

Gender Equality in Development: Towards Women's Empowerment in Sumbawa Regency

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Abstract. In the development process, gender is often ignored because there is an assumption that women are a weak group and play a less active role in the development process. Whereas the potential that exists in women is very large, it has just not been explored to the fullest so that there needs to be special attention from various parties, especially the regional government in the development and empowerment of women in Sumbawa Regency. The purpose of this research is to explore the potential that can be developed in women and formulate forms of empowerment that can be developed in the regional development programme in Sumbawa Regency. This research uses a qualitative method with research targets or informants, namely individual women, community leaders and local governments. Determination of informants using purposive sampling technique. Gender equality in development towards women's empowerment in Sumbawa Regency can be achieved by conducting awareness and education, monitoring and assessment, women's involvement and participation, strengthening women's economy, preventing gender violence, access to health services, strengthening capacity, changing patriarchal norms and culture, progressive policies and laws as well as collaboration and partnerships.

Keywords: Gender equality, Development, Women's empowerment

1. Introduction

In the context of human development, gender and development are two broad concepts that are closely intertwined. In social construction, gender is the division of roles and responsibilities between men and women. Meanwhile, the definition of development is an effort to improve the quality of life of the community that takes place in a sustainable and sustainable manner.

In the development process, gender is often ignored because there is an assumption that women are a weak group and play a less active role in development. Along with the changing times and the development of thought and research, it is realised that it is important to analyse the role of women in the development process. Especially in strategic areas such as education, politics, socio-culture and economy. As stated by Reshi, I.A. and Shuda, T. (2023) that

women's empowerment in the economic field is a key factor in promoting gender equality and sustainable development [1].

Gender equality is an equal condition between men and women to obtain opportunities and rights as human beings so that they are able to play a role and participate and can jointly enjoy the results of development [2]. Discussing issues of gender equality, equitable division of labour between men and women, reproductive rights and the elimination of violence against women is an approach that is often used in examining the relationship between gender and development. The female population constitutes half of the world's population that has the potential to be developed to play an active role in the development process in all fields including in the social, economic and political fields.

But in reality, women often face barriers in accessing resources, opportunities and policies that affect their well-being. Therefore, active participation and empowerment of women is needed to achieve sustainable and sustainable development in an inclusive manner.

Gender equality and women's empowerment is one of the United Nation Sustainable Development Goals, where gender equality is placed as an important principle for sustainable development. However, in its integration, many challenges are faced, the problem of patriarchy, gender stereotypes and discrimination is still a barrier in efforts to empower women to achieve gender equality, so continuous efforts need to be made in terms of education, socialisation and legislation to overcome these obstacles. According to Tedjo, A.K. (2021), education for women is one way to reduce discrimination [3].

Recognising the role of gender in the development process makes it possible to achieve gender equality, women's empowerment and a sustainable approach to human development. Problems that often arise in development from a gender perspective are gender mainstreaming and the government's inability to overcome gender barriers to equality and justice. Therefore, there needs to be an effort to explore the potential possessed by women so that they can be more empowered and achieve their welfare.

This kind of condition occurs in Kabupaten Sumbawa, where the great potential of women has not received the right touch in terms of empowerment so that many business opportunities have not been successfully developed. Starting from this condition, the researcher sees the need for a more in-depth and serious study to solve the problem of women's empowerment, so that gender equality can be achieved and women's empowerment in Sumbawa Regency can be developed maximally.

The purpose of this research is to explore the potential that can be developed in women and formulate forms of empowerment that can be maximised in regional development programs in Kabupaten Sumbawa.

2. Methodology

Methodologically, this research uses qualitative methods with research targets or informants, namely individual women, community leaders and local government. Determination of informants using purposive sampling technique with data analysis using the Spradley model. The stages of Spradley's qualitative research model begin with determining key informants who are trusted by researchers to enter the object of research, and start asking descriptive

questions, followed by analysis of interviews. Based on the results of the interview analysis, the researcher then conducted Methodologically, this research uses qualitative methods with research targets or informants, namely individual women, community leaders and local government. Determination of informants using purposive sampling technique with data analysis using the Spradley model. The stages of Spradley's qualitative research model begin with determining key informants who are trusted by researchers to enter the object of research, and start asking descriptive questions, followed by analysis of interviews. Based on the results of the interview analysis, the researcher then conducted domain analysis, taxonomy analysis, componential analysis and cultural theme analysis. Furthermore, the researcher wrote the results of the research report [4].

3. Results and Discussion

a. Overview of Research Sites

Sumbawa Regency is one of the regencies located in West Nusa Tenggara, Indonesia. The total area of 6,647.96 km² is inhabited by 457,671 people with a male population of 230,522 people and a female population of 227,149 people spread across 24 sub-districts with 8 urban villages and 157 villages. The Sumbawa Regency area is surrounded by small islands that have tourism potential that offers extraordinary beauty and abundant natural resource potential, especially agricultural, plantation and fishery products.

Socio-culturally, Sumbawa Regency has a diversity of ethnicities and customs. The Samawa tribe is the dominant indigenous tribe with Sumbawa as their main language, however there are also other tribes such as the Bima, Makassar, Bugis, Javanese, Madurese and a small number of ethnic Chinese. The livelihood of the people of Kabupaten Sumbawa is as farmers and some are fishermen and planters. However, the potential of the land, which is classified as dry land, has not been utilised properly because the Sumbawa Regency area is a dry area with only four months of rain, the rest being an eight-month dry season. Therefore, the period for cultivating crops is relatively short and most of them only rely on rainfed water, although there are several areas that receive irrigation from dams around the Sumbawa Regency area.

b. Gender Equality

Gender equality in development towards empowerment is a process that aims to change social structures and dynamics that tend to produce gender injustice. Gender equality focuses on how to make changes in culture, norms and unfair policies and stereotypes that can limit women in actively participating and achieving equal opportunities in society and development.

One of the main reasons why change is so important in development is because gender inequality has an adverse impact on a country's social and economic progress. Gender inequality stifles the potential and creativity of a large proportion of the

female population, hindering economic growth and sustainable development. Structural change focussed on gender equality is therefore essential to achieving inclusive and sustainable development goals.

The way to overcome these problems is by massively socialising gender awareness and fighting for equality in the development process. From the results of interviews with various parties, several ways to achieve gender equality in Kabupaten Sumbawa can be summarised, including through:

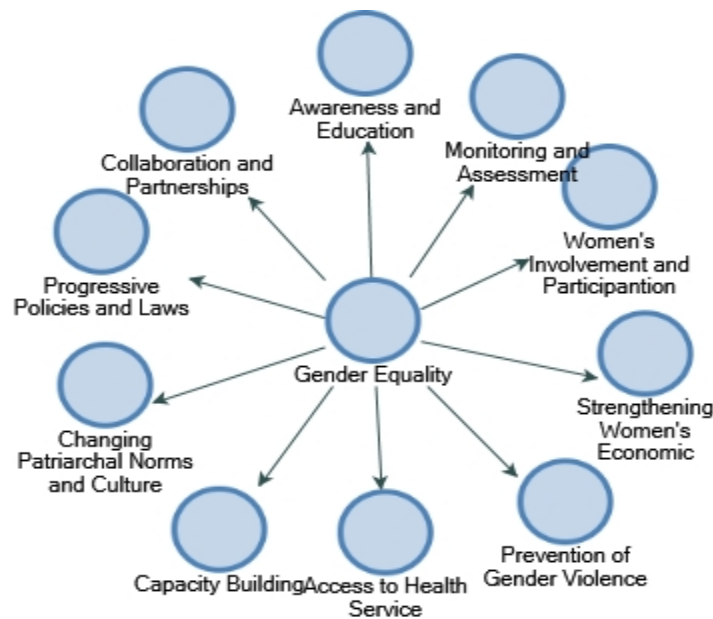


Fig. 1. The results of interviews with various parties, several ways to achieve gender equality in Kabupaten Sumbawa

1. Awareness and education. Raising awareness about gender issues and the importance of gender equality through campaigns, education and training. This should be done at the individual, community and institutional levels. According to Daulay, H., Sukarja, D., and Malik, R. (2023) that awareness can open insights into sensitivity and social practices in equitable gender relations directed at preventing and handling gender-based violence from a sociological and legal perspective so that various forms of gender injustice such as gender stereotypes, subordination, women's triple roles, marginalisation and violence can be minimised to never happen again [5].
2. Monitoring and assessment. Conduct gender monitoring and assessment in development policies, programmes and projects to ensure gender equality and empowerment. Develop clear indicators related to the expected impact on gender equality. According to Dewi, O. M. (2018), one of the keys to the success of gender equality in the Philippines is the implementation of the concept of gender mainstreaming, which integrates gender perspectives into the preparation, design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies, implementing regulations and financing programmes that become government policies [6].

3. Women's involvement and participation. Ensure women's active participation in decision-making and development planning. Encourage women's participation in government institutions, community organisations and the private sector. Equality can be achieved when women are allowed to decide for themselves on issues of concern and act on opportunities without fear [7].
4. Strengthening women's economy. Promote women's access to resources, economic opportunities, education and training to strengthen their economic role. Encourage inclusive job creation and financial assistance that can be accessed by women. Steelyana, E. (2013) states that the number of Indonesian women entrepreneurs has only reached 0.1% of the total number of entrepreneurs in Indonesia, which totals only 1.56%. This means that opportunities for women in developing businesses to strengthen their economy are still wide open [8].
5. Prevention of gender violence. Take concrete action to prevent and address gender violence. This should involve public campaigns, strengthening the legal system of services and protection for victims of violence. According to Rahmi, A., Salamah, U., Kahiriah, N. (2021) that one of the efforts to prevent gender violence is to hold training that can educate the community to better understand gender and violence against women [9].
6. Access to health services. Ensure women's access to quality health services, including reproductive health, sexual health, mental health and safe and affordable health services. Usman, S., Widhyharto, D.S., Maika, A. (2010) mentioned that health has a significant effect on poverty, because those who are unhealthy are difficult to encourage to think creatively, do innovative things and difficult to take productive actions. Therefore, the government must strive to improve the development of the health sector because it not only has strategic values to create a conducive situation for the development of healthy and productive human resources but also has a high investment value for efforts to improve people's welfare [10].
7. Capacity building. Provide training and capacity building to women to improve their knowledge and skills in various fields including leadership, political participation and technical skills. This is also confirmed by Jumiaty, E. (2022) that capacity building can be done through training to increase women's competence to become a leader and dare to make decisions [11].
8. Changing patriarchal norms and culture. Address negative perceptions and gender stereotypes that limit women. This can be done through a strong campaign to change patriarchal norms and culture that support gender inequality. According to Mulyani, T. (2018), changing the paradigm of patriarchal culture is very important, but not easy because it has been going on for generations. However, there is still hope to change it with the role of the legislature and executive as policy makers who can formulate gender-responsive legal regulations through the formation of legal regulations by considering matters that can build a condition where the relationship between women and men as equal partners to get fair treatment to access resources, control, participate, and obtain development benefits [12].
9. Progressive policies and laws. Develop and implement progressive policies and laws to create a legal framework that supports gender equality and protects women's rights. Siroj, M. and Marzuki, I. (2017) states that laws that do not provide a sense of justice have no benefit to society, the law is tasked with making people happy so that the law and humans have an equal position [13].

10. Collaboration and partnerships. Build and strengthen partnerships between government, civil society organisations, the private sector and international institutions to champion gender equality. Build networks and platforms to share knowledge and experiences and work together in the implementation of gender mainstreaming programmes and projects. This is also confirmed by Sapitri, E., Akhyary, E., and Hendrayady, A. (2023) who stated that partnerships between various parties can overcome the problem of gender injustice and can be one of the souls in the development of women's empowerment [14].

Gender equality is not only limited to granting women rights, but also focuses on empowering and eliminating all forms of violence and discrimination faced by women. Effective gender equality requires close cooperation between governments, community organisations, the private sector and international agencies in designing and implementing policies and programmes that promote gender equality and women's empowerment.

One important aspect of gender equality in development is ensuring women's active participation in decision-making and development planning. Women's significant participation will help portray their needs and aspirations in the development agenda. With this involvement, women can act as agents of change in influencing policies and programmes that impact their lives.

Gender equality also involves strengthening women's economies through education, training and access to economic resources and opportunities. This not only empowers women financially, but also strengthens their role in the workforce and promotes their economic independence.

At the social level, gender transformation involves efforts to change cultural perceptions and values that lead to gender inequality. This is through education, campaigns and honouring the role of women in society. Raising public awareness about gender issues and combating stereotypes and norms that limit women are important steps in gender equality.

Implementing gender equality requires progressive policies and laws that explicitly promote gender equality and protect women's rights. A clear and unequivocal legal framework will provide the legal basis for concrete measures to address gender inequality.

Overall, gender equality in development is a comprehensive and sustainable process that aims to create gender equality and women's empowerment through changes in social structures, inclusive policy development, cultural change and unjust norms. This process requires strong commitment and cooperation from various parties to achieve sustainable and inclusive development.

c. Potential Development

The following is an overview of the potential that can be developed with forms of empowerment that can be maximised. The development of this potential is based on

the conditions and capabilities of the region in utilising existing resources, both human and natural resources available.

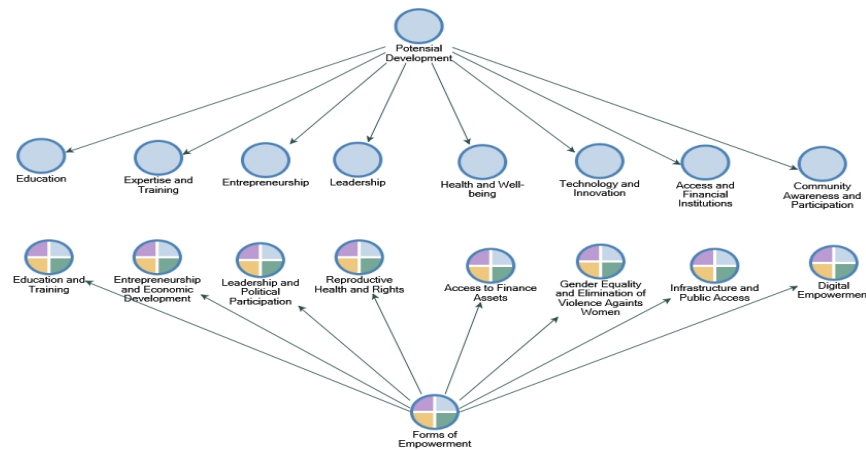


Fig. 2. The potential that can be developed with forms of empowerment

There are several potentials that can be developed in efforts to empower women, including:

1. Education, by improving access and quality of education for women that can help them develop the intellectual potential and skills needed to thrive in the academic and professional world.
2. Expertise and training, by providing access to training and skills development that can help women improve their competence in the world of work and expand economic opportunities.
3. Entrepreneurship, by supporting women in developing entrepreneurial skills and providing business capital will help them become economically independent.
4. Leadership, by encouraging women to take on leadership roles in sectors such as politics, business and civil society will help them influence policies and decision-making that affect society at large.
5. Health and well-being, by providing women with better access to health services including mental and reproductive care that can help them maintain their health and well-being, thus enabling them to participate fully in economic and social activities.
6. Technology and innovation, by encouraging women to participate in technology and innovation fields that can help them utilise developments in information and communication technology to improve their skills and access to wider opportunities.
7. Access to financial institutions, by ensuring that women have equal access to financial facilities such as credit and bank accounts will greatly help them manage and develop their own financial resources.
8. Public awareness and participation, by raising public awareness of gender issues and promoting women's participation in social and political activities that can help change norms and beliefs that encourage gender inequality.

By developing these potentials, women can advance economically, socially and politically and gain equal opportunities to contribute to inclusive and sustainable development.

d. Forms of Empowerment

Some forms of women's empowerment that can be carried out include:

1. **Education and Training.**
Provide equitable and quality access to education and training for women, from primary school to higher education. This can include formal education programmes, vocational training, and continuous learning to develop their skills and knowledge. The local government in collaboration with private higher education institutions in Sumbawa provides educational assistance to outstanding students to continue their education to a higher level.
2. **Entrepreneurship and Economic Development.**
Empowering women in entrepreneurship by providing support to start a business, providing entrepreneurship training, facilitating access to venture capital, and building supportive networks and relationships. According to Aljihad and Wibowo (2021), empowerment through microfinance has opened up access for women to financial services, thereby increasing their income and advancing their businesses, as well as improving their personal and social capacity [15].
3. **Political Leadership and Participation.**
Ensure women's active participation in political and social decision-making processes, both at the local and national levels. Efforts can be made to organise leadership training, advocate for the election of women in political positions, and promote gender awareness in public policy. This can be seen in the 2019 regional head election where the people of Sumbawa Regency succeeded in delivering a female figure to become the Deputy Regent.
4. **Reproductive Health and Rights.**
Ensure equitable and quality access to sexual and reproductive health services, including prenatal and postnatal health services, contraception, and prevention and management of domestic violence. This also includes education on reproductive health and awareness of reproductive rights.
5. **Access to Finance and Assets.**
Providing women with access to financial services such as banks, microcredit, insurance and cooperatives. This also includes advocacy for access to land and property ownership, as well as equal protection laws and access to justice. The local government strongly supports efforts to grow the people's economy by maximising the role of BUMDes as community partners to obtain revolving business capital and encouraging the formation of women's cooperatives in each sub-district and even villages.
6. **Gender Equality and Elimination of Violence Against Women.**
Promote gender equality by countering gender stereotypes, educating communities on gender issues and countering violence against women and girls.
7. **Infrastructure and Public Access.**
Ensure equitable and safe access to infrastructure such as clean water, sanitation, transport and energy for women in both urban and rural areas.
8. **Digital Empowerment.**
Support information and communication technology access and skills for women, especially in rural areas to ensure that they have equal access to technology and are not left behind in the digital age.



Fig. 3. Small Business Management Training Activity

These forms are concrete steps to empower women in various aspects of life, both economically, socio-culturally and politically. Efforts that have been made in addition to providing training to small and medium business actors are providing space to express business skills and hone the entrepreneurial spirit to women by opening the Samota area to become a car free day routinely every Sunday morning.



Fig. 4. Small and Medium Enterprise activities in Samota area

The government also established the Institute for the Protection of Women and Children (IPWC) which aims to advocate for the community and assist the government in handling cases of domestic violence and sexual offences against women and children. This organisation partners with the police, regional hospital and related agencies within the Sumbawa district government. In addition, the Samawa Children's Forum (SCF) was established with the intention of gathering children who have the potential to be fostered and directed according to their abilities, interests and talents.

4. Conclusion

Gender equality and women's empowerment are two elements that are interrelated and influence each other in the development process of a region. How to fight for it by conducting awareness and education, monitoring and assessment, involvement and participation of women, strengthening women's economy, preventing gender violence, access to health services, strengthening capacity, changing patriarchal norms and culture, progressive policies and laws as well as collaboration and partnerships.

Potentials that can be developed in efforts to empower women include education, skills and training, entrepreneurship, leadership, health and welfare, technology and innovation, access to financial institutions, community awareness and participation. Meanwhile, the forms of women's empowerment that can be carried out include education and training, entrepreneurship and economic development, leadership and political participation, health and reproductive rights, access to finance and assets, gender equality and elimination of violence against women, infrastructure and public access, and digital empowerment.

Acknowledgements.

Thanks are due to Deputy Regent of Sumbawa, the informants whose names cannot be mentioned individually, community leaders and relevant agencies within the local government of Kabupaten Sumbawa.

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