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**AN ANALYSIS OF WOMEN'S EDUCATION
IN INDONESIA:
EMPOWERMENT AND BARRIERS**

By

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International Development Studies

Saint Mary's University

Halifax - Canada

2000



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**AN ANALYSIS OF WOMEN'S EDUCATION
IN INDONESIA:
EMPOWERMENT AND BARRIERS**

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**A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of
the requirements for the degree of
Master of Arts in International Development Studies
Saint Mary's University
Halifax, Nova Scotia, Canada**

November, 2000

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ABSTRACTS

AN ANALYZIS OF WOMEN'S EDUCATION IN INDONESIA: EMPOWERMENT AND BARRIERS

**SRI LESTARI PRASILOWATI
NOVEMBER, 2000**

The purpose of the study is threefold. Firstly, the study is intended to recognize the empowerment approach provided by the government of Indonesia to increase number of women's education attainment. Secondly, it is to identify the barriers to education that impede Indonesian women in gaining their education. And thirdly, it is to determine the relevance of improved education for women in Indonesia and to seek a better alternative for the empowerment of Indonesian women. The description of Indonesian women is presented to trace their education achievements within the last three decades, their participation in the employment sector, and their contribution to national income. Using library research, the study also addresses several facets of women's empowerment and barriers to education of Indonesian women.

This study demonstrates that, as a rule, education for women in Indonesia is gradually improving although overall level of achievement still lags behind that of men. Indeed, the government of Indonesia is trying to empower women by providing easier access to education and involving them in various public organizations. Nevertheless, certain barriers to education for women still exist, namely social, cultural and economic barriers. Their stubborn presence is mostly due to the Indonesian patriarchal system, which is rooted in centuries of cultural tradition. The Gender and Development (GAD) approach is highly appropriate for Indonesian women since gender relations in Indonesia have been one of the central issues concerning inequality.

Although women's empowerment programs are already being implemented, the success of the programs depends not only on the capability of women themselves to participate in the empowerment process, but also to foster gender-sensitivity. In Indonesia, participation of women in education is far less than that of men. This is mainly due to the fact that men are the power holder and do not allow women to have access to education provided by the Indonesian government. To this day Indonesian men are prone to perpetuate the patriarchal system believing that investing in women's education yields unacceptably low returns. Apart from their views, this study, however, concludes that educating women generates higher returns.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1. Rationale of The Study

The 1993 Guidelines of State Policy of Indonesia indicated that education, particularly formal education, in Indonesia has been the national government's priority for development since the implementation of the Second- Five Year Development Plan (Repelita II) from 1974/1975 to 1978/1979 (Department of Information, 1993, p. 251).¹ With the objectives of improving the standard of living and creating more employment opportunities, education has been strongly promoted for school-age children, as can be ascertained by the improved rates of literacy. Indonesia implemented six years of compulsory education in 1984, which was then extended to nine years in 1994. As a result, school attendance from age 7-15 has increased from 55.6 percent in 1971 to 87.6 percent in 1985 (Hill, 1994, p.161), and up to 99 percent in 1995 (World Bank, 1998, p.75). Despite such improvements, it appears that the education of women lags behind that of men. According to the 1999/2000 World Development Report (p.232), in 1997 the adult-female illiteracy rate was 20 percent, while the adult-male rate was only 9 percent. Some of the constraints in educating women are related to social and cultural issues. In many cases, women are socially perceived as not needing education because the tasks of a married woman frequently revolve around housework and raising children. Some people also believe that it is better to educate men rather than women because married men assume to take social and financial responsibilities for their family as well as

their parents. Hence, it is more logical to educate men in order for them to obtain better work positions. This perception actually becomes a significant social and cultural barrier when it comes to empowering women.

The number of women's participation in the labor force tends to increase every year. In 1980 their participation was only 35 percent of total female population, but by 1998 it increased to 40 percent (1999/2000 WB Report, p.234). One reason behind the increase number of female labor force participation is employers seeking to improve their competitive position through flexible labor practices. For this reason deregulation has occurred and more jobs have become "feminized". This simply means that these jobs have taken on the characteristics of menial tasks traditionally assigned to women; they tend to be unstable and low paying, with few possibilities for advancement (Connelly, 1996, p.15). Unfortunately, uneducated women compete intensely for these job positions, which results in frequently receiving unfair treatment at the workplace and having to go without any health insurance or benefits (e.g. maternity leave). Although women bear the risk of low paid employment (even lower than men) they usually accept this unfair treatment in order to supplement low household incomes. This situation could be greatly alleviated if women were less helpless. In this sense, very low education attainment for these women is an important reason behind their powerlessness. Therefore, the education of women is an important ingredient to empowerment.

This thesis examines how formal education is related to the role of empowerment of women in developing countries, particularly in Indonesia. It also identifies and discusses barriers to this empowerment. This study hopes to provide an

¹ Pelita stands for Rencana Pembangunan Lima Tahun (the Five Year Development Plan).

analytical framework so that women in Indonesia may achieve real benefits from their educational attainment.

1.2. Research Questions

Investment in education has been one of the major factors of Indonesia's social progress and development. Studies sponsored by the World Bank (Gillis et-al, 1987) have also supported the idea that human resource development has an important bearing on economic growth. The relationship of human resource development and economic growth is two-way and mutually supporting. An expanding economy increases resources to improve educational, health and nutritional standards. However, investment in human resources also helps to accelerate economic growth by increasing labor productivity, encouraging greater physical investment, and reducing the dependency burden of the population. These contributions to growth are especially evident in the case of education (Gillis et-al, 1987, p.207).

Women's education becomes one of the most important investments for the future of any developing country. The reason being education attainment for women is likely to affect not only productivity but also the wellbeing of the society. Such benefits can be seen from general advances in both social and economic development (Hill, 1994, p.3; Hadden, 1996, p. 35, Buchmann, 1996, p.8). Specifically, improvement in the economy can be determined by increasing GDP, household income, women's participation in work, and women's productivity. This, in turn, has an effect on improved social welfare, due to declining fertility and mortality rates,

improved nutrition, increased life expectancy, and increased opportunities for education for their children. Yet, not all women have equal opportunities as men to enter the education track.

In view of the above findings, the key the research question for this thesis is: Given the Indonesian government's policy of equal access to education, why is the participation of women in education practically less than that of men?

1.3. Problem Statement

In recent years it has been generally recognized that Indonesian women were better educated than in the past. Women's participation in various social, economic and political activities is increasing annually. For example, for the first time in its history, the Vice President of the Republic of Indonesia is a woman. Furthermore, there are many more women politicians and ministers such as the minister of Women and Empowerment. Despite such encouraging developments, compared to the proportion of women in Indonesia to men, this level of participation is truly miniscule. The composition of Indonesia's population between men and women is almost equal, that is 49.4 percent and 50.6 percent respectively. However, in terms of education, the number of women finishing higher education (high school and above) was only 5.8 percent in 1994. In contrast the number of men was almost double, i.e. 8.7 percent (CBS, 1995, pp. 44-46). Although the Indonesian government has already established many educational programs for women, and access to education for women and men is supposedly equal, the rate of female education attainment still lags far behind that of men. This situation indicates that the government programs and

policies have failed to recognize important socio-cultural barriers to education for women. Given that education has a positive effect on women, it would make sense to encourage women to educate themselves. Unfortunately, this is not an easy task. If these barriers were eliminated (or *at least* reduced), this would present greater opportunities for women to participate in social, cultural, political and economic activities within communities. This, in turn, would improve the women's standard of living and social status. In view of the crucial role, these barriers play their impediment to education for Indonesian women will be integrated as an additional objective of this study.

1.4. Methodology

Acknowledging the smaller rate of women's participation in education, the purpose of the study is to recognize value of the empowerment approach as a means to eliminate the barriers to education that impede Indonesian women from gaining an acceptable level of education. The study also intends to determine the importance of gaining improved access to education for women in Indonesia. A final purpose is to seek an appropriate educational alternative for the empowerment of Indonesian women.

This study is both descriptive and analytical. The descriptive approach includes historical data covering the general nature and situation of women in Indonesia. The analytical aspect employs quantitative data to determine and estimate the principal factors influencing the empowerment of Indonesian women.

To carry out the analysis, the study uses social and economic indicators. Social indicators include fertility rate, mortality rate, life expectancy, primary education enrollment, and secondary education enrollment. Moreover, the rate of women's participation in the job market and Indonesia's income per capita will be used as economic indicators. The study employs qualitative analysis to identify potential barriers impeding the empowerment of women.

In order to attain the above goals, journals, articles, Indonesian magazines and newspapers, other international publications, as well as books serve as secondary sources. Statistical data will also be utilized from the Central of Bureau Statistics (CBS), the United Nations, the Ministry of Women and Empowerment and the Internet.

1.5. Structure of The Thesis

The thesis is divided into five chapters and is organized in the following manner. Chapter One, the introduction, includes the rationale of the study, research questions, problem statement, methodology, and structure of the thesis.

Chapter Two deals with a review of women, empowerment and education theory. It also discusses some practical research to provide a picture of education and empowerment in some developing countries.

Chapter Three describes Indonesian women. It presents educational attainment of Indonesian women, which includes level of education and regional dispersion. It also analyzes the work attainment of Indonesian women, covering employment status and regional dispersion. Following the discussion about education

and work attainments, the role of women's education on the Indonesian economy is discussed at greater length.

Chapter Four deals with empowerment and barriers to education faced by Indonesian women. The empowerment approach involves the government's efforts in promoting education for women, whereas the barriers to education include social, cultural and economic discrimination. Finally, some analysis of barriers to education will be summarized. Chapter Five presents conclusions along with suggestions for further research.

CHAPTER II

WOMEN, EDUCATION AND EMPOWERMENT: A REVIEW

2.1. Introduction

This chapter reviews a theoretical framework that is the foundation of the concept of women, education and empowerment. It relates these concepts with the situation faced by Indonesian women. It further presents research with respect to the above concepts and examines more closely the research results on the overall condition of Indonesian women. The purpose of these discussions is to show why gender inequality still exists in Indonesia and affects education attainment of women, especially those in the lower income bracket.

The first review of the literature focuses on the status of women. It explores some development theories, which have been criticized for ignoring the involvement of women in the development process. The review also considers the emergence of feminists' works to counter the arguments presented earlier. This approach on women's status then focuses on "Women in Development" (WID), "Women and Development" (WAD) and "Gender and Development" (GAD). These theoretical approaches essentially discuss such issues as inequality and the patriarchy that exist in all societies.

The second review of the literature is an explanation of education and how it is provided to women. Some theories explain why men receive greater access to education than women, and how feminists work to challenge the different treatment of men and women. Some research evidence on education reveals an improvement in the attainment of education by women, especially an increase number at the primary

level of education. The research further identifies several benefits in educating women. The review concludes that ignoring women's education is too risky for national development.

The chapter concludes with a review on the empowerment approach to education attainment. It discusses the theory of empowerment, and then, it links the empowerment approach to the attainment of education by women. The discussion focuses on whether it is generally accepted that women's education provides greater benefits for the family and national development; why there are many women, especially poor women in rural areas, who do not have access to education as they should. The chapter underscores the fact that providing education for them has been impeded by certain barriers. These barriers are identified as social, cultural and economic. To empower women to break these barriers, several policies established by the governments as well as the non-government organizations need to be actively promoted.

2.2. The Status of Women in Gender Relationship

Before World War II, development was usually identified with modernization. Modernization in those days meant embracing western political and economic thought. Within this thought system the work of three well-known political economists Smith, Ricardo and Marx, can be considered the most original contributors (Hunt, 1989, p.9). This "modernization" through a paradigm of industrialization aimed to improve the standard of living in developing countries. Within this paradigm, education systems have been expanded to create well-trained

workers and managers who are able to promote the modernization of agrarian societies (Rathgeber, 1990, p.490). The modernization approach to development was primarily a straightforward and linear process, where people in underdeveloped areas were directed toward modern society based on the western model. Within this model of development women have typically been ignored (Rathgeber, 1990; Plewes 1991 and Mosses 1993). This is largely due to the fact that people in underdeveloped areas have tended to be seen as passive recipients of the development planned by outsiders. That is to say, they are treated as “consumers” of development rather than “producers”. As a result, this type of development failed to take into consideration the fact that the term “people” refers to women and men. Women and men have different needs and interests. The model also left out most of the very poor, and failed to recognize that in itself, it was actually worsening their impoverishment (Mosses, 1993, p.11). In view of the above shortcomings, another alternative to development was required to provide a strong re-alignment of interest and a focus on particularly vulnerable sections of national populations. These include the rural and urban poor, and especially women (Mosses, 1993, p.20).

People who advocate alternative development models, such as the “Dependency” and “Feminist” theorists have criticized the conventional modernization approach to development. Proponents of the “Dependency” model argued that the modernization approach to development has created more underdeveloped countries than in the past. This is because such countries overtime have become more economically dependent upon the West. In effect, capitalism has benefited from this cycle of dependence and has actually perpetuated

underdevelopment in the Third World. According to the dependency theorists, in order to be developed Third World countries have to separate themselves from the West (Hunt, 1989 and Martinussen, 1997).¹

On the other hand, those people who advocate a feminist model of development have focused their criticism on the masculine standpoint of the concept of modernity (Rathgeber, 1990, p.491 and Mosses, 1993, p.12). Mosses clearly explains why gender is a development issue: Gender inequality and certain forms of patriarchy already existed in many pre-capitalist and pre-colonialist societies. Within these societies the main assumption is that elder males always control the means of production, whereas human reproduction is simply seen as women's work; a secondary and "natural" part of their biological roles. Until recently, such negative views of women have determined the nature of development planning in these societies. It is therefore necessary to counter these false assumptions about women's roles. By doing so, it will permit women to participate in the development process (Mosses, 1993, p.25).

In the 1960s and 1970s, the emergence of women's movement had a significant impact on how the development process is viewed. Liberal feminists have termed the involvement of women in development for the first time as simply "Women in Development" (WID). The key strategy to this approach was the effective integration of women into the national developing process. Development planners have been encouraged to involve women in development policy and planning as well as in project design and implementation. Although WID has successfully increased

¹ These arguments become the main discussions of the Dependency Theorists such as Andre Gunder Frank, Samir Amin, Dos Santos, and Fernando Cardoso, among others.

women's involvement into the development process, it nonetheless failed to solve the fundamental question, such as women's subordination, the impact of global inequities on women in the Third World, and the importance of race and class in women's life (Rathgeber, 1990 and Mosses, 1993).

In addition to the alternative models discussed above, marxist and dependency theorists have also been against the conventional modernization theory as it relates to women's subordination.² They regard women's subordination as a consequence of the development of private property and capitalism. In this regard, it is important to note that Marxism fundamentally challenge [international] capitalism rather than attack the system of patriarchy. One reason behind this is a Marxist belief that a class struggle, better known as a "*Dialectic Process*", eventually redresses all forms of inequality in development.

In contrast to the Marxist argument, dependency theorists believe that women's subordination merely occurs because of their dependence on the source of power and domination, that is men. Patriarchy has existed in most societies and can be viewed as the fundamental source of inequality. Based on an assumption that women need alternative social institutions to fulfill their needs, a newer approach called "Women and Development" (WAD) was introduced. This approach aims to protect women's interests from patriarchal domination.

The key issue to women's dependency is to challenge dominant patriarchal interests. It is due to these interests that women are generally marginalized and relegated to menial small-scale economic activities. It is because of the real problem

² The liberal approach, on the other hand, simply believes that development can be achieved by the adoption of Western political and economic systems.

of social and economic marginalization and that women have been restricted from transforming knowledge and experiences among themselves into viable forms of development.

By the 1980s, the issue of development focused on increasing women's economic contribution. This, in turn, improved overall national economic efficiency, and led to greater equity for women. This crucial issue arose especially when international development agencies offered structural adjustment packages (SAP) to overcome the economic turmoil in Third World countries. Gender and development perspectives emerged as an alternative to WID and WAD, which can be seen as an empowerment approach or even a form of a gender-awareness planning. Ultimately the focus is on the relationship between women and men.

The central concept of GAD is that gender relations are seen as the main determinant of women's position in society as socially constructed patterns of behaviour that can be changed, if desired. In this context, Kindon (1998, p.161) further states:

GAD aims at understanding and transforming the mechanisms underlying dominant, male-dominated paradigms rather than seeking to improve the integration of women into these paradigms. A GAD framework focuses on transforming unequal relationships within and between women and men rather than on women's roles themselves.

The "Gender and Development" concept is likely appropriate for Indonesian women, since gender relations in Indonesia have been the central issue of the gap between men and women. Since its independence in 1945, Indonesian laws have recognized that Indonesian women and men have equal political rights, equal pay for equal work, and legal equal status. It is explicitly stated in the article 27 of the 1945

Indonesian Constitution, that “all citizens have equal status before the law and in government and shall abide by the law and the government without any exception” (Department of Information, 1989, p.5). This has been the foundation and source for any subsequent law, rule or regulation and policy including the Guidelines of State Policy. Thus, at least officially there is no gender inequality before Indonesian law.

In addition, as the major religion of Indonesia is Islam, the discussion of gender relationship has also to deal with Islamic rules. Generally, women in Islam are clearly defined as having the same rights and obligations as servants of God as men. Islam elevated the position of women in society and treated them on equal footing with men. In some cases even Islam gives their precedence over men. Islam also gives women an independent identity and declares that their moral and spiritual gains depend solely on their own performance. In this context, Islamic framework is:

...men and women are of the same family, and as such have similar rights and duties, and their Lord promises them “Never will I waste the work of a worker among you, whether male or female, the one of you being from other.” (The Qur’an 3:195)

It is clear that Indonesia government in accord with Islam is supposed to treat women equally with men. However, in practice there are many exceptions that prevent them from being equal. Indonesian cultural practices are the most important factors that act as impediments to gender equality. As an example of this situation Hennessey (1995, pp.69-70) describes how children anywhere in the world have the same essential needs for food, shelter and clothing. But as they grow, they develop desires for non-essential things. The development and priority of these wants are based on messages from families and peers, and thus are said to be a result of culture. Culture reflects the human aspect of a person’s environment, it consists of beliefs,

moral, customs and habits learned from others. There are several components of culture that influence human behaviour such as language, religion, education, family, work and leisure, and reference groups (peers groups, role models, and country image).

Indonesia consists of many ethnic groups. Consequently there are many different cultures that co-exist. Within this national context, several historians and anthropologists have carried out studies on women and culture in Indonesia. To achieve their goal these scholars have employed the cultural and social relation approaches to examine gender inequality in Indonesia. For example, Locher-Scholten *et.al.* (1992, p.4) investigate the origins of a cultural (symbolic) background. They conclude that the construction of gender has strong social implications, which, in turn, influence cultural definitions. They further argue that images and ideas about gender roles are intricately linked to the long colonial period of Dutch occupation. The Dutch presence in Indonesia created certain perceptions and interpretations of female gender. For example, a typical image of Indonesian society usually conforms to a model generated by the dominant social group, represented by men. Under this model the “mutedness” of women is culturally and socially accepted as a general perception of Indonesian women.

Djajadiningrat-Niewenhuis (1992, pp.43-44) looks at women’s role in Javanese culture. The author describes how to be a good mother: by looking after the family, the group, the class, the company or the state. And this is done without demanding power or prestige in return. Power and prestige remain the privilege of men. The typical image of Javanese women is one of women who act, arrange and

organize the family to make it most efficient. A woman is considered member of the weaker gender. Her place is at home, and she should seek outside employment only if forced by necessity (Locher-Scholten, 1992, p.78). Unfortunately, when Javanese women need to work to support their family, they end up with inferior jobs. Mies Grijns' research on the tea-pickers in West Java in 1980-1981 shows that the distribution of worker's tasks is strongly influenced by gender. The research showed that men occupied all management/staff wage positions (100%), while most women (61.68%) occupied casual day-wage positions, with no allowances or benefits. The women were invariably paid according to the number of days they worked during the previous month. Sometimes they were paid by the piece of leaves they had collected (Grijns, 1992, p.106). At home, these women also faced task distributions based on gender. The research revealed that women and girls do nearly all domestic work, while men "sometimes" lend a hand in looking for firewood and other small chores (Grijns, 1992, p. 108).

Daimiria Pakpahan (1996, p.10) calls the perception of Indonesian women *kodrat wanita*, or "the destiny of women". This perception of women characterizes them as soft and weak, and do not speak loudly, and most certainly not on her own behalf. Women do not put their own interests before those of their husbands and fathers. Rather, they take the role of compliant wives, mothers and dutiful daughters: the central role of women is in the family. Although Pakpahan criticized this concept as a blatant contradiction of Indonesian socioeconomic reality, where poor women are in fact generally the major income earners for the family. It is obvious that economic role of women is still largely ignored in Indonesia.

2.3. Women's Access to Education

Michel Foucault, a French intellectual who has contributed much insight on education, defined education as “power and knowledge”. He describes this power - knowledge correlation as “a single, inseparable, configuration of ideas and practices that constitute a discourse. Power and knowledge are two sides of a single process. Knowledge does not reflect power relation but is immanent in them” (Ball, 1990, p.5). According to Ball (Ball, 1990), Foucault has contributed to the idea of a norm within a given population and the application of certain knowledge to the normalization of social principles and institutions of modern society. Among these are psychological, medical, penitential and educational knowledge and practices. By “normalization”, Foucault means that the judgment in society is based on what is normal and what is abnormal, and the measurements, hierarchy and regulations are applied to this judgment (Ball, 1990, p.2). In relation to education, he argues that schools, like prisons and asylums, are institutions of moral and social regulation, complex technologies of disciplinary control where power and knowledge are crucial.

In social communities, power has emerged in the name of governance, with the family seen as the smallest unit and state as the biggest. Population and its welfare then become the central theme of governance, where government can control the population with certain regulations for political obedience. It is often the case that people's abilities and knowledge about themselves are shaped by certain institutions, such as prisons, hospitals, asylums, the military, the work place, and school:

Within such institutions, knowledge has been developed about people, and their behaviour, attitudes, and self-knowledge have been developed, refined, and used to shape individuals. These discourses and practices have not only been used to change us in various ways but are also to legitimate such changes, as the knowledge gained is deemed to be "true". (Ball, 1990, p.15).

Foucault's work of power-knowledge has placed men as power brokers, and knowledge has been generally measured by the normative masculine subjects. In considering the notion of power-knowledge, it is usually understood that education is desirable for men rather than for women. In Indonesia, many parents, particularly those in rural areas, still do not see the need to send their daughters to school beyond the elementary level. Both Hill (1994) and Sadli (1995) argue that under these circumstances parents think that their daughters are supposed to either help their mothers with household chores or to marry at a younger age than their brothers.³ Moreover, parents often do not want to let their pre-adolescent daughters walk long distances to school alone. These attitudes indeed confine the development of girls' education in Indonesia (Hill, 1994, p.162 and Sadli, 1995, p.112). Families also take their daughters out of school before sons when an economic crisis arises. Such was the case in Indonesia in mid-1997. According to the World Bank report, the economic crisis brought a social crisis and increased number of poverty to Indonesia. As a result, women and girls were the first to sacrifice their positions in jobs and schools. The hardship situation may also have caused many parents to send their daughters to brothels rather than to schools (World Bank, 1998, p.81).

A great deal of the feminist work done throughout the 1970s and early 1980s on gender is in reaction to Foucault's notion of power and knowledge. Many

³ Before the marriage act was issued in 1974, the rural girls were often found to marry at 12-15 years old. But, recently this tendency changes to 16 - 18 years old.

feminists reject “the masculinist subject in history as foundational to all truth and knowledge”, preferring to ground their epistemology on the foundation of difference (Luke, 1992, p.7). Further results of feminists work throughout this period relate to the changes in educational policies and curricula involving girls, schooling, particularly in their greater access to and participation in all aspects of education. More research focuses on equality with boys in term of classroom time, class participation and curricular presence. Feminist pedagogy is designed to challenge the pedagogical theories that place women in marginal positions. Other major theories, such as Marxism and Liberalism have been challenged as well (Luke, 1992 b, p.28). Within Marxist and Liberal theories “the male authorship of theory, then articulated from the standpoint of male experience, and conceptions of critique and action with which to realize visions for a better future, have historically situated the male individual at the center of theoretical, public discourse (Luke, 1992b, p.29). Luke further argue that the roots of this male dominated discourse can be traced back to Greek political history where man was positioned in public life to pursue knowledge and truth, while women were silenced and privatized in the household (Luke, 1992b, p. 34).

The works of the Feminist pedagogy in the 1980s was characterized as a critical pedagogy, creating a new wave in education centering on hope, liberation and equality. The positive effect of this critical pedagogy supports the assumption that if “texts” and experience of schooling are changed (i.e. elimination of racism, sexism, and classism), then students’ lives will be changed for the better (Luke, 1992b, 27). Within this critical pedagogy discourse, the idea of empowerment has often been used

to encourage women's emancipation to attain equality in education. Perhaps as a consequence of the feminist pedagogy movement, the rate of women's school enrollment has been increasing.

Some research on education in developing countries and its implication toward women and empowerment shows a tremendous change in women's education attainment during 1980s. (Hill *et al.*, 1994; Hadden *et al.*, 1996; Sadli, 1996, Buchmann *et al.*, 1996 and Jayaweera, 1997). In the case of Indonesia, Sadli (1995, pp. 110-113), ascertained that in general, Indonesian girls are being better educated than they were before. Recent statistical data show significant gains in girls' education at the primary school level (with the percentage of girls in urban areas slightly higher than boys). However, the education gap between girls and boys remains unchanged at higher levels, such as general and vocational schools. That is to say, girls and young women are often under-represented.

In their research on education, Claudia Buchmann (1996) and Kenneth Hadden (1996) recognized several benefits related to female education. Education for girls is obviously expected to be one of the most important investments for any developing country's future. One reason behind this is that almost every aspect of progress, from nutrition to family planning, from child health to women's rights, are profoundly affected by the level of education of the female population (Buchmann, 1996, p.8 and Hadden, 1996, p.32). Therefore, it is not surprising that many developing countries are putting more emphasis on the education of girls.

Educating girls is likely to make great contribution to any society. Research findings indicate that a wide array of "benefits" can be gained, ranging from declines

in fertility rates and improvement in health and mortality rates to more general advances in both social and economic development. A connection between greater fertility control and reduced child mortality among educated women is reasonable since better-educated mothers are more knowledgeable about health, safety risks and prevention, and nutrition. All of these lower mortality rates and improve the health of children. It is estimated that child mortality is reduced 7 to 9 per cent for every year of a mothers' education.

There is mounting research evidence that increasing the education level of girls also results in greater labor force participation in adulthood (Hill, 1994; Buchmann, 1996 and Hadden, 1996). Studies show that increased earnings and participation in the wage labor market by women generally translate into national income growth. In Indonesia, better education and the push to improve the standard of living is boosting the number of women in the work force.

Young rural women with limited education usually worked in industrial areas on the outskirts of cities. Because they generally lacked the necessary skills to compete in the work place, most of them ended up as low-wage earners. Indeed, they were not always well prepared to adjust to their new surroundings, nor were they protected from various types of abuse in the work place as well as the outside world. To this day many of these young women are often ignorant about their rights as workers and as women.⁴ Nor are they aware of existing laws that can protect them from potential ill treatment in the work place. They also face the risk of unwanted

⁴ For example, many female workers do not know that they have a leave during their menstrual cycle.

pregnancy, which often results in the loss of their jobs (or a lack of compensation when they take pregnancy leave).

Today young Indonesian women with high school education frequently enter the labor market as clerical workers or similar types of jobs requiring limited skills. However, they are at risk of losing their jobs or being replaced by other women who possess only basic education. These women high school graduates actually face the risk of being unemployed whenever the company wants to reduce the number of workers, or when they try to fight for their rights and social supports. Unfortunately, government sponsored labor organizations (which are dominated by men), are unlikely to play an important role in improving working conditions for women. Thus these women's bargaining powers are still minimal (Sadli, 1996, p.112).

Due to the limitation of job opportunities even women with higher education have tended to enter low-skill types of jobs. Despite the low status of their jobs these more educated women possess better bargaining power as employees because their skills or knowledge prevent employers from imposing unfair treatment. The women also have more opportunities to utilize their knowledge at home as well as at work. They may also place independence and a "balanced" life as the top of their priority list. Although these women may receive better treatment over their rights, they still often feel powerless in the face of discrimination on the basis of gender in the work place.

Despite high expectations, female school enrollment in Indonesia continues to lag behind that of boys. One reason why girls are less apt to attend school than boys is due to patriarchal cultural tradition (Hill, 1994; Hadden, 1996; Sadli, 1996;

Buchmann, 1996; Jayaweera, 1997). The high cost of education is another reason why parents invest more in their son's future than in their daughter's. This is due to the fact that they cannot see any incremental benefit of educating girls; they still believe that girls will join their husband's family upon marriage. Indeed, these factors make parents reluctant to invest in girls' education.

In Indonesia, the impediments to education discussed above appear particularly strong among rural and/or poor women. These women are not likely to see any benefit from getting an education because of gender preference in the workforce. Furthermore family conditions do not support the attainment of education for women. It is important to realize, however, that the increasing responsibility of women for their family's health and welfare means that ignoring women's education will become too costly to attain sustainable development. If the education attainment of women remains low, this will likely affect their ability to make appropriate decisions that are best for their families. For example, they may not be able to choose the best nutritional practices for themselves and other family members; thus reducing their overall health and productivity. This lack of education may, in turn, impact on the economic and social development of the country (Hill and King, 1995, p.22). To illustrate this point, Hill and King (1995) summarize the types of cost and benefits associated with women's education, whether market or non-market, and the agent receiving benefits and experience costs. (See Table 2.1).

Table 2.1. A Summary of Costs and Benefits Associated with Educating Women

| | Market | Non-market |
|---------------------------|---|---|
| A. Current Costs | | |
| <i>Private</i> | | |
| Parents: | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Uniforms ➤ Textbooks ➤ Supplies ➤ Admission fees ➤ Incremental board and lodging (if away from home) ➤ Tuition ➤ Travel costs | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Opportunity cost of children's time in school ➤ Travel time ➤ Homework time ➤ Psychic time |
| Student: | See Note "a" | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Psychic costs |
| <i>Social</i> | Public expenditures for teacher salaries, supplies, buildings | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Foregone output of children enrolled in school^b |
| B. Future Benefits | | |
| <i>Private</i> | | |
| Parents: | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Higher family income | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Improved health and nutrition |
| Student: | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Higher earnings ➤ Greater occupational mobility | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Longer life expectancy ➤ Lower infant mortality ➤ Greater fertility control ➤ Improved quality of life |
| <i>Social</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Higher GNP and GNP per capita ➤ Faster GNP growth ➤ Increased labor productivity ➤ Higher taxes received on labor income | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Reduced population growth ➤ Healthier population (lower infant mortality, longer life expectancy) ➤ Better functional political processes |

Notes: a). In Indonesia, students at primary, secondary and tertiary do not bear any current "market" costs.

b). This cost would have a larger market component for older rather than younger girls.

Source: Hill & King, 1995, p.22.

2.4. The Empowerment Approach to Attaining Education

Acknowledging the benefit of educating women, empowerment for women to gain education will be necessary the development in Indonesian. Potterfield (1999, p38), an organizational theorist, noted that prior to becoming a popular management concept, empowerment was a concept widely discussed and applied in the field of social activism and social reform. The intellectual roots of empowerment can be traced back to a wide array of social reform movements in the 1960s and 1970s in North America (i.e. the civil rights movement, feminism, etc.). As a case in point, Potterfield refers to Simon (1994), who argues that within the context of social reform, empowerment is considered to be a process requiring individuals to take responsibility for improving their social, political, and economic circumstances (Potterfield, 1999, p.40). The rise of capitalism in Europe and the United States can be seen as one of the major historical influences on empowerment. Capitalism led to large-scale urbanization, colonialization, industrialization and emigration. This, in turn, has led to a severe dislocation for many people, including peasants, artisans, shopkeepers, tenant farmers, and industrial workers. In response, these marginalized people have worked together to improve their oppressed condition; “to challenge their status as marginalized members of society and to take concrete actions aimed at creating more fair and just social arrangements” (Dew, 1997, p.41).

An alternative development model has emerged as an answer to the social movement which focuses on vulnerable, marginalized people, including women. The model in effect emphasizes a process of empowerment. According to Mosses (1993, p.20), this process of empowerment is through organization, whereby people gain the

strength to create their own spaces, and to build up material assets in order to support their own growth and development.

Currently the word “empowerment” is used by many scholars in different fields of studies, such as in psychology, pedagogy, and management organization. In pedagogy, for example, Jennifer Gore (1992, p. 56) denotes that empowerment means to give authority, to enable, to license. It is a process which requires an agent - someone, or something: to empower. Even the notion of “self-empowerment” presumes the involvement of an agent - oneself. In critical and feminist pedagogy, this self-empowerment also refers to the subject of empowerment, i.e. who is (to be) empowered. For example, in teacher-student relationship, the agent of empowerment is the teacher and the subject of empowerment is the individual student. In this relationship, critical and feminist pedagogy conceives power as property, that is something the teacher has and can give to the students. Accordingly, to empower means that power can be given, provided, controlled, held conferred, and taken away (Gore, 1992, p. 57). In this context, the teacher has to be able to exercise power so that he or she will not misdirect or misuse this power. Gore further suggests that empowerment - the exercise of power - must occur in sites of practice through the process of knowledge production (Gore, 1992, p. 68).

John R. Dew (1997, p.2) discusses empowerment in organization within the perspective of the nature of an organic plant that grows and blossoms, or wilts and decays depending on the willingness and tenderness of the gardener. He mentions that empowerment is an organic model, not a mechanical one, so that it must be cultivated and nurtured to thrive.

Further Dew states:

In this state of being, people know the boundaries within which they are free to work, and the boundaries are appropriate to their experience and maturity. In an empowering setting, people are engaged in making the decisions that influence the quality of their work life and the quality of the product or service they give their customers. Empowered people have the necessary feedback, training, and knowledge to successfully perform their work. In a state of empowerment, people feel a sense of ownership and pride in their work, and are rewarded for the successful role they play in making their overall organization successful (Dew, 1997, p.3).

Empowerment, according to Dew, cannot be forced but has to be created in a system which reinforces the state of empowerment, not the state of endullment.

Endullment is a concept advanced by the educator, Ira Shor, to describe the condition being observed in school classrooms when the educational system does not allow students to participate in real learning process⁵. In the state of empowerment, people are involved in making decisions so that they engage their maximum effort and knowledge to successfully perform their work. While in the state of endullment, people are told what to do so that they just learn how to do the minimum to get by, as their staying even if they do not like or disagree with the system (Dew, 1997, p.3).

Women, especially poor women in rural area of Indonesia, are among those vulnerable people that need to be empowered. In accordance with women's conditions, Stromquist (1995, pp.13-25) discusses empowerment as a process to change the distribution of power, both in interpersonal relations and in institutions throughout society. Traditionally, Indonesian women are accepted in their capacity as mothers and wives. Therefore, they need to become their own advocates to address

⁵ Ira Shor links the empowerment approach with popular education and a radical liberatory-transformative approach. It is a collective process, starting with reflection moving into action, and working cyclically back through action and reflection, and always doing so through a process committed to participation and agency of the beneficiaries of the process (Godkewitsch, 1997, p.46).

problems and situations affecting them, many of which have been previously ignored. Empowerment ultimately involves a political process to produce consciousness among policy makers about women and to create pressure to bring about societal change.

Moreover, according to Luzita Lazo (1995), the prime target of empowerment must be adult women with low-income (those who usually have low education). This is due to the fact that within this group, authoritarian control is exercised by husbands who often prohibit their wives to step outside the home or to participate in society. Consequently, it is necessary to develop a sense of independence among these women. It is therefore paramount to create small, cohesive groups, within which members may closely identify, that can be need to promote literacy, and to address mutual basic support needs (Lazo, 1995, p.25).

Women can attain empowerment through different points of departure: emancipatory knowledge, economic leverage or political mobilization. For example, women who work outside their home have greater access to income and therefore improve their authority in their home. Generally, they have a greater sense of control over their lives and have more power and control over resources within the family than non-working women. This, in turn, increases their self-esteem and augment their domestic and conjugal decision-making. Creating certain clubs for women, such as mothers' club, or literacy skill club can also empower them to gain self-esteem. Through authentic empowerment, women can be expected to acquire a better understanding of their world, a clearer sense of their ability to change their own conditions, and harness resources to develop leverage.

Although empowerment shows many benefits for women, it is not easy to be applied to poor women. Not only do they spend much time and energy responding to family needs, they also face many restriction, such as rigid authoritarian spousal control, violence at home, social expectations regarding motherhood, and unsafe community environments. Under these conditions, participation is fraught with obstacles and only a few will find it possible to participate.

To eliminate some of the barriers to empowerment, the contribution of three sets of actors will be needed. Initially, grassroots and feminist groups will have to spearhead outreach activities and work with those marginalized women who need support. The second set will consist of women in development and international institutions who can provide the necessary funds to create projects and programs featuring empowerment. Thirdly, there will be a need for women in academic circles, who will be able to contribute theoretical analysis as to how gender is created and how it can be modified in society.

Stromquist (1995) suggests that despite the existence of empowerment barriers, education is the most important key for empowerment. She acknowledges the need for women to benefit from educational opportunities and considers that the “most” urgent priority is to ensure access to, and improve the quality of, education for girls and women. She further stresses the need to remove every obstacle that hampers their active participation.

Joseph (1997) further notes that by gaining education, women are able to have choices. This in turn gives them relative strengths and bargaining powers. With their

newly acquired strengths women are expected to participate more frequently in development process.

In discussing education, however, it is important to appreciate that education cannot be viewed as formal education only. It also means non-formal education. Undoubtedly, education benefits women in a variety of social and economic dimensions, ranging from family planning decisions to the enhancement of self-esteem. Yet, not all women have been educated properly simply because there are many social and economic constraints. To address this problem feminist scholars have turned to non-formal education as a means to empower the marginalized and powerless women. For instance, many feminist scholars implement non-formal education as part of their Participatory Action Research projects to improve the condition of marginal and powerless rural women (Ellis, 1995, pp. 86-87; Lepphoto, 1995, pp. 5-13 and Riezen, 1996, p. 83).

Initially, non-formal education was offered to women or specific groups at a relatively low cost. This type of education features flexibility of program delivery and pertinence of curriculum in specific situation outside the formal system (Stromquist, 1994; Riezen 1996). Another feminist scholar, Patricia Ellis (1995) has highlighted the contribution of non-formal education programs to the empowerment of women:

By participating in non-formal education programs that focus on building awareness and critical consciousness women have learned how to better articulate their experience of oppression and feelings of powerlessness; and have gained a better understanding of the factors such as patriarchal ideology, existing social structures, systems and arrangements, that are responsible for their position and condition in society. As they focus on their individual experience of disadvantage and powerlessness, they also become aware of the importance of analyzing, challenging and changing the oppressive societal structures within which they live and operate (Patricia Ellis, 1995, p. 86).

Non-formal education, as described by Riezen (1996), typically entails an organizational program framed within not more than one year, emphasizing goals that are practical and specific. Participants have direct benefits from the education program. Flexibility of design is relatively high and the homogeneity of the group is usually fairly low. Non-formal education has to answer the need of specific population groups, and has to let people participate in a way that is integrated into the development process.

One problem with non-formal education in rural areas is the willingness of the participant women to attend the programs because of their limited time and energy. Without any support from the government or non-government organizations, many programs cannot run successfully. Therefore, non-formal education for women in rural areas must be organized and funded by the government.

For Indonesian women, empowerment may be related to culture, as it exists and interacts with their social activities. The main characteristics of Indonesian women can be traced from the Javanese culture. This is because Javanese are the most numerous in Indonesia. There are three elements of Javanese culture, which are relevant here. The first has to do with the Javanese preoccupation with the avoidance of open conflict; the second relates to Javanese sense of hierarchical relations; and the third is concerned with Javanese concept of power (Magnis-Suseno, 1999, p. 218). Based on these three elements, Indonesian women tend to legitimate the patriarchal system which is directly responsible for their subordination. In this context, empowerment that is suitable to their condition would have to highlight the ability for Indonesian women to express their self-esteem. Empowerment should be targeted to

share power and responsibility in decision making between men and women or husband and wife concerning their society or family (Tan, 1997, p. 12). Thus, empowerment has more to do with power within, not power without (Poerwandari, 1997, p. 366).

While education is widely perceived as an indicator of the status of women and even more importantly, as an agent for empowerment of women, Jayaweera (1997, pp. 411- 423) surprisingly reveals that there is no positive linear relationship between education and the economic, social and political empowerment of women. He argues that this condition is merely a consequence of the interface of gender ideologies and social and economic constraints.⁶ In his research, Jayaweera uses macro data of 23 middle - and low-income countries in Asia. Dividing them into two groups, describes the education attainment of the women in these countries at the primary, secondary and tertiary levels. Group A represented countries which have achieved relatively high levels of female literacy (primary school enrollment rate with less uniformity at secondary and tertiary levels). These countries included the Republic of Korea, Hong Kong, Singapore, Brunei, Thailand, Malaysia, the Philippines, Sri Lanka, Indonesia, Mongolia, China, the Maldives, Vietnam and Myanmar. Group B represented countries of relatively low literacy levels and enrolment rates in primary, secondary and tertiary levels. The countries were Papua New Guinea, Lao Republic, Cambodia, India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Buthan, Nepal and Afganistan.

⁶ The argument was based on the macro quantitative data identified in the United Nation's Human Development Report, 1995, on indicators of gender empowerment - economic participation and income earning capacity and participation in decision-making in politics and administration in public sphere.

Jayaweera (1997) further indicates that although some countries were already in group A, there was little correspondence between educational attainment and female economic activity or between women's share of earned income and the proportion of women in decision making position in the public sphere. For example, the Republic of Korea, the Philippines, Sri Lanka, Indonesia, and the Maldives all showed lower female economic activity rates, wider gender disparities in economic participation and lower shares of earned income than some countries in group B, such as the Lao Republic, Nepal, Bangladesh, Papua New Guinea and Cambodia. Thus, it is evident that education cannot be generalized as the sole agent of empowerment for women. This is because women are not a homogeneous group in any society. Other factors that impede access to education and to empowerment through education in all societies include the interface of gender ideologies, and social and economic structural constraints.

Gender ideologies was an important indicator of the aspirations of most parents in wanting education for their children, especially their daughters. In group A, parents tended to motivate their daughters to get access to education, while in group B, parents were less apt to educate their daughters due to the disadvantages in the future. The latter group of parents preferred to involve them in domestic chores or economic activities. In practical terms, both "gender" and "class" interact to limit the girls to access education even at the primary level. While education may not be an adequate base for empowerment, exclusion from education reinforces powerlessness (Anonuevo, 1996 and Jayaweera, 1997).

The impact of gender and class ideologies can also be seen in the mobility of occupation acquisitions. Women with the same level of education but belonging to different socioeconomic classes or groups follow different career paths - upward vertical mobility for those from families with better economic resources and horizontal mobility in ill paid, low skill jobs for the poor. Furthermore, women and men with the same education qualifications reach different levels in occupational status. Men usually have easier access to formal sector employment, managerial and technical jobs or entrepreneurship. Thus, social class variables as well as gender norms intervene to limit the empowerment of women through occupational mobility and economic rewards (Jayaweera, 1997, p.417).

Meanwhile, rapid economic growth in most countries in Asia, especially the Newly Industrializing Countries, has created an increasing demand in unskilled and low cost female labour. Under these new circumstances little schooling is not a barrier to “economic activity” for unskilled and low-cost women labour, while higher education is still an avenue to more prestigious and remunerative employment. This sort of economic independence has been a most powerful variable, because it can make an illiterate wage laborer in a low income family feel more empowered in her family than an “educated” woman who is a “housewife” or contributes collectively to the family income (Jayaweera, 1997, p.422).

On the other hand, Hill (1993) and Hadden (1996), identify patriarchal values, culture and religious aspects as the real social constraints to women empowerment. For example, a “narrowly” interpreted religion can be an impediment to empowering women through education. In this context, Anonuevo (1996) shows how some

Islamic countries, such as Sudan and Bangladesh, have articulated a narrow understanding of Islam (as expressed in the “Sharia’ Laws” or Islamic Laws). Women in Afghanistan, for example, are not allowed to get a higher education because they actually believe that it is the men’s task to improve family welfare. It is not surprising then, that those countries have marginalized women in all spheres of life including education.

Although education for women has faced many constraints, it cannot be denied that access to education has improved the quality of life and the status of women in all developing countries. The macro data of education attainment in developing countries has shown incredible improvement in female education. However, within more insightful explorations of gender inequality in qualitative studies, the relationship between education and empowerment becomes questionable due to its contradictions. This is because education has not been able to counter economic, cultural and social constraints that perpetuate poverty and social class differentiation or the social construction of gender that reinforces gender inequality in the family, labor market and society (Jayaweera, 1997, pp.422-423).

Education and employment seem to be the two most critical conditions for Indonesian women in gaining their self-reliance and capacity to control their lives. Hill (1994), Hadden (1996), Sadli(1996), Buchmann (1996) and Jayaweera (1997), among others, successfully show that the most vulnerable women who do not have adequate access to education are women in the low-income class. But when they entered unskilled, low-paid jobs, these women also gained self-reliance in terms of having their own income, no matter how small. Nonetheless, in order to be a full

participant in development, Indonesian women need to be empowered to gain education. In this case, although employment status, education, and empowerment show little relationship, the benefits in educating women is too costly to be ignored for national development.

Another issue that needs to be addressed for women's empowerment is the existence of cultural barriers in Indonesia. It is not uncommon of Indonesian women, particularly married women to be perceived as subordinates to men. The education of women is supposed to be lower than that of men. Thus, the empowerment of women faces a big challenge. For example, for Indonesian villagers, it is common for a husband with less than a primary school education to not allow his wife to get higher education than himself. Such a husband feels inferior if his wife is smarter (or has better knowledge) than he does. It may create family friction. It happens because the husband feels that his wife's superiority may humiliate his position in the eyes of his neighbors. He often presumes that the independence of his wife may lessen his "dignity". Hence, he will be over-reactive if his wife proposes to become better educated. In this case, a process of gender sensitization needs to be implemented among the villagers. Gender sensitization helps men develop a better understanding of the strength and capabilities of women to contribute to community development (Bilgi, 1998, pp. 92-93). The education of men is also necessary to increase better understanding when empowering women, so that there will be no one in the family who feels inferior or superior. To encourage the participation of men and women in development process "you need both salt and spices...." (Shah, 1998, p.243).

2.5. Concluding Remarks

Gender inequality happens in the education sector where women are always under-represented. Previous theories, such as modernization, dependency and marxist, have perpetuated gender inequality and patriarchy system. Hence, the writer looks at the Gender and Development perspective and sees the relationship between men and women, which focuses on the gender role as an alternative approach to deal with inequality and patriarchy system.

Indonesian women experience different treatment not only in education attainment but also in their work occupation. Although the government of Indonesia and Islamic Law provide equal rights to men and women, in practice they are treated differently. The reason behind this is the image and ideas about Indonesian women socially and culturally constructed by the women's role in family as being a good mother or wife without demanding power or prestige in return.

Studies about educating women show several benefits ranging from improving social conditions to increasing national income growth. Therefore, it is important to provide easier access to education for women. Once the opportunity is open widely, the number of women enrolling or their participation in higher education would be expected to be greater than that of men since the population of women in Indonesia is greater than men. However, this situation has only happened at the primary level of education, whereas in secondary and tertiary level men are predominant. The rationale behind this is there are social, cultural and economic barriers that impede women to access education opportunities. Another alternative of education, that is non-formal education, is also promoted to empower the vulnerable

women to reach the ultimate goal of more equitable and sustainable development.

Hence, the existences of those three barriers are strongly rooted in the community that the changes of women's status and women's role only occur slowly and gradually.

Education is the most important key for empowerment. In other words, Indonesian women need to be empowered to ensure access to education and to remove every obstacle that hampers their active participation. In doing this, the government of Indonesia provides easier access to education for women and within three decades there is tremendous achievement in women's education attainment, especially in primary level education. The general description of Indonesian women's education and occupation status will be exposed further in the following chapter, where an analysis of their education attainment is also regionally described. The following chapter will also examine the benefits of educating women and the correlation between the level of education and the Indonesian Gross Domestic Products (GDP).

CHAPTER III

A GENERAL DESCRIPTION OF THE INDONESIAN WOMEN

3.1. Introduction

This chapter essentially analyzes the education condition of Indonesian women and its improvement within three decades (1970s-1990s). It presents the gender disparities of education attainment and gender dispersion in urban and rural areas as well as within the region. To recognize the benefits of educating women, the data of social indicators such as life expectancy, infant mortality, and primary and secondary enrollments are analyzed. The increase number of life expectancy, students' enrollments, and the decrease of infant mortality are likely to have a close relationship with the improvement of education attainment of Indonesian women.

Specifically, this chapter also provides data concerning women's education attainment in urban and rural areas for selected years. The year of 1971 is chosen to describe condition of women in Indonesia before the government promoted education as a priority of development program in the Second Five-Year Development Plan (1974/1975-1978/1979). The analysis then continues in the year 1974/1975 where the program begins to be implemented and every five years thereafter. The rationale behind this analysis is that the condition of the Indonesian women's education achievement can be periodically contrasted and whether the Government has put an emphasis on improving women' education to promote Indonesian sustainable development. However, due to the data availability, certain data in certain years can not be well presented.

In the economic sector, the benefits of educating women will further be seen with the correlation between the Indonesian GDP and the percentage of women who attain primary and secondary level of education. The participation of women in the labor force will also be looked at to analyze the participation rate according to their education background. Acknowledging the positive benefits, education for women should not be ignored. Hence, women should be empowered to use greater opportunities to access education. However, the existence of barriers can be seen as the impediments of women in accessing education.

3.2. Educational Attainment of The Indonesian Women

3.2.1. Level of Education

The government of Indonesia gives equal access to education for its citizens.

It is clearly stated in the 1945 Constitution article 31 that:

and “(1) every citizen has the right to education
(2) the government shall establish and conduct a national educational system which shall be regulated by law”.

However, the official programme on education was initially designed in 1974. Before that time, because the government did not place an emphasis on educational development, Indonesia was far from reaching universal primary education and male education attainment was still well above female, particularly at secondary and tertiary level. Since 1974, the capital expenditures on education have been disbursed primarily on the building of new schools in locations where previously there had been

no primary education facility.¹ Although access to education has been expanded, especially on primary education, the enrollment has only improved since 1980s.

At the beginning of education promotion, the gender ratio (female student per 100 male students) was relatively high at primary level, at 83 percent, but at secondary level it was only 52 percent (Oey-Gardiner, 1998, p. 279). Two decades later, the gender ratio increased tremendously to almost 100/100 at primary level and 85/100 at secondary level. (See Table 3.1). This simply means that the education gap between men and women had decreased. Nevertheless, Table 3.1 also indicates that Indonesia's women may have impediments to enter education because the gender ratio is far below 100. These impediments may include social, economic and cultural aspects, which will be discussed later. It is also interesting to note that the number of women entering secondary schools increased significantly rather than that of primary schools, especially in 1990 where at senior high school there were at least 79 female students per 100 male students while the ratio was only 69.3 in 1984. At primary school level the ratio in those years was already above 90. This condition connotes that most Indonesian women already perceived that they required basic reading and writing skills, which could be acquired through primary education. This achievement, in turn, could be an important ingredient to improve their quality of life.

¹ The program was called the *SD Inpres* program. Its purpose is to provide every village with at least one primary public school. Particular attention was paid to the remote regions, where primary enrollment were low (Booth, 1998, 277)

Table 3.1. Gender Ratio (F/100M) in Primary and Secondary Levels

| Year | Primary School | Junior High School | Senior High School |
|------|----------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| 1974 | 83.1 | 62.7 | 51.5 |
| 1982 | 90.5 | 72.9 | 67.5 |
| 1984 | 91.4 | 75.1 | 69.3 |
| 1990 | 94.4 | 84.2 | 79.1 |
| 1994 | 97.9 | 89.7 | 84.1 |
| 1997 | 99.0 | 91.0 | n.a. |

Note: n.a is data not available

Source: Oey-Gardiner, 1998, p. 279 and Human Development Report 2000

Although gender disparities in education at primary levels have been smaller, women's education attainment at secondary and tertiary levels is still lower than that of men. For example, the percentage of women's education attainment at the tertiary level was below 0.5 percent in 1971 - 1985. A tremendous change was identified ten years later in 1995 in which women's education attainment at the tertiary level increased almost three times from the 1980s, at 1.9 percent. (See Table 3.2).

Table 3.2. Gender Disparities in Selected Years

| Level of Education | Male/ Female | 1971 (percent) | 1975 (percent) | 1980 (percent) | 1985 (percent) | 1995 (percent) |
|--------------------|-----------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|
| Primary | Male | 38.2 | 35.1 | 42.4 | 25 | 27.8 |
| | Female | 21.8 | 21.3 | 28.1 | 20.8 | 26.5 |
| Secondary | Male | 4.2 | 5.4 | 7.9 | 19.5 | 28.9 |
| | Female | 1.7 | 2.4 | 3.8 | 12.2 | 22.2 |
| Tertiary | Male | 0.7 | 0.7 | 0.9 | 2.3 | 3 |
| | Female | 0.2 | 0.2 | 0.3 | 0.5 | 1.9 |

Source: Central Bureau of Indonesia, *Susenas* and *Sakernas*, selected years

Gender disparities in education exists both in urban and rural areas although in recent years this gap diminishes. Even in 1995, the percentage of female students at primary level is higher than male students, that is 23.57 per cent in urban area and 32.74 per cent in rural area, compared with 21.60 per cent and 31.34 per cent

respectively. The number of rural women attending primary school increased significantly. There two reasons for this observation. First, the 6-year compulsory school program introduced by the Government has boosted school-age children, male and female, to attend primary school. Second, rural people perceive that reading and writing skills become their basic needs to enter the job market. Because of industrialization, many rural women leave the agriculture sector to work at manufacturing or other sectors in the cities. Therefore, they need to go to primary school to get their basic needs in order to get jobs. That is why, in the late 1990s the gap at the primary level decreased. For example in 1971 urban-female students at primary levels was 44.42 percent compared to rural-female students at 16.98 percent and in 1995, the rural-female students at primary levels was doubled to 32.74 per cent. (See Table 3.3).

But the situation in which women begin to enjoy education opportunities can be endangered because of Indonesian economic crisis. That is, the government begins to cut education spending while the cost of living is increasing. The economic crisis has brought a very large depreciation of the value of the *rupiah*. Before the crisis (July 1997), the value of US\$1 was 2,300 *rupiah* while in October 2000 the value of the rupiah is 8,945.00.² The Indonesian income per capita fell to US\$ 400, although before the crisis it was calculated to be more than US\$ 1,000. In the market, many of prices of goods and services, including essential foods, have soared more than 100 per cent or even 200 per cent (Ananta, 1998, p.10-14). When the economy becomes worse, people may feel that women's education can no longer be a priority. In other words, if the crisis remains unchanged within ten years, the education attainment of

² The Media Indonesia daily newspaper adopted from <http://www.mediaindo.co.id> on October 25, 2000 at 10:35 A.M.

women will be set back 20 years, to 1980, where 37.23 per cent of female population were illiterate (CBS, 1980, p.84). Although proper data is not yet available, the rationale of this estimation is assumed appropriate because people in poverty who can not afford to fulfill their basic needs will not even think about providing education for their children, especially girls.

Table 3.3. Gender Dispersion on Education Attainment in Urban and Rural Areas for Selected Years

| Level of Education | Male/ Female | 1971 | | 1985 | | 1995 | |
|--------------------|-----------------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| | | Urban | Rural | Urban | Rural | Urban | Rural |
| Primary | Male | 65.99 | 31.93 | 23.58 | 25.75 | 21.60 | 31.34 |
| | Female | 44.43 | 16.98 | 23.09 | 19.99 | 23.57 | 32.74 |
| Secondary | Male | 14.74 | 1.86 | 38.08 | 12.01 | 45.38 | 19.31 |
| | Female | 6.96 | 0.54 | 27.28 | 6.64 | 37.40 | 9.11 |
| Tertiary | Male | 2.89 | 0.16 | 2.98 | 0.42 | 6.33 | 1.12 |
| | Female | 0.86 | 0.03 | 1.29 | 0.15 | 4.08 | 0.56 |

Source: Central Bureau of Indonesia, *Susenas* and *Sakernas*, selected years

Regardless of the economic crisis, it is evident that women's education attainment is higher than men. This is due to the fact that the gender disparities in education become smaller, though men's education is still above women. Nevertheless, the increase number in women's education attainment tends to give a positive impact on the social welfare. Table 3.4 shows the improvement of social indicators of the Indonesian women. It shows that life expectancy at birth, infant mortality rate (per 1000 live births), primary enrollment (percent) and secondary enrollment (percent) have improved. In this case, it can be concluded that the more educated women will lengthen life expectancy at birth and lessen infant mortality rate.

Table 3.4. Social Indicators of The Indonesian Women in Selected Years

| Indicators | 1971 | 1975 | 1980 | 1985 | 1990 | 1995 |
|-----------------------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| Life expectancy | 40 | 51.9 | 55 | 58.4 | 61.7 | 64.6 |
| Infant mortality | 142 | 104 | 93 | 81 | 72 | 62 |
| Primary enrollment | 21.8 | 21.3 | 28.1 | 20.8 | 24.2 | 26.5 |
| Secondary enrollment | 1.8 | 2.6 | 4.1 | 12.7 | 19.9 | 24.1 |

Source: 1. Life expectancy and infant mortality quoted from Detailed Statistic on Urban and Rural Population of Indonesia: 1950-2010 pp.53-55

2. Primary and secondary enrollment quoted from Central Bureau of Statistics, *Susenas* and *Sakernas*, selected years

3.2.2. Regional Distribution

Indonesia, straddling at 6° North - 11° South latitude and 95° - 146° longitude, is the largest archipelagic nation in the world and the third-largest country in Asia. It consists of five large and about 17,500 smaller islands³, and having an area of 1,919,317 square kilometers or 741,078 square miles. The principal islands are Java, Sumatera, Kalimantan (comprising more than two third of the island of Borneo), Sulawesi (or Celebes), Irian Jaya (or now known as Papua), the Moluccas and Bali. See Appendix B.

In 2000, the population of Indonesia is estimated to be 210 million people (The World Bank, 2000). Unfortunately, the population is not evenly distributed on each island. The island of Java (about 6.89 percent of the total arable land) absorbs almost 60 percent of the total population. With around 1,000 people per square kilometer, this makes Java one of the most densely populated areas in the world. It is not surprising that development planning for education has been prioritized in Java. School facilities from primary to tertiary levels are easily found in Java while outside Java the primary concern of the government is still on the improvement of primary facilities. Outside Java, the numbers of higher level facilities are few and only found

in the provincial cities. Most people who want to continue higher education have to go to Java or at least to the nearest city which has those facilities. However, Table 3.5 shows that although education development planning has been initially concentrated on Java Island, the education attainment of women is evidently high in other islands. Even, among the urban, the number of illiterate women in some Java provinces, *i.e.* the Central Java, the D.I.Yogyakarta and the East Java is found higher than the national average. The statistics presented below are the latest available from official resources.

³ Not all of these small islands have names and only about 1,000 islands are inhabited.

Table 3.5 Percentage of Women by Province and Educational Attainment in Urban and Rural Areas, 1995

| Province | Illiterate | | Primary | | Secondary | | Tertiary | |
|-----------------|-------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| | Urban | Rural | Urban | Rural | Urban | Rural | Urban | Rural |
| D.I. Aceh | 4.67 | 14.99 | 43.49 | 45.38 | 26.88 | 8.01 | 6.04 | 1.43 |
| North Sumatra | 4.51 | 9.55 | 47.41 | 41.86 | 19.62 | 5.93 | 3.31 | 0.5 |
| West Sumatra | 4.7 | 12.09 | 41.7 | 39.02 | 28.29 | 9.61 | 6.67 | 1.18 |
| Riau | 4.98 | 11.49 | 47.93 | 45.39 | 21.94 | 5.44 | 0.55 | 0.57 |
| Jambi | 5.72 | 15.65 | 48.38 | 41.09 | 22.18 | 3.98 | 1.05 | 0.34 |
| South Sumatra | 7.43 | 13.29 | 46.17 | 38.94 | 17.3 | 4.79 | 1.75 | 0.27 |
| Bengkulu | 4.66 | 14.59 | 45 | 39.02 | 25.71 | 7.21 | 4.76 | 0.62 |
| Lampung | 8.77 | 13.36 | 43.41 | 39.72 | 18.42 | 5.7 | 4.32 | 0.45 |
| DKI Jakarta | 5.13 | 0 | 49.93 | 0 | 23.16 | 0 | 4.9 | 0 |
| West Java | 8.5 | 18.39 | 47.42 | 42.5 | 17.57 | 2.75 | 3.14 | 0.2 |
| Central Java | 17.09 | 26.08 | 43.75 | 40.12 | 14.11 | 3.63 | 2.46 | 0.42 |
| D.I. Yogyakarta | 17.23 | 34.1 | 38.25 | 37.33 | 23.18 | 7.36 | 4.31 | 0.91 |
| East Java | 15.8 | 34.9 | 42.04 | 33.86 | 16.86 | 3.63 | 3.27 | 0.51 |
| Bali | 15.56 | 32.61 | 42.35 | 37.06 | 20.5 | 7.84 | 4.57 | 1.19 |
| West-East Nusa | 22.74 | 40.21 | 36.49 | 28.67 | 16.05 | 4.26 | 2.62 | 0.25 |
| South-East Nusa | 8.93 | 26.4 | 46.03 | 35.83 | 17.38 | 3.98 | 3.52 | 0.47 |
| East Timor * | 34.72 | 57.76 | 30.95 | 16.71 | 13.78 | 5.14 | 2.08 | 0.58 |
| West Borneo | 15.79 | 29.83 | 39.03 | 26.34 | 17.44 | 2.89 | 1.5 | 0.17 |
| Central Borneo | 4.12 | 9.07 | 50.96 | 48.76 | 20.14 | 4.86 | 3.81 | 0.25 |
| South Borneo | 7.44 | 15.18 | 42.22 | 37.75 | 20.25 | 5.3 | 2.67 | 0.46 |
| East Borneo | 6.94 | 15.45 | 45.44 | 40.81 | 21.98 | 6.23 | 3.93 | 0.63 |
| North Celebes | 2.22 | 4.19 | 44.97 | 48.49 | 27.69 | 13.49 | 3.92 | 1.46 |
| Central Celebes | 4.69 | 12.33 | 46.52 | 47.78 | 25.01 | 6.58 | 5.94 | 0.58 |
| South Celebes | 11.77 | 26.28 | 40.41 | 37.71 | 24.09 | 6.83 | 5.16 | 0.77 |
| S.E. Celebes | 10.7 | 21.2 | 42.7 | 40.47 | 21.79 | 7.16 | 4.31 | 0.46 |
| Maluku | 3.17 | 8.96 | 51.08 | 46.08 | 25.16 | 5.86 | 3.46 | 0.26 |
| Irian Jaya** | 5.14 | 41.32 | 44.59 | 21.3 | 22.52 | 3.93 | 4.59 | 0.49 |
| Mean | 9.75 | 20.71 | 44.02 | 36.96 | 21.02 | 5.64 | 3.65 | 0.57 |

Notes :

* East Timor was "released" from Indonesian territory in October 30, 1999

** it is also known as Papua

Source: Central Bureau of Statistics, *Susenas*, 1995

Table 3.5 also indicates that there are 9 provinces, which have the percentage of illiterate women higher than the national average of the urban. Those provinces are Central Java, D.I. Yogyakarta, East Java, Bali, West-East Nusa, East Timor, West

Borneo, South Celebes, and South-East Celebes. The fact that three of those provinces are on Java island, where the population is very dense, may reveal that barriers to enter education for women, especially in Java, may really exist. The best education performance achieved by North Celebes where the illiterate women are only 2.22 percent in urban area and 4.19 percent in rural. Its achievement also reveals that the lack of education facility is not impeding women to attain education because they may travel to other cities that provide the facilities.

3.3. Work Attainment of Indonesia Women

3.3.1. Employment Status

Along with Indonesia's modernization, the labor force profile has changed from agricultural sector to trade, construction, manufacturing, transportation and services sectors. During the new order period, the Indonesian labor force had more than doubled in size and became less Java centric, less concentrated in primary industries, less rural and much better educated (Hull and Jones, 1994, p.145). Women's participation in these sectors has also increased steadily since 1980. The changing of the distribution by industry can be seen in Table 3.6.

In addition to the agricultural sector, the data indicates that trades, restaurant and hotel sectors are the most popular industry of Indonesian women. This sector, along with manufacturing has been the most favorable sector chosen by Indonesian women because economically these sectors have grown significantly due to government development planning.

Table 3.6 Percentage Distribution of Female Employment by Industry

| Major Industry Group | 1971 | 1975 | 1980 | 1985 | 1990 | 1995 |
|--|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| Agriculture, Hunting, forestry and fishing | 62.16 | 67.41 | 54.17 | 54.76 | 54.96 | 44.33 |
| Manufacturing | 8.37 | 8.08 | 12.47 | 11.36 | 12.21 | 15.38 |
| Construction | 0.09 | 0.09 | 0.24 | 0.20 | 0.29 | 0.36 |
| Trades, restaurant | 13.59 | 13.59 | 19.04 | 21.08 | 20.04 | 24.28 |
| Hotels | | | | | | |
| Transport, storage & communication | 0.11 | 0.09 | 0.13 | 0.09 | 0.26 | 0.27 |
| Community, Social & personal Services | 8.24 | 7.87 | 13.16 | 12.50 | 11.93 | 15.39 |
| Others | 7.43 | 1.81 | 0.80 | 0.01 | 0.31 | - |

Source: Central Bureau of Statistics, *Susenas* and *Sakernas*, selected years

Meanwhile, the increase number of women's education attainment has also changed marital status and fertility. In turn, this affects the participation of women in labor force. Before 1980 women were married before reaching the age of 30, but recently the trend to delay marriage is common. The decision to have a small number of children after marriage is also related with the job that they need to survive.

Although laws guarantee women a three-month maternity leave, they are often dismissed or are replaced while on leave; some companies require that women sign statements that they will not become pregnant otherwise they have to leave or resign when pregnant.⁴ This situation can also be easily found in large industries (labor intensive industries) where female employment is in the majority. This problem would be eliminated if women were aware about their rights and privileges. To be aware, the most reliable thing to do is to improve their education (knowledge). Hence,

⁴ Private banks have strictly enforced this regulation.

undoubtedly, the level of education has influenced the participation rate of female employment. In 1971 more than 60 percent of women employed did not attend school at all. However, the situation gradually changed and by 1995 the percentage of employed women with little schooling was only 19.34 percent.

Table 3.7. Percentage of Female Labor Force in Urban and Rural Area by Education

| Education Attainment | 1971 | 1980 | 1985 | 1990 | 1995 |
|--------------------------------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| No-schooling | 60.11 | 43.93 | 32.95 | 12.48 | 19.34 |
| Incomplete primary | 22.69 | 33.10 | 33.14 | 18.79 | 26.01 |
| Primary | 13.33 | 15.53 | 22.03 | 30.93 | 30.90 |
| Junior High | 2.20 | 2.79 | 4.32 | 8.83 | 8.45 |
| Senior High | 1.46 | 4.17 | 6.62 | 23.38 | 11.99 |
| Diploma/academy/ University | 0.21 | 0.48 | 0.94 | 5.58 | 3.31 |

Source: Central Bureau of Statistics, *Susenas* and *Sakernas*, selected years

Although women's participation rate in labor force has increased every year, they still earn less than men with the same educational background and job-position. Whether in urban or rural areas they seem to receive the same discrimination. The level of education attainment also influences their wage. The higher their education attainment the higher the wage they will receive. For example, in 1994, urban women who never attended school received Rp.55.843,- per month while urban women who has tertiary educational background received at the range from Rp.280.000,- per month to Rp.330.000,- per month, but urban men with the same educational background received Rp.134.634,- per month for no-schooling background and at the range from Rp.320.000,-per month to Rp.472.000.- per month for tertiary educational

background. Rural women are those who suffer the most because they received less remuneration (CBS-b, 1995, p.78).⁵

3.3.2. Regional Distribution

In every province in Indonesia, men always dominate the labor force participation rate either in urban or rural areas. Table 3.8 shows that the male participation rate is almost double that of women's. It also shows that the numbers of women who work in rural area are higher than in urban areas. The only exception is in North Celebes, which reveals 42.17 percent of urban women are working while in rural areas the figure is only 37.78 percent. This is not surprising because this province leads the highest rate of women educational attainment in the country.

⁵ Note in 1994 one Canadian dollar makes around 2000 Indonesian Rupiahs.

Table 3.8. Labor Force Participation Rate by Province, Urban Rural Area and Sex, 1995

| Province | Urban Area | | Rural Area | | Urban + Rural | |
|--------------------|------------|-------|------------|-------|---------------|-------|
| | Female | Male | Female | Male | Female | Male |
| D.I. Aceh | 36.14 | 76.33 | 50.52 | 86.17 | 47.60 | 84.09 |
| North Sumatra | 40.14 | 77.64 | 66.24 | 85.68 | 55.00 | 82.26 |
| West Sumatra | 43.65 | 73.12 | 54.51 | 85.50 | 51.58 | 82.14 |
| Riau | 30.39 | 81.02 | 39.32 | 88.74 | 36.23 | 86.00 |
| Jambi | 31.59 | 76.66 | 47.24 | 89.03 | 42.79 | 85.67 |
| South Sumatra | 36.04 | 78.07 | 61.12 | 89.04 | 52.93 | 85.60 |
| Bengkulu | 42.81 | 80.21 | 64.94 | 89.67 | 59.02 | 87.18 |
| Lampung | 40.70 | 75.96 | 59.52 | 90.08 | 56.43 | 87.93 |
| DKI Jakarta | 36.97 | 77.42 | - | - | 36.97 | 77.42 |
| West Java | 37.25 | 79.51 | 43.05 | 88.09 | 40.56 | 84.40 |
| Central Java | 52.87 | 80.46 | 59.61 | 88.84 | 57.43 | 86.17 |
| D.I. Yogyakarta | 54.98 | 71.84 | 71.08 | 87.74 | 62.35 | 78.87 |
| East Java | 48.47 | 80.03 | 57.26 | 90.04 | 54.41 | 86.84 |
| Bali | 59.15 | 78.99 | 72.45 | 88.43 | 67.92 | 85.27 |
| West-East Nusa | 44.37 | 78.46 | 63.33 | 90.74 | 59.69 | 88.27 |
| South-East Nusa | 49.90 | 74.36 | 69.98 | 90.23 | 67.17 | 87.85 |
| East Timor* | 46.81 | 83.69 | 58.19 | 89.00 | 57.17 | 88.46 |
| West Borneo | 35.81 | 76.62 | 66.61 | 90.86 | 59.45 | 87.58 |
| Central Borneo | 38.57 | 77.87 | 56.08 | 91.99 | 51.98 | 88.71 |
| South Borneo | 40.62 | 81.25 | 65.38 | 90.70 | 57.71 | 87.83 |
| East Borneo | 35.92 | 81.34 | 50.19 | 90.22 | 42.82 | 85.64 |
| North Celebes | 42.17 | 78.74 | 37.78 | 88.04 | 39.00 | 85.68 |
| Central Celebes | 45.91 | 76.87 | 46.76 | 88.07 | 46.56 | 85.73 |
| South Celebes | 34.37 | 72.89 | 36.09 | 87.17 | 35.59 | 83.02 |
| South East Celebes | 42.43 | 77.09 | 47.92 | 88.91 | 46.63 | 86.27 |
| Maluku | 32.66 | 71.76 | 47.02 | 86.86 | 43.06 | 82.93 |
| Irian Jaya | 36.46 | 79.56 | 71.16 | 89.95 | 62.80 | 87.34 |

Source: Social Indicators on Women in Indonesia, 1995, p.66

3.4. The Role of Women Education on the Indonesian Economy

After its colonial era, historically, Indonesia has experienced five phases in the role of government in the national economy. They include: gradual attenuation of government control in 1945-1965, stabilization and boom under the New Order in 1965-1981, the New Liberalism and its enemies in 1982-1998, and the most recent development in the post-Soeharto's era (Booth, 1998, p.137; Robison and Rosser,

1998, pp.1593-1609; Pangestu, 1993, pp.253-283). Although these five phases have lasted over fifty years, Indonesia has only experienced four administrators governing the country. These are Soekarno's (known as the Old Order Government), Soeharto's (known as the New Order Government), BJ Habibie's and Abdurrachman Wahid's (or the Reform Government).

The economic development of Indonesia has been acknowledged successful under the New Order Government, though to achieve economic success the Government deliberately marginalized its opponents (Majangwoelan, 1997). Within Soeharto's administration, the Five-Year Development Plans, known as Repelitas, have been designed and implemented for improving the economy. The improvement of national economy also indicates the involvement of women in economic activities. The increase number of women's participation in the labor force indicates the trend of change in the perception of women's role in the household, not only as wives or mothers but also as breadwinners. There is also a trend in changing status of occupation from agricultural sector to industrial, trade and services. See Table 3.6 above. These changes are caused by the increase number of female education attainment. Along with this improvement the national income is gradually increased every year. The correlation between female education attainment and GDP can be described in Table 3.9.

Table 3.9 The Correlation Between Level of Education and GDP in Indonesia

| Education Level | Correlation |
|-----------------|-------------|
| Primary | 0.565 |
| Secondary | 0.902 |

Source: The author's Analysis

Using the Pearson Correlation, the study found that primary and secondary levels of education have a positive correlation to GDP, respectively. These findings are in line with Lucia Hanmer and Felix Naschold, though their research focuses only on net primary enrolment (2000, p.20). From Table 3.9, it also appears that secondary level of education is correlated to per capita income rather than primary education. This means, other things being equal, the higher the women's secondary education attainment the higher the Indonesian income and vice versa. There are two reasons behind this: firstly the growth rate of primary level of education has been lower so that the correlation to GDP is also lower; see Table 3.7 above. Secondly, the increased possibility of women entering secondary level of education has significant impact on GDP. It is evident that higher level of education has contributed higher GDP due to the higher income they received when they become more educated.

From the above description, it is understood that empowerment of women through education should be emphasized at secondary level of education rather than at the primary level. However, women's participation rate in secondary education is still under-represented. Although female literacy rate in 1997 is 80 percent (WDR, 1999/2000, p.232), only 11.4 percent enter secondary level of education. Hence, it appears that barriers to enter secondary level of education become significant.

3.5. Concluding Remarks

The government of Indonesia provides equal access to education for men and women. Its efforts can be seen with the emphasis on education as a priority development program and the six-year compulsory program of education with free tuition at the primary level. Since then, the number of primary students in urban and

rural areas have increased, even the number of women entering primary school was slightly higher than that of men. Indeed, this is a very significant improvement because it also affects social life as well as national income. Unfortunately, however, the number of women who enter higher education is lower than that of men whereas in fact the correlation between secondary level of education is more closely related to GDP than the level of primary education. Therefore, Indonesia's women evidently need to be empowered to access higher education and the barriers that impede them should be acknowledged and eliminated. Further analysis about the empowerment and the barriers will be discussed in the next chapter.

CHAPTER IV

WOMEN'S EDUCATION: EMPOWERMENT AND BARRIERS

4.1. Introduction

This chapter discusses two main elements in women's education. These elements are empowerment and barriers. The empowerment element means that the empowerment through the government efforts to boost the active involvement of women in the development process.

Regarding the importance of education for women, the government provides another tool for women to gain knowledge and skills to improve their self-esteem. There are two major programs managed by the government, first the development of non-formal education program and secondly the building of women's organizations established and organized by top-down government directives. The goals of these programs are to eliminate illiteracy of women by easier and more appropriate education programs and to encourage Indonesian women to be better involved in the development process by actively participating in such women's organizations.

The second element of women's education discussion is the barriers that have impeded women to gain equal access to education. There are three types of barriers: social, cultural and economic factors. Considering that Indonesia consists of many islands with different social and cultural backgrounds, the discussion of these barriers is centered on the largest population, *i.e.* ethnic Javanese, which may be socially and culturally representative of most ethnic societies in Indonesia. The main purpose of this discussion is to reveal greater detail about the barriers that impede Indonesian women in attaining education, and in turn, it necessarily hopes to create solutions to eliminate the barriers.

4.2. Women's Empowerment in Indonesia

The world awareness to women's condition has improved since the United Nations conducted the World Conference on Women in Mexico City in 1975. "Equality, Development and Peace" became themes of the conference and later those themes were used as the theme of the United Nations Decade for Women from 1976-1985. Education, Employment and Health sub-themes were added in 1980 where the second conference was held in Copenhagen. In 1985, at the third conference in Nairobi, these themes were incorporated in the Forward-Looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women. Ten years later, a platform for action concentrated on "twelve critical areas of concerns", that have been identified as obstacles to the advancement of women in the world, were discussed in the fourth world conference on women in Beijing.

As a member of United Nations, Indonesia has participated in the conferences and has conducted several actions according to the ten critical areas of concerns. Those concerns include poverty, education and health, violence, armed and other conflicts, economic disparity, politics, national and international institutions, human rights, mass media, and environment and development. Accordingly, women's status received greater attention along with the government's efforts to increase women's involvement in development process.

In the education and health sectors, empowerment approach became one of the tools for government and non-government projects on women in order to alleviate gender disparities and to provide more opportunities and greater access in education and health for women to increase their capabilities. Although opportunities and greater access were opened widely for women, these opportunities have been largely enjoyed by some women especially those from middle upper classes. Unfortunately, among the vulnerable

women are majority of those who live in poverty or those who are impeded by social, cultural and economic barriers.

The government's solution to empowerment has been the involvement and increased number of women's participation by providing easier access to education as well as self-esteem. There are two development programs as mentioned earlier to reach the Government's goals of women empowerment. Those are the development of non-formal education and the advancement of women's organizations.

4.2.1. Non-Formal Education

Non-formal education aims to provide an alternative way to assist vulnerable women who are unable to enter formal education. There are three kinds of non-formal education programs supported and funded by the government. These are Program Kelompok Belajar Paket A or the Learning Group Packet A Program (hereinafter known as Packet A Program), Program Kelompok Belajar Paket B or the Learning Group Packet B Program (hereinafter Packet B Program), and the Program Kelompok Belajar Berusaha or the Learning Group for Income Generating Program (hereinafter the Income Generating Program). According to the Department of Education and Culture (1994), the packet A program is designed to provide education at elementary level so participants are able to acquire basic reading, writing and counting skills. The primary goal is to alleviate illiteracy level in rural areas. The packet B program aims at providing education at junior-high school level so participants can attain more advanced reading, writing and counting skills. On the other hand, the income-generating program is intended to improve the quality and skills of human resources enable women to run a small-business activity by providing them with some business training.

Women's participation in non-formal education programs empirically shows an interesting figure: women's participation rate is higher than men's. (See Table 4.1). Despite these interesting data, there are several points, which need to be considered, why women's participation is officially higher than that of men. Firstly, this non-formal education program is specially designed to eliminate illiteracy rate, which affects women predominantly, that is, of all illiterate Indonesian people, 68.03 % are women (CBS, 1995). In addition, this program is deliberately set to improve quality of life targeted at women. For example, the focus of training for income generating programs are on home-based activities such as sewing, embroidery, and other training that is considered appropriate to women's talent. Thus, this income-generating program is, indeed, expected to educate women to increase their family's income. Secondly, it is a top-down program where women in the village are afraid of refusing the order of the village leader who has authoritarian power. Thirdly, it is designated according to the specific condition of the village and fourthly it is organized within a small group where distance is not an obstacle. Lastly, it is arranged on a short time basis and no fees required. These are the reasons why the Indonesian women have higher participation in non-formal education program than men do.

**Table 4.1. Number of Participants of Non-Formal Education, 1991-1999
(By Thousand)**

| Years | Packet A Program | | Packet B Program | | Income Generating Program | |
|-----------|------------------|---------|------------------|---------|---------------------------|---------|
| | Male | Female | Male | Female | Male | Female |
| 1991/1992 | 303,658 | 369,904 | 3,680 | 2,421 | 47,821 | 100,609 |
| 1992/1993 | 278,077 | 507,884 | 34,010 | 64,194 | 105,287 | 179,475 |
| 1994/1995 | 387,183 | 462,415 | 49,566 | 36,881 | n.a. | n.a. |
| 1996/1997 | 77,694 | 94,491 | 154,220 | 176,147 | 10,775 | 15,886 |
| 1998/1999 | 64,681 | 74,441 | 125,875 | 141,933 | 4,456 | 7,101 |

Source: Statistics of Community Education, Book I, Department of Education and Culture, selected years

Notes: n.a. = data not available

4.2.2. Women's Organizations

During the New-Order period under President Soeharto, all recognized public or private organizations including women's groups were restructured and "invisibly" controlled or organized by the Government. Its aim was to impose **Pancasila**, the state ideology, as the only and legal organizational principle. Even, in the mid-1980, the Government forced activists to legally administer their organizations in the Department of Home-Affairs through its provincial offices. If they refused to do so, their organizations would be officially prohibited from operating in Indonesia. Therefore, under the Soeharto government, "states" are legally able to manage and "intervene" in any organizational activity.

In order to survive, many women's activists then allow the government to arrange their activities. For example, since 1974, all women's activities within state departments and institutes were mainly organized by *the Dharma Wanita*, the organization for the wives of government employees while within the Armed Forces then have been organized by the *Dharma Pertiwi*, the official organization for the wives of Indonesia's soldiers. Meanwhile, in private organizations, any women's activity locally must be organized under the *Gerakan Pembinaan Kesejahteraan Keluarga* (or the Guidance for Family Welfare Movement) or *PKK* (Pakpahan, 1996, p.11) which has been led and ordered by the village leaders. The success of this PKK often becomes a key-success factor for the leader to be re-appointed or promoted to a higher level. This strongly indicates that government influence on any women's activity is "widely" accepted.

The Government strongly supports and assists these three organizations where the leader of these organizations are always the wives of the highest ranking male official or at PKK the leader is the wife of the village head. In this regard, the competence and

capabilities of the women as wives of the leader are frequently ignored with the assumption that these women will have power from their husbands. This condition sometimes excludes potential women who have more knowledge and capabilities but their husbands do not have high position in the villages or offices. However, as a member of the organizations they must be actively involved in all activities as their husbands' career development calls for such co-option. From this standpoint, women organizations are in fact a means of political control over both the women and their husbands (Pakpahan, 1996, p.12, Suryochondro, 1996, p.302).

Meanwhile, the *PKK* activities have been the engine of the national development because these activities have involved the family as the smallest unit of the society. All government projects for women are formally channeled through *PKK* organizations, such as non-formal education program, or health services for community. The wife of the village head is supposed to actively mobilize the women by creating activities such as monthly meetings, sewing and other handy-craft skills, cooking etc. Furthermore, regardless of the husbands' interests and government's pressure, the mobility of *PKK* activists are able to recruit women and empower them to acquire more knowledge and skills to reduce gender inequality. Its goal is also to raise women's position in the family as a partner of their husbands rather than as a companion only (Bianpoen, 1996, p.197).

The *Dharma Wanita's* and *Dharma Pertiwi's* activities are not different from *PKK's* activities. The members are supposed to involve and support these organizations since their involvement reflects their husband's career. In this sense, women's organizations in Indonesia are still a reflection of patriarchy because their husbands' power takes over the women's self-ability which leads to further marginalization of women.

There are several benefits for women living in poor conditions to be involved in this empowerment approach. Firstly, the continuation of funding from the Government provides facilities to run the programs, hence women in remote areas have also embraced activities. Secondly, the power of the husband can be used to persuade them to attend the activities. Thirdly, the women get benefits from acquiring better education, wider knowledge and better nutrition (Pakpahan, 1996; Suryochondro, 1996; Bianpoen, 1996).

However, the women who have capabilities more than the leader receive some disadvantages because they will not be in a leadership position if their husbands' position is lower, and vice versa for the leader's wife who does not have leadership nor education will be overacted or stressed. The top-down conditions sometimes make village women unable to receive optimum benefits because they feel under-pressure. The programs are sometimes also not suitable for certain women's condition such as cooking lessons using modern and expensive technology or other training that is inappropriate for poor and illiterate women.

4.3. The Social, Cultural and Economic Barriers

The government's efforts in empowering women to gain a better quality of life as well as the women's efforts by themselves have evidently shown changes in present years. That is from women who did not have their own interests and always obeyed their parents or husbands before the 1970s, to become women who are more aware of their rights and more active within their families and community. Since 1980, women's involvement in the development process has become more active, along with their improvement of educational attainment. The 1993 Guidelines for National Development of Indonesia emphasized the government to promote and encourage women's partnership

with men and equal role between men and women. Consequently, women are involved in all spheres of development planning and process with regard to their dignity as women. The Long-term Development Plan II has also recognized women's role as important as men's roles so that all barriers that hinder women to participate in development have to be eliminated. In doing so, social and cultural circumstances need to be improved so that women will be able to create and use their chance to advance their skills and capabilities.

In line with the Long-term Development Plan II, which focuses on women's role and their partnership with men, the government developed regulations which give greater benefits to women. For example, since 1993 the system of National Account has been improved by adding the market value of some commodities produced by household, namely some home-based activities. However, this system cannot evaluate the value of domestic jobs done by women in their family although those jobs are accountable when done by housemaids (CBS, 1995b, p.5).

Education is considered a value-added for women in their participation to development. There are tremendous changes over years in women's education attainment. However, these changes have not simultaneously changed their participation in economic sectors. Several social and cultural barriers have impeded women to fully participate in development process. Those barriers include the different treatment between women and men with the same educational background (women are considered emotional and men are considered rational so in choosing between them for managerial position men are preferable). Women also receive unfair and are poorly perceived if they choose their career or have dual roles due to the assumption that they will ignore their dignity as women.

In order to recognize how far these barriers exist, the study analytically discusses the three further barriers.

4.3.1. Social Barriers

As mentioned before, Indonesia consists of more than 17,500 large and smaller islands. It is a land of diversity with approximately four hundred different cultural groups with their own languages. However, these different cultural groups are united as one nation which is known as the “Bhinneka Tunggal Ika” or “unity in diversity”, therefore recognizing the rights of each individual grouping, yet unifying all under one umbrella (Soemardjan, 1988, p.23).

The diversity in ethnic group and language is reflected in the various forms of social structure. Soemardjan (1988) mentions, *at least*, four types of social structures with respect to Indonesia. These types can be distinguished as follows (Soemardjan, 1988, pp.25-29):

1. Hunting and gathering societies
2. Simple agricultural societies
3. Advanced agricultural societies
4. Urban societies

Hunting and gathering societies are characterized by their dependence on the nature as hunters or fishermen. Settlements are made in small clearings in the forest, usually not far from the river shore where people get their supply of water. Between members of these community there exist many mutual helps, such as sharing fireplace for cooking meal etc.

Simple agricultural societies are the type of settlement that thrives on agriculture, *i.e.* the people learn to till the soil to produce foodstuffs by cultivating the jungle. The people live in permanent residence inhabited by extended families. A high degree of mutual help exists although limited to cases where such help is needed, for instance when building a house, opening part of the jungle or performing ritual ceremonies. There is no sharp division of labor according to gender as men and women usually have an equal share in agricultural work, although men perform heavy labor and women are responsible for lighter work and their children.

Meanwhile, advance agricultural societies, though still depending upon agriculture as the main form of production, are far more complex than simple agricultural societies. They have a greater division of labor with craft specialization, greater social stratification, develop exchange systems and changes in family and residential structure. Modern forms of technology including communication and transportation are introduced and the system of mutual help is less pronounced but more wage labor is employed. Local leadership has an important role in these societies because of the influence of feudalistic society, which is established during the old kingdom and principalities. Local leader can be a village leader or a male Islamic-figured called “*kyai*”. A village leader has power and control in terms of administrative issues meanwhile a “*kyai*” has power in society in term of behavior and mass decision making. Thus, to promote a new program sometimes the village leader will persuade the *kyai* to influence the society. Once he agrees the society will immediately follow the program without any hesitations.

Meanwhile, the main characteristic of urban societies is that agriculture has almost disappeared as a means of existence. The people are mostly employed in government offices or in the private business sectors, especially in industries and

services. Social relations are more heterogeneous in character since it involves various ethnic, social, religious and racial origins. The tradition of mutual help has been changed to a system of paid labor. The greater availability of educational institutions and any other means of modern technology characterize urban life.

In general, the first three types of societies are frequently categorized as rural society. Due to social change, although slow, and a government program of transmigration, the hunting and gathering societies, and simple agricultural societies are slowly merged as advanced agricultural societies.

In Indonesia, more than 60 percent of population still live in rural areas on Java island. Along with their limitation of modern technology, the limitation of job fields available and their willingness to improve their quality of life, most rural people have moved to urban areas. Parents in rural families tend to send their children to cities to acquire better schooling thus preparing them for a better future. Accordingly, the young generation prefers to stay in the cities where possibilities for vertical social mobility are more evident (Soemardjan, 1988, p.28). It is not surprising why urban societies become more complex with the blend of various ethnic groups, social, religious and racial origins. Unity and diversity tends to be more pronounced in urban societies than in rural societies.

Historically speaking, Indonesian people have the same origins of Micronesians and Polynesians, which spread from the Pacific islands. The indigenous populations of Indonesia, the Philippines and the Pacific islands speak languages of the same family called *Austronesian* (or Malayo-Polynesian). Various religions such as Islam, Hinduism and Buddhism have been adopted and blended with the origin of beliefs. Therefore, based on the same historical background and the motto of unity in diversity, a discussion about a certain ethnic group can be representative of the Indonesian population although they

spread out in many islands. The occupation by the Dutch for 3.5 centuries and Japanese for 3.5 years has also created a global perspective of the Indonesian society. The religious influences as well as the emergence of several kingdoms coupled with the occupation of Dutch and Japanese people in previous times have formed a certain society characteristics that are linked to patriarchy. This patriarchal system emerged in society as the perceptions about men and women were perceived differently, and men were considered to have authoritarian power over women.

Perceptions about hierarchical gender relationship are strengthened, where men were considered organizers and women were considered as organized, form the socio-economic, religious and cultural aspects of the Indonesian people. Consequently, from the Dutch occupation to the most current government, most development approaches tend to be directed by men, didactic and top-down, even for programs that involve women. Participation in development context always tends to distribute women and men tasks as prescribed, stereotypical and gender-specific ways (Kindon, 1998, p.153). Further, Kindon (1998) stated that women in Bali prepare offerings, refreshments and decoration for visits by government officials. They are also targeted with income generating projects which focus on sewing, embroidery or handicrafts, thus keeping them at home and in the domestic sphere in line with their perceived role as wives and mothers. In contrast, men are often expected to be involved in decision making and other activities away from their homes, in line with their perceived role as breadwinners and family representatives.

Patriarchal systems also influence the perception of women's role and destiny that inhibits them from active involvement in the development process. As wives and mothers, women are perceived as economically unproductive, although in fact they perform economic activities and support their families. However, women with double

role as mothers or wives at home and as employees at work sometimes also accept this perception, because they feel that double role is against their biological destiny. They even conceive that their right place is at home with their children. Hence, when they are questioned whether they work or not, they often answer that they are “just” housewives and their husbands are the primary earners. The casual or low paid nature of many women’s job combine with the undervaluing of women’s reproductive work in the home means that women often colludes with men’s perception of themselves as economically unproductive (Kondon, 1998, p.157). In order to improve the quality of human resources, the Government of Indonesia tries to eliminate this perception based on the institutions of patriarchy. Within its 1993 Guidelines, the government accepts women with double role in family and economic activities and encourages them to be more actively participated in development process.

The image of Indonesian women noted by Pakpahan is that the destiny of women is connected to being as soft and weak. These women do not speak loudly and of a women’s own interests (Pakpahan, 1996, p.10). In this case, women’s subordination with the above description underlies all spheres of social activities. Therefore it is not uncommon if men and women are treated unequally in family and community such as in attaining education or receiving salaries. The perception of women’s subordination also underlies the existence of women in Islam with a narrow understanding of Islamic Law. In other words, although the government of Indonesia as well as Islamic law ensure the equal position of men and women in society, women still face much discrimination due to the patriarchal system that is historically rooted in Indonesian society.

The social relationship based on patriarchy seems to influence the decision to acquire education. The tendency to prioritize education to men has a relationship with

superiority and power of men in society. Women tend to face this patriarchy as a social barrier when entering education. It is evidently true when we look at again at Table 3.1, which simply shows the gender ratio below 100 at primary, junior and high schools. The gender ratio becomes higher at the level of tertiary education.

4.3.2. Cultural Barriers

With the number of its islands at more than 13,000, Indonesia constitutes a plural society on many levels of culture, race and religion. The number of the ethnic groups, which is called *suku* (or ethnic), cannot be determined exactly but each *suku* can be differentiated by its own cultural differences, such as language, structure and social system, music, songs and dances. However, since its independence, Indonesia has attempted to build a united nation by developing and utilizing a growing national language, that is the Indonesian language. This language has paved way for the formation of a new national culture over and above the multitude of *suku* languages and *suku* cultures. That is why the motto of *Bhinneka Tunggal Ika* or unity in diversity has always been stated to facilitate and maintain a national unity without abandoning the rich variety of languages and cultures (Soemardjan, 1988, p. 64). Therefore, in discussing cultural barriers, it refers to the general characteristics of cultures that exist in each *suku*. Since Javanese is the largest single *suku* (over one third of Indonesian population is Javanese and almost 80 million of the Indonesian population evidently speaks Javanese language), the most identifiable cultural barriers can therefore be taken from Javanese culture.¹

Moreover, there are three regions in Java island, where the Javanese culture exists, which

¹ Ekowardono, "80 Million Indonesians speak Javanese Language", *the Suara Merdeka CyberNews* July 14, 2000 at 09.15 p.m as in <http://www.suamamerdeka.com>

are considered high in its illiterate level in 1995, as shown in Table 3.5 before. As a consequence, Javanese cultural barriers can be looked at to analyze the problems regarding women's education attainment.

There are three elements of the Javanese culture seemingly relevant with the backwardness of women's education attainment. These are the Javanese preoccupation with *rukun* (the avoidance of open conflicts), the Javanese sense of hierarchical relations, and the Javanese concept of power (Magnis-Suseno, 1999, p.218).

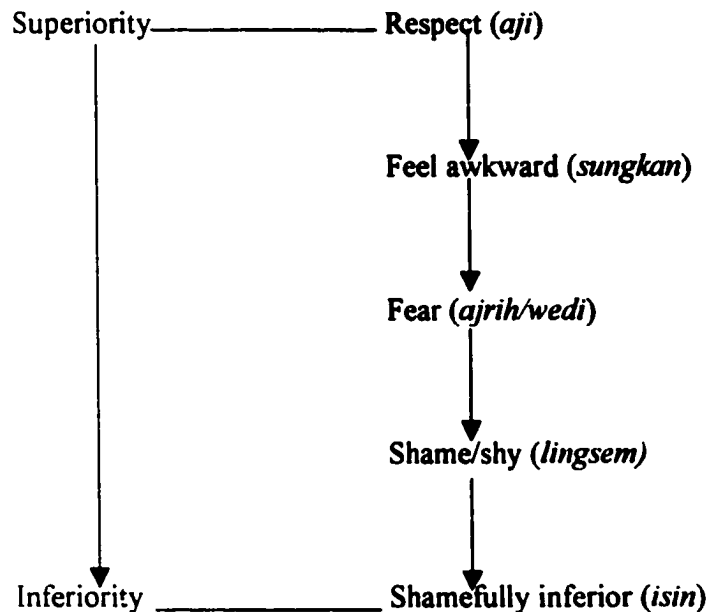
The Javanese concept of *rukun* means that people need to endeavour, at all times, to repress signs of social or personal tension and to preserve the impression of harmonized social relationships as much as possible. Meanwhile, Javanese sense of hierarchy requires everyone, in speech and behaviour, to show proper respect to those with whom one comes into social contact. These "respectful people" usually have power to control those in lower position and they cannot accommodate criticism or suggestions. Power comes from above, not from the (lower) people (Magnis-Suseno, 1999, p.218-220).

Based on the above three concepts of Javanese culture, parents, as the one who have power in the family, develop the feeling of respect by deliberately teaching their children how and when to feel fear (*wedi/ajrih*) to them. They also teach their children to be obedient (*manut*), keeping good relations with others, helping as much as possible, sharing with neighbors, trying to understand others by avoiding open conflict, and placing oneself in the situation of others (*tepaslira*) (Koentjaraningrat, 1985, p.122).

Javanese culture vertically constructs the continuum of superiority to inferiority where the notion of respect (*aji*) is placed at the upper end of range, and the notion of

shamefully inferior (*isin*) at the bottom range. The notion of fear (*wedi/ajrih*) is placed between respect and shamefully inferior.

Figure 4.1: Notion Flows of Javanese Culture



Sources: Adapted from Koentjaraningrat, 1985, p.251)

Of the inferior people, being obedient is considered one of the ideal human virtues. Therefore, an obedient child is widely praised. A child is considered good, and will hopefully be successful in his/her further career as a civil servant when he/she is obedient, because obedience is considered to be very useful quality of manners (Koentjaraningrat, 1985, p.250). The habit of obedience is also developed to deal with other people except his/her parents, when these people are more superior (such as with the boss, teacher or leader).

Usually the parents-children relationship is based on the feeling of respect to the feeling of fear. While in a broader scope such as the teacher-student relationship can be

based further on the feeling of respect to the feeling of shamefully inferior. In this stage of feeling an individual ego considers himself extremely inferior towards another person because his Ego thinks that the other person despises him very much, and thinks that he (Ego) is a very inferior and worthless person. In terms of behavior and action, Ego will constantly try to avoid the other person, and keep away from him. One useful and safe way to avoid the other person is being obedient and silent (mutedness) (Koentjaraningrat, 1985, p.248).

The superiority of the father includes all their decision for their children' future. From education to marriage is upon the father's choice, even sometimes they choose a person for their daughter's husband-to be. In rural areas, parents still cling to the idea that school education is not important for girls as they all get married under the age of 20 and follow their husband afterwards. There are several other reasons which based on the three elements of Javanese culture that prevent the parents to send their daughters to school or beyond elementary schools:

1. Girls/women are naturally born to get pregnant, be pretty, and able to cook (*manak, macak, masak*). From their early childhood girls are trained in household duties such as clean the house, cook, sew clothes or to assist in agricultural production.
2. Children are net producers of wealth and parents depend on their son for their retirement. It is not surprising that the priority of education comes to their sons first.
3. Girls disadvantage in educational opportunities is greatest when schools are less accessible, because parents are reluctant to allow daughters to travel great distances. The risk of being violated is also another reason of keeping their daughter at home.
4. In Islamic rural areas, there is also tendency for parents to send their daughters to non-public school (religious schools) than to public, usually secular, schools. One

rationale behind this is that those religious schools are considered to be cheaper, safer and do not waste much time to do tasks at home or in the field because those schools take place in the evening.

Considering the Javanese culture and the reason behind the backwardness education attainment for women, it is empirically evident that a barrier to education for women traditionally still exists, although it becomes less due to the social change.

4.3.3. Economic Barriers

On average, education in Indonesia is very expensive. Compared with Canada, the proportion of the tuition fee to GDP per capita is relatively high. For example, in 1999/2000, on average, the ratio of the tuition fee for some Canadian universities to Canada's GDP per capita is around 13 % while the fee for some Indonesian universities ranges from 25% to 65 % of Indonesia's GDP per capita depending on nature of such universities.² In this case, it is common if the fee for private institution may be a little bit higher than public ones.

Indeed, the higher the education level, the more expensive the education fee. Not only is the tuition fee higher but also the cost of education supplies such as textbooks is relatively more costly. Further, the tuition fees of private schools are more expensive than public schools. It is not unusual to find private school charging twice or three times higher than that of public schools. Therefore, it is not surprising if private schools can provide better facilities and qualities that make rich people eager to send their children to

² For example, the tuition fee for full-time undergraduate Art student with 5 full credit at St.Mary's University in 2000/ 2001 academic year is \$4,440/year, while Canada's GDP per capita is \$32,835, so the ratio of tuition fee to GDP per capita in Canada is 13.50 percent. Meanwhile, the tuition fee for undergraduate student at University of Indonesia is around \$490/ year, while Indonesia's GDP per capita is

these schools. In addition to tuition fees, some private schools also ask their students to pay other contribution fees when they pass the entrance test, known as the “building fee”. It means parents have to pay additional amount of money to use for maintenance of the building and other facilities. The fee for each student is different depending on the rank of the students’ test result. However, some famous schools, either public or private, will provide bargaining position in which whoever pays more is accepted without considering the test result. In such situation, good education seems only to belong to the rich people because the poor people will never afford to pay the education fee.

In 1984, the Government tried to evenly distribute education by boosting the primary enrollment with no-tuition fee for public elementary schools. Consequently, the number of primary students increased tremendously both in urban and rural areas. However, the improvement is still far from expectation because there are other fees that some parents cannot afford to pay such as stationary supplies, uniform, and text-books. In this situation parents do not send their children to school or finally give priority to their sons rather than to their daughters to go to school. The fact that economically, education attainment does not provide many benefits and appropriate costs of return as women still receive different treatment which becomes another driving force for parents not to use education opportunities provided by the government.

In 1994, as the target of sixth development plan, the government tried to provide and extend opportunities to study for school-age children from elementary to junior high school by a nine-year compulsory program. To support this program the government allocates higher fund and subsidy in order to release parents’ burden on educational cost.

\$962.65 in 2000, so the ratio of tuition fee to GDP per capita in Indonesia is around 51 percent (See, St. Mary’s University, 2000; Statistics Canada, 2000; CBS, 2000 and <http://www.mediaindo.co.id>).

However, this financial support is limited to school expenditure costs, such as the extending of new class rooms, literature supplies, etc. so that free tuition fee for junior high school is still impossible.

The government funding for education is higher at tertiary level due to the more expensive school facilities. In fact, the overall funding of education in Indonesia is used to subsidize tertiary education. Hence the present levels of subsidy to post-secondary education only benefits the wealthy. The poorest 40 per cent of income earners only receive 7 per cent of higher education subsidies because low-income groups are grossly under-represented at this level of education. Meanwhile, the highest 30 per cent of incomes receive 83 per cent of university subsidies (Hull and Jones, 1994, p.166; HDR, 1999, p.95).

Considering the cost of education, in Indonesia, education is regarded expensive and exclusive since most of the population of Indonesia live under the poverty line. Absolute poverty persists in certain area among certain groups. The poor tend to live in rural areas where they have less access to education. In this situation girls appear to get short-changed in household resource allocation (The World Bank, 1998, p. 77). Further, the World Bank estimated that the economic crisis in the mid-1997 would increase the number in poverty from 11 percent in 1996 to 14 percent in 1999, affecting both rural and urban residents although rural residents seem more hit by the crisis (The World Bank, 1998, p.84). In this case, women and girls disproportionately suffer because they lose their jobs first, and parents will pull their daughter out of school before sons.

4.4. Concluding Remarks

From the above discussion, the government of Indonesia seems to be involved in empowering Indonesian women to gain knowledge and skills due to the incapacity of women to improve themselves. One reason is that the social, cultural and economic barriers continue to exist. The study, however, summarizes the existence of barriers to education as presented in Table 4.2 below. In this summary, the study categorizes the existence of barriers as low, moderate and high if some following criteria prevail.

1. A barrier is categorized to be low where practically all women are accepted as partners of men in every sector of life including access to education and opportunity to work with equal wages (no subordination).
2. A barrier is defined as moderate where there is a process of accepting women as a partnership in every sector of life.
3. A high barrier exists where women are regarded, for example, as subordinate.

Table 4.2 Summary of Barriers to Education in Indonesia

| Indicator | Description |
|-------------------------------------|--|
| Women's Empowerment Programs | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Centrally-oriented organization ❖ Dictated and top-down planning ❖ Husband's official position dependency ❖ Village leader dependency ❖ Ignorance of potential women leadership |
| Social | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Rural Societies ❖ Hierarchical Gender Relationship ❖ Patriarchy system ❖ Subordination ❖ Narrow understandings of Islamic laws ❖ Community myths (<i>macak, manak, masak</i>) |
| Culture | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ The avoidance of open conflict ❖ Javanese sense of hierarchical relationship ❖ Javanese concept of power |
| Economy | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Low income ❖ High cost of education ❖ National economic crisis ❖ Low benefits expectation |

Sources: Author's Analysis

Based on the description of the social, cultural and economic barriers, the study would finally argue that the barriers to empower women through education in Indonesia still exist although they tend to be eliminated by the government. As shown in Table 4.2, some descriptive factors are empirically found. The existence of these factors, indeed, impedes women's education attainment in Indonesia. Therefore, the study concludes that barriers to women's education in Indonesia continue to remain high.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

The world's attention is now generally focused on women's advancement at national and international levels to enable governments to implement twelve critical areas of concern that disadvantage women. In the education sector, several actions have been taken, such as providing education for all to enlarge equity in enrollment and education opportunities and to make education gender-sensitive by removing social stereotypes from curricula, textbooks and training materials.

This thesis explores the condition of the Indonesian women within three decades and their achievement in the education sector, the empowerment actions from the Government of Indonesia and the barriers that have impeded women achieving equal access to education with men.

The government of Indonesia combats the inequality in education by creating wider education opportunities for women. As a result, illiteracy rates have decreased, participation in work-force has increased, life expectation has increased, infant mortality has decreased, primary and secondary enrollments have increased from year to year that reduce the gap in gender education attainment.

The use of a "Gender and Development" framework is relevant to focus on transforming unequal power relationship within and between women and men rather than on women's roles themselves. The Gender and Development (GAD) approach is likely to be appropriate for Indonesian women since gender relations in Indonesia have been the central issues of inequality between men and women. A radical approach in empowering

women to gain education can be seen from government's efforts to integrate women's organizations and promote non-formal education that suit women's needs. This, in turn, will increase their knowledge and skills. Although the characteristics of these efforts are still didactic, top-down and controlled by men, women's advancement has been successfully achieved. In this sector the achievement can be seen at the economic level where the increase number on women's enrollment at primary and secondary levels has contributed to higher national income.

However, a radical change in women's achievement is still under consideration because they are inhibited by social, cultural and economic barriers. A patriarchal system in society commonly becomes a foundation of any decision concerning women's education and their involvement in the developing process. Socially, men as husbands or fathers have controlled women's mobility since they have had authoritarian power over women. Meanwhile, the social perceptions on women's destiny often accept this subordination as common and normal. Culturally, women are made to feel inferior and they are described as weak and soft so that they have to respect men as having superior power. Economically, as education is expensive, women have no right to object their fathers or husbands to obtain education but they have to obey them to stay at home to do household chores. So, in this sense, patriarchy institutions that are functioning in Indonesia have marginalized women in all sectors. Without any support from the government to raise women's condition, women are unable to struggle to change their own condition.

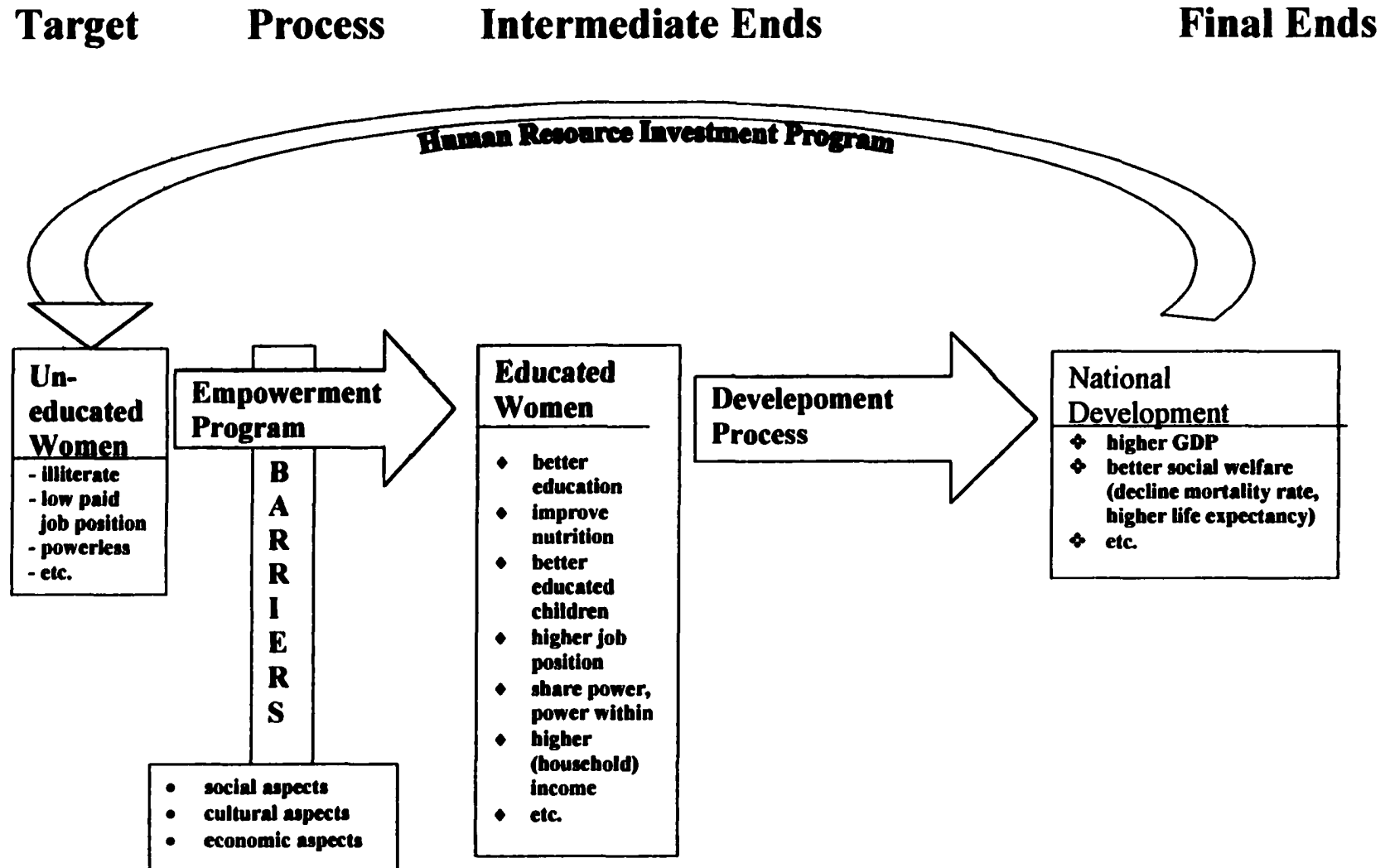
Recently, in Indonesia, these barriers still appeared insurmountable to the extent that women's participation and role in developing process is frequently disregarded.

However, because this result is based merely on qualitative measurements, further research with more quantitative analysis on social, cultural, and economic barriers is seemingly needed to acknowledge the barriers and to take further action based on the qualitative and quantitative measurements. A field research using Participatory Action Research can also be done to note barriers and to decide the appropriate tool for empowerment approach. As the government's assistance is significant in empowering the Indonesian women in rural areas, the continuing of its assistance and funds is still needed. But, the official intervention has to be reduced and the education programs should be redesigned which relate to women's needs. Thus, the programs will be more bottom up planning rather than top down.

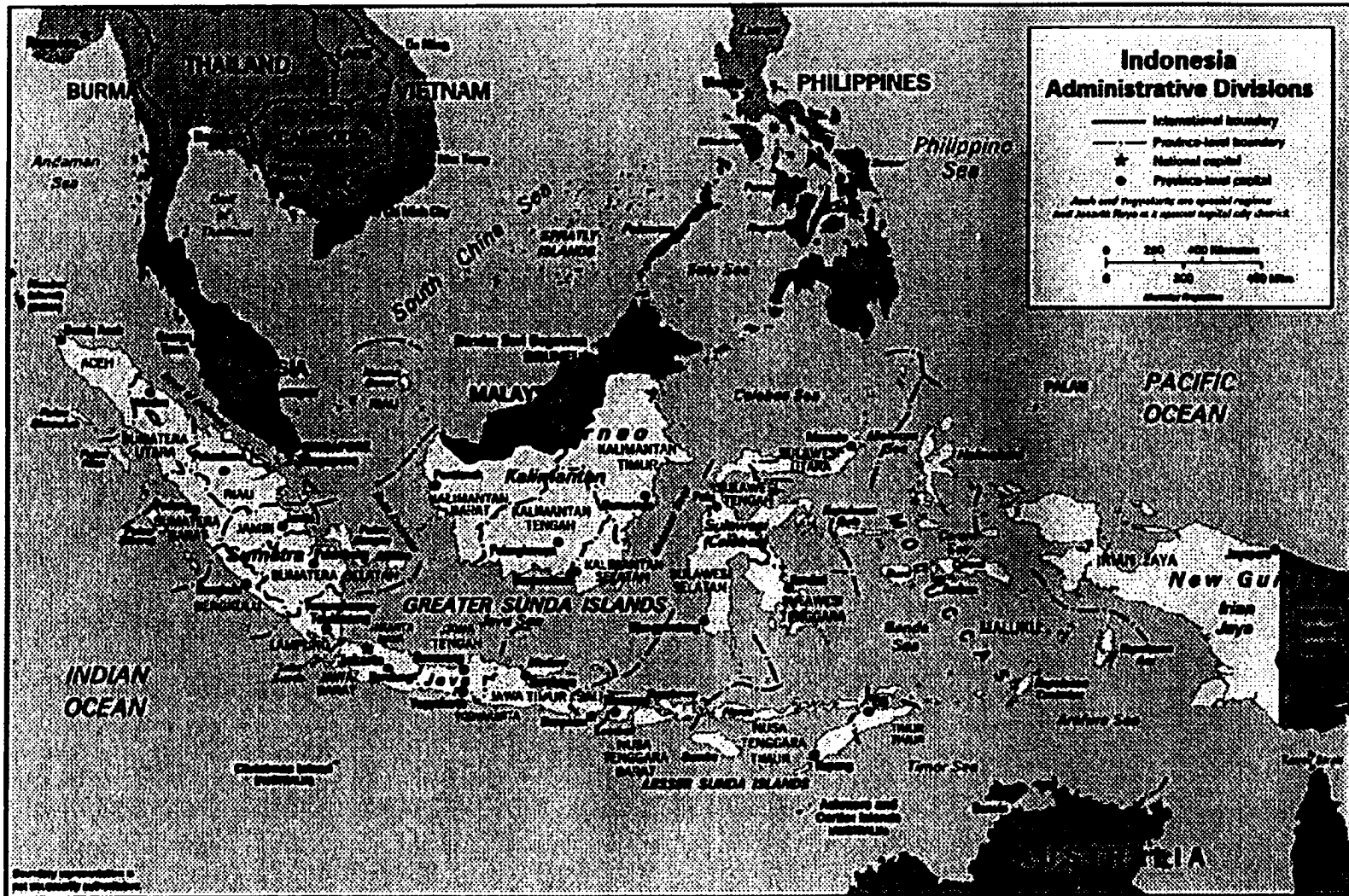
In addition, it is also important to develop a program focus on men with gender-sensitive dimension because this program will allow men to understand and care more about women's needs. In turn, such enlightened men will use their authoritarian power to provide appropriate education for their wives or daughters. With the encouragement from men, women will be able to increase their capabilities so that they will be able to participate more in the development process. In this context, the government's efforts to promote women as having equal rights in education with men and as partners of men will be successfully achieved along with increased gender-sensitivity.

APPENDIX A:
MODEL OF EMPOWERMENT AND BARRIERS

❀Model of Empowerment and Barriers❀



APPENDIX B:
MAP OF INDONESIA



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