood as a system of faith, values, ideas, and experiences through practices, artifacts, and institutions. Communication in this context is not only about feelings and mood. Moreover, it involves such things as values, hopes, and faith of the nation produced by its people. In Indonesia, women national fashion is divided into four types: *Kemben*, *Baju Bodo*, *Baju Kurung*, and *Kebaya* (Sartomo, 1953). Those types are explained as follows (Achjadi, 2003) and (Sartomo, 1953): a) *Kemben* is simply a torso wrap kind of blouse; b) *Baju Bodo* is a traditional Makassar blouse whose shape is rectangular and usually short-sleeved; c) *Baju Kurung* is a traditional Malay dress for women which is a loose-fitting full length dress that consists of a skirt and a blouse; and d) *Kebaya* is another traditional cloth for women that is usually tight-fitting with a variety of materials and models. The four aforementioned types of Indonesian women's fashion is usually matched with a *Kain* or a *Sarung* (a tight-fitting skirt made of a traditional fabric). It can be concluded that national fashion is characterized by its physical appearance, function, types of garment used, occasion of wearing, color, materials, size, and certain techniques of wearing (Figure 1).

A long *Kain* is a bottom usually matched with national dress for women whose shape is rectangular and each edge does not meet each other and has the following criteria: a) body: containing main pattern; b) edges: containing supporting pattern; c) *Tumpal*: containing a triangle pattern; d) edges pattern; and e) other additional patterns. For women, it is worn by rolling it from left to right with some little folding in the back and for men, it is from right to left and the folding from is at the front and usually bigger than that of women. Its length is usually 250 cm and its width ranges from 100 to 110 cm. *Sarung*, on the other hand, is rolled and folded in the waist and its width is between 100 – 110 cm and its length is 180 to 220 cm (Djumena, 1990).

Those four types of fashion are categorized to national fashion due to their popularity in the nation (Sartomo, 1993). The bottom part of each fashion, as mentioned above, is usually a *Kain* or a *Sarung* that is usually rolled and folded in the waist or in other parts depending on the top being worn. The top of each type; however, has typical variation one to another (Figure 2).

In terms of official national fashion, there are several types as follows.

- a) Classical
 1. Javanese classical batik that is combined with classical *Kebaya*, either long or short sleeve, and usually without any scarf.
 2. Classical *Sarung* such as *Songket* with *Baju Kurung* or long-sleeved *Kebaya* that is matched with a scarf following the tone of the *Sarung*.
 3. Any classical clothes appropriate for governmental events.
- b) Semi-classical
 1. A *Berwiru* fabric or a *Sarung* combined with a long or short-sleeved *Kebaya* with model modification and a scarf.
 2. Semi-classical clothes for formal meetings, funeral, or inauguration.
- c) Modern

This type of cloth is usually not combined with *Sarung*. It usually suits some casual governmental events

such as tea or coffee time, attending concert or opera.

1.2 Periods of First Ladies

Even though the position of first ladies is not written in the law, being first ladies is such an honor since it is believed to be a convention (an unwritten law) in Indonesia. This unwritten law was born due to the practice of the government year by year. The convention is a supporting system to the government and is not in contrary with the existing constitution of Indonesia. The roles of first ladies of Indonesia emerged after its independence on August 17, 1945 (Table 1).

3.1 Fatmawati (Figure 3)

1. Hair bun:
 - a. Bun Model: Traditional
 - b. Bun Accessory: Traditional hairpin
2. Top:
 - a. Top Front Cutting: Square and Rectangler
 - b. Front Model: *Kutubaru*
 - c. Bottom of the Top Model: Upside triangle and straight, length up to the hip
 - d. Top Arm Model: Sleek
 - e. Edge of the Arm Model: Loose and medium (not too long and not too short)
3. Type of Fabric: Lace
 - a. Floral
 - b. Brown
4. Bottom:
 - a. Conical *Jarik*
 - b. Type of Fabric: cotton
 - c. Pattern of Fabric: with patterns
 - d. Color: Brown and cream-colored
5. Accessory: Neclace
6. Millinery: *Hijab* and slippers

3.2 R.Ay Siti Hartienah (Figure 4)

The fashion design of R.Ay Siti Hartimah as the first lady was recognized through the presidential decree of Republic of Indonesia No.18 year 1972 on March 7 and in a national workshop of fashion in 1978 in Jakarta.

1. Hair bun:
 - a. Bun Model: Traditional (Javanese)
 - b. Bun Accessory: Traditional hairpin
2. Top:
 - a. Top Front Cutting: Square
 - b. Front Model: *Kutubaru*
 - c. Bottom Part of the Top Model: Tight-fitting from the top to the hip
 - d. Top Arm Model: Sleek
 - e. Arm Model: Straight
3. Type of Fabric:
 - a. Pattern: *Lace*
 - b. Color: Floral
4. Bottom:
 - a. Model: *Wiron*
 - b. Type of Fabric: *Mori*
 - c. Pattern: *Lereng*
 - d. Color: Brown
5. Accessory: Necklace, earrings, and bracelet.
6. Millinery: scarf, slippers, clutch, glasses, and Angkin.

3.3 Hasri Ainun (Figure 5)

1. Hair bun:
 - a. Model: Traditional
 - b. Accessory: none
2. Top:
 - a. Top Front Model: Triangle
 - b. Front Model: *Kartini Kebaya*, a type used by Aristocric Javanese women in the 19th century.
 - c. Bottom Model: Straight and loose to the hip and almost the knees
 - d. Top Arm Model: Sleek

- e. Arm Model: Straight and loose
3. Type of Fabric: Lace
 - a. Pattern: Floral
 - b. Color: Dark blue
4. Bottom:
 - a. Model: with *Wiron* and conical
 - b. Type of fabric: *Batik*
 - c. Pattern: Floral
 - d. Color: Redish brown
5. Accessory: *Subang* and earrings
6. Millinery: Scarf
- 3.4 Sinta Nuriyah (Figure 6)
 1. Hair bun:
 - a. Model: traditional (Javanese)
 - b. Accessory: none
 2. Top:
 - a. Top Front Cutting: Triangle
 - b. Front Cutting: Straight and symmetrical
 - c. Bottom Part model: Tight-fitting and long (front part is longer).
 - d. Top Arm Model: Sleek
 - e. Arm Model: Straight and symmetrical
 3. Type fo Fabric: Lace
 - a. Pattern: Floral
 - b. Color: Yellow
 4. Bottom:
 - a. Model: With *Wiron* at the bottom
 - b. Type of Fabric: cotton
 - c. Pattern: Traditinal (Floral, Geometrical),
 - d. Color: Cream-colored, brown, black, and yellow.
 5. Accessory: Ring and earrings
 6. Millinery: *Hijab* and loafers
- 3.5 Kristiani Herrawati (Figure 7)
 1. Hair bun:
 - a. Model: Traditional
 - b. Accessory: *Konde* (traditional hairpin)
 2. Top:
 - a. Top Front Cutting: Square and Heart-shaped
 - b. Front model: Straight and symmetrical
 - c. Bottom Part Model: Straight, loose and long to the knees
 - d. Top Arm Model: Sleek
 - e. Arm Model: Straight and loose
 3. Type of Fabric: Silk
 - a. Pattern: Floral in every edge
 - b. Color: Red
 4. Bottom:
 - a. Model: *Sarung*
 - b. Type of Fabric: Cotton
 - c. Pattern: Floral
 - d. Color: Blue-ish brown
 5. Accessory: Ring
 6. Millinery: Scarf, clutch, and loafers.

1.3 First Ladies and The Image of National Fashion

Based on the visual elaboration of the national fashion of the first ladies within the years of 1945 and 2014 (see Table2), the image of the national fashion consists of the blouse (*Kebaya*) on top, *Kain* on the bottom, and some additional accessories such as scarf, clutch, and slippers. The most frequently-used patterns are commonly floral and some plain ones with a variety of colors.

Below is the analysis of similarities and differences of each first lady's fashion.

- a. Similarities:

- 1) Hair bun: Bended
 - 2) Model of the Top: *Kebaya* in *Kutubaru* and Sundanese with some *Kemben* or long torso.
 - 3) Pattern of the Top: *Kebaya* with some plain and floral patterns.
 - 4) Model of the Bottom: Long *Kain* or *Sarung* with or without Wiron.
 - 5) Type of Fabrics: Traditional/ ethnic.
 - 6) Pattern of the Bottom: Traditional/ ethnic.
 - 7) Accessories: Traditional hairpin, necklace, earrings, ring, bracelet, and brooch.
 - 8) Millineries: Scarf, handbag/ clutch, and slippers.
- b. Differences:
- 1) Hair bun: In addition to the traditional bun, some wear modern one.
 - 2) Model of the Top: *Kebaya* by the first ladies commonly transform in the following: a) top front cutting; b) front cutting; c) length; d) bottom part; e) sleeve; and f) fabrics.
 - 3) Pattern of the Top: none.
 - 4) Model of the Bottom: from the conical silhouette to the loose and straight one.
 - 5) Type of *Kain*: using traditional/ ethnic fabric.
 - 6) Pattern of the Bottom: none.
 - 7) Accessories: none.
 - 8) Millineries: there is transformation from the function of the scarf; sometimes it is used as *Hijab*. The footwear also transforms from slippers to loafers with socks.

The similarities commonly happen since every first lady try to refer to the convention that has been implemented for quite a long time yet the differences are caused by their personal taste. The taste is usually influenced by their physical appearance, cultural background, and trend each first lady is in; however, the biggest difference is actually caused by the political condition of the country their husband is leading. Below is the explanation of each first lady.

- a. Fatmawati appears with her *Hijab* as her unique factor. In this era, women are respected and adored as a nationalist in this way. Besides, she is also proud of her Malay culture so that she looks exclusive and exquisite.
- b. R.Ay Siti Hartinah shows herself with *Kutubaru* combined with a scarf crossed on her chest and knotted in her waist. This is actually affected by the lifestyle of first ladies in the traditional palace wearing their blouse the same way Hartinah does.
- c. Hasri Ainun performs herself with a simply detailed yet formal *Kebaya*. She also prioritizes intellectual quality rather than fashion icon.
- d. Sinta Nuriyah has a unique factor of an O-silhouette *Hijab* covering her chest. This shows her dignity as a religious Muslim in Indonesia.
- e. Krsitinai Herrawati has a luxurious touch in her selection of pattern, cutting, fabrics, and technique of her *Kebaya Landung*. This kind of development happens since in this era open-mindedness is the center of every existing activity. This leads to creativity in many aspects including fashion. Thus, the image of national fashion starts to fade away.

2. Discussion

National fashion is related to the identity of the nation. It also represents the characters of its citizens. To identify one's nation, there are several factors that can be indicators such as language, culture, and education. National fashion cannot be separated as a part of culture of the nation. Since it plays such important roles, it has to express solidarity among the people of the nation as well.

Kebaya has been iconic as the national fashion of first ladies of the Republic of Indonesia. This means that it is a fashion image of Indonesia's first ladies in international level. The prototype of *Kebaya* itself is transforming from traditional from to the combination of traditional and modern touch as the impact of cultural communication. Some traditional aspects that are still preserved lie on such aspects as the hair bun, the *Kain*, *Kemben*, the scarf, the traditional hairpin, necklace, earrings, bracelet, and brooch yet the modern touch is in such things as the variety of blouse, handbag, and loafers.

The detailing in the model of the national fashion first ladies wear can be an alternative option of the national fashion. Such variations as hair bun, top front cutting, collar, sleeve, and the bottom part are some examples of the alternatives. Besides, scarf can also be put in several ways such as on the head as *Hijab*, on the shoulder, on the waist, and so on.

The society's appreciation to the first ladies is high due to the position of the first ladies as the wife of the president. First ladies actually deserve this kind of respect and appreciation since they have to maintain the reputation of their husband especially when meeting guests from other countries. The fashion first ladies wear may vary in each occasion, depending on what kind of event they attend. The type of fashion they wear is also matched with the president's variety of fashion such as suit and tie, official civil servant uniform, and so on.

Nevertheless, the fashion variation of both presidents and first ladies usually follow the prototype of each leadership that is influenced by the government's visions and missions, political strategies, economic situation, the development and socio-cultural phenomena occurring around the country and beyond.

President Soekarno's era, for instance, put women as the second biggest power to independence; however, after the independence of Indonesia happened, every women empowerment activity is monitored by men leaders (Chatterjee 1990; Jayawardena 1982; Mies 1986 dalam Wieringa, 2010). It is ironic that women are praised for their charm yet in the same time are over-ruled. This is actually evidence that colonial era has not finished yet since women are positioned only in some house work. Most even believe that women are childish, emotional, irrational, and inferior to men. Unfortunately, this kind of mainstream point of view towards women happened in that era so that women did not have adequate rights in political, economic, and sexual aspects (de Groot 1991, Gouda 1995, Stoler 1995 dalam Wieringa, 2010). In the end of his era, Soekarno controlled the movement of national organization that did not agree with his board. Meanwhile, in president Soeharto's era, the image of national fashion of first ladies is brought back. Since then, the dignity and image of women start to arise so that they have equal rights with men. In the eras of Baharuddin Jusuf Habibie and Abdurrahman Wahid, the image of national fashion of first ladies are not really discussed since they eras lasted in quite a short period; however, each first lady of both presidents always look simply elegant in every occasion. Finally, in the era of Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono's administration, the development of fashion creativity went very rapidly as the impact of reformation era. In one aspect, this is such a good thing yet on the other hand, the image of national fashion started to fade away.

3. Conclusion

Based on the content analysis of the visual data of this study, there are similarities and difference of each first lady's national fashion in such factors as the model of the hair bun, model and pattern of their *Kebaya*, model and pattern of their *Kain*, and also accessories. There is actually no huge difference of structure yet some small factors such as how each first lady wear certain items transforms. The image shown by each first lady develops from time to time through the trend acculturation that indicates the social bonding, solidarity, soul, and symbol of the nation those first ladies represents in the international level.

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Interview

1. Lina Agustina Setyapurnama, S.Pd (Owner of Quenta sewing course/ member of Kartini Fashion Designer Association. Interview time; November 2014.
2. Uun Unajah (Head of Tiara Kusumah foundation/ Owner of Unna Salon in Bandung, Indonesia). Interview time: 15 November 2014, 28 November 2014 and 20 Maret 2015.
3. Sonny Muchlison (Fashion observer/ lecturer at Jakarta Arts Institute/ Presidential Fashion Stylist on Soeharto’s era. Interview time; 17 January and 21 May 2015.
4. Astim Riyanto (Professor of law at Universitas Pendidikan Indonesia). Interview time; 30 January 2015.
5. Benny Cahyadi (Head of Protocol Division of Ministry of Internal Affairs of The Republic of Indonesia). Interview time: 10 February 2015.
6. Dr. Rudianto, S.Pd., M.Si (Head of Public Relations of Universitas Pendidikan Indonesia). Interview time: 16 September and 5 October 2015.
7. Watie Moerany (Assistant Deputy of Indonesia National Tourism Marketing). Interview time: 23 October 2015.
8. Samuel Wattimena (professional fashion designer), Interview time: 13 November 2015
9. Musa Widyatmodjo, B.Sc (Indonesia traditional fashion designer). Interview time; 3 March and 15 March 2017.

First Author. Suciati was born in Bandung on January 28, 1975. Her bachelor degree was on Fashion Design Education at the Faculty of Technological and Vocational Education, Universitas Pendidikan Indonesia (2001). She then pursued her master’s degree at the Faculty of Arts and Design at Insitut Teknologi Bandung in 2007. She is currently a Ph.D candidate at the same faculty at ITB. Since 2002, she has been working as a lecturer and researcher at Fashion Design study program, Faculty of Technological and Vocational Education, Universitas Pendidikan Indonesia. For the past years, she has been conducting several research studies either funded by the government of independently.

Second Author. Agus Sachari was born in Bandung on October 22, 1956. He earned his bachelor, master’s, and Ph.D degrees at the Faculty of Arts and Design of Institut Teknologi Bandung. His research interest are on aesthetic values of goods and the development of traditional and modern tools.

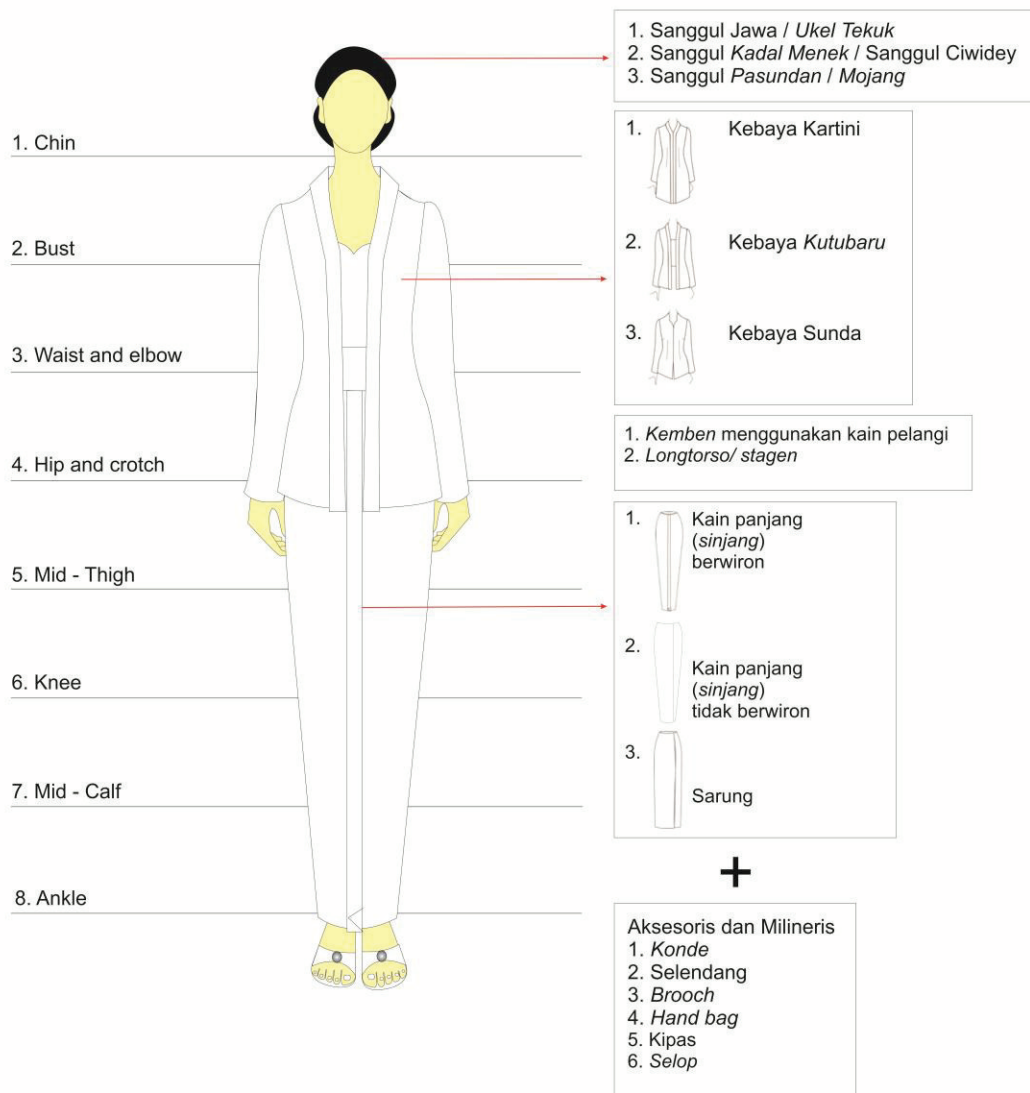


Figure. 1 Design of national fashion (Suciati,2015)

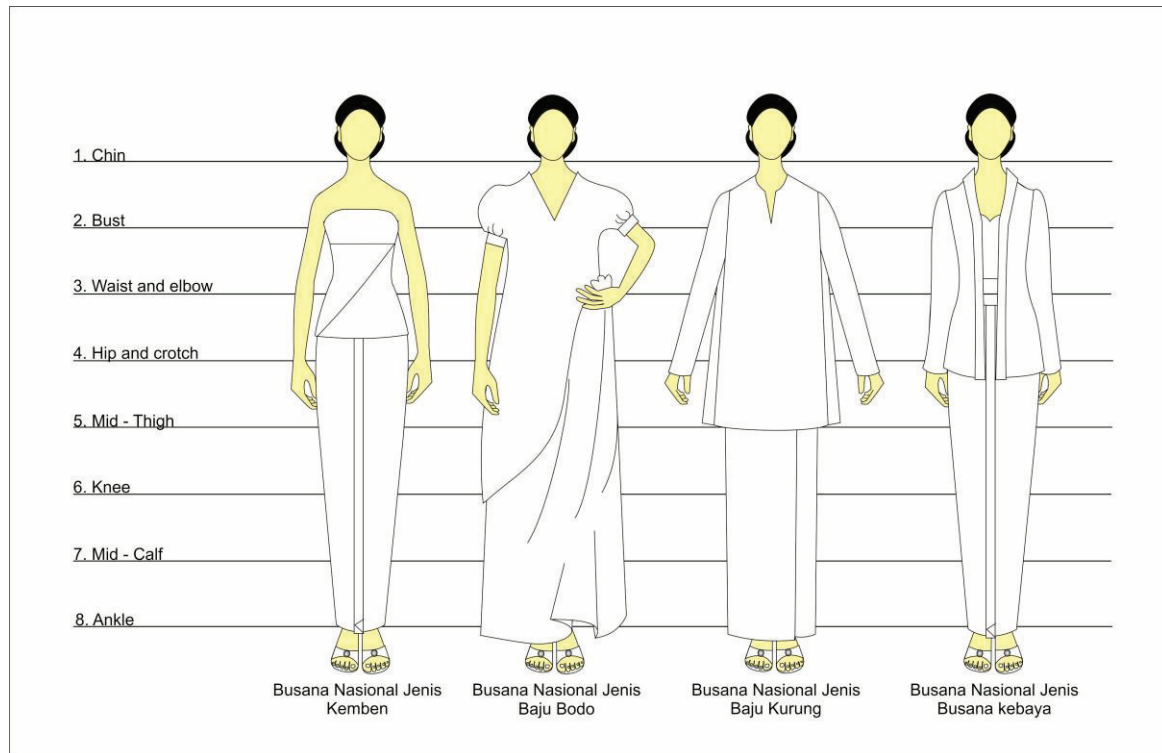


Figure. 2. Types of national fashion (Suciati, 2015)

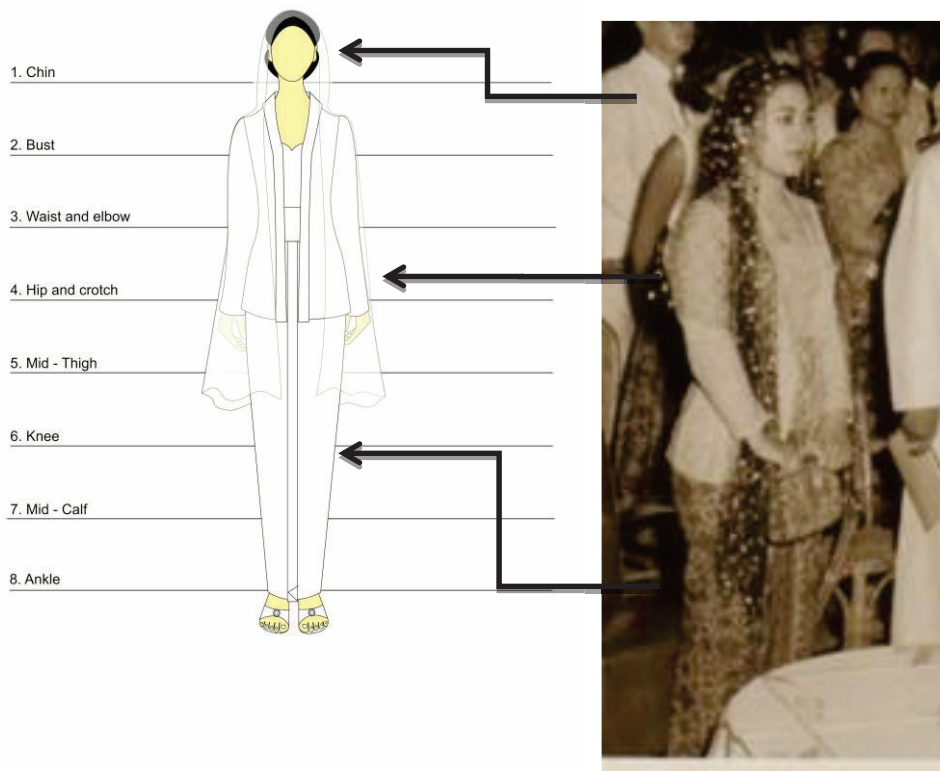


Figure3. Design of Fatmawati's national fashion (Suciati, 2015)

Source: Press and Media Bureau of Indonesia Secretariat, 2015

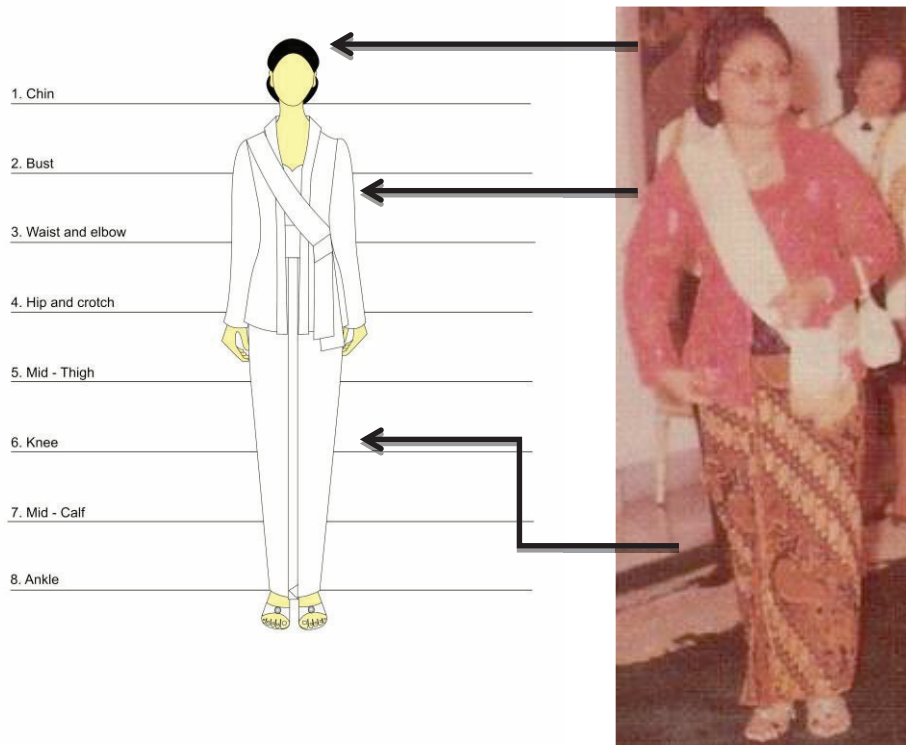


Figure 4. Design of R.Ay Siti Hartinah's national fashion (Suciati, 2015)

Source: Gafur, Abdul, 1992, Siti Hartinah Soeharto; Ibu Utama Indonesia, Jakarta: PT Citra Lamtoro Gung Persada

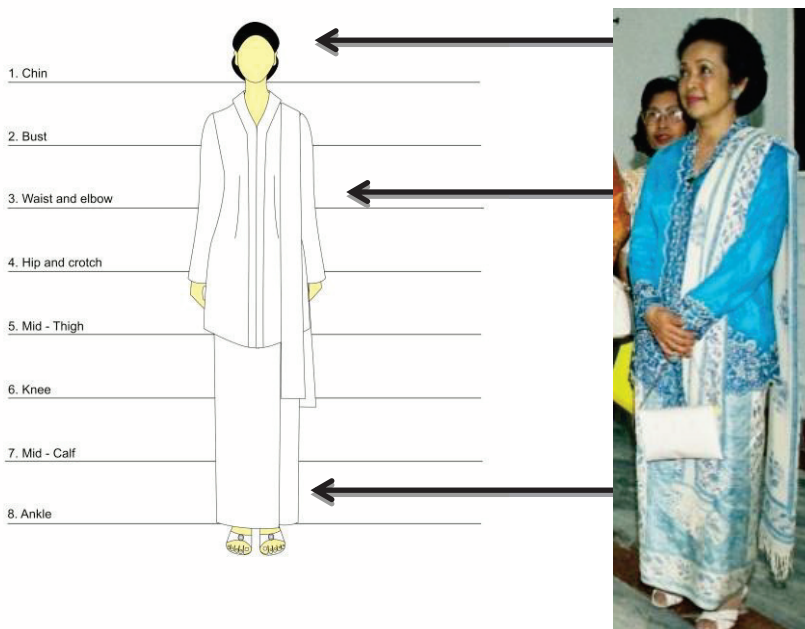


Figure 5. Design of Hasri Ainun's national fashion (Suciati, 2015)

Source: Press and Media Bureau of Indonesia Secretariat, 2015

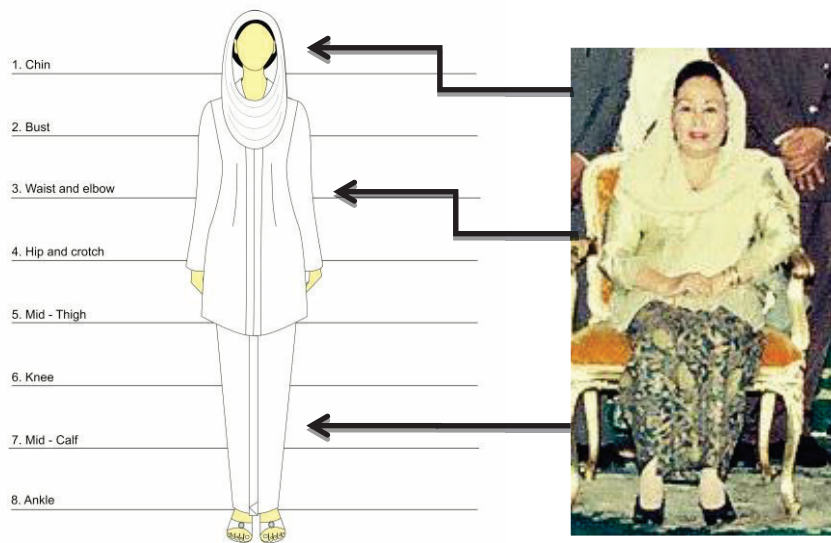


Figure 6. Design of Sintia Nuriyah's national fashion (Suciati,2015)

Source: Press and Media Bureau of Indonesia Secretariat, 2015

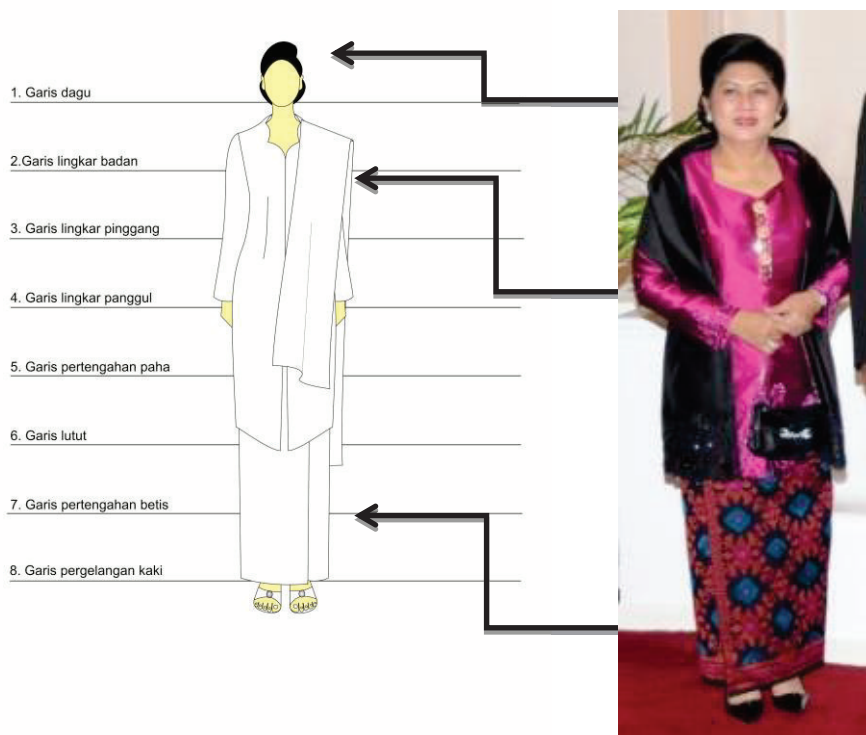


Figure 7. Design of Kristiani Herrawati's national fashion (Suciati,2015)

Source: Press and Media Bureau of Indonesia Secretariat, 2015

Table 1. Indonesia's first ladies in 1945-2014

No.	Name of First Lady	Name of President	Beginning of Tenure	End of Tenure
1.	Fatmawati	Soekarno	17 August 1945	12 March 1967
2.	R.A Siti Hartinah	Soeharto	12 March 1967	28 April 1996
3.	Hasri Ainun	Baharuddin Jusuf Habibie	21 May 1998	20 October 1999
4.	Sinta Nuriyah	Abdul Rahman Wahid	20 October 1999	23 July 2001
5.	Kristiani Herrawati	Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono	20 October 2004	19 October 2014

Table 2. Total and Sample Data of Indonesia's first ladies periods of 1945-2014

	Fatmawati	R.Ay Siti Hartinah	Hasri Ainun	Shinta Nuriyah	Kristiani Herrawati
Total data	56	204	14	5	66
Sample data	10	10	5	5	10