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THE HIDDEN INJURIES OF BROKEN DREAMS. A REFLECTION OF WOMEN'S EDUCATION IN RURAL INDONESIA

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ABSTRACT

Despite many global declarations and development goals, and significant effort by the international communities and local governments, gender disparity in education continues to exist. In Indonesia, for example, although the government has issued the government regulation on 12 years compulsory education, the gender equality in education has not achieved completely. This article seeks to describe the women's education participation rates in Indonesia, provides explanation the factors that prevent women from getting an education, argues the benefits of educating women, and gives the deeper insight about women's experiences in education in rural Indonesia. This research relies on qualitative research method with primary data from observation and in-depth interview with 50 informants comprising 33 women and 17 men. Meanwhile, the secondary data was completed through a comprehensive literature review. The finding of the study shows that the percentage of women who completed compulsory education in rural areas is lower than men's which has caused by financial situations, cultures believe that put women only belong at home, and educational institution unavailability. We argue that educating women affect their lives and society positively in many various ways, including better educated children and reducing poverty. Across the participant, all women acknowledged that they feel sad and angry for not being able to complete their dream of getting better education.

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INTRODUCTION

Education is the basic need for every single human being and it has an important role in developing a country. It has been a universal agreement that education is a right for both men and women, which makes every nation working hard to ensure its citizen receive the equal access to education. To achieve this goal, in 2008, the government of Indonesia established the Government Regulation on compulsory 12 years of study. Compulsory education is a minimum education program that must be followed by Indonesian citizens on the responsibility of the Indonesian central government and local governments. Education referred in this government regulation is education for elementary schools (6 years), junior high schools (3 years) and senior high schools (3 years). The program has the function of striving to expand and equalize opportunities, and provides minimum education for Indonesian citizens to be able to develop their potential so that they can live independently in society or continue their education to a higher level.

However, for all the regulation that has been made, education is still beyond the reach of many women in Indonesia. Based on survey results from the Central Statistics Agency (BPS) and the Ministry of Women and Child Empowerment in 2018, 93.99 percent of women aged 15 years and over were able to read and write Latin, Arabic, or other letters, while the percentage of men was higher, reaching 97.33 percent. Literacy rates for girls and boys 15 years and above in urban areas, respectively 96.46 percent and 98.67 percent, while in rural areas each was 90.93 percent and 95.67 percent. Furthermore, nationally, the percentage of males 15 years and over who have completed high school education and above was higher than females with a large percentage of 37.70 percent and 32.53 percent. On the other hand, the percentage of women 15 years and over who did not complete primary school education and did not / have never attended school was higher than that of men with a percentage of 20.74 percent and 15.29 percent, respectively (BPS, 2019). The quality of human resources according to gender can be seen from several indicators, one of which is the highest level of education completed (Mustar, 2007). This condition shows that the quality of female human resources in Indonesia is still lower than that of men (Widyaningsih, 2010).

The gap in the highest level of education completed did not only occur between sexes, but also between areas of residence. In urban areas 48.83 percent of men

15 years and over have completed high school education compared to women 42.92 percent. Meanwhile, in rural areas, males 15 years and over who have completed primary / equivalent education was 33.06 percent slightly higher than females 31.91 percent. In addition, in both rural and urban areas the percentage of women who did not complete primary school was higher than that of men. In urban areas the percentage of women and men who did not complete primary school / equivalent was 15.31 percent and 10.86 percent, respectively, while in rural areas the percentage was 27.46 and 20.78 percent.

The gender gap in education is still felt by most women in rural part of Indonesia, and it has become one of the problems in achieving gender equality between men and women. This research aims to find the percentage of women's education participation in rural Indonesia, seeks for the barriers between women and education, provides detailed discussion on the importance of education for women, and will describe women's perspectives and experiences in education. The result of this paper is expected to provide fresh insight about the condition of women's education in rural Indonesia that can be a guide for central and local governments of Indonesia in improving the education for women in rural parts of the country.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study relies on qualitative study method with descriptive analysis. We use primary and secondary data as data source. The primary data obtained through in-depth interview with 33 women and 17 men in rural areas of Aceh Province (North Aceh and Aceh Tamiang) which are the Eastern and western part of Sumatera Island, Indonesia. The informants were chosen purposefully after making some considerations, including their education background, residential areas, and gender. The age of informants are ranging from 20 to 45 years. The number of women is outweighing the men's because we want to find a better understanding about women's education in rural areas based on their perspective without neglecting the voice of men. Moreover, this research only focuses on women's education in elementary school, junior high school, and senior high school because it is a compulsory education level that must be attended by all Indonesian. From 50 participants 10 women finished elementary school, 7 men and 10 of women attended junior high school, 10 men and 13 of women finished senior high school. The research data is completed through library research with a comprehensive secondary source review that related to the study.

Table I. Informants Information Based on Education Level Attended

No	Education Attended	Men	Wo- men
1	Elementary School (SD)	-	10
2	Junior High School (SMP)	7	10
3	Senior High School (SMA)	10	13
Total 50			

Source; Research Data, 2020

1. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

1.1 Women's Education Participation Rates in Indonesia

Inequality in education becomes very important in knowing the effectiveness of the education system and as a measurement tool to evaluate the educational process (Harahap, 2020). Indonesian people and government agree that creating equality in education is an extremely challenging task (Suwarno, 2018). There are issues and challenges in poor, rural, and remote areas where school facilities, transportation, and access are minimal, while availability, quality, and attendance of staffs is questionable (OXFAM, 2017). The education sector is the most decisive sector in the effort to realize gender equality which will open up opportunities in various Fields. Gender equality can benefit men and women in terms of education, employment and services (Nugroho, 2011). Educational inequality in Indonesia can be measured from 4 education indicators, namely; 1. Gross participation rates, 2. Net participation rates, 3. Educational attainment, the number of students completing several levels of education, and 4. Literacy rate, the individual ability of students to read and write (Digdowiseiso, 2010). The women's participation in education which measured using the four indicators above can be described as follows.

Table 2. The Percentage of School Gross Enrollment Rate (GER) by Area of Residence, and Gender.

Gross Enrollment Rate by Area of Residence, and Gender (%)				
Residence Area	Gender	Elementary School	Junior High School	Senior High School
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
Urban	Women	106,91	93,13	86,15
	Men	107,51	92,09	87,14
Rural	Women	109,82	91,27	74,74
	Men	110,47	89,41	72,50
Urban and Rural	Women	108,29	92,25	81,04
	Men	108,91	90,82	80,33

Source; Indonesian Central Statistics Agency (BPS), 2018

Based on residence area and gender, women's participation in obtaining educational equality as seen in the table above, at the level of primary / equivalent education, the gross enrollment rate for women was slightly lower than that of men (108.29 percent compared to 108.91 percent). Then, as the level of education increases, the gross participation value of women is slightly higher than men's.

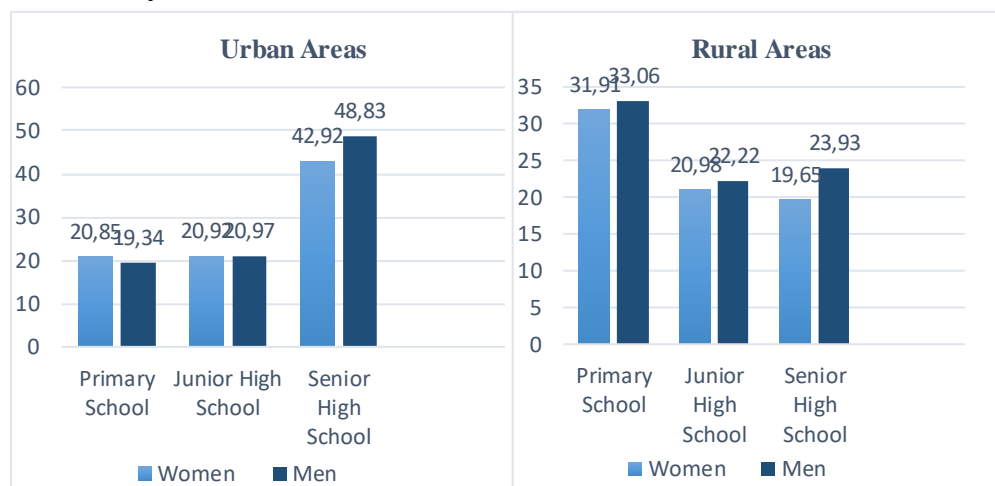
Table 3. The Percentage of School Net Participation Rate (NER) by Area of Residence, and Gender.

Net Participation Rate by Area of Residence, and Gender (%)				
Residence Area	Gender	Elementary School	Junior High School	Senior High School
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
Urban	Women	97,43	80,78	64,99
	Men	98,03	80,45	64,31
Rural	Women	97,29	78,17	57,50
	Men	97,51	75,65	54,47
Urban and Rural	Women	97,37	79,55	61,64
	Men	97,79	78,18	59,74

Source; Indonesian Central Statistics Agency (BPS), 2018

In 2018, the NER pattern for each level of education has a pattern almost the same as the GER where the value decreases in line with the higher level of education. The NER value at each level of education has not yet reached 100 percent. This shows that the population aged according to the education level has not all attended school according to the level. The net enrollment rate for women in the table above shows that none of the girls at the primary / equivalent level reached 100 percent. At the basic education level, the average female participation in Indonesia is 97.37 percent. Based on gender, the value of the net enrollment rate for primary school / equivalent for girls was slightly lower than that for boys (97.37 percent compared to 97.79 percent). Then, as the level of education increases, the percentage of women who attend school on time was higher than that of the male population. NER for junior high school / female equivalent was 79.55 percent compared to 78.18 percent; NER for high school / equivalent was 61.64 percent compared to 59.74 percent.

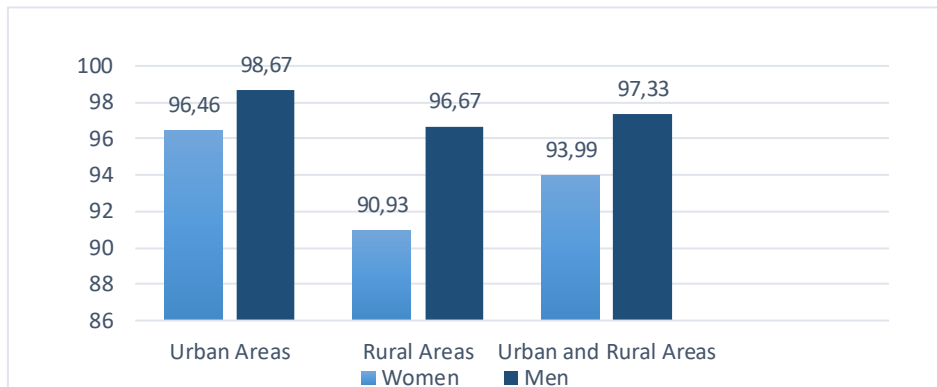
Figure I. The Percentage of Students Completing Several Levels of Education by Area of Residence, and Gender (BPS, 2018).



The gap in the highest level of education completed does not only occur between sexes, but also between areas of residence. The figure above shows that of the total population of 15 years and over in urban areas, the largest percentage was those who have completed high school education, where the percentage for men was 48.83 percent more than for women 42.92 percent. On the other hand, in rural areas, of the total population 15 years and over, the highest percentage was those who had completed primary school education / equivalent, with the percentage of males 33.06 percent slightly higher than for women 31.91 percent. During this

year, in rural areas, the percentage of men who completed compulsory education was higher than women's.

Figure 2. The Percentage of Literate Population by Gender and Area of Residence (BPS, 2018)



The literacy rate is a measure of the percentage of the population in a certain age group who can read and write simple sentences in Latin letters, Arabic letters, and other letters (such as Javanese letters, kanji, etc.). The ability to read and write depicted with literacy rates is included in the agenda of Indonesia's Sustainable Development Goals. As one of the countries that has committed to participate in implementing the SDGs until 2030, the Indonesian government then sets a target for achieving literacy rates in the 2015-2019 national medium-term development plan. In that period, it was expected that the average literacy rate would increase to 96.1 percent in 2019 (Bappenas, 2014). Based on the results of the national socio-economic survey in March 2018, the ability to read and write has been mastered by almost all Indonesians aged 15 years and over. This can be observed from the literacy rate of both women and men which reached more than 90 percent. However, women's reading and writing skills were still lower than men's. In 2018, as many as 93.99 percent of women aged 15 years and over were able to read and write Latin, Arabic, or other letters, while the percentage of men was higher, namely 97.33 percent.

Disparities in reading and writing skills and educational opportunities between women and men have become a public policy problem in developing countries (Gallaway & Bernasek, 2004). The pattern of achievement of women's reading and writing skills that is lower than that of men also occurs in urban and rural areas. The literacy rate of women and men 15 years and over in urban areas was 96.46 percent and 98.67 percent, respectively, while in rural areas it was 90.93

percent and 95.67 percent, respectively. If we look closely to the number between gross enrollment rate, net enrollment rate, attainment rate, and the percentage of literate population, we will find contradiction in the data. Both women's gross and net enrollment rates show that women's participation is slightly higher than men's. However, the percentage of women who finished education level and literacy rates still lower compared to the number of men's. We hypothesized that during the education process, many women had to leave the school, which resulting the number of men who finished education much higher.

1.2 The Great Walls between Women and Education in Rural Indonesia

Women in developing countries suffer from gender inequalities. In Indonesia itself, literate women are lower than men, 83,9% of men participate in the labor market, but only 54,3% of women do; men's estimated income earned US\$ 15,400 on average, but women earn only US\$ 7,800; only 17,4% of women are in parliament while men who work in parliament reaching 82,6%. Women in ministerial positions only 23.5% compared to men 76.6%. (World Economic Forum, 2020). Women participation in public areas has been a challenge for many years, particularly in education.

Some scholars have argued that there are several factors that limited women's access to education in rural part of Indonesia. One of which is financial status and poverty. As in Aceh province, poverty level is still the highest among other provinces in Indonesia. Aceh province was the poorest region on Sumatera Island for the last five years. In 2019, 810 thousand (15.1 %) of the population was living below the poverty line (Kiram, 2020a). Disparities in education among people living in households with different economic statuses indicate that the higher the economic status of the household, the higher the participation rate in education. When the interview was conducted, across the informants, 96% of them put the financial situation as the main challenge for women to attend higher education, followed by parents support reaching 86%, and the availability and access to education 72%.

The level of welfare plays a role in children's school participation because if the economy of a family is not stable, the educational process will also be hampered. Glewwe and Kremer examined school participation in developing countries and found that school participation was influenced by the demand side, including family welfare. Most children from disadvantaged economic families do not attend school due to their parents cannot afford school fees (Glewwe and Kremer, 2005). The result of the 2012 Social and Economic Survey (SUSENAS) shows that the

reason more than 43.9 percent of children do not go to school was because of the lack of funds in the household. Other reasons given by the children were closely related to the family economic condition, such as: (a) they had to work for payment and the shame around one's economic situation, which were the reasons given by male children, and (b) marriage and household responsibilities, which were the reasons that came from female children. Female children aged 7-18 years who were no longer in school were generally of the ever-married status (Surbakti and Theresa, 2015).

One way to keep children in school was to give scholarships to households which needed economic assistance. However, those children who are able to secure scholarships have been found to be a very small group. Only 12 percent of the primary school students, 12 percent of junior high school students, 9 percent of senior high school students, and 7 percent of university students actually received scholarships. Education does not only belong to women who have economic access or middle and upper social class but also the rights of all women equally. However, in daily practice, economic limitations have become a barrier for women to continue their education and choose to work or marry instead. According to Wahyuni, et al, women must have literacy skills so that they can play a further role in carrying out their obligations and claiming their rights as women and citizens of Indonesia. However, this is still constrained by economic capacity (poverty) (Wahyuni, et al, 2017).

Our interview with local communities in Aceh province revealed that another challenge in achieving education equality in rural areas is the lack of family support. Parents' perceptions about education, especially for girls, are very important because it will determine the support for the educational attainment of these girls. However, in rural areas of Aceh, many parents believe that education is only for men, because they are the leader of the family (breadwinner), while women do not need to be highly educated because even though highly educated, women end up dealing only with mattresses, wells and kitchens (*kasur, dapur, sumur*). This is how most of Aceh people think (Kiram, 2020b). Patriarchy and traditional cultures hand more resources and power to men, which lead to women's lack of access to education, healthcare facilities, and labor markets (Samarakoon, 2015). Another concrete example is the patriarchal culture in the life of the Papuan people, which is still upheld and respected today, where the position of women is one level below the shadow of men.

The perspective of society that considers women only as housekeepers has become an obstacle for women to get an education. In addition, women in Aceh are also required to marry when they reach the age of 20 and over. Family members are more likely to question their marriage than their education or career during this period, and if they marriage at their 30 or later they will be bullied by society, which makes the situation even more complicated for women to choose between pursuing their dreams or fulfill the demand of families and society. In most cases, highly educated women marry at the age of 27 or over 30 because men do not like well educated women who are considered to be more powerful than men in the household. The lack of public awareness of the importance of education has become a great wall between women and education in remote areas in Indonesia. The last factor that contributes to gender inequality in education is the availability of education institution. In Indonesia, the women NER percentage in urban areas are higher than in rural areas. This further strengthens that residents in urban areas have a greater chance of obtaining an education than those living in rural areas. It can be caused by several factors, including school facilities and the quality of teaching staff. Schools in urban areas have good facilities and competent teaching staff, while in rural areas, it is the opposite (Vito et al, 2015). Distance is a reason given by both male and female children for not attending school. According to Indonesian Central Statistics Agency (BPS), not all villages had an operational school. Of the 78,736 villages in Indonesia, only 71,205 villages had the resources to offer residents an operating primary school. The average distance from home to the nearest primary school was 2.4 kilometers, 4.5 kilometers to a junior high school, and 7 kilometers to a senior high school (BPS 2013). One of our informants said that:

“ My house is located in a forest area and far from the school. When I go to school, I always go with my brother, and sometimes I am afraid that my brother will not wait for me and leave me in the middle of forest. So I left school at the first year of junior high school (Interview, 2020).”

“I wanted to go school, but there was no school in our village. The only school that we have is located in the city (Kuala Simpang), so far from my home. Because the location is very far many parents do not allow the girls to go to school because they are afraid to leave the girls alone (Interview, 2020).”

This uneven education is one of the problems of education in Indonesia where in big cities educational facilities and infrastructure are very advanced. Meanwhile, in the villages, they only rely on modest facilities and infrastructure. This has made the people living in the villages still lagging behind in education compared to the people in cities. In general, the government only optimizes education in cities and neglects education in remote areas. The percentage of women who finished certain level of education in rural areas as mentioned in previous discussions is lower compared to urban areas which have caused by limited access of women to education in a number of areas. If Indonesia wants to achieve equality of education in the country, government intervention needs to be carried out, especially in regions that have low school participation. Infrastructure development in the form of educational facilities is deemed important to support education process.

1.3 Women's Education. Toward a Better Future of Indonesia

United Nations (UN) organizations aim to enforce basic human rights, including education for all. Article 26 (1) in the Universal Nations Declaration of Human Rights stated that everyone has the right to education. Education shall be free, at least in the elementary and fundamental stages. Elementary education shall be compulsory. Technical and professional education shall be made generally available and higher education shall be equally accessible to all on the basis of merit. Education shall be directed to the full development of the human personality and to the strengthening of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. It shall promote understanding, tolerance and friendship among all nations, racial or religious groups, and shall further the activities of the United Nations for the maintenance of peace (UN, 1948). The declaration shows us that equality in education does really matter and educating girls is pivotal to the development of society because when we give the opportunity to the girls, it has not just transformed their lives, it transforms their families, communities and the entire country.

Education has a profound effect on girls' and women's ability to claim other rights and achieve status in society, such as economic independence and political representation. As the following examples demonstrate, having an education can make an enormous difference to a woman's chances of finding well-paid work, and raising a healthy family. Women with at least a basic education are much less likely to be poor. In Indonesia, women are still, in the twenty-first century, very much discriminated against in both education level and economic participation, and for this reason, from our point of view, the Indonesian society needs to understand

completely the benefits of education for women. At the same time the government of Indonesia also needs to pay closer attention to education in rural areas. In our research, the question that we asked the respondents was ‘do you think education is crucial for women and why?’ From fifty participants that we interviewed, 100% of them agreed that education is important for women for various reasons including human right, and to be a better educator for their children as family is first education place for children, and provides effective way to reduce child marriage. The percentages in table 4 represent frequency of responses by study participants.

Table 4. The Importance of Women’s Education and Frequency of Responses

No	The Importance of Women’s Education	Frequency of Responses
1	Fundamental Human Right	(50) 100%
2	Better Educated Children	(50) 100%
3	Reduced Child Marriage	(50) 100%
4	Reduced Domestic Violence	(40) 80%
5	Economic Development and Poverty Reduction	(32) 64%
6	Active Participation in Politics	(25) 50%
7	Empowerment and Leadership	(21) 42%
8	Active Participation in Decision Making at Home	(20) 40%
9	Confidence and Independence	(19) 38%
10	Stability in Society	(10) 20%

Source: Research Data, 2020.

All participants showed positive responses to the impact of educating girls. They believe that education is a fundamental right for both men and women and there is no reason to deny this right. According to one of the participants:

“Women’s education is very important. A girl will be a mother who is the first person to educate the children, women are the first school. Women not only must be well educated, but also need to always upgrade their knowledge because great generations are born of great mothers. Furthermore, in this modern era women in-

volve both in domestic and public activities. By having good education, women can pursue their career and help family to earn money as well. If we do not send our daughters to school and build strong women, our condition will always remain the same. Living in society is like being on a boat, imagine if we have the problem and only half of them who know how to solve it, while the rest are sitting and watching because they do not know what to do. The boat will sink and this is exactly the same in society. This is why we need women to be well educated (Interview, 2020).”

The respondents agreed that a mother is a child’s first teacher and that an educated mother will be able to raise better educated children. If a girl is educated, she will transfer that knowledge and values all those around her. Furthermore, the level of education of women has a significant effect on the quality of children's health. A study by the World Bank on Gender Equality and the Millennium Development Goals shows that low levels of education and high rates of maternal illiteracy have a direct impact on the prevalence of malnutrition due to the low quality of care for babies (World Bank, 2003). All respondents agreed that with more education, women delay their marriage, which prevent them from early age marriage. Most women who involve in school actively marry after their graduation or at the age of 23 or over.

Education is considered as a value in itself because it leads to the development of the overall personality of the individual. The function of education is to widen the horizon of our experience, as our direct contact with reality is always limited (Nayak and Nair, 2005). The majority of respondents also believe that educated women are also more likely to avoid domestic violence because they are more willing to stand up for the truth and protect themselves. Education can play a critical role in reducing violence against girls and women and enhancing their control over their own bodies (Kimotho, 2005). In addition, educated women also have a greater opportunity to be involved in the public sphere or develop their careers so that they can help the family economy which has an impact on reducing poverty. Education is a critical input in human resource development and is essential for the country’s economic growth. Therefore, women’s education is so inextricably linked with the other facets of human development that to make it a priority is to also make changes on a range of other fronts. No society has ever liberated itself economically, politically, or socially without a sound base of educated women. Research demonstrates that investment in women, and more specifically women’s

education, has numerous positive effects, including: 1) reduction in female fertility rates; 2) lower infant and child mortality rates; 3) lower maternal mortality rates; 4) increase in women's labor force participation; and 5) fosters educational investment in children (Hausmann, 2008).

1.4 The Unfinished Dreams and Women's Experiences in Education

In this section, women's experiences in education, including their dreams and expectation will be discussed in more detail. The research question that we want to answer in this part is "Do most women in rural areas of Indonesia have the dream to go to school and what do they feel about not being able to fulfill that dream?" To gain better understanding regarding to this topic we interviewed 33 women in rural area of Aceh Province. 10 of them finished Elementary School (2 were dropouts from junior high school), 10 attended Junior High School (3 were dropouts from senior high school), and 13 Senior High School graduated.

In Indonesia, the number of out of school students is still high, reaching 4,586,332 at the national level. Although the enrollment rate of school-age children in Indonesia is increasing every year, the total number of children dropping out of school in 34 provinces of this country is still in the range of 4.5 million children. The number of children aged 7-12 years in Indonesia who do not attend school is 1,228,792 children. For the 13-15 year age category in 34 provinces, the total is 936,674 children. Meanwhile, aged 16-18 years, there are 2,420,866 children who do not go to school (Putra, 2020).

Several studies have shown that dropping out of school has a negative effect on the majority of children, both psychologically and socially. Psychologically, children who drop out of school experience disturbances in their mental development. As a result, children become insecure, and prefer to keep their problems to themselves, especially when dealing with peers who are students. Sociologically, children who drop out of school face problem in socializing due to difficulties in adjusting to their environment. This shows that dropping out of school can interfere with the social development of children with their social environment (Fajrie, 2013). In addition, the impact of dropping out of school also creates a feeling of hopelessness and disappointment with themselves. One of our informants acknowledged that:

"I felt very sad, angry, and my heart was filled with hatred. At that time I just finished elementary school and I was eager to continue to the next level. I wanted to go to higher education and become a teacher, but my father didn't let me go to school. I tried to persuade

him to give me permission to go to school. I know we were not from a rich family and I really didn't care about other things, I would be fine if I didn't have fancy things, new clothes etc., all I wanted was an education. But my father simply answered that the school is not for women and women do not need to continue their studies. The answer made me cry because I didn't know what to do. I felt as if the world was ending and everything was dark. I cried myself to sleep every night and locked myself at home for months, I was so stressed that I almost lose my mind. It took years for me to recover from that pain, till I decided to marry at the age of 18 because I did not know what to do and I found the right man too. Although it has been a long time, my dream still in my heart, it never fades away. Right now every time I remember that moment I still feel the pain, but people might not know it (Interview, 2020)''

The interview above provides us an insight that when going to school is forbidden for women, they feel disappointed and furious because their dreams are being taken away. It is clear that parents' decision to support the education of their children, especially girls' education plays a crucial role in women's participation in school. The lack of parents' support has led to a high number of out of school women in rural Indonesia. Another response also shows how women have faced a very difficult situation during their education process.

''After my mother died and my father remarried, I chose to live with my grandmother. At first it was my grandmother who sent me to school, but over time my grandmother objected to the cost of my education because it was too much for her. Finally, I decided to quit school in the first grade of high school and started looking for work to help my grandmother. I worked in various places and moved around. I did whatever I could, from waitresses in restaurants to selling newspapers, and babysitting. Even though I dropped out of school, I was still enthusiastic but sometimes felt inferior, especially when I gathered with peers who were still in school, so I preferred to stay at home. If only I finished school, I might have graduated from university now. (Interview, 2020).''

As we examine the result of this interview, it can be understood that economic status contribute huge impact on women's education as well. The higher the poverty rate of a municipality, the more likely children will (a) never attend school and (b) drop out from school (Muttaqin, 2017). Brown and Park (2002) investigated that in rural China, parents' incapability to pay compensate school fees was the reason for the dropout of 47% of girls while only 33% of boys drop out in elementary schools; in junior secondary high school, fees were half of the girls but only 8% of the boys. The same situation also experienced by another informant who stated that:

“ Yes, I used to have a dream to continue my education to university, but now I don't think about it anymore. I graduated from high school in 2015, and at that time I applied to college, but I did not have the cost to pay the tuition fee, and I also did not get a scholarship. My uncle actually wanted to help with my tuition fees, but before I started college, he passed away, and since then I have also buried my dreams. I feel sad that my dream did not come true, but I am also grateful to have graduated from high school. Many kids in my neighborhood don't even finish high school, so I stay positive even though my dream may never come true.”

We have to admit that being dropouts of school is something terrible for those who really want to be there and involve actively in every activity. However, this situation has been happening all the time in rural part of Indonesia, which caused by cultural and economic factor. Our interview shows that women in rural areas of Indonesia have the dream to get a better education, although their dream never come true and they have to continue their lives with sadness, optimism, anger, insecurity, and pain hidden within their heart. All of the informants also admitted that they feel sad when they see girls around their neighborhood being out of school, and 100% of them said that they would allow their daughters to pursue education to a higher degree if they could support them financially because they did not have the chance to pursue education when they were young and they do not want their children experience the same.

CONCLUSION

This paper offers fresh result that women in rural Indonesia still face gender inequality in education. This can be seen from the percentage of a level school attended/finished by men and women. Although women's net participation rate

was higher than men's, which was about 97,37 percent in elementary school, 79,55 percent in junior high school, and 61,64 percent in senior high school, the percentage of men who completed elementary school, junior high school, and junior high school was higher than women. The gender gap in education can also be observed by making comparisons between men's literacy rate and women's. The result shows that women's reading and writing skills are still lower than men's. In 2018, 93.99 percent of women aged 15 years and over were able to read and write Latin, Arabic, or other letters, while the percentage of men was higher, namely 97.33 percent.

In this paper, we have highlighted three main reasons behind the low number of women completing school in rural Indonesia which are lack of parents' support, poor economic condition, and the education institution unavailability in many remote areas. Parents' involvement in girls' education is considered really important. However, many Acehnese still refers to culture when dealing with life which is patriarchal culture. As a result, in Aceh, women are considered to be only housewives who carry out domestic chores and nurture their children (Kiram, 2020c). This situation has forced women to stay at home and leave their education. Direct and indirect schooling costs are important factors in the education of children and some research indicate that schooling costs, especially school fees, are a central reason for most women to give up on schools. Lastly, many women in several regions in remote areas of Indonesia still left behind in education due to difficulty in accessing and lack of facilities provided.

We have pointed out that the benefits of education, women can be very broad, ranging from providing better education for children, reduce child marriage, decrease the number of domestic violence, help economic development, and poverty reduction. By educating women, we also allow them to participate in politics and make them become more empowered, and active in decision making. We cannot neglect that the education of women and girls is a critical component in a country's goal to close the gender gap and advance the economic and social growth and development. When we educate women, indirectly we educate a new generation, the community, and the country.

Many women who only completed a certain level of school or dropouts from school acknowledged that they experience both psychological and social impacts. Women in rural Indonesia also had dream to study and complete their education as high as possible and they feel sad, angry, and insecurity when their dream remains a dream and never finished. At worst level, being out of school caused them

severe stress and struggling with mental disorder. Furthermore, sociologically, women who stay out of the school experience problem in social life due to difficulties in adjusting to their environment, especially with their peers.

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