

Regional Gender Disparities in Indonesia: A Comparative Analysis Across Five Islands

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ABSTRACT

Indonesia's socio-economic landscape is a tapestry woven from historical legacies, cultural norms, and dynamic economic forces. At the heart of this mosaic lies Java, the most populous and economically advanced island, often serving as a developmental benchmark. However, prosperity does not flow uniformly across the archipelago. Sumatra, Bali, Sulawesi, and Kalimantan—each with its unique context—grapple with gender-related challenges that shape the lives of their inhabitants. By dissecting these regional disparities, we uncover the intricate interplay of factors influencing gender outcomes. Our investigation relies on data extracted from the 2023 Sakernas survey. We hone in on critical indicators of gender disparities: work hours, income discrepancies, educational access, and social safety nets. Employing a descriptive and typological lens, we juxtapose these indicators across the five islands. This method allows us to discern patterns, outliers, and distinctive features specific to each region. Our research serves a dual purpose: it enriches academic discourse and informs policy formulation. By spotlighting the variations in gender inequities, we pave the way for targeted interventions. Policymakers can leverage these insights to tailor programs that address the unique hurdles faced by women and men in different locales. Moreover, our findings contribute brushstrokes to a more nuanced portrait of Indonesia's socio-economic fabric—one that transcends mere statistical aggregates and delves into the intricate brushwork of gender dynamics.

Keywords: Gender disparities, regional variations, socio-economic outcomes, Indonesia, Sakernas survey, policy interventions

ABSTRAK

Lanskap sosial ekonomi Indonesia terbentuk melalui perpaduan warisan sejarah, norma budaya, dan dinamika kekuatan ekonomi. Meskipun Pulau Jawa memiliki populasi terbesar dan ekonomi yang maju, kesejahteraan tidak merata di seluruh kepulauan. Sumatera, Bali, Sulawesi, dan Kalimantan menghadapi tantangan gender yang memengaruhi penduduknya. Dalam analisis kesenjangan regional,

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kami menemukan hubungan kompleks antara faktor-faktor yang memengaruhi ketidaksetaraan gender. Data dari survei Sakernas 2023 menjadi fokus kami, dengan indikator kesenjangan gender seperti jam kerja, pendapatan, akses pendidikan, dan jaring pengaman sosial. Metode deskriptif dan tipologis digunakan untuk menganalisis indikator ini di kelima pulau, memungkinkan identifikasi pola, outlier, dan karakteristik unik setiap wilayah. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk memperkaya wacana akademis dan memberikan informasi bagi pembuat kebijakan. Dengan memperhatikan variasi ketidaksetaraan gender, kami membuka peluang bagi intervensi yang lebih terarah. Pembuat kebijakan dapat menggunakan wawasan ini untuk menyesuaikan program yang mengatasi tantangan khusus yang dihadapi oleh pria dan wanita di berbagai pulau. Temuan kami juga memberikan gambaran tentang struktur sosial-ekonomi Indonesia, melampaui sekadar data statistik dan menggali dinamika gender yang kompleks.

Kata kunci: *Kesenjangan gender, variasi regional, dampak sosial-ekonomi, Indonesia, survei Sakernas, intervensi kebijakan*

Klasifikasi JEL: *J01, I31*

1. INTRODUCTION

Gender disparities in labor markets are a global concern. As per the International Labour Organization (ILO, 2020), more than 78% of businesses worldwide are headed by male CEOs, underscoring a substantial gender disparity in leadership positions. This global pattern emphasizes scrutinizing gender inequalities within specific contexts and regions. With its diverse culture, varying development levels, and vibrant economic landscape, Indonesia offers a distinctive case for investigating gender disparities. The labor market in Indonesia is segregated, with many women working in the informal sector (Yunisvita et al., 2021). The labor market in Indonesia is segregated, with many women working in the service sector. This mirrors entrenched cultural norms and economic roles assigned to genders. For instance, the World Bank report 2020 revealed that 55% of women in Indonesia work in the service sector, compared to 38% of men.

Indonesia's archipelagic nature results in significant regional disparities. Inequality is not only apparent between genders in the labor market but also varies considerably across different islands. Java, the most developed island, stands in stark contrast to other regions in terms of economic output and gender equality indicators. For example, Java contributes over 58% to Indonesia's GDP, while outer islands like Maluku and Papua contribute less than 3% combined (BPS, 2023b).

In the context of Indonesia, Cameron (2023) said that though Indonesia has made progress in gender equality compared to many other Muslim-majority nations, the female labor force participation rate remains relatively low. This is due to various factors, including social norms that position women as the primary caregivers in households and the lack of policies that support workplace flexibility for women. Despite these challenges, women's participation in higher education has significantly increased. In 2022, the percentage of women enrolled in higher education rose from 34.87% to 36.95% (BPS, 2022), indicating progress in women's educational attainment. However, disparities continue to exist in the labor market. In 2023, 64.25% of women were employed in the informal sector compared to 55.81% of men (BPS, 2024), reflecting persistent gender-based economic vulnerabilities.

Economic disparities across Indonesia are pronounced. The top five regions contributing to Indonesia's Gross Regional Domestic Product (GRDP) are primarily in Java, demonstrating a Java-centric development pattern. In contrast, areas outside Java, such as Nusa Tenggara Barat (NTB), experience higher levels of gender inequality, as indicated by a Gender Inequality Index (GII) of 0.648. Meanwhile, the GII of several provinces in 2022 showed that Yogyakarta had the lowest inequality (0.240), followed by Jakarta (0.320), Bali (0.321), Central Java (0.371), and South Sulawesi (0.390) (BPS, 2023).

The Kuznets hypothesis suggests that economic growth initially leads to increased inequality, eventually decreasing as a country develops. Indonesia, classified as an upper-middle-income country, reflects this pattern in its gender inequality trends. From 2018 to 2022, Indonesia's GII decreased from 0.49 to 0.459 (BPS, 2023), indicating gradual improvement. However, the disparity, especially in the labor market between the developed region of Java and the less developed outer islands, remains substantial (Yunisvita, et al., 2021). Based on the growth pattern in Indonesia, the development starts in Java, but in Jokowi's regime, the development started to grow outside Java, for instance, the development of Papua and Kalimantan. Despite the massive development, BPS (2024) said that the Gender Disparity Index (IKG) of Papua Province in 2023 has increased to 0.518, it shows that the gender equality in this island is worsened. In contrast, East Kalimantan Province IKG showed a decrease to 0.414. The level of education is one of the calculations in IKG, and in Papua Province is less than 40% of young adults go to school until high school and in East Kalimantan around 50%. Education participation can decrease the gender inequality in region (Tokal, et al., 2023). In labor market context, Tjitrajaya, et al. (2024) found that in West Java, education, age, and cultural factor are important in shaping the labor market. In South Sumatera's labor market, Hermawanti & Irawan (2024) found that education is important to the absorption of the labor market. Thus, education might be an important thing in shaping the labor market segregation in Indonesia.

Previous studies have largely focused on gender disparities at the national or provincial level. This research systematically compares gender disparities across the five main islands of Indonesia: Sumatra, Java, Kalimantan, Sulawesi, and Papua. This study explores variations among these islands by taking into account different socio-economic and cultural factors. These different factors across each island can create variations in gender disparities that are not yet fully understood. This research seeks to contribute to academic discourse and inform policy-making by highlighting the variations in gender disparities across Indonesia's major islands. Understanding these regional disparities can facilitate targeted interventions that promote gender equality and balanced regional development.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

The historical evolution of gender roles in Indonesia is profoundly affected by its assorted social legacy, colonial history, and devout homes. Traditional societies like the Minangkabau in Sumatra, which honed a matrilineal legacy, generally allowed ladies critical social control. Be that as it may, patriarchal standards have been predominant in numerous other locales, fortified amid Dutch colonial run show, which forced Western sex standards that frequently undermined inborn hones (Blackburn, 2004; Elmhirst, 2006). Post-independence, the Indonesian government has promoted gender equality through various policies. Despite these efforts, traditional gender roles persist, especially in rural areas, influencing women's participation in economic and political life (Robinson, 2010).

Cultural norms in Indonesia significantly impact gender disparities, especially in rural areas where patriarchal values are strong. These norms dictate that women should primarily manage

household responsibilities, limiting their participation in public and economic activities. Religious interpretations, particularly in predominantly Muslim regions, often reinforce these traditional roles, further restricting women's opportunities (Bennett, 2007). Research indicates that these cultural norms limit women's access to education and employment, contributing to broader socio-economic disparities. For instance, societal expectations often pressure women to prioritize domestic duties over professional careers, resulting in lower labor force participation rates and greater economic dependency on male family members (Utomo, 2012).

As Indonesia's political and economic center, Java shows varied gender disparities between urban and rural areas. Urban regions like Jakarta demonstrate more progressive gender norms and higher female labor participation rates. However, rural Java still adheres to traditional gender roles, with significant disparities in education and economic participation (Jones & Hull, 1997).

Comparative studies across Indonesian islands reveal significant regional differences in gender disparities. Matrilineal societies like the Minangkabau in Sumatra show relatively better gender equality indices. Unique Hindu cultural practices in Bali emphasize women's roles in religious and cultural rituals, but economic inequalities persist (Geertz, 1984). In Sulawesi and Kalimantan, these regions exhibit pronounced gender disparities, especially in rural and indigenous communities where traditional customs limit women's roles in leadership and economic activities (Elmhirst, 2006; Robinson, 2010). These regional differences highlight the need for tailored policies to address women's unique challenges in different parts of Indonesia.

Women's labor force participation in Indonesia is significantly lower than men's, with women often employed in informal sectors with irregular hours and lower wages. The double burden of domestic responsibilities and paid work exacerbates gender disparities in work hours (ILO, 2018). Young rural women opt out of informal, unpaid work and exit wage work due to family and childcare constraints, while young urban women are increasingly likely to hold wage jobs (Schaner & Das, 2016). Based on Yunisvita et al (2021), women are more segregated in labor market in all aspect, which makes women more difficult to enter the workforce. Women who work for a wage have more control over decisions at home and are less likely to accept violence from their partners.

Income inequality is a persistent issue, with women earning less than men on average. This wage gap is due to occupational segregation, with women overrepresented in lower-paying jobs and underrepresented in leadership positions. Rural areas and lower-income populations see more pronounced wage gaps (World Bank, 2020). Comparable to the worldwide condition, Indonesian women gain 23 percent less than men. Even though more women workers have college degrees than male workers, higher education has not narrowed the gender pay gap (UN Women, 2020)

While educational access for Indonesian women has improved, disparities remain, particularly in higher education and rural areas. Women in rural and impoverished communities face barriers like early marriage, cultural biases, and economic constraints, limiting their educational opportunities (UNICEF, 2016). Higher-income people can provide their kids with better education and better health care. In Tjitrajaya et al (2024) & Hermawanti & Irawan (2024) also found that education is shaping the labor market, which makes higher education can increase the chance of employment. However, those who live in low-income families will be less educated (Wicaksono & Amir, 2017) which worsens inequality for the next generation.

Social safety nets like the Family Hope Program aim to support vulnerable populations, including women. However, the effectiveness of these programs in reducing gender disparities is mixed. Challenges such as limited coverage, implementation inefficiencies, and cultural acceptance issues hinder their impact. More gender-sensitive approaches to social protection policies are needed

(World Bank, 2018). Women can be disadvantaged when the household is treated as an income pooling unit in social security programs; the benefits are individual entitlements but are expected to provide for the family (MacDonald, 1998).

3. RESEARCH METHOD

This research aims to examine the variation of gender disparities across the five major islands of Indonesia (Java, Sumatra, Kalimantan, Sulawesi, and Maluku-Papua), mainly focusing on the labor market. To achieve this, we employed descriptive statistics to compare the female and male populations using data from the National Labor Force Survey (Sakernas) conducted in August 2023.

Descriptive statistical analysis involves summarizing and interpreting data to uncover patterns and insights. This method allows for examining key variables such as income, work hours, education level, and social security benefits. By employing this approach, we aim to identify and analyze gender differences within these variables across different regions. The data for this study were sourced from Sakernas, which provides comprehensive labor force statistics in Indonesia. The critical variables analyzed in this study include:

- **Income Discrepancies:** Average earnings of male and female workers.
- **Work Hours:** Average number of hours worked per week by males and females Workers.
- **Education Level:** The highest level of education attained by male and female workers.
- **Social Security:** Access to and participation in social security programs by gender.

To facilitate comparison, we categorized the data based on gender, with males coded as '1' and females as '2'. We computed mean values, standard deviations, and percentages for each variable using descriptive statistics. This provided a comprehensive overview of the data, enabling a detailed comparison between male and female workers regarding income, work hours, education level, and social security access. Further analysis was conducted to assess the presence and extent of gender inequality in the labor market across the different regions.

This methodological approach has several advantages:

- **Clarity and Simplicity:** Descriptive statistics provide a clear and straightforward way to summarize and compare data, making it easier to identify patterns and differences.
- **Comprehensive Overview:** By examining multiple variables, this method offers a holistic view of gender disparities in the labor market.
- **Region-Specific Insights:** Analyzing data from different islands allows for identifying regional variations in gender disparities.

4. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Income

Income disparities between women and men are pretty visible, especially in Java Island, where the average income of males in Java is Rp 2,230,991 and females only earn Rp 881,947.3 which is more than 50% of male income; meanwhile, the distribution of female and male income in Sulawesi Island is pretty equal where a female in average only earn less than men by Rp 400,000. Java Island is one of the regions that still adheres to patriarchal culture. Patriarchy makes it difficult for women to establish their existence. Sudarso et al. (2019) conducted their research in (Madura, East Java) where the society strongly emphasizes a patriarchal culture that places a higher social role on men than women. They marry off girls at a young age, women are expected to take care of household chores, and girls' education is neglected. It has been ingrained since childhood that men are leaders

while women are just complements. The other factors are the dual role demands of being both a worker and a family caregiver, which often act as barriers for women seeking and maintaining employment. Lack of support for childcare facilities or flexible working hours can make working difficult for women.

Based on Sakernas data (2023), the data gap between the average income between men and women in Sumatra is Rp 782,568, which is still higher than in Sulawesi. This gap occurs because the patriarchal system is still in effect in Sumatra. The Batak tribe has a tradition of paying a dowry (*cinnamon*), a marriage payment of money, objects, and wealth. The *sinamot* tradition is usually referred to among the Toba Batak community as *tuhor ni boru*. This tradition (*sinamot*) is used not only to buy a woman but also to build family relations in the Toba Batak community, which is a valid requirement to conduct a marriage. The higher the level of women's education, the higher the value of *sinamot* for a woman. If we look at the Sakernas data (2023), the number of women with an income of Rp 10,000,000 is proven to be greater than men. We can conclude that Batak women are motivated to increase the number of *sinamot* by achieving higher education.

In Sulawesi, women who earned higher education dominate the income range, with incomes above Rp 10,000,000 (Sakernas data, 2023). The gap between the number of women and men who complete higher education is relatively low. It can be said that women in the Bugis Tribe are motivated to pursue higher education to improve their social status and dowry. There is a tradition of "panai money" in the Bugis Tribe (Makassar, South Sulawesi). *Panai* is a form of appreciation and hard work from a man to his future wife to fulfill marriage needs (Yansa et al., 2016) The high dowry that is set is used by some people as a means of prestige and a means of showing social status. Women in their social strata have different amounts of dowry that men must pay. Yansa et al. (2016) explained that women have a high and respected position socially. The higher the level of nobility, the higher the woman's dowry.

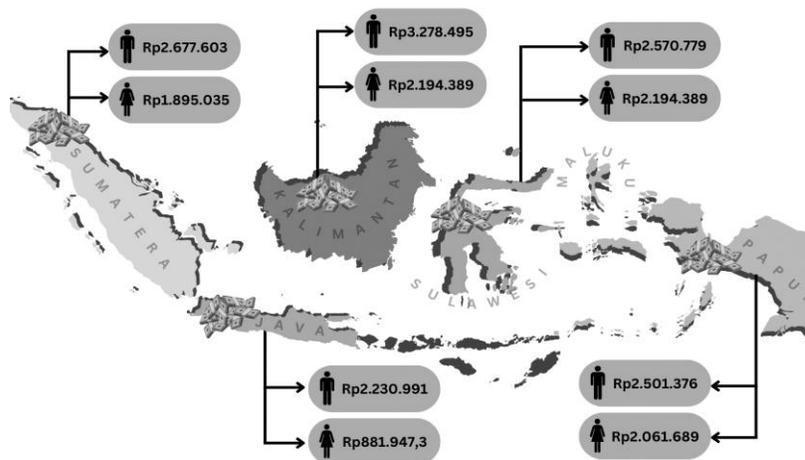


Figure 1. Indonesia Map of Average Income Distribution based on Gender

Source: Sakernas, 2023 (processed)

The gender inequality index (GII) in Papua is still relatively high, where the GII in 2023 was 0.518, an increase of 0.003 points compared to 2022, which was 0.515, which is still higher than in Java. However, based on Sakernas data (2023), the data gap between the average income between men and women in Papua is Rp 439,687, which is still lower than in Java, Rp 1,349,043.7. We assume

that the distribution of survey respondents' data in Sakernas is uneven, where the standard deviation of salary is above Rp 2,000,000. Besides that, the position and role of women in all sectors of life are still not fair due to the construction of a patriarchal system and neglect of women's rights. Gender construction has been internalized in a more latent layer of culture. In addition, the dowry has undergone social construction. It ensures women are a symbol of the transaction, which in practice hands over women to men, indicating that women have ultimately become the property of men.

The value of Dayak women in the eyes of the community itself is highly valued, which is shown by the high value of dowry at the time of marriage. The position of Dayak women in the family is very respected and honored. For example, Dayak women can act as Balian, a candidate to replace the traditional leader who serves as a mediator and communicator between humans and other creatures (Riwut, 2011).

There is a philosophy of life of the Dayak tribe that nature is part of their lives. Women are a symbol of nature, and destroying nature is the same as destroying women: destroying the kitchen where they cook, destroying water sources, and destroying the land where they grow crops.

4.2 Work Hours

On average, in 4 central Islands in Indonesia, Sumatera, Kalimantan, Sulawesi, Maluku, and Papua, both genders are working more than common work hours, but based on the Omnibus Law, the productive work hours are 40 hours, all of the people in 5 major islands still working below the productive hours. Java Island has a significant difference between males and females, with an 11-hour difference. This can happen due to the vital gender roles in Java society, where most Javanese are patriarchal, where they believe men should do the work and females only do the homework. Most housewife's work does not count as work hours. Because of that, there is a significant difference between them.

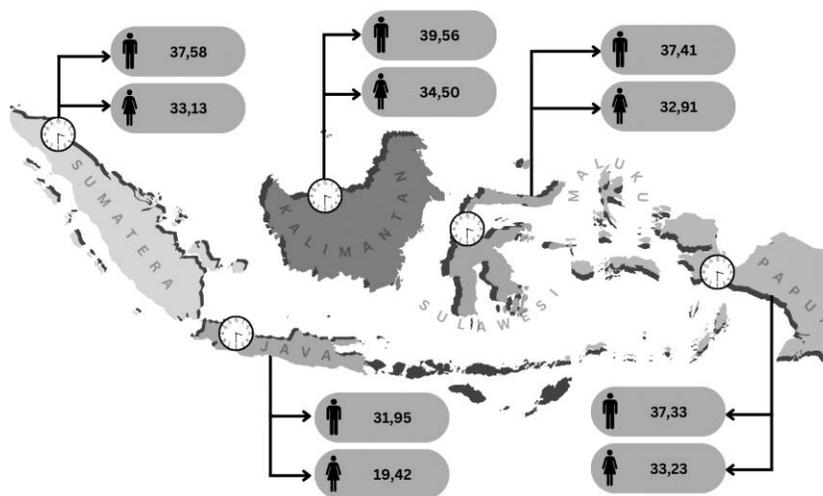


Figure 2. Indonesia Map of Average Work Hours based on Gender

Source: Sakernas, 2023 (processed)

Based on research conducted by Setyoneluri et al. (2021), it was found that men are usually seen as the primary "breadwinners" while women are expected to handle household chores. Despite holding multiple roles such as mother, wife, daughter, and worker, many women still need to include their social roles in their working hours, even though these activities consume significant time.

Robinson (2010) notes that during the New Order Regime in Indonesia, the concept of "kodrat" was introduced, which dictated that women should be responsible for household chores and childbearing. However, women's empowerment gained traction during this period, giving rise to "State Ibuism," as described by Suryakusuma (2011). Organizations like Dharma Wanita and PKK (Pemberdayaan dan Kesejahteraan Keluarga) significantly promoted women's involvement in the workforce and even in leadership roles within families.

Despite these historical changes, the traditional view of "kodrat" persists, resulting in women often holding more responsibilities than men but not having these additional tasks recognized as part of their working hours. This disparity is especially pronounced in Java, where cultural expectations heavily influence gender roles and contribute to significant inequality in working hours between men and women.

Recent studies support these findings, highlighting that women consistently work fewer paid hours than men but spend significantly more time on unpaid labor, such as household chores and caregiving. According to the International Labour Organization (ILO), women in Indonesia spend, on average, 3.5 times more hours on unpaid care work compared to men, which significantly impacts their participation in the formal workforce (ILO, 2020). Based on Sakernas data, we found that in 2023, women in Java worked 19,42 hours per week on average, compared to 31,95 hours for men, reflecting the impact of their unpaid labor responsibilities on their formal employment hours.

In contrast, there appears to be a more equal distribution of working hours between genders on other major islands, such as Kalimantan, Sumatera, Sulawesi, and Maluku-Papua. In these regions, men only work five more hours per week than women. For instance, Sakernas data 2023 indicated that in Sumatera, women worked an average of 33,13 hours per week in paid employment, compared to 37,58 hours for men. Similarly, in Sulawesi, women worked 32,91 hours per week on average, compared to 37,41 hours for men. This narrower gap suggests that cultural and societal expectations regarding gender roles may differ significantly from those in Java, leading to a more balanced division of labor.

These cultural and societal expectations place a disproportionate burden on women, contributing to the ongoing gender inequality in work hours and employment opportunities in Java and across Indonesia.

4.3 Education

A significant difference in education is seen in Maluku and Papua Islands, where males usually go to high school, and females do not go to school. Meanwhile, Sumatra has the highest education on average, where both women and men went to high school; there is a good distribution of higher education for females in Sumatra where more females are going to higher education such as diploma, bachelor, master, doctoral degrees than males. This can happen due to the cultural issues in Sumatra, especially in the Minangnese and Bataknese cultures. In West Sumatra, most of the ethnicity is Minangnese; they believe in a matriarchy, where women hold higher positions and often role as the head of the family; because of that, women tend to get pushed to get a better education to get more respect. In North Sumatra, most of the ethnicity is Bataknese, where they believe in patriarchy by marga. However, they are also fond of their female (*parboru*) because there is a culture of *sinamot*. When the *parboru* gets married, the male needs to pay the bride's parents some money to acknowledge the parents' hard work in raising their daughter. The amount of *sinamot* can vary based on their current job and education. Usually, when *parboru* gets a bachelor's degree, they are "priced"

higher, such as Rp15,000,000 just for the degree, but it can be more based on their current job, family background, and others.

Based on the World Economic Forum (2023), Indonesia has a Global Gender Gap Index value of 0,697, ranked 87th globally. The Global Gender Gap Report assigns a score between 0 and 1, where 1 indicates gender equality and 0 indicates gender inequality. The GGGI value is based on four dimensions, namely, educational attainment (0,972), health and survival (0,970), economic participation and opportunity (0,666), and political empowerment (0,181). The highest score from the four dimensions is educational attainment. This means that in Indonesia, women and men have equal education. Data per island also has this conclusion. The percentage of males (50,97%) and females (49,03%) in Java. In Sumatera, the percentage of males (49,80%) and females (50,20%). In Kalimantan, the percentage of males (was 50,53%) and females (was 49,47%). In Sulawesi, the percentage of males (51,01%) and females (48,99%). In Maluku and Papua, the percentage of males (49,13%) and females (50,87%).

4.4 Social Security

Based on Indonesia's belief "PANCASILA", on the fifth principle, "Social Justice For All the People of Indonesia", which can be translated to the people of Indonesia should have equal rights and be covered by the government in this context, it can be seen as an employer. Based on our findings, most workers did not know about the social security system and what they should get, such as health care, death protection, work accident protection, old age protection, and pension funds.

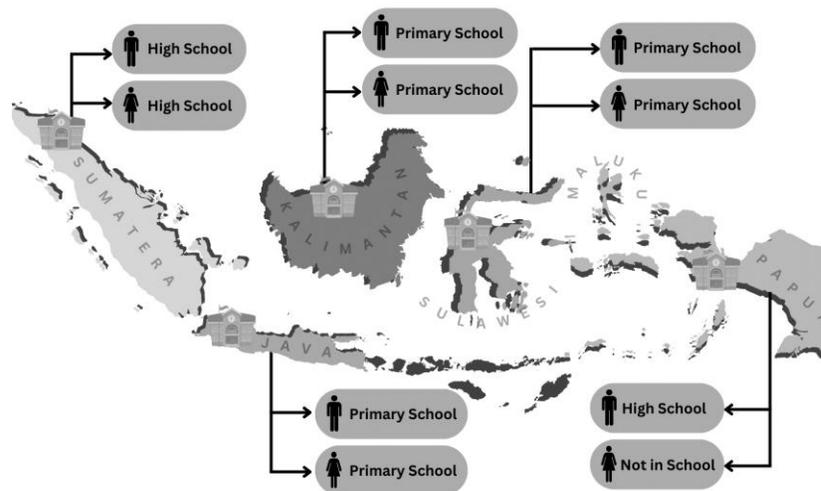


Figure 3. Indonesia Map on Average Education based on Gender

Source: Sakernas, 2023 (processed)

One of the SDGs Goals by Bappenas is without poverty. One of the indicators (1.3.1) explains the proportion of the population covered by the social security system and floor by gender, age of children, unemployed people, the elderly, the disabled, pregnant women with newborns, victims of work injuries and the poor and vulnerable. Social security rights in Indonesia are regulated in the Undang-Undang Dasar 1945, Chapter 28H (verse 1, verse 2, verse 3), Chapter 34 (verse 2, verse 3, dan verse 4), and Undang-Undang Number 40 Year 2004. This regulation contains the substance of

the population's right to health services and treatment for equal opportunities; everyone has the right to security, and the state develops a social security system.

In Indonesia, there is a Law of the Republic of Indonesia No. 24 of 2011 regarding the national social security agency, that every employer needs to pay the National Social Security on Health (BPJS Kesehatan) 2.5%. The employee only needs to pay 0.5%. For the National Social Security Agency for Employment (BP Jamsostek), 5% is from the salary of workers, where 4% is from the employer, and 1% is from the employee. BP Jamsostek has some benefits, such as old age protection, pension protection, work accident protection, death protection, and loss of job protection. Based on February 2023, only 54,88 million workers registered in BP Jamsostek, where 64.33% are formal workers and 35.67% are informal workers. This data is a significant gap between BPJS Kesehatan, where they can achieve 97% of the total population registered in their system. Director of Investment Development Edwin Ridwan said this could happen because if a worker already works in some place, the employer must register their worker with the firm. A lot of Indonesian people are informal workers, so they need to register themselves. However, the problem is that many need to learn and have the information. Our findings show that most workers needed to know if they were covered by social security (Ilmu Ekonomi UNPAR, 2024).

Table 1. Social Security Average based on Gender

	SOCIAL SECURITY	YES	NO
	JAVA	Health (M)	16176
Health (F)		9682	13695
Work Accident (M)		14943	27841
Work Accident (F)		8544	14771
Death Protect (M)		11183	31366
Death Protect (F)		6574	16654
Old Age (M)		7664	24731
Old Age (F)		4855	15068
Pension (M)		5204	27138
Pension (F)		3441	16460

PAPUA MALUKU	Health (M)	4194	4031
	Health (F)	2397	1874
	Work Accident (M)	3263	4890
	Work Accident (F)	1649	2601
	Death Protect (M)	2793	5322
	Death Protect (F)	1527	2707
	Old Age (M)	2395	4904
	Old Age (F)	1499	2583
	Pension (M)	2572	4743
	Pension (F)	1645	2438
SULAWESI	Health (M)	6149	10749
	Health (F)	4483	5578
	Work Accident (M)	5655	11195
	Work Accident (F)	3736	6300
	Death Protect (M)	4319	12442
	Death Protect (F)	3199	6816
	Old Age (M)	2861	10233
	Old Age (F)	2543	6506
	Pension (M)	2688	10403
	Pension (F)	2541	6508

KALIMANTAN	Health (M)	7811	8491
	Health (F)	3470	3489
	Work Accident (M)	7085	9183
	Work Accident (F)	2917	4025
	Death Protect (M)	5516	10640
	Death Protect (F)	2368	4549
	Old Age (M)	3996	9999
	Old Age (F)	1933	4522
	Pension (M)	3062	10908
	Pension (F)	1702	4752
SUMATERA	Health (M)	13272	25856
	Health (F)	7860	12034
	Work Accident (M)	12571	26512
	Work Accident (F)	6955	12915
	Death Protect (M)	9754	29180
	Death Protect (F)	5804	14024
	Old Age (M)	6633	23475
	Old Age (F)	4427	12947
	Pension (M)	5837	24270
	Pension (F)	4350	13025

Source: Sakernas, 2023 (processed)

On average, all five major islands only covered male workers. This can happen because many female workers primarily work in the informal sector. According to BPS (2024), the proportion of informal employment according to gender in 2022 showed that females have a more significant portion (64,34 percent) than males (56,03 percent). Based on Omnibus Law, women's welfare should be prioritized, too, especially during maternity leave and menstrual leave. Currently, the Ministry of Manpower plans to make a policy about father maternity leave to promote gender equality.

Ensuring that social security provisions must meet women's practical needs within traditional context should not compromise their strategic interest in changing and undermining unfair gender relations that refers to the long-term goals of achieving gender equality, reducing discrimination, and altering societal norms that disadvantage women. This approach ensures that women now receive the support they need without sacrificing their long-term goals of attaining equal rights and fair treatment (MacDonald, 1998).

5. CONCLUSION

Based on our empirical analysis, we have concluded that the disparities in gender equality across Indonesia's five significant islands can be attributed to deeply rooted patriarchy (evident through societal norms), the diverse roles women undertake, and the high prevalence of women in the informal sector. We analyzed four key indicators: income, education, working hours, and social security.

In the context of income, we noticed a significant variation in the gender pay gap across different islands. Sulawesi has the smallest gender pay gap, indicating a relatively fairer income distribution between male and female employees. In stark contrast, Java has the highest gender pay gap, underscoring substantial income disparity between the genders.

The gap in educational attainment rates between genders also showed significant differences. Papua-Maluku has the smallest gap in educational attainment between males and females, suggesting a higher level of gender parity in access to education and its outcomes. Conversely, Java has the biggest gap, indicating considerable challenges in achieving educational equality between genders on this island.

Our analysis of working hours revealed that the gap between the number of hours worked by males and females is smallest in Papua-Maluku, implying a more balanced distribution of work hours between the genders. Nevertheless, again, Java shows the most enormous gap, indicating a significant difference in the working hours of males and females.

Regarding social security, our study encompassed various aspects, including health security, death security, employment injury security, old-age security, and pension security. Sulawesi has the smallest gap in social security benefits between genders, suggesting a more equitable social security position. On the other hand, Kalimantan has the most enormous gap, highlighting significant disparities in social security coverage between males and females.

Aggregate findings across the four indicators show clearly that Java Island has the worst gender inequality compared to the other four major islands in Indonesia. The finding is particularly striking as it contradicts the theoretical hypothesis that higher regional income levels would correlate with smaller gender gaps. Despite Java's higher economic output, gender inequality remains deeply entrenched and pronounced.

Our empirical analysis underscores the intricate interplay of societal norms, economic roles, and sectoral employment in shaping gender equality across Indonesia. The findings highlight significant regional variation and challenge prevailing assumptions about the correlation between economic development and gender equality.

Future research is needed because the data population did not describe the actual conditions in Indonesia. We suggest using the Indonesian Family Life Survey (IFLS) data because longitudinal data can describe it, and hopefully can describe the condition in Indonesia. We suggest that the government cares more about welfare than economic growth, so gender disparities can be reduced because the finding suggests that even though Java is the most "developed" island in Indonesia, in reality, it has held the worst. We suggest policy intervention at BP Jamsostek to increase awareness among workers regarding social insurance, because many workers do not know about social insurance. Current gender policy regulations are pretty good, but appropriate implementation is needed so that gender inequality can be reduced.

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