

A Critical Study of Gender Equality in Women in the Coastal Area (Case Study of Women Salt Farmers in Brebes Regency)

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Abstract. Gender inequality is vulnerable in poor communities, including coastal areas. Women should not experience discrimination, domination, and exploitation in their jobs and making decisions. This study aims to determine gender equality in women salt farmers in Brebes Regency. This empirical research conceptualized law as behavior, using primary and secondary data, and analyzed using an interactive model. The results of this study indicate that women have a significant role in making boiled salt to contribute to supporting the family economy. In addition, women are also empowered in terms of access to resources. However, women have not been empowered regarding participation and control in decision-making. Participation has not been fulfilled because women have been involved in decision-making but are still subordinate. This causes women not to have control over decision-making because their husbands dominate them. To solve the problem, it is recommended that the Brebes Regency government take steps and policies that are gender-responsive for women salt farmers.

Keywords: Women, Salt Farmers, Gender Equality

1 Introduction

The study of gender equality cannot be separated from historical aspects that show discrimination, domination, and oppression against women. In discrimination, women are not given the same or equal roles as men, so women are always stigmatized as subordinate to men. Women in carrying out legal actions/legal actions cannot be equated with men, who are even integrated into various laws and regulations in Indonesia. Some resources are not accessible to women because of their gender, and even certain positions in the world of work are determined by gender [1].

Women are subordinated to men in various fields of life, even in the household as the smallest unit. The same thing happens in the workplace. Likewise, in social positions and roles, men are still the main ones. The symptoms above indicate that men are dominating women. Not infrequently, women are victims of operations in the household and other social relationships. The increasing violence evidences this against women in the home. However, it is miserable that such actions in specific communities are considered natural, so this old understanding undergoes a crystallization process and is considered trustworthy over time [2]. This crystallization occurs because of a long historical path and has begun to change since the industrial revolution in the XVII century. In this century, the deconstruction of gender-biased understandings has already started to create justice in various fields of life [3].

The existence of gender inequality is not in line with the value of justice. The words equality in the context of gender also remind us of Gustav Radbruch's statement, which states that the essence of justice is equality, including gender equality. Here it will be noted that the effort to create gender equality is to create social justice called the liberating force. It was a liberating power because it could provide freedom and equality for women to develop themselves and gain access to resources.

As a liberating force, Pancasila demands recognition of the rights of individuals and groups (women). Discussions about these rights also cannot be separated from human rights. One of the *leading figures* in the concept of human rights is John Locke, who stated that humans have rights that are fundamentally inherent in themselves, given by God, that cannot be separated from them. These are then referred to as absolute human rights derived from derivative human rights [4]. Women as individuals certainly have these human rights and are also entitled to various derivative rights equal to men. These human rights are then enshrined in the constitution. Thomas Patrick Burke stated that the constitution is an instrument to guarantee freedom and human rights [5].

One of the human rights in the Constitution of the Republic of Indonesia is equality between women and men. In the 1945 Constitution of the Republic of Indonesia, 40 constitutional rights can be broadly divided into fourteen rights groups. One of the articles that regulate gender mainstreaming is Article 27 I of the 1945 Constitution of the Republic of Indonesia, which clearly states that equality in law and government exists between all individuals. In addition, there is also Article 27 paragraph (2), which regulates the right to a decent living and work for humanity. There is also Article 28 I of the 1945 Constitution of the Republic of Indonesia, which governs the right to work and receive fair and proper remuneration and treatment in a working relationship. The article above emphasizes women's rights as individuals and the equality of women and men in work and wages.

Internationally, both explicitly and implicitly, women's rights to work are regulated in various conventions, including the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW). This Convention was later ratified in Law no. 7 of 1984 concerning Ratification of the Convention Concerning the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women. The ratification of this Convention means that Indonesia is obliged to implement the articles in the Convention, including essays on gender equality in the field of work. In addition, there is also the Workers With Family Responsibilities Convention, which was made in 1981 and protected women's rights.

The existence of various national and international legal instruments regarding gender equality in the world of work has not been able to maximize women's participation and obtain equality in their work [6]. Based on data from the World Bank as quoted by the International Labor Organization, it is known that in 2016 the number of women in the labor force working age only reached 50 percent or only half of the total female population. On the other hand, gender inequality also still occurs in Indonesia as described in the Indonesia Gender Development Index (IPG) released in 2019 where there are still many provinces that have low achievements, namely fourteen provinces, and Indonesia's position has decreased in terms of GPA achievement from ranking 103 to be ranked 107th in the world. In addition, one of the calculations that can show the existence of gender inequality in the economy is the wages received by female and male workers. The average salary for female workers during 2014-2019 was still below that of men. In 2018, the wages for female workers were Rp. 2,178,000 or lower Rp. 560,000.00 compared to men's wages. Moreover, there is still a high gap in Labor Force Participation (TPAK) and the dominance of jobs that are seen only as male jobs (*jobs based on masculinity*).

The potential for discrepancies between men and women or gender inequalities is enormous in work in coastal areas. This is because in coastal areas, there is high poverty, and in several studies, it is stated that gender inequality has the potential to occur in poor communities. One of the studies that reveal this is the research of Ratna Indrawasih, which states that male fishermen are always the main focus in fishing activities when in reality, in some areas, there is a more significant role for women than female fishermen. However, there are still various obstacles experienced by women workers in accessing their rights due to various policies in coastal areas that are still gender-biased. This prevents women fishermen from getting access to fisherman protection and fisherman insurance [7]. Based on this understanding, this study aims to determine the role of women in the Brebes Regency in salt processing, the condition of gender equality in the Brebes Regency, and the role and mechanism of empowering women, especially women salt farmers in the Brebes Regency.

This article is different from the writing of Ratna Indrawasih [8] And men and the influence of technology on the role of women fishermen. The difference with this paper lies in two things. This research is not related to the effect of social change on women fishermen and specifically discusses the role of women salt farmers. In addition, this is different from the research of Nurlaili and Rizky Muhartono [9] which focuses on the role of women fishermen, especially in capture fisheries, not salt farmers, namely in the preparation and post-fishing processes.

2 Method

This empirical research no longer conceptualizes law as a norm but as *nomos* or behavior so that it emphasizes the implementation or application of statutory regulations. This research is prescriptive, which tries to provide an overview of the reality or phenomenon under study, namely the role of women salt farmers [10]. This study uses primary data from interviews and observations directly in the field. The interviews were unstructured (*free-flowing*) and made non-participatory observations. The number of women salt farmers that were interviewed was 40 people from 12 to 13 May 2022. In addition, primary legal materials consisting of various laws and conventions, and declarations related to gender equality were used. The data and legal entities collected are then analyzed qualitatively based on the interactive model proposed by Matthew B. Miles and Michael C. Hubberman, which begins with data collection, reduction, data display, and the last is making conclusions or verifying data [11].

3 Discussion

One thing that needs to be discussed before knowing the role of women fishermen is first to analyze various international and national arrangements that regulate women's rights to equality in the world of work. Regarding the rights of women at work, it can be seen in CEDAW, which states that the state must take and develop appropriate steps to prevent discrimination against women, both in laws and policies [12]. One of the women's rights is to be free from discrimination in work. Article 11 of this convention states that women have the right to equal employment opportunities and are free from discriminatory conditions. In addition, the state must guarantee the right of women to freely choose their profession and

work, the right to the promotion of human rights, the protection of workers, and to obtain all the benefits and services of their work [13].

This international Convention obliges countries to take proactive steps to protect women's rights in their work, including in the marine and fisheries sector. This is to prevent the view that men are free to join in all stages or processes of production while women are always stigmatized as subordinates whose only job is to help men; even worse, their role is still in the private sphere [14]. However, the role of women, especially in the fishing community, cannot be underestimated because their role is quite large, including for women salt farmers. This dichotomy of work in society still exists between women and men. In this case, men are tasked with making or adding salt, from land preparation and drying salt to harvesting salt. This salt production process is entirely the male domain or territory.

The female domain or domain is the next role for converting coarse salt into boiled salt. Currently, the number of women salt farmers in Pandansari Village, Kaliwlingi District, Brebes Regency is 23 people. The number of women who become salt farmers continues to decrease due to the difficulty of converting krosok salt into boiled salt and the lack of income earned due to a lack of marketing. Changing from krosok salt to boiled salt takes a long time, even up to 16 hours of boiling. To get krosok salt can be obtained within 8 hours; only the women salt farmers in Brebes Regency, especially in Pandan Sari Village, Kaliwlingi District, try to get additional income by doing a longer boiling process to produce more boiled salt to get additional income. However, this does not mean that all salt produced can then be traded because one of the obstacles women salt farmers face is the difficulty in marketing their products because they cannot compete with other salt sold in the market. This certainly affects the welfare of the families of boiled salt farmers, including female salt farmers.

Women allowed to work have also shown the fulfilment of gender aspects because they have placed women as subjects, not just objects. In this case, there is an equal division of labour between men and women. This also shows that the division of women's participation has contributed to supporting household income. It becomes important to increase the Gender Development Index because one of the indicators of the gender development index is a decent life measured by the equal contribution and income of men and women [15].

Although these women salt farmers have a big role in making boiled salt, they still do not have an equal position with men. This is because the decisions in making boiled salt are determined by men, so the decision-making process in the family still places women as subordinate. The placement of women as subordinate to men in work is also clearly contrary to the Workers with Family Responsibilities Convention of 1981.

This convention is a further elaboration of the Philadelphia Declaration on *Aims and Purposes the International Labor Organization* which recognizes that all living things without distinction of sex gender has the right to get a job [16]. In the *Workers with Family Responsibilities Convention* of 1981 it was stated that there should be no discrimination against women who have families in the world of work and that there should be serious efforts to create equal opportunities and effective treatment for women and men in the world of work.

This inequality in decision-making is also not in line with Article 51 of Law no. 39 of 1999 concerning Human Rights, which states that a wife has the same rights and responsibilities as her husband in the marriage bond. Thus, women should have an equal position or be placed as partners or equal partners in decision-making. In this case, women have the right to get fair treatment in the world of work, and their position as housewives should not prevent a woman from working and making decisions. However, until now, women still experience gender inequality because of the patriarchal culture in society, both in community leaders, policymakers and even women themselves. This patriarchal culture is firmly entrenched in

society, even in women themselves, because of a long crystallization process, so gender inequality and restrictions on women's roles that have been happening are considered something right. Therefore, such an understanding must be deconstructed so that gender equality can be created. This deconstruction is carried out by providing knowledge to women about their rights and advocating for women's rights.

The measurement of gender equality based on indicators of women's empowerment put forward by Sarah Longwe to women salt farmers in Brebes Regency can be presented in the following table [17]:

Table 1. Women's Empowerment

Indicators	Success Measures	Reality
Welfare	Gaining equal access to resources	High poverty in coastal communities has an impact on women's access to resources
Access	Women have access to work.	Women as salt farmers have a major role in processing from coarse salt to boiled salt. Lack of use of technology to facilitate women's work activities
Knowledge	Comprehensive understanding of equality Gender	Women do not understand about gender equality a need for socialization about the importance of gender equality
Participation	Increasing women's participation and placing women as equal partners	Women are still subordinate to their husbands
Control	Women must influence and exercise control in making decisions	Involved in decision making but is still subordinates from husband

(Naila Kabeer, 2005)

Referring to the table above, the absence of women's freedom in controlling decision making shows that a has not implemented the principle of non-discrimination and the principle of substantive equality in CEDAW. Therefore, the state is obliged to take steps or strategies to increase gender equality. This is because one of the principles of gender equality is the principle of state obligations [18].

Moreover, the Ministry of Maritime Affairs and Fisheries has made the Minister of Marine Affairs and Fisheries Regulation No. 51/PERMEN-KP/2016 concerning Guidelines for Mapping the Implementation of Gender Mainstreaming in the Maritime and Fisheries Sector in the Regions, which requires the community to make policies that are gender-responsive at the central, provincial and district/city levels. This needs to be done to create an integrated policy for gender equality in the marine and fisheries sector, including for women salt farmers in Brebes Regency.

4 Conclusion

Women farmers have a very important and strategic role in the management of boiled salt. In this case, women play a role in boiling the salt that has been produced by their husbands as farmers. This shows that women also contribute to increasing family income which is an indicator in the gender development index. Measurement of gender equality based on indicators put forward by Sarah Longwe to women salt farmers in Brebes Regency shows that there are two indicators that have been met, namely welfare and access. As for the indicators of knowledge, participation and control have not been fully met. This is because decision making is still dominated by male fishermen. In order to increase gender equality, the Brebes Regency government must increase the socialization of gender equality and design regulations and policies that emphasize women's empowerment.

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