

Gender Inequality in Grobogan Regency: A Longitudinal Study of the GDI and GDI Indexes from a Sustainable Development Perspective

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Abstract. *Gender inequality remains a persistent barrier to inclusive development, particularly at the sub-national level where policy translation often lags behind national goals. This study examines the longitudinal trends of gender disparities in Grobogan Regency, Indonesia, through an analysis of three key indices: the Gender Development Index (GDI/IPG), the Gender Empowerment Index (GEI/IDG), and the Gender Inequality Index (GII/IKG). Using secondary data published by Badan Pusat Statistik (BPS) from 2019 to 2024, the study applies descriptive analysis to assess progress in health, education, income, labor participation, and political representation. Findings show that while Grobogan's IPG improved slightly from 85.98 (2019) to 86.45 (2024), women continue to lag in income and schooling years. The IDG increased primarily due to women's rising presence in professional jobs, yet income contribution and political representation remain stagnant. Notably, IKG declined from 42.39% to 34.80%, driven by improved labor force participation, though political inequality persisted. These findings reveal uneven progress across gender indicators and confirm that numeric gains do not guarantee structural empowerment. This study highlights the need for gender-sensitive local governance aligned with Sustainable Development Goal 5. It provides novel insights by contextualizing national gender development targets within a regional setting, underscoring the importance of localized policy interventions. Without targeted reforms in education, income equity, and political inclusion, gender inequality in Grobogan may persist despite statistical gains.*

Keywords: *Gender Development Index; Gender Empowerment Index; Gender Inequality; Gender Inequality Index; Local Governance*

1. INTRODUCTION

Gender inequality continues to be a persistent and deeply rooted challenge in development across the world. While global modernization and social reform have led to notable improvements in women's access to health, education, and labor markets, the gender gap remains wide in political participation, income, and decision-making structures. In many developing countries, particularly in decentralized and rural areas, structural barriers such as patriarchal culture, weak policy enforcement, and lack of disaggregated data continue to inhibit gender equality. This aligns with Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 5, which seeks to achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls by ensuring full participation in public and economic life.

In Indonesia, the Gender Development Index (GDI) and Gender Empowerment Index (GEI), referred to locally as IPG and IDG, are central indicators used by the Central Bureau of Statistics (BPS) to track gender disparities. While at the national level these indicators show gradual improvement, the sub-national reality remains uneven. Grobogan Regency, located in Central Java, offers a compelling case for local-level analysis. As of 2024, the region's GDI stood

at 86.45, an improvement from 86.18 in 2022, yet still below the national average. Meanwhile, the IDG value remains low at 25.12, with women's representation in local parliament stagnant at 12% over multiple years. These numbers suggest that although development efforts are being made, the gender gap in empowerment and agency persists and is resistant to change through general development policies alone.

International literature supports this complexity. Roig et al. (2020) found that in Spain, modernization altered traditional gender roles, increasing women's access to political knowledge and civic participation. Similarly, Huang et al. (2019) highlighted that although women's academic participation has grown globally, career disparities persist, especially in leadership roles. Hekmatpour et al. (2021) further demonstrated that secular societies tend to have significantly lower gender inequality, particularly in labor force participation and political representation. These findings underline the idea that modernization alone does not guarantee gender equity; institutional reforms and cultural shifts are also necessary.

In terms of education and health in Grobogan, although life expectancy for women (76.95 years) is consistently higher than that of men (73.3 years), and years of schooling have increased, the gender gap remains. In 2023, male average years of schooling reached 7.88, while females averaged only 6.77 years, revealing persistent educational disparities despite national commitments to parity. Moreover, economic data from BPS Grobogan show that women's contribution to income, political roles, and high-skilled professions remains disproportionately low, despite gradual increases in female labor participation.

Campbell and Mínguez (2021) established a positive correlation between gender equality and educational outcomes, reinforcing the idea that reducing gender disparities has transformative potential beyond equity it also enhances overall development indicators. Kabeer (2016) also emphasized that women's agency plays a central role in breaking cycles of poverty and inequality, especially in low- and middle-income countries. These studies strengthen the argument that gender equity must be pursued not as a peripheral agenda, but as a core strategy in sustainable development planning.

Despite the richness of global research, there remains a notable gap in localized, longitudinal gender studies in Indonesia, particularly at the regency (*kabupaten*) level. Existing research tends to focus on national data or urban centers, while areas like Grobogan remain underexamined. Studies such as Sudarsono & Herawati (2020) and Permatasari & Nurlaela (2021)

have highlighted regional disparities, yet they often rely on cross-sectional or macro-level data. This research addresses that gap by providing a five-year longitudinal analysis (2019–2024) of Grobogan's gender indicators, with emphasis on both development outcomes (GDI) and empowerment metrics (GEI).

The novelty of this study lies in its combination of spatial and temporal depth. It analyzes not only current gender inequality in Grobogan, but also its progression over time revealing whether the changes are linear, stagnant, or regressive. Furthermore, it applies a SDG-based framework, allowing the results to speak to both local development goals and Indonesia's national commitment to Agenda 2030.

In light of these observations, the research problem is clear: despite improvements in development indicators, gender empowerment in Grobogan remains critically low, and the mechanisms of change are poorly understood. Therefore, this study seeks to answer the question: *How have gender disparities in Grobogan Regency evolved between 2019 and 2024, and what implications do these trends have for achieving SDG 5 at the regency level ?* The objective of this study is to provide a longitudinal, data-driven analysis of gender inequality in Grobogan Regency through the lenses of the GDI and GEI indices, and to assess how the evolution of these indicators aligns with the region's sustainable development commitments.

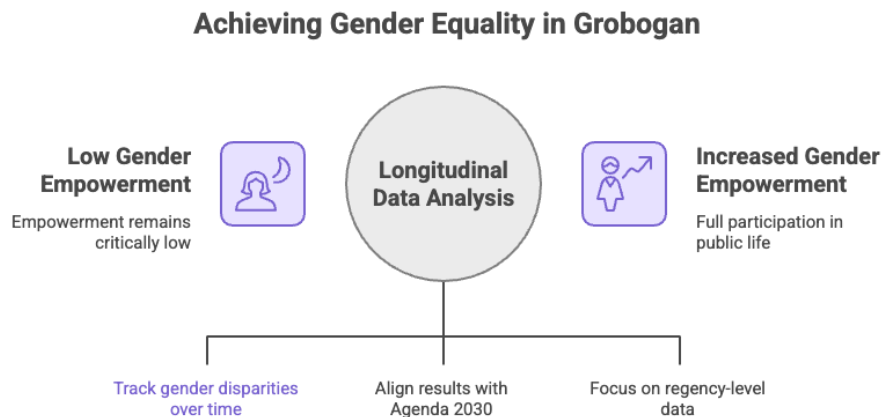


Figure 1. Achieving Gender Equality in Grobogan: A Longitudinal Data Analysis

2. RESEARCH METHOD

This research adopts a quantitative-descriptive approach utilizing secondary data analysis to examine gender inequality trends in Grobogan Regency. The method is grounded in the principle that meaningful insights can be generated by analyzing preexisting, systematically collected data. As emphasized by Schutt et al. (2007), secondary data research provides a cost-effective, time-saving alternative to primary data collection while maintaining analytical rigor, particularly in policy-related studies where official statistics are regularly published.

All data used in this study were sourced from publicly available documents published by the Central Bureau of Statistics (Badan Pusat Statistik – BPS), including national and regional-level datasets. Key sources include the annual Statistik Gender Kabupaten Grobogan (2022) and the national databases on Gender Development Index (IPG) and Gender Empowerment Index (IDG) published between 2019 and 2024. These documents were accessed through BPS official portals (bps.go.id, grobogankab.bps.go.id) and supplemented with contextual information from the SDGs Baseline Report issued by Bappenas & UNDP (2020).

The research focuses on two main composite indicators IPG and IDG each consisting of sub-indicators that reflect critical dimensions of gender equality. The IPG components include life expectancy at birth, expected years of schooling, mean years of schooling, and adjusted per capita expenditure, all disaggregated by gender. The IDG measures female representation in parliament, professional employment, and income contribution relative to men. These indicators are standardized nationally and used to assess local performance in gender-related development.

Data for each indicator were collected for the six-year period between 2019 and 2024, enabling longitudinal analysis of gender disparity trends over time. Each annual dataset was organized into spreadsheets, categorized by indicator and gender, and reviewed for completeness. Where discrepancies or missing values were detected, alternative sources such as provincial BPS summaries were cross-checked. Only stable, consistently reported indicators were used for time-series comparison. This ensured the validity of cross-year comparisons and minimized measurement bias caused by indicator changes.

The study applies descriptive statistical analysis to interpret the data. Metrics such as year-on-year percentage change, absolute value differences between male and female subgroups, and relative gaps in representation were calculated. This approach enables identification of patterns

such as growth, stagnation, or decline in each dimension of the IPG and IDG. Although this method does not infer causality, it is highly effective for identifying macro-level trends in regional development and institutional performance, especially when supported by policy context and literature.

The validity and reliability of the data were critically assessed following the criteria outlined by Goode et al. (2017) and Doolan et al. (2009) for secondary data usage. Since all core datasets originated from BPS, which adheres to national standards of statistical reporting and quality control, the data are considered reliable. However, to ensure methodological integrity, each indicator was checked for consistency in definitions, units, and frequency of reporting. The analysis avoided drawing conclusions from any data points that were ambiguous or inconsistently reported across years.

Technological advancements have made large volumes of statistical data more accessible and usable. As noted by Johnston et al. (2017), secondary datasets across disciplines can now be reused systematically, provided researchers maintain alignment between research objectives and dataset structure. In this study, alignment was achieved by selecting only indicators that directly measure gender disparity, and by maintaining coherence between the national indicator framework (IPG/IDG) and the targets outlined in SDG 5: Gender Equality.

The method chosen also offers significant practical advantages. As Sisira et al. (2022) argue, secondary data analysis lowers research costs, reduces ethical concerns related to human subject involvement, and facilitates broader policy insights. In this case, the use of existing BPS datasets eliminated the need for surveys or interviews, making the study more efficient and allowing for immediate application to policy evaluation. The method also enables replication and extension in other districts, enhancing its utility for regional planning and gender mainstreaming.

Despite these strengths, limitations of secondary data must be acknowledged. Some indicators were not available for the full six-year period, and certain dimensions such as informal labor participation or intersectional inequalities were not captured in the datasets. Additionally, secondary data do not provide explanatory depth or context for individual-level behavior. These limitations were mitigated by focusing on consistently reported, aggregated indicators and interpreting the results in relation to existing literature and national policy frameworks. Overall, this method provides a solid empirical foundation for understanding structural gender disparities in Grobogan Regency and assessing progress toward the achievement of SDG 5 at the local level.

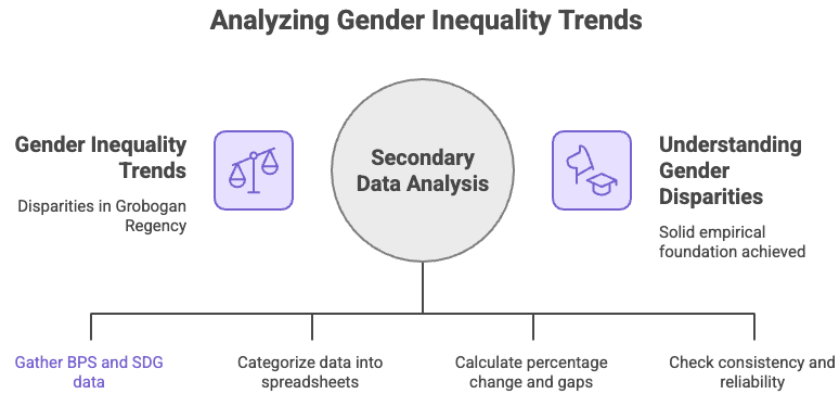


Figure 2. Analyzing Gender Inequality Trends in Grobogan: A Secondary Data Analysis

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Gender development indices reveal persistent and systemic challenges in achieving gender equality across multiple dimensions of social and economic development. In Grobogan Regency, the evolution of the Gender Development Index (GDI/IPG) over the six-year period from 2019 to 2024 demonstrates a pattern of modest progress, yet key disparities especially in education and economic participation persist. The overall upward trend in the IPG values suggests improved outcomes, but deeper inspection reveals uneven development across its sub-indicators.

Overview of IPG Progress (2019–2024)

The data below presents the annual IPG scores along with key gender-disaggregated indicators:

Table 1. Gender Development Index and Components – Grobogan Regency, 2019–2024

Year	IPG (%)	Life Expectancy (Years)	Mean Years of Schooling	Exp. Years of Schooling	Per Capita Expenditure (Rp)
		Female / Male	Female / Male	Female / Male	Female / Male
2019	85.98	76.4 / 72.7	6.34 / 7.35	12.29 / 13.75	7,566 / 15,464
2020	86.14	76.54 / 73.0	6.60 / 7.64	12.30 / 13.77	7,504 / 15,450
2021	85.89	76.66 / 73.1	6.51 / 7.78	12.44 / 13.78	7,704 / 15,914
2022	86.18	76.77 / 73.3	6.76 / 7.88	12.45 / 13.80	8,006 / 16,422
2023	86.23	76.95 / 73.3	6.77 / 7.88	12.46 / 13.80	8,006 / 16,422
2024	86.45	– / –	– / –	– / –	– / –

Source: BPS Grobogan (2022–2024), compiled by author

From the data, Grobogan's IPG value increased slightly from 85.98 in 2019 to 86.45 in 2024, reflecting an incremental improvement of 0.47 percentage points over five years. The most consistent improvement occurred in life expectancy for women, which rose from 76.4 to 76.95

years. This aligns with national and global trends where women tend to outlive men, a pattern that, while positive, does not necessarily indicate equity in other domains.

While schooling outcomes have improved for both sexes, gender gaps remain in mean years of schooling, where males consistently outperform females by more than 1 full year. In 2023, women averaged 6.77 years, while men averaged 7.88 years. These findings support the analysis of Gaye et al. (2010), who emphasize that educational inequalities are a persistent structural barrier in gender development and are rarely overcome without targeted interventions. Although expected years of schooling are somewhat closer (e.g., 12.46 for women vs. 13.80 for men in 2023), the lower actual schooling years for women indicate retention problems or limited access to secondary and tertiary education, particularly in rural districts. This indicates that while policy frameworks exist to support education equity, implementation gaps at the regional level continue to disadvantage girls and women.

The adjusted per capita expenditure data reveal even starker disparities. In 2023, men's per capita expenditure was Rp 16,422,000, more than double that of women, who stood at Rp 8,006,000. This economic inequality is a clear indicator of limited access to productive resources, employment opportunities, and financial autonomy for women in Grobogan. According to Nurdin et al. (2024), such disparities are not only a result of economic structures but also of low gender awareness among policymakers and the public, which limits the design and funding of programs that support women's economic empowerment. In other words, the data is not just reflective of inequality it's symptomatic of deeper institutional inertia and socio-cultural resistance to gender-sensitive planning.

Although the overall IPG rose slightly over the years, the improvement is largely attributable to gains in life expectancy and basic health indicators, where women have traditionally had better outcomes. As shown in similar studies like Annastasya et al. (2024), certain indicators such as health may improve, yet developmental power structures (education, economy) remain male-dominated. This creates an illusion of balance when composite scores rise while key gender roles remain unchanged or even regress. This phenomenon is what Gaye et al. (2010) referred to as “partial progress”, where advances in one domain mask stagnation or setbacks in others. The apparent health advantage for women does not translate into greater participation in economic or decision-making processes, leading to a development paradox.

The relatively static nature of gender development in Grobogan highlights the systemic nature of inequality. Gains in life expectancy and expected years of schooling represent individual-level progress, while disparities in income and actual educational attainment reflect institutional and structural challenges. The lack of significant change in economic indicators across years suggests that women's roles in the local economy remain constrained whether by limited employment sectors, unpaid care work, or discrimination in hiring and promotion.

This aligns with global findings, where increases in gender development indices have plateaued without corresponding reforms in governance, gender budgeting, and grassroots participation. It also explains why Grobogan's IPG while progressing is still below national averages, signaling a regional lag that warrants policy attention.

Compared to other regencies in Central Java, Grobogan's progress is moderate, yet lacks acceleration. Districts with higher levels of urbanization and infrastructure such as Semarang or Surakarta report higher IPG values and narrower gender gaps in education and employment. This confirms what Annastasya et al. (2024) observed in Papua Province that only one or two indicators show female advantage, while broader development remains male-centric. Grobogan, as a predominantly rural district, reflects this pattern. Without integrated regional gender policies, indicators will likely stagnate, and composite indices will fail to capture meaningful empowerment.

Gender Empowerment Index Trends in Grobogan (2019–2024)

While the Gender Development Index (GDI) focuses on basic capabilities such as health, education, and income, the Gender Empowerment Index (GEI/IDG) highlights the extent to which women can exercise power, influence, and economic autonomy. IDG indicators such as women's political participation, professional employment, and income contribution are often more sensitive to structural and cultural constraints than GDI indicators.

In Grobogan Regency, analysis of IDG data from 2019 to 2024 shows minimal change, with persistent stagnation in political representation and modest increases in professional participation and income contribution. These trends confirm that gains in gender development are not always accompanied by greater empowerment, echoing the concerns raised by Gaye et al. (2010) and supported by more recent studies (Nurdin et al., 2024; Annastasya et al., 2024).

Table 2. Gender Empowerment Index Components – Grobogan Regency (2019-2024)

Year	IDG (%)	Women in Parliament (%)	Women in Professional Jobs (%)	Women's Income Contribution (%)
2019	57.18	12.00	40.44	25.43
2020	56.31	12.00	44.13	25.56
2021	58.03	12.00	50.18	25.85
2022	58.98	12.00	45.97	26.06
2023	58.82	12.00	51.00	26.02
2024	66.59	12.00	–	25.12

Source: BPS Grobogan (2022–2024), compiled by author

From 2019 to 2024, the proportion of women in the Grobogan local parliament has remained flat at 12%. This indicator has not improved in six years, highlighting a critical structural stagnation in political empowerment. Despite national efforts to enforce a 30% quota for women's legislative representation, local realities remain entrenched in male-dominated political networks, likely influenced by party patronage, low political literacy among women, and weak institutional support for female candidates.

This finding confirms the view of Nurdin et al. (2024), who argue that gender equality is not progressing significantly in Indonesia, in part due to low public and policy awareness of gender issues. Without robust interventions such as leadership training, financial support for female candidates, or party reform representation may remain symbolic rather than transformative. The percentage of women in professional occupations such as teachers, health workers, administrators has seen moderate growth. From 40.44% in 2019, this figure rose to 51% by 2023, showing that women are increasingly accessing professional sectors. This growth may be attributed to improved access to tertiary education and the feminization of certain public-sector jobs (e.g., nursing, elementary teaching).

The slight dip in 2022 (down to 45.97%) and the lack of available data in 2024 reflect the fragility and inconsistency of these gains. Women's entry into professional jobs may still be limited to sectors that are traditionally "acceptable" for women, and their advancement into leadership or managerial roles remains unclear. These figures do not reveal how many of these positions are part-time, precarious, or poorly paid, which are common limitations in gendered labor markets. The upward trend is promising but must be interpreted with caution and contextual sensitivity.

Perhaps the most revealing indicator of gender empowerment is women's income contribution relative to men's. From 2019 to 2024, this figure increased only slightly, from 25.43% to 26.02%, and declined again to 25.12% in 2024. This indicates that three-quarters of total income generated in the regency is still contributed by men, reinforcing women's economic dependency

and structural exclusion from higher-income opportunities. This pattern is echoed in the IPG data (per capita expenditure), where women consistently earn less than half of what men earn. Economic empowerment is thus far from achieved, as women's labor is often undervalued, underpaid, or unpaid (e.g., in domestic roles or informal agriculture).

As Gaye et al. (2010) noted, empowerment is more than access it is about control and value. In Grobogan, even where women are present in the workforce, their roles may not be economically recognized or rewarded, leading to disempowerment despite participation. Despite stagnation in political participation and limited income share, the composite IDG score rose from 57.18 (2019) to 66.59 (2024) a gain of 9.41 percentage points. However, this increase is largely driven by the rise in professional participation among women, which carries significant weight in the index calculation.

This composite improvement must be critically interpreted. As Annastasya et al. (2024) cautioned, certain indicators can skew the overall perception of empowerment, especially when others like political representation are stagnant or regressive. A higher IDG does not necessarily indicate true systemic empowerment but may reflect narrow improvements in specific sectors. The IDG data in Grobogan suggests that gender empowerment remains partial and highly sector-specific. Gains in professional participation are not matched by progress in politics or economic equity. This fragmented pattern underscores the need for integrated gender policies that address the full spectrum of empowerment not just occupational access.

The data shows that while Grobogan has moved forward modestly in professional empowerment, it remains stuck in political and economic inequality, with little change over six years. This confirms the argument by A. Gaye et al. (2010) that gender empowerment is complex and multidimensional, requiring targeted interventions across sectors and sustained institutional commitment. As gender empowerment is deeply tied to human development and social justice, localizing SDG 5 will require more than improving statistics it will require reconstructing opportunity structures, challenging social norms, and embedding gender into every aspect of governance.

Gender Inequality Index (GII/IKG) in Grobogan Regency

The Gender Inequality Index (GII), or *Indeks Ketimpangan Gender* (IKG), is a multidimensional index measuring loss in human development due to gender disparities, especially in reproductive health, empowerment, and labor participation. Unlike IPG or IDG, which

emphasize capabilities and agency, the IKG captures the cost of inequality and is thus a critical indicator of systemic gender-based barriers. In Grobogan, the GII values between 2019 and 2024 reveal persistent and structural forms of inequality, especially in labor force participation and women's share in parliament. While reproductive health outcomes (e.g., maternal mortality) are not reported at district level, the other dimensions show high inequality, with only marginal improvements.

Table 3. Gender Inequality Index (IKG) – Grobogan Regency (2019–2024)

Year	IKG (%)	Female Parliament (%)	Female Labor Force Participation (%)	Male Labor Force Participation (%)	Female/Male Ratio (%)
2019	40.48	12.00	49.15	86.43	56.88
2020	41.43	12.00	51.37	87.22	58.91
2021	42.39	12.00	50.18	87.09	57.61
2022	36.11	12.00	53.24	86.63	61.45
2023	35.97	12.00	53.84	86.93	61.96
2024	34.80	12.00	54.27	87.10	62.31

Source: BPS Grobogan (2022–2024), processed by author

The IKG in Grobogan declined from 42.39% (2021) to 34.80% (2024), indicating a modest reduction in gender inequality over time. However, the improvement was largely driven by increased female labor force participation, rising from 49.15% in 2019 to 54.27% in 2024, rather than gains in political or reproductive domains. This trend supports the assertion by Gaye et al. (2010) that while gender gaps may shrink in one dimension (such as economic inclusion), others remain entrenched. Notably, women's representation in local parliament has remained stagnant at 12% throughout this period, severely limiting their decision-making power and policy influence.

Female labor force participation rose steadily by over 5 percentage points in five years, suggesting broader inclusion in productive sectors. However, the female-to-male participation ratio only reached 62.31% in 2024, indicating that women are still 38% less likely to be in the labor force compared to men. This disparity may reflect persistent barriers such as: Unpaid care burdens, cultural restrictions on women's mobility and informal employment without social protection

The gains, while measurable, should be interpreted in the context of quality of employment, which remains unaccounted for in the IKG data. Political inequality, as measured by female share in parliament, is a major contributor to Grobogan's IKG. At 12% from 2019 to 2024, this indicator shows no progress, despite national regulations mandating 30% gender quotas. The lack of change

suggests: Weak enforcement of electoral gender policies, party-level barriers to female candidacy and limited access to political capital for women at the local level. This lack of voice and representation directly undermines women's ability to shape economic and social policy, reinforcing systemic gender gaps.

The IKG decline from 42.39% to 34.80% might appear encouraging, but the persistence of inequality in critical domains particularly in political participation warrants deeper policy scrutiny. These findings echo Nurdin et al. (2024), who argue that gender equality in Indonesia shows stalled progress, especially at the regional level, where gender-responsive budgeting and governance are still lacking.

The analysis of the IKG reveals how aggregated progress masks unequal domains. Women are increasingly part of the workforce but remain excluded from decision-making arenas. This aligns with critiques of the GII/IKG presented by UNDP and scholars like Gaye et al., which Grobogan's case is emblematic of rural districts in Indonesia where gender parity is slow, uneven, and easily reversible without continued policy intervention.

Discussion

The findings of this study underscore the complex and multidimensional nature of gender inequality in Grobogan Regency, as revealed through longitudinal trends in the Gender Development Index (IPG), Gender Empowerment Index (IDG), and Gender Inequality Index (IKG). Despite moderate progress in life expectancy and professional employment for women, persistent gaps remain across educational attainment, political participation, and income contribution. This aligns with global patterns noted by Gaye et al. (2010), who emphasized that while women have made gains in health outcomes, true equity in power and opportunity structures remains elusive. The marginal improvement in Grobogan's IPG from 85.98 in 2019 to 86.45 in 2024 suggests that gender development, though progressing, is not yet transformative.

In terms of political and economic empowerment, the IDG indicators reflect deeper systemic stagnation. Women's representation in the local parliament remained unchanged at 12% throughout the six-year period, while income contribution consistently stayed under 30%. These results reinforce the conclusions drawn by Nurdin et al. (2024), who observed that gender awareness among policymakers remains low, resulting in minimal structural reform. Moreover, Annastasya et al. (2024) found that in some Indonesian provinces, like Papua, only health indicators showed female advantage mirroring the Grobogan case where women's life expectancy

leads, but economic and political power lag significantly. This signals a phenomenon of “partial gender advancement,” where development occurs unevenly across domains.

The downward trend in the IKG from 42.39% in 2021 to 34.80% in 2024 is noteworthy and superficially promising. It indicates a reduction in gender-based losses in human development. However, a closer inspection reveals that the improvement is driven primarily by incremental gains in labor force participation. Meanwhile, structural inequality especially in decision-making roles persists. This supports Kabeer’s (2016) argument that even in contexts of economic growth, without systemic redistribution of agency and access, gender equality remains superficial. Grobogan’s case exemplifies the limitations of aggregate indicators in capturing the nuanced realities of power, representation, and control over resources.

Globally, longitudinal studies have shown how gender inequality is reshaped over time through modernization and policy interventions. For instance, Roig et al. (2020) demonstrated how modernization in Spain altered gender roles and increased women's access to political knowledge. Huang et al. (2019) identified increased female participation in academia across nations, yet persistent disparities in career advancement. These findings resonate with Grobogan’s development trajectory, where more women are entering education and professional jobs, but remain underrepresented in leadership and economic agency. The pattern in Grobogan aligns with Hekmatpour et al. (2021) who found that secular, reform-oriented societies tend to exhibit greater gender parity implying that local cultural and institutional structures in Grobogan may still hinder progressive gender outcomes.

Importantly, these findings must be situated within the framework of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly Goal 5: Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls. According to the SDGs Baseline Report (Bappenas & UNDP, 2020), local governments are critical actors in implementing gender-responsive development. Grobogan’s slow progress suggests a disconnect between national commitments and regional execution. Without concrete gender mainstreaming, responsive budgeting, and grassroots empowerment initiatives, the district’s IPG, IDG, and IKG trends will likely remain stagnant or insufficient. Therefore, this study contributes new insights by providing a localized, empirical, and longitudinal analysis rare in the Indonesian gender literature which can inform future policy design, monitoring, and advocacy at the sub-national level.

4. CONCLUSION

This longitudinal study reveals that gender inequality in Grobogan Regency remains a persistent challenge, despite modest gains in key human development indicators. The Gender Development Index (IPG) shows a slow upward trend from 85.98 in 2019 to 86.45 in 2024, mainly driven by improvements in women's life expectancy and slight increases in educational attainment. However, deeper disparities persist in mean years of schooling and per capita expenditure, where women continue to lag behind men. These results confirm that while basic development indicators may show convergence, they often mask more ingrained structural inequalities, particularly in access to quality education and economic autonomy.

The Gender Empowerment Index (IDG) and Gender Inequality Index (IKG) further highlight the lack of substantive progress in political and economic domains. Women's representation in parliament has stagnated at 12% across six years, far below the national quota of 30%, indicating serious institutional barriers to political inclusion. Although the proportion of women in professional employment has increased, their contribution to total income remains less than half of that of men. The IKG decreased from 42.39% to 34.80%, suggesting a narrowing gender gap, but this is primarily due to increased labor force participation, not structural empowerment. These patterns align with global findings that gender equality in numbers does not necessarily translate into power redistribution or agency.

In line with Sustainable Development Goal 5, achieving genuine gender equality in Grobogan requires transformative policy interventions that go beyond aggregate indicators. Local governments must prioritize gender-responsive planning, enforce political gender quotas, promote women's leadership, and systematically address economic barriers through inclusive programs. This study contributes a novel empirical lens by contextualizing national gender goals at the district level using multi-year data, offering a foundation for future research and policymaking. As gender inequality is both a cause and consequence of underdevelopment, its resolution is not merely a matter of justice but a prerequisite for sustainable, inclusive growth.

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