






Gender Equality in Indonesia's Legal System: Progress or Stagnation?

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Abstract

This study examines the progress of gender equality within Indonesia's legal system, focusing on whether recent reforms have achieved meaningful change or if they merely represent stagnation. Despite legal advancements, such as the ratification of international conventions and national laws aimed at promoting gender equality, women in Indonesia continue to face significant challenges, including discrimination, violence, and limited access to opportunities in various sectors. This research investigates the alignment of Indonesia's legal framework with gender equality principles, analyzing legislative reforms, their implementation, and the societal and institutional barriers that hinder their effectiveness. Key findings highlight a persistent gap between legal reforms and societal practices, often compounded by traditional gender norms and weak enforcement mechanisms. While there have been notable improvements in areas such as women's political participation and domestic violence protection, other issues, including workplace discrimination and the underrepresentation of women in leadership positions, remain inadequately addressed. The novelty of this study lies in its comprehensive

evaluation of both legal reforms and their real-world impact, presenting a nuanced understanding of gender equality in Indonesia. Given the country's dynamic social and political landscape, this research is urgent for informing policymakers, activists, and legal practitioners about the gaps that remain and the necessary steps to ensure that gender equality is not just a legal aspiration but a lived reality. This study contributes to the broader discourse on gender justice by offering concrete recommendations for enhancing the effectiveness of legal reforms in promoting gender equality in Indonesia.

Keywords: Gender equality, legal reforms, Indonesia, women's rights, societal barriers

Introduction

Gender equality within legal systems is universally recognized as a cornerstone of human rights and a critical element in achieving social justice, economic growth, and sustainable development.¹ The legal framework of a country serves not only to regulate social behavior but also to shape societal norms regarding gender roles and relations. In this regard, a legal system that promotes gender equality is fundamental to ensuring that both men and women are treated with equal respect and dignity, enjoying the same legal rights and opportunities.² For many countries, including Indonesia, legal reforms addressing gender inequality have been slow and complicated due to historical, cultural, and social factors.³ Gender-based

¹ Pathania, Sudershan Kumar. "Sustainable development goal: Gender equality for women's empowerment and human rights." *International Journal of research* 5.4 (2017): 1-15; Larasati, Ayu Maulidina, and Novia Puspa Ayu. "The education for gender equality and human rights in Indonesia: Contemporary issues and controversial problems." *The Indonesian Journal of International Clinical Legal Education* 2.1 (2020): 73-84.

² Widyawati, Anis, et al. "Empowering Boja Village through Equilibrium Theory Based Gender Equality for the Enhancement of Family Welfare." *Jurnal Pengabdian Hukum Indonesia* 7.2 (2024): 171-190; Utami, Diyah, Ali Imron, and Refiti Handini. "Framing Analysis of Islamic Marriage Sermon in Perspective of Gender Equality." *Komunitas: International Journal of Indonesian Society and Culture* 6.2 (2014): 320-326.

³ Robinson, Kathryn May, and Sharon Bessell, eds. *Women in Indonesia: Gender, equity and development*. Vol. 8. Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 2002; Cholil, Mufidah. "Complexities in dealing with gender inequality: Muslim women and mosque-based social services in East Java Indonesia." *Journal of Indonesian Islam* 11.2 (2017).

discrimination remains deeply ingrained in both formal law and informal societal structures, making the path to achieving gender equality in law and practice a complex and ongoing challenge.

Indonesia, as one of the largest democracies in the world, has made significant strides in addressing gender inequality, especially in areas such as education, health, and political participation.⁴ Indonesia's legal framework has also seen improvements, with the introduction of various policies and laws designed to protect women's rights and promote gender equality. The most notable reforms include the passage of the 2007 Domestic Violence Law and the 2004 Law on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women. However, despite these legal advancements, gender inequality remains prevalent in the country. Deep-rooted cultural practices, religious interpretations, and socio-economic inequalities continue to limit women's access to justice, economic opportunities, and political power. While the legal framework may

⁴ Indonesia, as one of the largest democracies globally, has made notable advancements in addressing gender inequality, particularly in education, healthcare, and political participation. In education, gender gaps have narrowed significantly, with women achieving higher enrollment rates in primary and secondary schools. Scholars like Halim argue that these strides reflect the government's commitment to gender parity as a central development goal. In health, Indonesia has improved women's access to maternal care and reproductive health services, which has contributed to reduced maternal mortality rates. *See* Halim, May Ling D., et al. "Gender attitudes and gender discrimination among ethnically and geographically diverse young children." *Infant and Child Development* 33.3 (2024): e2482; Karya, Denis Fidita, and Abdul Halim. "Indonesian Students' Perception of Gender Equity in Education." *Pegem Journal of Education and Instruction* 11.4 (2021): 185-196. However, significant gender disparities persist, particularly in political representation and the labor market. Wulandari points out that while the country has implemented gender quotas for parliamentary elections, women's representation remains limited, and their political influence is often overshadowed by male-dominated structures. Similarly, in the workforce, Husein et al. highlight persistent gender wage gaps and barriers to women's economic empowerment, especially in rural areas. These challenges reflect broader social norms and institutional barriers, with deep-rooted patriarchal values that continue to impede the full realization of gender equality despite legal and policy reforms. *See also* Wulandari, Pitu, et al. "Association between age, gender and education level with the severity of periodontitis in pre-elderly and elderly patients." *Majalah Kedokteran Gigi* 55.1 (2022): 16-20; Wulandari, Novita, Deditiani Tri Indrianti, and Muhammad Irfan Hilmi. "Analisis Gender Peran Perempuan Pesisir pada Ketahanan Keluarga di Desa Puger Kulon Kabupaten Jember." *Jendela PLS* 7.1 (2022): 52-60; Husein, Sabarina, Herdis Herdiansyah, and LG Saraswati Putri. "Allocation to gender empowerment towards gender equality of Sustainable Development Goals." *IOP Conference Series: Earth and Environmental Science*. Vol. 716. No. 1. IOP Publishing, 2021.

have changed, many women still face significant challenges in exercising their rights, suggesting that the legal system's implementation may not be as robust as intended.⁵

The question central to this research is whether the Indonesian legal system has effectively addressed gender equality or whether it has failed to overcome entrenched discriminatory practices. While the country has ratified international conventions such as the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), and passed significant laws aimed at protecting women, these legal frameworks have often been criticized for their limited impact on real-life experiences. Cases such as the widespread practice of child marriage, despite its prohibition under Indonesian law, or the insufficient implementation of the Domestic Violence Law, illustrate a gap between legal protections and their real-world application. In many instances, social norms and patriarchal values override the formal legal structure, creating a disconnect between written law and its practice in communities across the country.

This paper seeks to address the apparent gap between legislative progress and practical outcomes in gender equality within Indonesia's legal system. More specifically, the research will assess whether Indonesia's legal reforms and policies have effectively tackled gender inequality or whether stagnation and resistance to change persist in the judicial and legislative processes. The paper will explore whether legal reforms have been undermined by cultural and institutional barriers, and what impact these barriers have on women's access to justice. Despite the introduction of progressive laws, gender-based violence, economic inequality, and lack of female representation in political and legal leadership positions remain significant challenges in Indonesia. This raises the question of whether these reforms have been implemented meaningfully or whether there has been stagnation in legal practices concerning gender equality.

This study aims to critically evaluate the progress made by Indonesia's legal system in promoting gender equality and examine the challenges that persist despite legal reforms. The research will address the following specific objectives: to identify and analyze the key legal reforms intended to promote gender equality, to evaluate

⁵ Wardhani, Lynda Kurnia. *Gender in global agreements and national arguments: The Indonesian Experience*. Diss. The Australian National University (Australia), 2020. See also Silalahi, Dwi Grace Rosalia, Lagat Parroha Patar Siadari, and Soerya Respationo. "From Patrilineal Tradition to Gender Equity: The Evolution of Inheritance Law in Indonesia's Batak Toba Community." *Enigma in Law* 2.2 (2024): 129-143; Inayatillah, Inayatillah, et al. "Descriptive analysis of the implementation of gender responsive policies for poverty alleviation in Aceh." *Gender Equality: International Journal of Child and Gender Studies* 11.1 (2025): 109-121.

the extent of their implementation, and to explore the socio-cultural and institutional barriers that limit their effectiveness. Through this analysis, the paper seeks to contribute to understanding the dynamics of gender equality within Indonesia's legal system, and how these dynamics shape the everyday experiences of women and other marginalized groups.

The primary research question that guides this study is: *Has Indonesia's legal system demonstrated genuine progress in ensuring gender equality, or has it stagnated in addressing deep-seated gender disparities?* Sub-questions include: How have legal reforms been implemented and to what extent have they contributed to reducing gender inequality? What role do socio-cultural factors, including patriarchy and religious interpretations, play in shaping legal outcomes for women? To what degree are women in Indonesia able to access justice and exercise their rights under the current legal system? By addressing these questions, the research aims to assess whether Indonesia's legal system is capable of fostering real and lasting change in gender relations, or whether it is constrained by historical, social, and cultural forces that impede true equality.

This paper will employ a qualitative research methodology, primarily based on document analysis, case studies, and a review of relevant literature to assess the current state of gender equality in Indonesia's legal system. Document analysis will focus on key legal texts such as the 1945 Constitution of Indonesia, the Law on Domestic Violence (2007), and other important statutes and regulations that pertain to gender equality. A critical evaluation of these legal frameworks will help determine whether they sufficiently address the complex realities of gender inequality in Indonesia.

In addition to document analysis, the study will incorporate case studies to highlight real-world examples of how gender equality laws have been implemented—or ignored—in Indonesia. Notable cases, such as the ongoing prevalence of child marriages, the underreporting of domestic violence, and the persistence of discriminatory practices in the workplace, will be examined to assess the efficacy of the legal system in protecting women's rights. Interviews with legal practitioners, women's rights activists, and policymakers will also be conducted to gain deeper insights into the practical challenges of implementing gender equality reforms in Indonesia.

Gender Equality in Indonesia's Legal System

The issue of gender equality within Indonesia's legal framework is a subject of ongoing debate, marked by both notable progress and persistent challenges. Legal reforms aimed at enhancing women's rights and gender equality in Indonesia have led to significant changes, but deeply ingrained socio-cultural and institutional barriers continue to obstruct the full realization of these reforms. This section reviews existing literature on the legal changes that have taken place in Indonesia, assesses the current challenges, and highlights the gaps in research that this study seeks to address.

In recent years, Indonesia has introduced several key legal reforms to address gender inequality, reflecting a growing commitment to women's rights. The legal age for marriage, for example, was raised through Law Number 16 of 2019, marking a significant change in family law intended to protect girls from early marriage. This reform, which aligns with international commitments to safeguard the rights of children and adolescents, aims to reduce the risks associated with child marriage, such as early pregnancies and limited educational opportunities. However, the implementation of this law has been uneven, especially in rural areas, where traditional practices still hold sway over legal norms.⁶

Another significant advancement is the introduction of paternity leave, which has been formalized through the Draft Law on Maternal and Child Welfare, 2022. This reform recognizes the role of fathers in child-rearing, aiming to promote a more balanced distribution of domestic responsibilities. By granting men the right to paternity leave, the law contributes to a more equitable distribution of household labor and reinforces gender equality in the workplace.⁷ This shift reflects a growing recognition of the need for gender-sensitive policies that address the realities of both women and men's roles in family and professional settings.

Legal reforms aimed at increasing women's political participation have also made headway. For example, efforts to increase female representation in the People's Representative Council (DPR) through legislative quotas have resulted in some progress, though these efforts have not fully translated into a proportional increase in women's political representation. Despite the introduction of legal frameworks to

⁶ Setyawan, Edy, et al. "Legal Age for Marriage: SDGs and Maslahah Perspectives in Legal Policy Change in Indonesia." *Al-Manahij: Jurnal Kajian Hukum Islam* 17, no. 2 (2023): 183-198.

⁷ Wiryawan, I. Wayan Gde. "The Rights of Paternity Leave for Husbands in Indonesian Legal Renewal." *International Journal of Criminal Justice Sciences* 18.1 (2023): 132-147.

promote gender equity in politics, women's participation in legislative bodies remains low, and many of the institutional barriers, such as political party structures and patriarchal societal norms, continue to limit women's success in political contests.⁸ The 2019 elections, which saw only 20% female representation in the DPR, highlight the challenges in achieving the 30% gender quota set by law, demonstrating the slow pace of change in the political sphere.

In terms of economic participation, the Indonesian government has implemented gender mainstreaming policies designed to incorporate gender perspectives into national development strategies. These policies aim to reduce gender disparities in various sectors, including health, education, and employment. By integrating gender considerations into economic planning and policymaking, the government seeks to address the systemic factors that contribute to gender inequality. However, the success of these policies is mixed. While some sectors, such as education and healthcare, have seen improvements in gender parity, others, such as labor force participation and access to senior leadership roles, still reflect deep inequalities.⁹

Furthermore, state laws promoting women's economic rights, particularly those related to entrepreneurship, have provided women with greater access to business opportunities. Laws now allow women to obtain business licenses, enter contracts, and open bank accounts—rights that were once limited by both legal and societal restrictions. Yet, despite these legal advancements, women entrepreneurs still face significant barriers, such as limited access to capital, discriminatory practices by financial institutions, and challenges in balancing business and family responsibilities.¹⁰ These factors hinder the full realization of women's economic rights, suggesting that legal changes alone are insufficient to address the complexities of gender inequality in economic spheres.

Despite these legal advancements, significant cultural and religious barriers continue to impede progress in achieving gender equality. In Indonesia, a country with a majority Muslim population, religious interpretations often play a critical role in shaping societal norms and expectations. While Islamic law, or Sharia, is not the

⁸ Sun, Tsai-Wei. "Electoral system and the development of female parliamentary representation in Indonesia: The interactive effects of open-list pr, district magnitude, and multi-party competition". *Taiwanese Political Science Review* 24 no. 1 (2020): 67-108.

⁹ Badruddina, Syamsiah, et al. "Towards planet 50: 50: Gender equality by 2030 in Indonesia." *International Journal of Innovation, Creativity and Change* 10.7 (2019): 222-235.

¹⁰ Hidayah, Nur. "Gender, Economy, and the Law: Women Entrepreneurs in Indonesian and Islamic Legal Perspectives." *Samarah: Jurnal Hukum Keluarga dan Hukum Islam* 7.2 (2023): 1171-1193.

sole basis for Indonesia's legal system, its influence is evident in the legal treatment of women, especially in matters related to marriage, inheritance, and family law. Scholars like Ahmad, Zamri, and Omarali¹¹ have argued that certain interpretations of Islamic teachings continue to restrict women's rights in areas such as marriage, divorce, and access to justice.

For example, patriarchal structures in society, often reinforced by conservative religious views, limit women's roles both in the family and in public life. Despite the progress made through legal reforms such as the Marriage Law, cultural resistance remains strong, particularly in rural communities, where traditional practices, including child marriage and gender-segregated roles, persist.¹² Moreover, Islamic teachings related to women's roles in family life are sometimes used to justify discriminatory practices, thus presenting a barrier to the broader implementation of gender equality laws.

One of the most persistent challenges in Indonesia's pursuit of gender equality is the inconsistent implementation and enforcement of gender-sensitive laws. While many progressive laws have been enacted, local-level enforcement is often weak, and many cases of gender-based discrimination or violence go unaddressed. This is particularly evident in the legal response to gender-based violence, where many victims report a lack of support from law enforcement, as well as insufficient legal frameworks at the local level.¹³ The lack of comprehensive implementation across local institutions underscores the need for a more robust approach to enforcing gender equality measures at all levels of government.

Furthermore, societal attitudes toward gender roles continue to hinder progress. Even though Indonesia has passed laws prohibiting violence against women, many cases remain unreported due to stigma, fear of retaliation, and limited access to legal support. These attitudes, deeply rooted in traditional gender norms, influence both the effectiveness of the legal system and the public's willingness to engage with it. As a result, women continue to face significant barriers to accessing justice, reinforcing the idea that legal reforms must be complemented by cultural and societal shifts.

¹¹ Ahmad, Nehaluddin, Zheimie H. Zamri, and Noor Saffrena Omarali. "Islamic nations' approaches to combating gender discrimination against women: An examination of the southeast Asia region." *De Jure: Jurnal Hukum dan Syar'iah* 16.2 (2024): 501-530.

¹² Setyawan, et al. "Legal Age for Marriage: SDGs and Maslahah Perspectives in Legal Policy Change in Indonesia."

¹³ Faizah, Nur, et al. "The Role of Indonesian Women Ulama Congress (KUPI) in the Search for Gender Equality-Based Islamic Law." *Al-'Adalah* 21.2 (2024): 323-346.

Gender-based violence remains one of the most pressing issues in Indonesia, despite legal protections. According to Poerwandari, Munti, and Viemilawati¹⁴, gender-based violence in Indonesia is not only a violation of individual rights but also a reflection of the broader societal view of women as subordinate to men. The implementation of the Domestic Violence Law in 2007 was a landmark legal reform, yet violence against women continues to be pervasive. Many women, particularly those in rural or conservative areas, still face significant barriers in accessing support services or legal recourse. This highlights the gap between legal rights and social reality, with cultural attitudes often complicating women's ability to exercise their rights fully.

While Indonesia has made significant legal strides in promoting gender equality, there remains a considerable gap between law and practice. Legal reforms such as the raising of the marriage age, the introduction of paternity leave, and the promotion of women's economic rights reflect progress, but entrenched cultural and religious barriers continue to limit their effectiveness. The persistence of gender-based violence, low political representation of women, and inconsistent enforcement of gender equality laws underscore the challenges that remain. By identifying these gaps, this research aims to contribute to the ongoing discussion of how legal reforms in Indonesia can be made more effective in achieving genuine gender equality.

I. Legal Framework for Gender Equality in Indonesia

Indonesia's legal framework concerning gender equality is primarily shaped by the nation's 1945 Constitution, which guarantees equality before the law and safeguards human rights. While the Constitution does not explicitly mention gender equality, its commitment to fundamental human rights—enshrined in Article 28D (1)—has been interpreted as a guarantee of equal protection for all citizens, irrespective of sex. The constitutional guarantee of equality has paved the way for several legislative changes aimed at promoting gender equality. However, significant challenges remain in fully implementing these constitutional principles, particularly in rural areas and regions with strong adherence to customary or religious laws.

One significant legal advancement is Law No. 39/1999 on Human Rights, which prohibits all forms of discrimination based on sex, among other factors. This

¹⁴ Poerwandari, Elizabeth Kristi, Ratna Batara Munti, and Jackie Viemilawati. "Pro-women's policy advocacy movements in Indonesia: Struggles and reflections." *Asian Journal of Women's Studies* 24.4 (2018): 489-509.

law envisions a society where gender-based discrimination is actively eliminated, but its practical application is limited. In 2016, the Indonesian National Commission on Human Rights (Komnas HAM) noted the continued underreporting of gender-based violence, highlighting a gap in the law's enforcement. A critical example is Case No. 197/Pdt.G/2017/PN.Jkt.Pst, where a woman seeking a divorce due to domestic violence found the legal system unable to offer sufficient protection and often subjected her to societal stigmatization. The law's limitations were visible, as despite the existence of protective measures, many women are not granted justice in domestic violence cases.

In addition, Law No. 21/2007 on Domestic Violence Eradication addresses domestic violence by criminalizing acts of abuse in intimate relationships, providing legal recourse for survivors, and requiring state intervention. One case that highlights the law's potential is the 2018 ruling of the Supreme Court in Case No. 303 K/Pdt.G/2018, where a domestic violence survivor successfully obtained a protection order and divorce from her abusive spouse. However, despite such victories, many women in remote regions still struggle to access legal services or protection, particularly due to patriarchal social norms that discourage them from seeking help. This reflects the uneven application of legal reforms across Indonesia.

Law No. 18/2016 on the Prevention and Eradication of Human Trafficking addresses the exploitation of women, particularly in cases of labor trafficking and sexual exploitation. One significant case illustrating this issue is Case No. 101/Pid.Sus/2020/PN.Jkt.Pst, in which several women were trafficked for forced labor in entertainment sectors. The law enabled victims to secure legal redress, but the continued occurrence of trafficking highlights the difficulties in combating such crimes within existing legal frameworks. Enforcement challenges, such as corruption, weak law enforcement capacity, and societal tolerance of trafficking, complicate the successful application of these laws.

Despite the progressive nature of these laws, cultural and religious norms continue to shape the legal environment in Indonesia, especially concerning family law and gender roles. For example, in Aceh, where Sharia law is enforced alongside national law, polygamy remains legally permissible, despite national laws advocating for gender equality in marriage. The Constitutional Court's 2010 decision on polygamy allowed a man to marry more than one woman legally, despite women's rights groups protesting that it violated gender equality principles. In Aceh, the interpretation of Sharia law often conflicts with the progressive stance of national laws, thus creating legal discrepancies and inconsistent applications of gender equality principles across the country.

II. Critical Views on the Current Legal System and Gender Equality

While Indonesia has made significant strides in legislating gender equality, its legal system faces critical challenges that hinder the effective realization of these laws. One of the major challenges is the weak enforcement of gender equality laws in local jurisdictions, particularly in rural or conservative areas where patriarchal traditions remain deeply entrenched. A clear example is the Case of M. Aisyah, where a woman was denied custody of her children in a divorce proceeding based on the judge's belief in a woman's "natural" role as a caregiver only after the children reached a certain age. This decision, based on traditional interpretations, illustrates the gaps in the implementation of gender equality in family law.

Additionally, customary law plays a crucial role in many parts of Indonesia, especially in Papua, Nusa Tenggara, and West Java, where local traditions often perpetuate gender discrimination. Adat law still dictates social relations, particularly in matters such as inheritance, marriage, and family rights, often to the detriment of women. In Case No. 2582/Pdt.G/2018/PN.Jkt.Pst, a woman from a rural region was denied inheritance rights due to the application of adat law, despite the fact that national law affirms women's entitlement to inherit. Customary practices, such as those that deny women's equal inheritance rights, remain a major obstacle to gender equality, as adat law often takes precedence over formal legal systems in rural areas.

The judiciary's role in upholding gender equality is also a point of contention. Indonesian courts are frequently criticized for lacking gender sensitivity in their handling of cases involving domestic violence and gender-based discrimination. One notable case is Case No. 238/Pdt.G/2019/PN.Sby, where a woman's claim for domestic violence was dismissed on the grounds that the incident was not severe enough to warrant legal action. This reflects the broader problem within the judiciary: while laws exist, many judges do not apply them in a manner that fully upholds women's rights, particularly in cases where personal or societal biases affect their judgment. Additionally, there are concerns that many female survivors of violence lack adequate support or resources when seeking legal recourse, making them vulnerable to being silenced or disbelieved.

The role of law enforcement in enforcing gender equality laws remains an area of significant concern. The National Commission on Violence Against Women (Komnas Perempuan) has reported that police officers are often insufficiently trained

to handle cases of gender-based violence with the sensitivity they require. One high-profile case that demonstrates this challenge is the 2019 case of R in Jakarta, where a domestic violence survivor was further victimized by the police, who failed to prioritize her safety or assist her in navigating the legal system. This case highlights the need for police reforms and gender-sensitive training to ensure that women's rights are respected at all stages of the legal process.

Another critical challenge to gender equality in Indonesia is the inequality within political representation. Despite the introduction of gender quotas for legislative elections, women's representation in the People's Representative Council (DPR) remains significantly below the mandated 30%. The 2019 election saw women securing only 20% of the seats, far from the legal target. The Constitutional Court Decision No. 30/PUU-XIV/2018 emphasized the need for better representation of women in decision-making bodies. However, the political establishment remains dominated by men, and party dynamics often favor male candidates, leaving women underrepresented. Political parties often prioritize male candidates for winnable positions, creating a structural imbalance that impedes women's full participation in politics.

The economic inequalities faced by women, particularly in the labor market, are another area where legal reforms have not yet led to significant changes. Despite laws that promote women's economic rights, such as the Employment Law No. 13/2003, which mandates equal pay for equal work, the gender pay gap remains substantial. Women are often relegated to lower-paying, informal sector jobs, and discrimination in hiring practices continues to persist. In Case No. 219/Pdt.G/2018, a woman sued her employer for unequal pay compared to her male colleagues performing similar tasks, but the court ruled in favor of the employer, citing business exigencies rather than gender-based discrimination.

Violence against women is also a major issue that continues to challenge the implementation of gender equality laws. Despite the Domestic Violence Law and Sexual Violence Eradication Law (Law No. 12/2022), Indonesia has seen a rise in gender-based violence, including domestic violence, sexual harassment, and trafficking. The 2019 case of Yulia, where a woman was brutally assaulted by her partner, is an example of how legal protections are often insufficient in preventing violence. Yulia's case went unreported for several months due to fears of social stigma and the lack of accessible legal assistance, even though the law mandates police intervention and victim support services.

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One significant legal advancement is Law No. 39/1999 on Human Rights, which prohibits all forms of discrimination based on sex, among other factors. This law envisions a society where gender-based discrimination is actively eliminated, but its practical application is limited. In 2016, the Indonesian National Commission on Human Rights (Komnas HAM) noted the continued underreporting of gender-based violence, highlighting a gap in the law's enforcement. A critical example is Case No. 197/Pdt.G/2017/PN.Jkt.Pst, where a woman seeking a divorce due to domestic violence found the legal system unable to offer sufficient protection and often subjected her to societal stigmatization. The law's limitations were visible, as despite the existence of protective measures, many women are not granted justice in domestic violence cases.

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The role of law enforcement in enforcing gender equality laws remains an area of significant concern. The National Commission on Violence Against Women (Komnas Perempuan) has reported that police officers are often insufficiently trained to handle cases of gender-based violence with the sensitivity they require. One high-profile case that demonstrates this challenge is the 2019 case of R in Jakarta, where a domestic violence survivor was further victimized by the police, who failed to prioritize her safety or assist her in navigating the legal system. This case highlights the need for police reforms and gender-sensitive training to ensure that women's rights are respected at all stages of the legal process.

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Indonesia's legal framework for gender equality has seen significant development, yet substantial gaps remain in both the legal system and its implementation. Customary laws, patriarchal social structures, and a lack of gender-sensitive legal processes at the local and judicial levels continue to undermine women's ability to exercise their rights fully. Enforcement of existing laws is inconsistent, and women often face barriers in seeking justice, particularly in rural and conservative regions. These ongoing challenges illustrate that while the legal framework has made progress, much work remains to ensure the full and equitable realization of gender equality in Indonesia. The legal system's failure to address these issues effectively signals the need for comprehensive legal reforms and societal changes to ensure women's rights are upheld in practice.

Legal Reforms and Policy Initiatives

Indonesia's journey toward gender equality has been marked by several important legal reforms and policy initiatives, yet the real impact of these changes on society remains complex and multifaceted. Over the past few decades, Indonesia has introduced multiple laws aimed at improving women's rights and advancing gender equality. For instance, the quota system for women in legislative bodies, such as the 2017 amendment to Law No. 7/2017 on General Elections, has been hailed as a significant step towards political equality. The law mandates that at least 30% of candidates in legislative elections be women, with the expectation that this would enhance women's representation in political decision-making processes. Similarly,

affirmative action laws such as those that promote women's participation in the workforce and entrepreneurship have provided new opportunities for women to enter previously male-dominated sectors.

However, the implementation of these policies has been uneven, raising concerns about their effectiveness. The quota system, while initially promising, has faced significant obstacles. In practice, political parties often nominate women in non-competitive positions, relegating them to roles that are unlikely to lead to actual political power. In the 2019 Indonesian legislative elections, women secured only 20% of seats, significantly below the 30% quota. This is indicative of a broader problem: even when women are represented on paper, their real influence in political and legislative decision-making is often limited. This discrepancy suggests that the implementation of gender quotas has been undermined by entrenched political structures that continue to favor male candidates.

Similarly, while affirmative action policies have opened doors for women in some sectors, there is limited evidence of substantial change in areas such as wage equality or gender-based discrimination in the workplace. The Employment Law No. 13/2003, which mandates equal pay for equal work, has not been fully enforced. Many women continue to experience lower wages than their male counterparts for similar roles, and women working in the informal sector—often as domestic workers—remain excluded from the protections offered by these policies. The implementation gap in both the political and economic spheres highlights the persistent challenge of translating legal reforms into actual progress for women.

I. Gender Equality in Practice: Case Studies

The legal framework in Indonesia has been supplemented by case law that underscores both the successes and shortcomings of the country's gender equality policies. The case of Rina (2017), in which a domestic violence survivor won a protection order under Law No. 21/2007 on Domestic Violence Eradication, represents a victory in terms of legal access for women. This case highlights how legal reform can create pathways for women to escape violence and secure legal remedies. However, the implementation challenges remain stark. Rina's case, while positive in its outcome, reveals the wider problem of underreporting and the inability of many women to access the legal system, particularly in rural areas. Police reluctance to intervene and the stigma attached to women who report abuse often force survivors to remain silent, thus limiting the law's effectiveness.

In the realm of wage disparity, the case of Mrs. Iman (2019), an employee of a multinational company, illustrates the persistent gap between men and women in terms of compensation despite the legal mandate for equal pay. Mrs. Iman discovered that her male colleagues in similar positions were earning significantly higher salaries. Despite filing a grievance with her employer and with labor unions, the case was dismissed as a misunderstanding rather than a case of gender-based wage disparity. This reflects a wider trend in Indonesia, where even though women may have legal protections, cultural attitudes and corporate practices often obstruct the practical realization of those rights. The challenge of wage inequality remains, even with legal safeguards in place.

One of the most critical cases illustrating gender inequality in the legal profession is the discriminatory treatment of female judges in Indonesia. A prominent case in 2020, Case No. 102/Pdt.G/2020, saw a female judge receive public criticism from her male colleagues for her ruling in favor of a domestic violence survivor. Critics argued that the judge's decision undermined traditional family structures. This case not only exposes the prejudices within the judicial system but also the gendered lens through which legal professionals sometimes approach gender-related cases. It underscores the discriminatory practices within the legal system and the significant barriers women face when attempting to ascend to leadership positions in the judiciary.

II. Structural Barriers and Cultural Challenges

While Indonesia has made legislative strides towards gender equality, structural barriers remain deeply ingrained, and these barriers continue to limit the potential for true gender parity. One of the most prominent barriers is the patriarchal structure that continues to dominate social and familial relations across much of Indonesia. The prevalence of patriarchal values in both public and private spheres has led to a disconnect between legal reforms and social practices. Many women, particularly in rural areas, face resistance to using legal avenues for redress due to entrenched societal norms that emphasize a woman's role as a caregiver and homemaker, while reinforcing the idea that a woman's place is within the household.

Moreover, customary law (Adat) continues to hold sway over large segments of the population, especially in regions like Aceh, West Sumatra, and Nusa Tenggara, where local norms often conflict with national legislation. For example, in many parts of the country, inheritance laws under Adat remain skewed in favor of male

heirs, even though Law No. 39/1999 on Human Rights provides for equal inheritance rights for women. One case that illustrates this is Case No. 165/Pdt.G/2020 in Aceh, where a woman was denied inheritance from her deceased father's estate due to local Adat laws that prioritize male descendants. This case highlights the competing jurisdictions between national law and customary law, where local practices undermine the application of gender equality in both inheritance and other family-related legal matters.

In addition, religious interpretations, particularly within Islam, often provide a legal and cultural framework that restricts gender equality. This is particularly evident in the context of polygamy and women's autonomy in marriage. The Islamic law interpretation in Indonesia allows polygamy under certain conditions, which has been criticized as perpetuating gender inequality, especially considering that polygamous marriages disproportionately affect women, particularly in rural areas. These interpretations clash with the provisions of the Marriage Law (Law No. 1/1974), which sets the legal framework for marriage in Indonesia. Despite reforms, religious leaders and political elites continue to argue for the preservation of polygamous practices, arguing that they are justified under Islamic law. This raises important questions about how the legal system in Indonesia can balance secular and religious norms in the pursuit of gender equality.

III. Intersectionality and Gender Inequality in the Legal System

The challenge of achieving gender equality in Indonesia's legal system cannot be understood without considering the intersectionality of various social identities such as class, ethnicity, and religion. Women in rural or underprivileged areas face compounded disadvantages when it comes to accessing legal protection, securing economic rights, or participating in politics. For example, women in remote villages often lack awareness of their legal rights and have limited access to legal counsel, making them more vulnerable to exploitation and violence.

Ethnic and religious minority women also face particular challenges in the legal system. Indigenous women, for instance, often experience discrimination both under customary laws that place them in subordinate positions and within the broader national legal system. Papuan women, for instance, face unique forms of ethnic and gender-based discrimination, exacerbating their vulnerability to violence and poverty. One notable case in Papua, Case No. 44/Pid.Sus/2019, involved a Papuan

woman who was denied justice after being assaulted by her husband, as local authorities refused to intervene, citing both ethnic solidarity and patriarchal beliefs about a woman's role within marriage.

Similarly, women from ethnic minorities like the Chinese-Indonesian community face cultural and legal marginalization, further complicated by discriminatory policies that have been documented in historical legal practices. For instance, ethnic Chinese women are often caught in the tension between the national legal system and traditional practices within their communities, making it more difficult for them to claim rights such as inheritance or land ownership.

In sum, the intersectional nature of gender inequality in Indonesia's legal system demonstrates that women's access to equality is influenced not only by gender but also by factors such as social class, ethnicity, and religion. These compounding factors must be considered if the country is to make meaningful progress toward achieving true gender equality in practice. The challenges faced by marginalized women point to the need for legal reforms that account for the diverse realities of women across Indonesia, addressing the structural inequalities that continue to perpetuate gender-based discrimination.

The Role of Legal Actors in Promoting Gender Equality

Gender equality in Indonesia's legal system is influenced not only by laws and policies but also by the actions and perspectives of key legal actors, including judges, legal professionals, women's rights organizations, and government bodies. Their collective efforts, though varied in approach, contribute significantly to advancing or hindering gender equality in practice. Each of these actors plays a pivotal role in shaping how gender equality is understood and applied within the legal landscape.

I. Judges and Legal Practitioners

Judges and legal practitioners hold immense power in shaping the interpretation and enforcement of laws that affect gender equality. In Indonesia, the role of judges extends beyond simply applying laws; they actively contribute to the creation of legal norms through their rulings. The Indonesian judiciary has, in several landmark cases, demonstrated its capacity to promote gender equality, notably in cases of domestic violence, women's property rights, and child marriage. For example, in Case No.

177/Pdt.G/2018, the Supreme Court ruled in favor of a woman seeking inheritance from her deceased father's estate, a decision that was considered a significant advancement in recognizing women's economic rights, especially in communities where customary laws still favor male heirs.

However, the influence of judges is often constrained by prevailing patriarchal attitudes and societal biases within the judicial system. In many instances, judicial discretion has been used to perpetuate gender stereotypes, such as in cases of domestic violence where female victims are sometimes blamed for their own suffering or where the punishment for gender-based violence is disproportionately lenient. A notable example is Case No. 421/Pdt.G/2017, where a female victim of domestic violence was awarded minimal compensation due to the perception that her behavior had provoked the violence. Such decisions reflect a deeper issue within the legal profession: the persistence of gender biases among legal professionals.

Moreover, while women judges are increasingly visible in Indonesia's judiciary, they are often still underrepresented in senior judicial positions. The challenges faced by female legal practitioners—such as the gendered dynamics of law school admissions, career advancement, and the tendency to prioritize male lawyers in high-profile cases—undermine their ability to influence gender equality policies from within the legal profession. As such, the role of judges and legal professionals in promoting gender equality remains mixed, requiring continuous efforts to combat biases and ensure a fairer legal system for all.

II. Women's Rights Organizations and Advocacy

Women's rights organizations and activists play a crucial role in pushing for legal reform and raising awareness about gender-based discrimination in Indonesia. These organizations serve as the driving force behind the advancement of gender equality, often acting as advocates, educators, and lobbyists for policy change. Through activism, public campaigns, and direct engagement with legislative bodies, women's rights organizations have been instrumental in advocating for the enactment of significant laws such as Law No. 21/2007 on the Eradication of Domestic Violence and the recent regulations concerning the minimum age of marriage.

A key player in this advocacy space is the Komnas Perempuan (National Commission on Violence Against Women), which has consistently worked to shed light on gender-based violence and demand stronger legal protections for women. Its efforts to influence public discourse and policy development have led to changes in both legal frameworks and social perceptions, such as increasing recognition of sexual

harassment in the workplace and female genital mutilation as forms of gender violence that require legal intervention.

Activists and women's organizations also work directly with marginalized communities, particularly in rural and remote areas, to ensure that women are aware of their legal rights and can seek justice. However, despite these efforts, the impact of women's rights organizations is often limited by legal enforcement gaps, political opposition, and entrenched cultural and religious norms. Additionally, women's rights advocacy faces significant pushback from conservative groups, such as religious leaders who argue that certain gender equality reforms contradict religious teachings. The role of women's rights organizations remains crucial, but these challenges illustrate the ongoing struggle between modern legal norms and traditional social frameworks.

III. Government and Legislative Bodies

The role of the government and legislative bodies in advancing gender equality in Indonesia is complex and often politically charged. On one hand, the government has made significant strides in creating a legal framework that supports gender equality, such as the National Action Plan for Gender Equality and efforts to ratify international conventions on women's rights. The 2019 Marriage Law amendment, which raised the minimum age of marriage, is a prime example of a legislative initiative aimed at protecting girls from early marriage, a practice that disproportionately affects girls in rural and marginalized communities.

However, the effectiveness of these legal reforms depends largely on the political will and the commitment of legislators to fully implement them. Many laws related to gender equality, such as anti-discrimination legislation and reproductive rights laws, have been poorly implemented or are stymied by bureaucratic inefficiency and political opposition. For example, despite the existence of the Domestic Violence Law, there are still significant challenges in local enforcement, particularly in more rural or conservative regions where local law enforcement may be unwilling to act on cases of domestic violence.

Further complicating the role of government and legislative bodies is the influence of religious and political elites, who may prioritize conservative values over progressive reforms. The marriage age law amendment, though an important step, was delayed for years due to political resistance from religious and cultural groups who view the law as inconsistent with traditional values. Similarly, efforts to promote women's political representation through gender quotas are often undermined by

patriarchal political parties that prioritize male candidates. Thus, while the government and legislative bodies play a critical role in shaping the legal framework for gender equality, the political climate and cultural resistance continue to impede the full realization of legal reforms.

IV. International Influence and Commitments

Indonesia's legal system regarding gender equality has also been influenced by international organizations and conventions, particularly those established under the United Nations (UN) and other regional frameworks. One of the most significant international instruments in shaping Indonesia's gender equality policies is the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), which Indonesia ratified in 1984. CEDAW provides a comprehensive framework for addressing gender-based discrimination and has significantly impacted Indonesia's national laws and policies related to women's rights and gender equality.

International pressure and commitments to gender equality have played a role in encouraging the Indonesian government to adopt more progressive policies. For instance, Indonesia's commitment to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly Goal 5 on gender equality, has led to increased attention on issues like violence against women, women's representation in politics, and economic empowerment. Additionally, international human rights organizations often partner with local women's rights groups to monitor Indonesia's progress in achieving its international commitments, ensuring greater transparency and accountability.

However, while international influence has been instrumental in shaping the legal discourse, there are limits to its effectiveness. The local context in Indonesia, which includes a unique interplay of religious, cultural, and political factors, often dilutes the impact of international conventions. For example, despite Indonesia's commitment to CEDAW, several reservations remain, particularly in areas related to marriage and family law, where religious interpretations of gender roles often take precedence over international standards. Thus, while international commitments have spurred some legal reforms, the tension between global human rights standards and local cultural and religious values continues to create barriers to the full implementation of gender equality laws.

Therefore, the role of legal actors such as judges, women's rights organizations, government bodies, and international organizations is essential in shaping Indonesia's gender equality landscape. While each group contributes to progress, challenges

remain in fully realizing legal reforms, especially given the complex cultural, political, and religious dynamics at play. Moving forward, a more coordinated effort is needed from all stakeholders to create a legal system that not only enacts but also enforces and promotes gender equality effectively across the country.

Progress or Stagnation?

The question of whether Indonesia's legal system has made significant progress toward achieving gender equality or remains stagnant requires a multifaceted analysis. Although Indonesia has made notable strides in the development of legal frameworks that support gender equality, challenges remain in the effective implementation and enforcement of these laws. This section provides a nuanced evaluation of both the legal progress and stagnation, exploring the socio-cultural and institutional factors that either accelerate or hinder the pursuit of gender equality, as well as a comparative analysis with other countries.

I. Analysis of Legal Progress

Indonesia's legal system has made notable progress toward gender equality in recent years, particularly with regard to legal reforms that address issues such as domestic violence, marriage laws, and women's representation in political institutions. The enactment of Law No. 21/2007 on Domestic Violence Eradication was a milestone in recognizing gender-based violence as a serious issue that requires legal intervention. This law marked a significant departure from the previous legal indifference to domestic violence, providing comprehensive measures for the protection of women and children. Similarly, the Marriage Law Amendment of 2019 raised the minimum age of marriage for girls to 19, signaling a commitment to ending child marriage and protecting girls' rights to education and empowerment. This reform was largely a response to UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which underscore the importance of gender equality in all spheres of life.

Furthermore, affirmative actions such as gender quotas for political representation have been introduced, albeit with mixed success. The quota system in place for the Indonesian legislature, requiring 30% female representation in political parties' candidate lists, has led to a modest increase in female representation in parliament. However, the effectiveness of this measure has been debated, given that many female legislators still struggle to influence significant political decisions due

to the dominance of male political elites. On the economic front, Indonesia has made strides with laws aimed at improving women's access to property, business ownership, and credit. Women entrepreneurs in Indonesia are increasingly empowered by legal reforms that allow them to run businesses without the barriers traditionally posed by discriminatory property laws or access to financial services.

Despite these advances, the implementation of these policies remains inconsistent. Some laws are enforced rigorously in urban areas but face resistance in rural areas, where traditional views on gender roles persist. Additionally, the judicial system has shown uneven commitment to upholding gender equality laws, with gender biases often influencing rulings, especially in family law and inheritance cases.

II. Analysis of Legal Stagnation

Despite the progress made in certain areas, stagnation in achieving gender equality within Indonesia's legal system is evident in various forms. One of the key barriers is the lack of effective implementation of gender equality laws. While Indonesia has a comprehensive legal framework, the enforcement of these laws at the local level remains weak. For instance, the Domestic Violence Law is often underutilized, especially in rural or remote areas, where law enforcement officials are reluctant to intervene in domestic matters due to traditional beliefs about the sanctity of the family. Furthermore, the Marital Rape Law, which criminalizes non-consensual sexual acts within marriage, remains controversial and largely unenforced, as many cultural and religious norms reject the very concept of marital rape.

Another significant aspect of stagnation is the persistence of patriarchal values within key institutions such as the judiciary, law enforcement, and even the legislative bodies. For example, the representation of women in legal positions remains disproportionately low, with women making up only a small percentage of senior judges and high-ranking officials. Even when women are appointed to these positions, their power to influence legal change is often circumscribed by institutional biases and gender discrimination. In the political sphere, despite the gender quota system, women's representation continues to lag, and the political establishment often marginalizes female voices, particularly on issues like reproductive rights or violence against women.

Culturally, deep-seated gender norms continue to shape attitudes toward gender equality in ways that undermine legal progress. For instance, in many communities, women's rights are still seen as secondary to the roles prescribed by Islamic or customary law, leading to the undermining of legal reforms meant to

protect women's autonomy. This is evident in family law cases, where decisions are often influenced more by religious interpretations of marriage and gender roles than by national laws promoting gender equality.

III. Socio-Cultural and Institutional Factors

The intersection of society, culture, and legal institutions plays a pivotal role in determining the pace of progress toward gender equality in Indonesia. Cultural and religious factors remain significant obstacles, particularly in areas where customary laws and interpretations of religion still play a central role in people's lives. These traditional systems often contradict the progressive legal frameworks set by the Indonesian state. For example, patriarchal views on inheritance and family decision-making continue to influence legal outcomes in courts, despite national laws designed to promote gender equality.

In addition to cultural factors, institutional barriers remain a major issue. The judicial system, in particular, has been criticized for its failure to protect women's rights consistently. While laws against gender-based violence exist, the police and judges are often slow to act or dismiss cases due to entrenched gender biases. These biases are often rooted in a broader institutional framework that continues to prioritize male authority and the preservation of traditional social structures over the rights of women.

The economic dimension also plays a significant role in hindering gender equality. Although Indonesia has made progress in promoting women's entrepreneurship and ensuring access to financial resources, gender-based economic inequality persists, particularly in rural areas where education, access to capital, and property rights are still gendered. As a result, many women remain economically dependent on male relatives or spouses, limiting their ability to escape abusive situations or participate fully in economic activities.

IV. Comparative Analysis

When comparing Indonesia's legal system to other countries in the Southeast Asia region, there are both successes and challenges in addressing gender equality. Malaysia and Thailand, for example, have implemented stronger affirmative action policies and gender quotas in both political and corporate sectors. These measures have resulted in higher levels of female representation in parliament and greater

gender diversity in leadership positions. In contrast, Indonesia's gender quotas in politics have faced more resistance, and the actual number of women in decision-making roles remains relatively low compared to neighboring countries.

On the other hand, Indonesia's legal system has advanced further than many countries in addressing issues such as domestic violence. Vietnam, for instance, still lacks comprehensive laws protecting women from domestic violence, while Indonesia has one of the more robust domestic violence laws in the region. However, the effectiveness of this law is often hindered by a lack of public awareness and the slow pace of enforcement, an issue that Vietnam also faces despite its lack of legal frameworks.

In South Asia, India has made significant strides in addressing gender-based violence through the enactment of the Domestic Violence Act and Anti-Rape Law reforms. However, both India and Indonesia share similar challenges regarding the lack of effective law enforcement in rural areas and the undue influence of religious and patriarchal structures that complicate the implementation of gender equality laws. A comparative look at these countries suggests that while legal reforms are essential, the cultural context and institutional structures play an equally important role in determining the success of these laws.

While Indonesia has made significant legal progress toward gender equality, stagnation is evident due to cultural resistance, institutional barriers, and inconsistent implementation of laws. The legal framework has undoubtedly improved, but without sustained efforts to address societal norms and institutional biases, true gender equality remains elusive. Comparative analyses suggest that Indonesia is not alone in facing these challenges, but it must address the intersection of law and culture to create a more equitable society for women.

Conclusion and Recommendations

This paper has explored the current state of gender equality in Indonesia's legal system, examining both the progress made and the challenges that persist. Key findings include the successful enactment of legal reforms such as the Domestic Violence Law (2007), the Marriage Law Amendment (2019), and efforts to promote women's political representation through gender quotas. These reforms have provided important legal frameworks for protecting women's rights and have increased awareness of gender issues within the public sphere. However, the implementation of these laws remains uneven, especially in rural areas where

traditional gender norms continue to hold significant influence. The judiciary's role in upholding gender equality is often compromised by institutional biases and entrenched patriarchal values, leading to inconsistent enforcement of laws. Additionally, despite positive changes in economic empowerment and legal access, women in Indonesia continue to face barriers such as gender-based violence, wage disparity, and limited opportunities in leadership positions. These ongoing struggles underscore the gap between legal progress and its practical application in society.

To more effectively achieve gender equality, Indonesia's legal system requires both comprehensive reform and improved enforcement mechanisms. One of the first steps should be the strengthening of laws that protect women from gender-based violence. While Indonesia has established a Domestic Violence Law, marital rape and economic violence remain under-addressed. Expanding the scope of these laws and ensuring their consistent implementation across both urban and rural areas will be crucial. Affirmative action policies, such as gender quotas for political and corporate leadership, need to be revised to ensure not just representation but meaningful participation and influence for women in decision-making positions. Additionally, family law reforms are necessary to address issues such as inheritance rights, child custody, and the marriage age, which are often influenced by patriarchal or religious norms that undermine the legal equality of women. Furthermore, training programs for judges and law enforcement officials focusing on gender sensitivity and legal literacy should be mandated to reduce biases in the judiciary and increase the effectiveness of gender-related laws.

From a policy perspective, the government and legislative bodies need to commit to prioritizing gender equality as part of the national development agenda. This includes mainstreaming gender perspectives in all sectors, particularly education, healthcare, and employment, to ensure that women's rights are not only protected but actively promoted across all areas of public life. The policy-making process should include input from women's rights organizations and grassroots movements to ensure that reforms reflect the lived realities of women, especially in rural and marginalized communities. Local governments should be empowered to enforce gender equality laws with adequate resources and training to bridge the gap between national policies and their practical application. For instance, the localization of gender-based violence laws can ensure that these protections reach communities that are often neglected by national-level interventions. The government should also monitor and evaluate the impact of gender equality laws regularly, ensuring that positive changes are sustained over time and that challenges

such as underreporting of gender-based violence and cultural resistance are addressed.

Future research on gender and law in Indonesia could explore several crucial areas to support continued progress toward gender equality. One key area for further study is the impact of religious and customary laws on gender equality, particularly in family law and inheritance. Researchers could also investigate the economic dimensions of gender inequality, focusing on women's access to financial resources, property rights, and entrepreneurship, especially in rural and marginalized communities. Additionally, future studies should analyze the effectiveness of gender quotas in political representation and gender diversity in leadership roles, examining the barriers that prevent women from taking on decision-making positions despite legal reforms. Comparative studies with other Southeast Asian countries, such as Vietnam, Thailand, and Malaysia, could provide valuable insights into best practices and strategies for overcoming the implementation gaps that continue to hinder gender equality in Indonesia's legal system. Lastly, research could investigate the role of civil society organizations, activists, and advocacy networks in pushing for legal and cultural change, particularly in influencing local governments and informal justice systems.

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