



# Gender Equality in Patriarchic Culture

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**Abstract.** Gender equality has always been an issue that is demanded in various parts of the country. The patriarchy that has long been a part of our culture makes the fact of gender equality increasingly difficult to realize. The dividing line between the roles of men and women has long been imprinted in the culture of our country and has been passed from generation to generation. Feminism doesn't simply demand that women have the same status as men; far from it. They want to have the same role as men in the development of Indonesia. Look further. Involving women means making efficient in various aspects, such as economic growth. Because the more heads that work, the better the results. Feminism is not a demand for mathematical equality. Feminism is the desire for fair equality according to the context of each individual.

**Keywords:** Gender Equality · Cultural Patriarchy

## 1 Introduction

Quoting Alfian Rokhmansyah (2013) from his book entitled *Introduction to Gender and Feminism*, patriarchy comes from the word patriarchate, which means a structure that places men as the center or sole ruler of everything. Patriarchy, which has been transformed into a culture, is already very strongly attached and seems to be a common thing. Men seem to be given power over everything in various sectors of social roles. Meanwhile, women are given very little space, both economically, politically, socially, and educationally.

This culture has long developed in Indonesia. Women are often used as subjects in the domestic sector, while men are used as subjects in the public sector. Women are often required to only serve their parents, then at the next level, they are required to always be at home looking after their husbands and children. For example, the roles of taking care of children, taking care of the house, and cooking in the household are often described as the duties of a woman alone, while the main role of the breadwinner is played by a man. Whereas in a household, harmonious cooperation between husband and wife is needed to be able to do these things. The creation of these feminine and masculine characters has long developed in our society, becoming an ideology that is firmly attached and passed down from generation to generation.

All humans are basically given the same potential to be able to develop into great creatures; it's just that not all humans are given the same opportunity to be able to

develop the talents that exist within them. Like a tree planted in a small pot, it cannot grow as big as a tree planted in a large field. Likewise, with women, who are often limited in their space of movement. For we can see that the Madurese community still considers, for example, that women are part of the family that must be protected and nurtured as a result of the struggle of men to gain self-esteem in front of the community. There is a Madura proverb which says, “*jha ‘gitenggi asakola, dagghi’ badha e dapor keya,*” which means, “no need for school, because it will end up in the kitchen too,” which is intended for women. This expression certainly describes the enormous power over men; the sentence is a form of the strong patriarchal culture in Madurese society. Madurese women have long been trapped in a patriarchal culture that has been instilled by their ancestors revealing that there are restrictions on self-exploration activities for Madurese women who do not work or have careers beyond their husbands. Even quoting, which explains that Madurese girls are educated for the role of wife and mother for their children later in life, rather than for themselves and their future careers. In fact, it is not uncommon for women to be expelled from school for getting married when they are not yet 17 years old. They think that higher education is not important for women, especially because, in the end they will only be in the domestic sector as housekeepers. Madura women in general will obey orders to marry young in accordance with the orders of their parents, because women who are filial are women who obey their parents’ orders. In fact, if we look further, early marriages often end up in court as divorce cases, plus women who do not have the knowledge of education will only make the woman miserable in the end because she cannot support herself and her children.

This paper describes how patriarchy affects social life in Indonesia and how to achieve gender equality in an environment that has made patriarchy a culture. The data presented is obtained through a literature study from various books and journals.

## 2 Discussion

### 2.1 The Impact of Patriarchal Culture

The patriarchal culture that has long developed does not only hurt women as free human beings. In practice this culture has a wide impact. Perhaps at first, patriarchy was expected to bring benefits under the pretext of protecting women and protecting them. But can the limitation of women’s rights as human beings in the midst of a patriarchal culture still be said to be good? The following authors describe the impact resulting from this patriarchal culture.

#### 2.1.1 Domestic Violence

Quoting Bintang Puspayoga, Minister of Women’s Empowerment and Child Protection, who said that more than eight thousand complaints related to acts of violence against women and children were received by the online information system for the protection of women and children from January to December 2021. Of course, this cannot be separated from the role of men. Men who consider themselves to have a great influence on women We can find in various news reports that domestic violence also occurs, not only physically attacking women but also mentally and psychologically. The stereotype

that women are weak creatures both physically and mentally has long been created in our social construction. This social practice makes patriarchal culture easier for men to commit domestic violence. Ironically, there are so many victims of this violence who cannot report because they feel dependent on their husbands as breadwinners. This would not have happened if women were not limited to having the same education and career as men. Again, this is proof of how gender equality has affected various aspects of life. More than that, there are actually many signs that women are under pressure from men. Not only is violence, but treatment such as trying to control others is one of the signs that women are often trapped in abusive relationships. Restrictions on how to dress, restrictions on the scope of friendship, manipulation of feelings, threats to hurt yourself, distorting facts to make feelings of guilt for actions that women don't do, and jealousy that causes women to lose a lot of time with their friends are examples of many power-abusive behaviors.

### **2.1.2 Marriage and Discrimination Against Women**

According to 2015 research data from the Center for Gender and Sexuality Studies at the University of Indonesia, the rate of early marriage in Indonesia is ranked second in Southeast Asia. Bappenas until 2020 noted that the number of child marriages in 18 provinces in Indonesia increased in the period of 2019. The high number of early marriages was driven by several influencing factors. One of them is the social factor. The social environment is often affected because of the patriarchal culture that has taken root. In rural areas, many people think that boys are more valuable than girls because they are considered more able to continue the business that has been run by their parents. According to the Indonesian Women's Congress, between the ages of 14 and 18 years, women are being prepared by their parents to enter the world of marriage because they are believed to not need education and are only expected to be able to help with housework and fields, so marriage is a way out. For those who are no longer in education, this is certainly wrong because women should not experience educational discrimination.

In urban society, women are also often encouraged to get married immediately when they are focusing on their education and career. Society often sets a marriage age limit for women, and if a woman cannot meet the target age, then she gets a negative stigma that is also given to her by the community. This stigma then creates feelings of guilt for women. Rather, both men and women should have the right to focus on what they want to pursue. In this case, men are given the freedom to marry at any age, in contrast to women, who are limited in their careers and education to pursue marriage.

Even when women have met the criteria of society to marry at these age limits, they are still victims of the cruelty of this patriarchal culture. The practice of patriarchal power still continues in women's bodies. After marriage, women are generally required to immediately have children. Women seem to be burdened by their obligation to immediately have children, so that if they don't, they will feel guilty. In practice, not all women can conceive due to several health factors. They are not just silent. Many women have tried various ways to get pregnant immediately, but of course, it is not in their power to be able to force the presence of a child as a form of God's mandate. This environment, which puts pressure on women, is seen as a patriarchal way of using a woman's body in marriage.

### 2.1.3 Toxic Masculinity

Masculinity is a psychological concept that has long developed in the midst of patriarchal culture. Masculinity emphasizes the role and characteristics of men who forbid having emotional feelings that are described as a form of femininity. Masculinity then develops into a form that is detrimental to men from patriarchal culture. We then know it more as toxic masculinity. In the context of gender studies, toxic masculinity is one of the factors that perpetuates patriarchy in society because men will always be given the expectation of being the main one, being a leader, being stoic and other characteristics that show masculinity. This masculinity certainly has a negative impact on men, because it limits a person's natural traits to being able to have feelings of sadness and pleasure. Men in this practice are not allowed to express their own feelings. This, of course, can be dangerous because it can cause conflicts with themselves. Toxic masculinity also burdens men with continuing to maintain their image as creatures who have no feelings about being accepted in society. Men who are raised with the idea of masculinity will then grow up as humans who feel they have greater power over women. Degrading actions and violence given to women are the result of this masculinity. Because boys have been taught since childhood not to act like girls. For example, blue is the color for men and pink is for women. Without realizing it, since we were small humans, we have been taught that men and women should not be the same. Whereas, as free people, we all have the same opportunity and right to choose what we want. Likewise, men who can express their feelings.

So it is clear that there are so many impacts of patriarchal culture that affect the social environment. This is difficult to fix because discrimination against women has been ingrained from an early age and has been taught from generation to generation. Both women's and men's positions are always one level lower than each other, both in terms of education and profession outside the home.

"Where are we at and why does it matter?" Feminism, which is often voiced by women, is not an act to weaken the role of men. Nor is the prosecution supposed to have the same role vertically. Far from that, women demand equal rights in declaring their functions for society and development as human resources, which have the same meaning as men's as people of development. The inclusion of women in various aspects of employment is also a form of efficiency for the economic growth and development of this country. According to the results of the integration of Dukcapil, Muhammad Hudori, Secretary General of the Ministry of Home Affairs, reported that the total population of Indonesia in 2020 reached 271,349,889 people. 137,199,901 million of whom were women. Based on this information, we can say that having women work in the public sector is an effective way to speed up development.

Citing data provided by the Central Statistics Agency, which shows that 36.20% of women in 2021 will become formal workers. In fact, many of the women who have succeeded in becoming the number one person in a company are now executive government chairs. For example, Sri Mulyani Indrawati, the Indonesian Minister of Finance who also succeeded in becoming the first Indonesian to serve as Managing Director of the World Bank. This illustrates that women actually have the same potential as men. In practice, however, women face two challenges in their careers and in pursuing their dreams. Women cannot be separated from their work in the domestic sector as mothers

and housekeepers. It is not uncommon for career women to get a negative stigma for not being able to look after their children and instead employ other people as babysitters to carry out these domestic tasks. As if only women have the obligation to take care of children.

The dual role of women in carrying out their work in the domestic and public sectors cannot be said to be free from the snares of patriarchy if, in practice, there are still dividing boxes between public and domestic spaces. Of course, this, of course, can be overcome by changing the way we view women. As free human beings, of course, women are free to have many roles, as well as men can carry out various tasks and roles other than breadwinners. We have to see humans from the side of humanity, as a complete human regardless of gender. Citing the opinion of Naomi Wolf as one of the figures who often expresses views on feminism which views that being a feminist means being human. As humans, of course, there are no limits to filling these roles. Apart from the nature of women to give birth, breastfeed, and menstruate, women can fulfill their universal human nature. To be able to fill domestic roles, men and women must be able to establish harmony. This is done to break the dichotomy created as a real form of patriarchy. Just as the participation of women in the development industry as one of the workforce for efficiency, the participation of men in the domestic sphere also has the same impact. In the end, awareness is needed to form a harmonious system in carrying out life. Both men and women have the same benefits if they support each other. It is not appropriate for women to continue to be subject to being subordinated because of their limitations. Even if men have superior physical stamina to women, they cannot be compared with women who give birth. We are only required to be aware that this difference cannot be used as a benchmark to distinguish and limit women's rights to have the same rights as men's.

## **2.2 Gender Equality in Environments that have Made Patriarchy as a Culture**

Gender in this sense identifies men and women from a non-biological point of view. But more on character as a trait that can be constructed by culture. Gender is attached to both men and women, socially and culturally. For example, the woman is known to be gentle, beautiful, emotional, and motherly. While men are considered strong, rational, mighty men. The view that these traits are not natural but the result of social construction can be seen in the fact that there are men who are emotional and gentle. Meanwhile, there are also women who are strong, rational, and mighty. Community understanding that characterizes men and women with gender bias can occur from time to time and from place to place. Even though it has become a socio-cultural construct of society and has lasted for a long time, the issue of gender inequality has increasingly attracted the attention of many people to find a solution, which is a noble goal to realize complete social justice. According to Bressler, patriarchy is a social system that places men as the main central authority figures in social organization. Fathers have power over their wives, children, and property. This system makes it clear that men are in charge and have special rights, and that women are lower on the totem pole.

Patriarchy in societies around the world is developing, and Java is no exception. Gradually, from the role that developed in premodern culture, where the physical size and entire muscular system of men were superior, together with the biological role of women

giving birth to children, resulted in a division of labor based on sex, which is still valid today. Men become providers of the necessities of life and protectors in dealing with the world outside the family. Such deep responsibility can provide relatively great autonomy and opportunity. This division of labor led to the development of social roles that were limited to both sexes and the creation of power differences in some ways favoring men. The ranks of authority stemming from biological differences extend deeply into the public realm.

Articulated regulations affect the environment in part simply because the institutions and powers they represent persist and continue to operate. To realize gender equality, it is necessary to take various actions based on a strong commitment to lift women from structural poverty, starting from the individual or oneself, the community, the state, and the international community. Of course, everything must start from the self-will to change to carry out a transformational movement and not a revenge movement, where the movement seeks to create fundamentally better and new relationships between human beings. The fight for gender equality is not the same as the struggle of women against men. Not at all. However, the problem of oppression of women is not a problem for men but a systemic and structural problem in society (gender inequality).

However, at the moment, they feel that gender equality has been implemented in the government of the State of Indonesia. It can be seen that the government has implemented an equal distribution of education programs throughout Indonesia, which can be seen until now that there have been many generations of the nation's successors, which means that many future generations of the nation who are candidates for the development of this country have the same opportunity to receive education. Apart from the existing educational problems, it can be acknowledged that the views of past parents who did not send their daughters to school have now changed. It can be seen that nowadays many women go to high school. In addition to the right to education in the State of Indonesia, which has actually implemented gender equality in organizational structures ranging from small organizations to government, the evidence shows that women now have the same role in this case, occupying certain positions in other institutions, starting from the highest level of the President. The Republic of Indonesia was once occupied by a woman, even at the village level, and the lurah was once led by a woman.

### **2.2.1 Gender Equality in Education**

Education is a conscious and planned effort to create a learning atmosphere and learning process so that students actively develop their potential to have religious and spiritual strength, self-control, personality, intelligence, noble character, and skills needed by themselves, their community, nation, and state. This is an affirmation of the importance of education to change traditional patterns into modern patterns that are more capable of prospering. This is an affirmation of the need to improve the quality of learning at every type and level of education.

Efforts to improve the quality of education at every type and level can be carried out and achieve optimal results if the learning process takes place in a conducive classroom atmosphere and is fostered and guided by professional teachers. Generally, Justice and equality are the basic ideas, goals, and main missions of human civilization to achieve prosperity, develop harmonious social and state life, and build quality families. The Indonesian female population is almost half of the entire population of Indonesia and represents a huge potential for achieving progress and a better quality of life. Equal conditions for men and women to obtain opportunities and their rights as human beings to be able to play a role and participate in political, economic, legal, socio-cultural, defense education, and social security, as well as equality in enjoying the results of development.

### **2.2.2 Gender Equality in the Field of Employment**

One of the efforts to realize gender equality in the field of employment is to provide special protection to female workers in accordance with the specificities and privileges possessed by female workers that must be understood by companies, such as giving maternity and maternity leave in accordance with the nature of women. In addition to having the specificity of female workers, they must also be protected from discrimination in employment relations, the provision of wages, benefits, and social security, opportunities to develop themselves through training and get opportunities for promotions. The rights of women workers have been guaranteed by various regulations, laws, and international conventions, but in reality, many of these rights remain unfulfilled, due to internal factors such as women workers' lack of knowledge and understanding of their rights, as well as external factors such as patriarchal culture, marginalization in the workplace, stereotyped concepts, and so on. The government's role is also not functioning effectively in implementing laws and regulations related to the protection of women workers.

This is indicated by the weak application of sanctions for violators of regulations carried out by companies related to the protection of the rights of female workers.

### **2.2.3 Gender Equality in the Economic Field**

Gender equality can benefit economic development prospects and greatly help people's standard of living. However, the relationship between gender equality and economic growth works in both directions: income generation and economic development. Economic development will improve women's welfare and gender equality. More vigorous economic activity can improve gender equality in several ways, namely economic development, expanding job opportunities and increasing worker productivity in the labor market and encouraging the emergence of a labor market where it did not exist before. This development could remove some of the economic inefficiencies and increase the economic involvement of both men and women. Economic growth is usually accompanied by increased investment in infrastructure such as clean water, roads, transportation, and fuel. Such investment and development of a substitute labor market can reduce women's unpaid work, thereby enabling them to earn leisure time or to work for income and also eliminate gender segregation in the area of economic growth. As family income

increases, the gender gap in education, health, and nutrition tends to decrease. Low-income families who are accustomed to saving on education, health, and nutrition budgets will increase their spending on these things. By increasing the availability and quality of public services (such as health clinics, schools, and roads), economic development also reduces the cost of capital investment for each household.

#### **2.2.4 Gender Equality in Health**

Low economic status will cause women in low-income families to have limited potential to improve the health status of themselves and their families. The dual role that is not fully understood and appreciated causes women to fall into the location of physical and mental exhaustion without adequate support from their surroundings. This will weaken the health status and its role in the development of family and community life. The affordability and quality of health efforts that are widely affordable and of good quality will ensure public health care, such as midwives stationed in the village or posyandu who give more attention to mothers and children. So, it can be concluded that the strategy of increasing the role of women in health development includes increasing the role of women in health development shown to improve the quality of quality human resources both physically and mentally healthy; encouraging women to take an active role in making decisions about planning activities in the health sector; and increasing the role of women in health development. Integrated health development in coordination with the Minister for the Role of Women and increasing support networks for women to improve their social, economic, and health status.

#### **2.2.5 Gender Equality in the Economic Sector Per capita Expenditure**

The market can show some success in economic activity. However, this success does not allow guaranteeing a gender equality. In realizing this equality, serious attention is needed to overcome market gaps that can affect gender equality through consumption, income and expenditure activities. Expenditure per capita is the contribution of income earned between men and women to meet their daily needs.

### **3 Conclusion**

Gender equality is an equal condition between men and women in legal rights and the conditions or quality of life are the same. Gender equality is one of the human rights of every human being. Gender is what differentiates roles, attributes, traits, attitudes, and behaviors that grow and develop in society. Gender roles are divided into productive roles, reproductive roles, and social roles. However, in reality, until now, women were often considered weak and only became complementary figures. Moreover, there is a pattern of thinking that the role of women is only limited to working in the kitchen, wells, and taking care of the family and children, so that in the end, the role outside it becomes unimportant. The term gender equality is often related to the terms discrimination against women, subordination, oppression, unfair behavior, and the like. Gender discrimination causes vulnerabilities for women and/or girls and has the potential to cause violence against women in various fields of life. The dual role of women in carrying out their



work in the domestic and public sectors cannot be said to be free from the snares of patriarchy if in practice there are still dividing boxes between public and domestic spaces. This, of course, can be overcome by changing the way we view women.

As free human beings, of course, women are free to have many roles, as well as men can carry out various tasks and roles other than breadwinners. We have to see humans from the side of humanity, as a complete human regardless of gender. The creation of these feminine and masculine characters has long developed in our society, becoming an ideology that is firmly attached and passed down from generation to generation. In its development at this time, we have encountered many women's roles that have developed in development, employment, and cross-gender, which, of course, cannot be separated from the struggle of feminists. Efforts to realize gender equality are human interests. Gender equality will create justice between men and women, giving wider space for the nation's children to be able to work freely without discriminating against gender. This can be done starting from the awareness of each other and the existence of education in schools that teach about gender equality. And serious efforts are needed from all parties to help realize gender equality. We need to know that this equality is not equality. That is, this equality does not mean giving equal treatment to every individual so that specific needs can be met. Gender equality will in turn result. Healthy, educated and confident women.

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