



“Sekolah Ibu Program”: Women Resilience Program or Gender Blind Policy?

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Abstract

This article analyzes the Gender Blind Policy phenomenon in the “*Sekolah Ibu Program*” in Bogor City, Indonesia. This article aims to see whether there are gender gaps or inequality in the “*Sekolah Ibu Program*”. The “*Sekolah Ibu Program*” was created to reduce the divorce rate in Bogor City, Indonesia. The divorce trend in Bogor City has increased in the last three years. Therefore, the Bogor City government created a program to suppress divorce cases. In the “*Sekolah Ibu Program*”, there are learning modules such as parenting patterns, family health, family resilience, and others, so women are expected to have more knowledge about family resilience. The method used by the author in this research is Cresswell's qualitative case study approach. The author uses Naila Kabeer's Gender Blind Policy theory, which uses four indicators to determine the phenomenon in the program: participation, benefits, control, and access. These four indicators used to see the inequality and the gender gap in this program. The result shows that there is still a gender gap, such as what occurs in the “*Sekolah Ibu Program*”, where there are still limitations between women and their participation in the program.

Keywords: Women Resilience, Policy, Gender Inequality, “*Sekolah Ibu Program*”, Social Welfare

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Introduction

Gender inequality is a problem that still exists today and causes much unrest in society due to differences in public and private affairs (Benstead, 2021; Czymara et al., 2021). Gender itself speaks not only of the dichotomy of sex but also of the structure of complex social systems, and gender inequality speaks to gender norms that limit the space for men and women to move in various sectors, such as health (Heise et al., 2019), education (O'Connor, 2020), and employment (Alemany et al., 2019; Kleven et al., 2019; Landivar et al., 2020). This practice is perpetuated by society, households, and the government (Lawless et al., 2021).

Gender inequality is the injustice between women and men in achieving equal rights. It is influenced by various things, including geographic area, education, location of residence, and marital status (Adeosun & Owolabi, 2021). This practice is perpetuated, one way or another, through religious perspectives on women through the labeling process (Wood, 2021) and social media (Qin et al., 2024). Gender inequality has various impacts, especially in long-term development plans (Silva & Klasen, 2021), perpetuating women's poverty (Nisak & Sugiharti, 2020). Gender inequality also has an impact on increasing suicide rates among women (Chang et al., 2019).

The root of gender inequality is patriarchal culture. Patriarchy exists in simple and complex scopes, always intersecting with power (Ortner, 2022; Pringle, 1995; Rakow, 1986), which perpetuates positions of dominance (Altay, 2019) and subordination of women (Quek, 2019). Patriarchy talks about oppression, domination, and exploitation, which are legalized by the social system (Hossen, 2020), as well as segregation due to ideology, which has an impact on behavior (Hadi, 2019). In the political realm, patriarchy can prevent women from taking part in politics, thereby suppressing political participation rates (Wayan & Nyoman, 2020) and even hampering research related to political science (Bensimon & Marshall, 1997; Freidenberg, 2019)

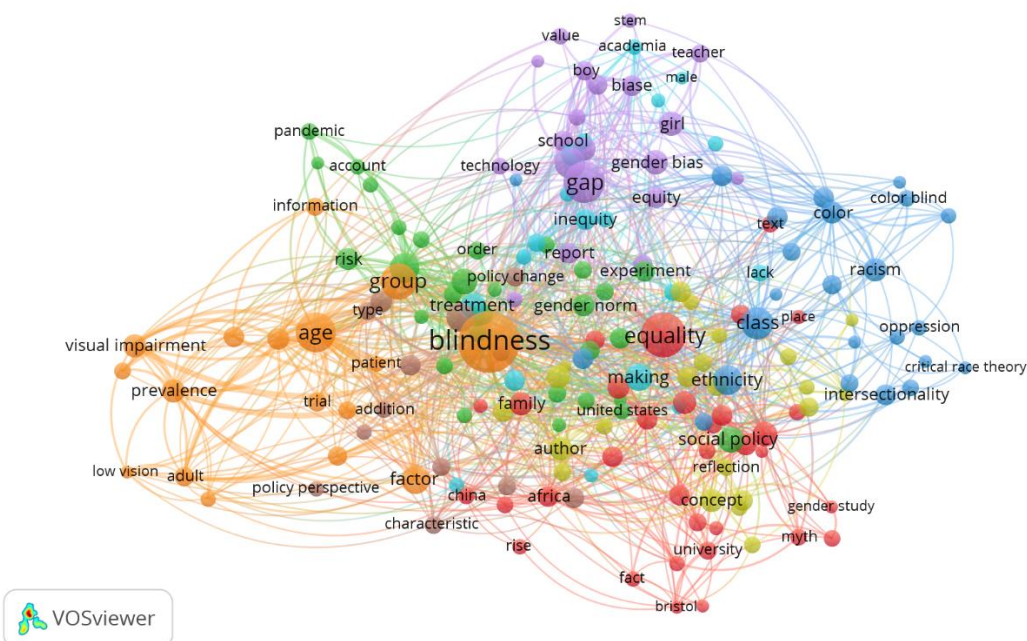


Figure 1. *Visualization Network by Vosviewer regarding gender inequality in public policy. Source: Processed by authors, 2024*

This research tries to see how gender inequality due to patriarchal culture occurs in public policy, known as gender-blind policy. Based on Figure 1 the visualization results carried out via Vos Viewer on searches of 1000 pieces of literature that have been mined via publish or perish, this research looks at the relationship between blindness from a policy perspective. So far, gender blindness has often been found in education (Bishu, 2024) and public services (Colley et al., 2020). It is essential to formulate inclusive public policies by engaging decision-makers, including women (Radjabova, 2022), in the cycle in which public policies are prepared (Gonda, 2019). So far, existing studies have seen inconsistencies in policy formulation, especially regarding women (Goijaerts, 2022). In some decision-making cases, viewing an issue from the perspective of colorblindness is preferable to gender blindness (Koenig, 2021). The higher gender blindness will affect the exclusivity of women (Stoll et al., 2018)

Inclusivity in viewing gender issues is necessary to ensure the value of gender equality (Kroese, 2022; Mantouvalou, 2020). In several countries such as China (Leow, 2022), America (Skidmore, 2019), and Scandinavian countries (Aggestam et al., 2018), inclusivity has been adopted in viewing gender (Vossenbergh, 2020), especially in the field of public policy (Raj & Kumari, 2022). This phenomenon was initiated by the equal role of men and women in the military (Chapsos & Norman, 2023) and perspectives on responding to climate change (Allwood, 2019). Therefore, this research aims to encourage diversity awareness, especially in the realm of public policy (Gundemir et al., 2019).

In Indonesia, gender inequality occurs in Bogor City. Gender inequality in Bogor City occurs in several aspects, including education, political participation, economic equality, and health. Men have a higher participation rate than women. For example, at the political level, the majority of seats in politics are filled by men. Men are prioritized in politics because most people think men must fill most leaders, and women can not lead. Women tend to be underrepresented in political positions. Only a 30% quota is given to women, which many still do not have—fulfilled in some areas. One of the reasons for gender inequality is the lack of education in women. It has an impact not only on women's status being lower than men but also on women becoming victims of patriarchal culture.

In the Bogor City itself, there are still many gender-blind policies. Kabeer (Kabeer & Subrahmanian, 1996) emphasized that the Gender Blind Policy could worsen gender inequality even more, especially according to Kabeer regarding accessing and controlling resources. Kabeer gave an example of a gender-blind policy, the financial assistance program that should be able to provide equal benefits to both women and men. However, men have more access than women and need more economic resources.

In contrast, in social reality, women often have difficulty accessing resources compared to men. Another example that could be said to be gender blind, according to Kabeer, is the job training program, where men and women are given the same training without paying attention to their respective abilities. In this way, women may experience difficulty accessing employment due to their limited mobility.

Another problem in Bogor City is the divorce rate is still relatively high; many people get married at a young age and then divorce due to several factors. Divorce is a complex social phenomenon in developing big cities, including Bogor in Indonesia. The increasing divorce rate in this city reflects changing social, economic, and cultural dynamics. Bogor City is one of the cities with relatively high divorce cases compared to the neighboring town, namely Sukabumi, where in 2020,

divorce cases in Sukabumi City did not reach 1000 cases; to be precise, 764 cases were approved, and in 2021, many as 731 cases were obtained from Sukabumi religious court data. Then, compared with Cirebon City, in 2020, there were 1116 divorce cases in Cirebon City, and in 2021, there were 849 cases. From data collected through the official website of the Bogor City Religious Court and the Supreme Court's decision, in 2020, the Bogor City Religious Court received 4,904 divorce reports, and the Religious Court and 1,923 reconciliations approved 2,981.

Divorce cases are divided into two types: *talak* divorce, which is carried out by the man, and contested divorce, which the woman carries out. Of the 2981 cases, 1230 were divided into 1751 divorce cases. Then, in 2021, 2122 divorce cases were accepted by the court. As many as 1440 divorce cases were approved by the Bogor City Religious Court, divided into 346 talk divorce (filed by the husband) and 1,094 divorce cases (filed by the wife). Then, in 2022, as many as 1472 cases have been approved, divided into divorce filed by the husband as many as 898 cases and divorce filed by the wife as many as 574 cases. In 2023, as of February 5, the Bogor City Religious Court decided on divorce as many as 140 divorce cases.

The Bogor City Government held a “Sekolah Ibu Program”, which was published in 2018 and was founded by Yane Adrian, the head of the Bogor City TPKK and the wife of the mayor of Bogor, Bima Arya (Karunia et al., 2021). Yane said that in preparing a “Sekolah Ibu Program”, it takes a long time to design educational modules and train the workforce (Okezone, 2018). The Bogor City Government considers that the presence of the “Sekolah Ibu Program” in Bogor City can increase the capacity and quality of a mother or woman in taking care of the household, educating children, serving her husband, and so on (Karunia et al., 2021). The “Sekolah Ibu Program” teaches 20 educational modules, including financial management or managing one's potential (Ibrahim et al., 2019). The “Sekolah Ibu Program” is an effort by the government to promote family welfare. This program assumes that mothers or women have significant potential in a family. From the data obtained, the “Sekolah Ibu Program” is distributed to almost all sub-districts in Bogor City. However, it is starting to be effective and implemented regularly in 68 sub-districts, beginning in July 2018.

The “Sekolah Ibu Program” was held to increase a mother's capacity to take care of the family or household, take care of children, and so on in the family (Putri, 2021). In this case, in other words, in the “Sekolah Ibu Program”, mothers assume that women have an essential role and that women are the main foundation for family resilience (Permana, 2021). If we look at the role and function of the family, two people have an essential role in the family's resilience, namely the husband and wife. The two are interrelated, and in maintaining the family, both must be involved, not only women who must be educated for family resilience.

Research Methods

Researchers used qualitative research methods and a case study approach (Cresswell, 2015). The case study approach aims to deeply understand a complex phenomenon in a particular context. This approach is widely used in social sciences, such as anthropology, sociology, psychology, and political science. In this approach, researchers collect data from various sources, such as observations, interviews, documents, and archives. Then, it is analyzed in depth and interpreted using multiple analytical techniques such as narrative, thematic, and descriptive analysis.

Creswell identified three types of case study approaches, namely: (1) Single case study approach: Research conducted on a single case to deeply understand a complex phenomenon in a particular context.; (2) Multiple case study approach: Research conducted on several cases to compare the same phenomenon in different contexts; and (3) Collective case study approach:

Research conducted on a group of cases to collectively understand a phenomenon in a particular context.

Researchers used a case study approach because the “Sekolah Ibu Program” is a public innovation program implemented by the Bogor City Government. The “Sekolah Ibu Program” is an innovation that only the Bogor City has and is also a program that is a reference for other regions to create similar programs. The “Sekolah Ibu Program” once won 1st place in West Java Regional Planning Development (PDD) (Pemerintah Daerah Kota Bogor, 2020). Researchers also used a case study approach because they wanted to understand a phenomenon, namely the phenomenon of gender blindness in the “Sekolah Ibu Program”, and to obtain in-depth information to find out the problems that occurred in the “Sekolah Ibu Program”. The researcher used a single case study approach because the researcher only examined one case, namely the “Sekolah Ibu Program”. Researchers use single case studies to understand the case in-depth, focus more, and gain better insight into the factors that influence or are related to the case. Researchers can collect data from the cases taken in more detail.

The researcher's primary focus in this study is Gender Inequality and the Gender-Blind Policy Phenomenon within the “Sekolah Ibu Program” in Bogor City. Specifically, the researcher aims to understand how gender inequality manifests within the “Sekolah Ibu Program” and explore the phenomenon of gender blindness in this context.

Results and Discussion

Researchers used four indicators of Nailaa Kabeer's Gender Blind Policy Theory (Kabeer & Subrahmanian, 1996). When discussing indicators in the context of the “Sekolah Ibu Program”, Naila Kabeer provides four indicators to measure whether a policy can be categorized as a gender-blind policy. In these indicators, several aspects can be linked to efforts to improve program quality and gender equality, including:

Participation

This indicator measures how policies or programs ensure equal participation between men and women, including access to education, training, and employment opportunities. Participation indicators are tools or parameters used to measure a person or group's level of involvement in a particular activity, program, or process. This indicator helps assess whether the individual or group is involved in a specific decision, activity, or initiative. Participation is often considered a key element in democratic decision-making and inclusive development.

This participation indicator includes the number and level of women's participation in the “Sekolah Ibu Program”. In other words, this program shows that women have equal access to register and attend this program. The balanced and sustainable participation of women and men in the program will demonstrate that there are no gender barriers that prevent women from being involved. Women's involvement in the “Sekolah Ibu Program” dominates all aspects because the program is specifically for women. This program builds the spirit of women's participation in Bogor City to gain broader knowledge and insight to obtain the same rights as men. Even though this program has age and status restrictions, this program is very popular with women in Bogor City. The procedure for registering for the “Sekolah Ibu Program” is that participants can register directly at the sub-district according to their domicile through the PKK Mobilization Team.

The “Sekolah Ibu Program” was held to increase a mother's capacity to care for the family, household, children, and so on. However, in the “Sekolah Ibu Program”, there is a classification of

participants where only women who are married or want to get married are allowed to take part; apart from that, women who are allowed to take part are women under 45. According to the government, this classification is used to make it more relevant to the program. It is made according to existing materials and will be used to teach all program participants. This relevance is related to the goals to be achieved with the “Sekolah Ibu Program”, including children's education, parenting skills, health and nutrition, women's empowerment, and specific household management skills.

It proves that there is still an access gap in the “Sekolah Ibu Program”, which refers to participation indicators, which measure the extent to which policies or programs ensure equal participation between men and women, including access to education, training, and employment opportunities. There is unequal access to this program, especially for men who cannot participate in it because the “Sekolah Ibu Program” is specifically for women, but for women themselves, the access given is different; there are still classifications and criteria. Not all women, especially in Bogor City, can participate in the “Sekolah Ibu Program” due to their limited status and age.

Benefits

This indicator measures the extent to which policies or programs provide equal benefits for men and women, including in terms of health, income, and social welfare. Benefit indicators are parameters or measures used to evaluate the positive results or impacts resulting from a policy, program, or project. Benefit indicators are critical in understanding the contribution and effectiveness of an action or intervention.

The benefits indicator evaluates the impact obtained by women from the “Sekolah Ibu Program”. It includes mastering new skills, increasing knowledge, and other benefits women gain after participating in the program. This evaluation will ensure that the benefits obtained by women are comparable to those obtained by men, so there is no gender gap in the results achieved from this program.

“Sekolah Ibu Program” provides many benefits for women in Bogor City. As many participants said, by participating in this program, household relationships can become more harmonious and colorful than before. The participants also understand family health. Family health here means that the participants increase their insight into health, such as food patterns and choosing nutritious food for the family, especially nutrition for children because nutrition for children is essential for their growth to be even healthier.

Then, besides good food or eating habits, the participants were provided with more insight into the importance of physical activity or exercise for health. The participants were also offered teachings about managing or knowing the child's physical and mental conditions; this is very useful for parents to be more sensitive to their child's physical and psychological health, which can bring the role of parents closer to their children. And children also become closer and more open to their parents, because many children receive less attention from their parents, which causes the child to become more withdrawn and closed to the home environment, resulting in the atmosphere at home becoming stiff and awkward. This condition causes a lack of harmony in the family; therefore, in the “Sekolah Ibu Program”, the participants are taught the importance of parenting and managing the household well.

Apart from that, the “Sekolah Ibu Program” teaches participants skills and how to manage finances well because managing finances is essential for the family's survival. Therefore, participants are taught how to manage finances based on needs that must be prioritized or lifestyles that drain finances.

In this case, participants are taught how to differentiate between needs and desires so that finances can be more neatly organized, starting from income and expenses. Then, apart from being taught how to manage money, the participants are directed to learn about micro, small, and medium enterprises so that homemakers can earn income. The participants are directed and taught how to manage and build the business; they are also facilitated with loans from the government. The government wants to develop through this “Sekolah Ibu Program”; apart from participants gaining insight into households, child-rearing patterns, and other things related to the household, this program can also build economic growth and open up new jobs in Bogor City, Indonesia.

Apart from that, participants who work or are building a career in the “Sekolah Ibu Program” are taught how to manage their time to be more efficient and maintain a balance between taking care of the household and building a career. These participants are taught how to manage their time to be more effective and overcome stress due to having a dual role, namely taking care of the household and having a career. So, not only do they gain knowledge and insight into the household, but the participants are also encouraged to become small entrepreneurs in Bogor City to help improve their families' economy because many household problems arise due to economic issues.

Control

Control indicators are parameters or variables used to measure or assess the efficiency, effectiveness, or performance of a system, process, or activity. They provide information about a particular condition or parameter that meets the established standards or objectives. These indicators help monitor and manage a system's quality or performance. According to Kabeer, this indicator measures policies or programs that provide equal opportunities for men and women to control decisions affecting their lives, including resource management and participation in public decision-making.

This indicator looks at the extent to which women in the “Sekolah Ibu Program” have control over the learning process and decisions that affect them. This involves women's active participation in learning subject matter appropriate or relevant to their needs, as well as the opportunity to provide input and influence the course of the program.

In the “Sekolah Ibu Program”, participants receive lessons and much knowledge. It is hoped that the participants can open their minds and insights so that they can control themselves and know their capacities so that later, the participants can choose or make their own good decisions to influence their lives in a better direction. Apart from that, by participating in the “Sekolah Ibu Program”, participants can have control over managing their household life because they already have sufficient skills and knowledge regarding child-rearing patterns, so the participants will know how to educate their children properly. The participants will have insight into family health, such as providing good nutrition to the family, especially children, which is very important for the child's growth and can also be more sensitive to the child's physical and mental health; participants are also able to manage finances with the insight they have from participating in the “Sekolah Ibu Program”. The participant can manage income and expenses and differentiate between needs and desires.

Participants can be more confident in making decisions for themselves and those relating to their children and other issues that affect daily life. Women can control themselves more over situations in the household, play a more active role in the household, and take part in making decisions that affect the household.

Access

Access indicators are parameters or measures used to evaluate the extent to which individuals or groups have the ability to obtain or use a particular service, resource, or facility. This indicator provides an overview of the availability and accessibility of a good or service by the target population. According to Kabeer, these indicators measure how policies or programs ensure equal access for men and women to resources. Another indicator is whether different genders have equal access to resources and opportunities, such as education, health, or work. If one gender consistently faces barriers that the other does not, gender-aware interventions can help level the playing field and ensure equal access.

The “Sekolah Ibu Program” also ensures that women have the same access as men by providing opportunities for education, health, and work, and they can even choose their own lives. In the “Sekolah Ibu Program”, women are taught many things, starting from knowing themselves, their potential, and their environment. They are also taught how to develop the skills that exist within themselves so that they can be put to good use to produce goods and money, which are useful for better household relationships.

In this “Sekolah Ibu Program”, participants are taught many things that broaden their knowledge in household matters, such as parenting, family health, managing finances, and many others. In terms of access, women have more access to various aspects. One of them is education. Women have greater access to education regarding family insight, which will be very useful for the continuity of household life. Women have more comprehensive access to active decision-making roles in the household that will affect their domestic life.

Apart from that, women have broad access to the economy. Women are taught to manage finances well and always have enough money for household needs. Women are better able to manage their finances more wisely because if the economy is sufficient, household life will feel more harmonious. The “Sekolah Ibu Program” not only teaches theories in economics; participants who have graduated from the Mother School are then directed to Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises. The participants are trained and directed to become small-scale entrepreneurs and provided with facilities to support their business needs. Teachers will accompany participants interested and serious about carrying out this business so they can develop.

This is essential access for women to help improve their household economy so that it becomes better, which will also affect harmony in the family. Apart from that, this also opens up new access to increased employment opportunities in the region, especially in the participant environment, which will undoubtedly have an impact on improving the region's economy, namely Bogor City, Indonesia. So, this program was not solely created to increase women's knowledge about family resilience; after attending the “Sekolah Ibu Program”, women gained access to small entrepreneurs.

Conclusion

Based on the results of the research, it was found that there are still several gender gaps in the “Sekolah Ibu Program” in Bogor City, Indonesia. The government created the “Sekolah Ibu Program”, specifically for women, to reduce the divorce rate in Bogor City. Apart from the “Sekolah Ibu Program” aims to increase the capacity of a mother or woman to take care of the family or household, taking care of children such as knowledge of parenting patterns, children's health, and nutrition, both mental and physical health, which is very useful for family harmony. However, there is still a gap among women in the implementation of the “Sekolah Ibu Program”. In contrast, in the “Sekolah Ibu

Program”, there are classification requirements to enter and take part in the program; namely, women who are allowed to take part are women under 45.

Then other conditions that can participate in the “Sekolah Ibu Program” are married women or women who want and are ready to get married soon. This criterion proves that this program still has an access gap, which refers to participation indicators. This indicator measures how policies or programs ensure equal participation between men and women, including access to education, training, and employment opportunities. In this program, there is unequal or equal access for women themselves, and the access given is not the same; there are still classifications and criteria which mean that not all women, especially in Bogor City, Indonesia can take part in this “Sekolah Ibu Program” due to limited status and age.

The correlation between the Gender Blind Policy indicators, a framework developed by Kabeer, and the “Sekolah Ibu Program” is as follows:

1. Participation. This indicator measures how policies or programs ensure equal participation between men and women, including access to education, training, and employment opportunities. In this program, there is unequal or equal access, especially for men who cannot take part in this program because the “Sekolah Ibu Program” is specifically for women, but for women themselves, the access given is not the same; there are still classifications and criteria. Not all women, especially in Bogor City, can participate in the “Sekolah Ibu Program” due to limited status and age.
2. Benefits. This indicator measures how policies or programs provide equal benefits for men and women, including health, income, and social welfare. The “Sekolah Ibu Program” creates many benefits that women in the city of Bogor can feel. As many participants said, by participating in this program, household relationships can become more harmonious and colorful than before; the participants also understand family health, good parenting patterns, and managing household finances well; after graduating, the participants directed and facilitated micro-entrepreneur so that later the participants can make money from the business and help the family economy.
3. Control. This indicator looks at the extent to which women in the “Sekolah Ibu Program” have control over the learning process and decisions that affect them. By participating in the “Sekolah Ibu Program”, participants can be more confident in making decisions for themselves, their children, and other daily life issues. Women can control themselves more over situations in the household, play a more active role in the household, and take part in making decisions that affect the household.
4. Access. These indicators measure the extent to which policies or programs ensure equal access for men and women to resources. In the “Sekolah Ibu Program”, women are taught many things, starting from teaching about knowing themselves, their potential, and their environment, and also taught how to develop the skills that exist within themselves so that they can be put to good use to produce things such as goods and money which are helpful for better household relationships.

Declaration of Competing Interest

The authors declare that they have no known competing financial interests or personal relationships that could have appeared to influence the work reported in this paper.

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