

Chapter 4

The Paradox of Educational Inequality in Indonesia: Socioeconomic Implications and Paths Towards Inclusion

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ABSTRACT

This chapter examines the causes and consequences of educational inequality in Indonesia, illuminating the intricate relationship between inequality and factors such as society's wealth and the state of the environment. Disparities are analyzed in terms of their location, income, ethnicity, and gender, with special focus on the rural-urban and gender gaps. It delves into the ways in which economic disparity contributes to underdevelopment and poverty. The chapter also highlights the significance of educational disparities in efforts to promote environmental sustainability. Inclusion of the financial sector, infrastructural development, training of educators, and curricular changes are all recommended solutions. This discussion is helpful for academics and policymakers because it sheds light on the monetary and social costs associated with education disparities.

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1. INTRODUCTION

The conundrum of educational disparity in Indonesia is complex. Located on more than 17,000 islands, Indonesia is home to more people than any other country in the world (Shaturaev, 2021). In the last few decades, the country has made significant strides toward its goal of providing free, compulsory education to all of its citizens. Compared to its neighbors, Indonesia devotes a larger share of its national budget on education than any other country in the region (Setiawan et al., 2022).

Despite these advances, a nuanced educational disparity landscape persists. There is a large disparity in people's ability to get a good education in different parts of Indonesia, which is hindering the country's progress (Sulisworo, 2016). While the country's cultural landscape benefits from the richness of its ethnic and socioeconomic diversity, the complexity of educational disparity grows as a result of the country's archipelagic terrain.

There are several manifestations of inequality in Indonesia's educational system. Urban and rural areas, as well as distinct regions and provinces, display strikingly different conditions than the rest of the country. There is a large gap between the educational attainment of people living in metropolitan areas and those living in rural or island locations because of a lack of resources (Roberts, Sander, & Tiwari, 2019).

In addition, one's socioeconomic standing is crucial here. While it is true that all individuals should have access to a great education, this is not often the case for children from low-income homes. Indirect costs, such as transportation and school supplies, are a common obstacle that can prevent these students from continuing their education and can even cause them to drop out altogether (Black, Bissessar, & Boolaky, 2019).

This study wouldn't be complete without a theoretical framework to guide the analysis and interpretation of the data. The study is based on a socio-ecological paradigm because of the importance of considering both the individual and their environment when examining behavior. It is suggested that demographics, social level, and political climate are just a few of the many aspects that determine education. All three of these tiers interact and have an effect on one another, which in turn affects educational outcomes and inequalities. This theoretical approach sheds light on the systemic reasons of educational disparity, not only its immediate, personal origins. It gives us a holistic strategy to address these inequalities by intervening on many fronts, from increasing students' access to financial aid to bolstering educators' agency to revamping curricula and school infrastructure to influencing national educational policies. The proposed tactics and recommendations reflect this perspective, which holds that the answer to educational inequality lies in comprehensive and multidimensional approaches.

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