

GENDER DISPARITIES IN EMPLOYMENT IN NORTH LOMBOK REGENCY: A FEMINIST ECONOMIC ANALYSIS OF LABOR PARTICIPATION AND THE INFORMAL SECTOR

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Abstract:

This study examines gender disparities in employment in North Lombok Regency through a feminist economic lens, analyzing labor force participation patterns and informal sector concentration. Using data from the 2024 National Labor Force Survey (Sakernas), this research reveals significant gender gaps in the labor market. The Labor Force Participation Rate (LFPR) shows a 22.06 percentage point gap, with males at 91.97% and females at 69.91%. The analysis demonstrates that 22.32% of working-age women are engaged in household duties compared to only 1.78% of men, reflecting the gendered division of reproductive labor. Furthermore, 82.28% of employed women work in the informal sector, predominantly as unpaid family workers (35.90%), while men have greater access to formal employment (32.17%) and wage positions (30.52%). This research employs a literature review methodology, integrating feminist economic theory to critique structural barriers that perpetuate gender inequality in employment. The findings indicate that patriarchal structures, unrecognized reproductive work, and occupational segregation systematically marginalize women in the labor market. The study concludes that addressing gender disparities requires policy interventions recognizing the economic value of care work, promoting women's access to formal employment, and transforming gender norms that confine women to domestic roles.

Key words: *gender disparity, feminist economics, informal sector*

Abstrak:

Penelitian ini mengkaji disparitas gender dalam ketenagakerjaan di Kabupaten Lombok Utara melalui perspektif ekonomi feminis, menganalisis pola partisipasi angkatan kerja dan konsentrasi sektor informal. Menggunakan data Survei Angkatan Kerja Nasional (Sakernas) 2024, penelitian ini mengungkap kesenjangan gender signifikan dalam pasar tenaga kerja. Tingkat Partisipasi Angkatan Kerja (TPAK) menunjukkan kesenjangan 22,06 poin persentase, dengan laki-laki mencapai 91,97% dan perempuan 69,91%. Analisis menunjukkan bahwa 22,32% perempuan usia kerja mengurus rumah tangga dibandingkan hanya 1,78% laki-laki, mencerminkan pembagian kerja reproduktif berbasis gender. Lebih lanjut, 82,28% perempuan yang bekerja terkonsentrasi di sektor

informal, terutama sebagai pekerja keluarga tidak dibayar (35,90%), sementara laki-laki memiliki akses lebih besar ke pekerjaan formal (32,17%) dan posisi bergaji (30,52%). Penelitian ini menggunakan metodologi kajian literatur, mengintegrasikan teori ekonomi feminis untuk mengkritisi hambatan struktural yang melanggengkan ketidakadilan gender dalam ketenagakerjaan. Temuan mengindikasikan bahwa struktur patriarkal, kerja reproduktif yang tidak diakui, dan segregasi okupasional secara sistematis memarjinalkan perempuan dalam pasar kerja. Penelitian menyimpulkan bahwa mengatasi disparitas gender memerlukan intervensi kebijakan yang mengakui nilai ekonomi kerja perawatan, mempromosikan akses perempuan ke pekerjaan formal, dan mentransformasi norma gender yang membatasi perempuan pada peran domestik.

Kata kunci: disparitas gender, ekonomi feminis, sektor informal

A. INTRODUCTION

Employment serves as a fundamental indicator in measuring the economic development of a region, yet behind employment statistics often lie structural inequalities with gender dimensions. North Lombok Regency, as one of the districts in West Nusa Tenggara Province, faces complex challenges in human resource management, particularly regarding women's participation in the labor market. Data from the 2024 National Labor Force Survey (Sakernas) indicates that of the 188,249 working-age population in North Lombok, there are significant differences in labor participation patterns between men and women. The Labor Force Participation Rate (LFPR) for men reaches 91.97 percent, while women only achieve 69.91 percent, reflecting a participation gap of 22.06 percentage points. This phenomenon is not merely a statistical issue but rather a manifestation of patriarchal structures deeply rooted in society and an economic system that has not been fully inclusive toward women.

Gender issues in employment cannot be separated from the feminist economics perspective, which critiques how capitalist economic systems have constructed gender-based divisions of labor. Feminist economics emphasizes that reproductive work predominantly performed by women—such as household management and family care—is often not counted as an economic contribution despite having significant productive value. In North Lombok, data shows that 22.32 percent of working-age women are recorded as household managers, far higher than men at only 1.78 percent. This pattern indicates that domestic work burdens remain structural barriers to women's economic participation, while simultaneously demonstrating the naturalization of gender roles that place women in the domestic sphere and men in the public sphere.

Analysis of the employment structure in North Lombok also reveals another dimension of gender inequality: occupational segregation and the concentration of women in the informal sector. Although the percentage of employed women increased to 68.56 percent in 2024, the majority are concentrated as unpaid family workers (35.90 percent) and work in the informal sector (82.28 percent). This condition contrasts with men who have greater access to formal employment (32.17 percent) and positions as workers/employees/civil servants (30.52 percent). This phenomenon reflects what feminist economics refers to as the "feminization of poverty," where women are systematically pushed into vulnerable, unprotected jobs with low bargaining power. The concentration of women in the informal sector not only reflects limited access to quality

employment but also indicates the perpetuation of gender-based economic exploitation through unpaid or underpaid work mechanisms.

The objectives of this research are threefold: first, to analyze gender disparities in labor force participation in North Lombok Regency from a feminist economics perspective; second, to examine the structural factors causing the concentration of women in the informal sector and unpaid family work; and third, to identify policy implications needed to promote gender equality in employment. This research is important because it not only provides empirical documentation of gender inequality in employment but also offers critical analysis of the structural and cultural mechanisms that perpetuate such inequality.

Literature review on gender and employment in Indonesia shows that gender disparities in the labor market are a persistent phenomenon across various regions. Research by Utari et al. (2022) found that LFPR for women in Indonesia remains consistently lower than men, influenced by factors such as education level, marital status, and number of children. Raharja and Priyarsono (2023) emphasize that the gender wage gap in Indonesia is not solely caused by productivity differences but also by discrimination and occupational segregation. From a feminist economics perspective, Elson (2021) argues that mainstream economic analysis often ignores unpaid care work, which is predominantly women's responsibility, thereby creating invisible barriers to their labor market participation. Power (2020) further elaborates that the capitalist economic system relies on the exploitation of women's reproductive labor without adequate recognition or compensation.

Studies specifically on the informal sector show that women's work in this sector is often characterized by precarity and lack of social protection. Chen et al. (2022) demonstrate that women informal workers face multiple disadvantages, including lower wages, longer working hours, and limited access to social security. Regarding the Indonesian context, Suryahadi et al. (2021) found that the informal sector absorbs the majority of the female workforce, particularly in rural areas, with agricultural work and household-based industries being the main sectors. Feminist economic theory offers a critical framework for understanding these phenomena by revealing how gender, class, and location intersect to create complex forms of economic marginalization.

B. RESEARCH METHODS

This research employs a literature review methodology by conducting secondary data analysis from the 2024 National Labor Force Survey (Sakernas) for North Lombok Regency, published by the Central Statistics Agency (BPS). The analytical approach integrates feminist economic theory to interpret employment data through a critical gender lens, examining not only quantitative disparities but also the structural and ideological mechanisms that produce and perpetuate gender inequality in the labor market. Data analysis focuses on key employment indicators including Labor Force Participation Rate (LFPR), employment status, industrial sector distribution, and formal-informal sector categorization, all disaggregated by gender. The feminist economic framework is applied to critique the invisibility of reproductive work, analyze occupational segregation patterns, and understand how capitalist economic structures intersect with patriarchal gender norms to marginalize women workers. This methodological approach allows for a comprehensive understanding of gender disparities

in employment beyond descriptive statistics, revealing the underlying power relations and systemic inequalities embedded within labor market structures.

C. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Gender Disparities in Labor Force Participation: Structural Barriers and Reproductive Work

The analysis of labor force participation in North Lombok Regency reveals profound gender disparities that cannot be explained by individual choices alone but must be understood as products of structural constraints and gendered social norms. The 2024 data shows that the LFPR for men stands at 91.97 percent, meaning nearly all working-age men are economically active, either employed or actively seeking work. In stark contrast, women's LFPR is only 69.91 percent, creating a participation gap of 22.06 percentage points. This substantial gap represents approximately 20,000 women who could potentially contribute to the measured economy but are systematically excluded or constrained from doing so. When examining the composition of those outside the labor force, the gendered pattern becomes even more apparent: among men outside the labor force, 51.31 percent are students, 21.83 percent are engaged in household management, and 26.85 percent fall into other categories. For women, the distribution is dramatically different: only 19.13 percent are students, while a staggering 74.18 percent are household managers, and 6.68 percent are in other categories.

This concentration of women in household management activities reflects what feminist economists call the "care penalty"—the economic disadvantage women face due to their disproportionate responsibility for unpaid care and domestic work. The data shows that 22.32 percent of all working-age women in North Lombok are engaged in household management, compared to merely 1.78 percent of men. This twelve-fold difference is not a natural outcome of biological sex differences but rather a social construction reinforced through cultural norms, educational socialization, and institutional structures that assign care work to women. Folbre (2020) argues that this gendered division of labor serves capitalist accumulation by providing free reproductive services that enable the male workforce to participate fully in productive activities while simultaneously restricting women's economic opportunities. The economic value of this unpaid work is substantial; studies estimate that if valued at market prices, unpaid care work would constitute 30-50 percent of GDP yet it remains invisible in conventional economic accounting and policy-making.

The age-disaggregated data provides further insights into how reproductive responsibilities shape women's labor force participation across the life cycle. Among women aged 15-19, the LFPR is 33.45 percent compared to 65.46 percent for men of the same age, with 53.02 percent of young women engaged in education. However, the gap widens dramatically in the 20-24 age group, which corresponds to typical marriage and early childbearing years in the Indonesian context. Women's LFPR in this group is 61.22 percent compared to 86.59 percent for men, with 36.79 percent of women managing households. This pattern intensifies in the 25-29 and 30-34 age cohorts, where 28.79 percent and 24.69 percent of women respectively are household managers, coinciding with peak childbearing and early child-rearing years. The data clearly demonstrates that marriage and motherhood significantly constrain women's labor market participation, not

due to personal preferences alone but because of the absence of adequate childcare support, inflexible work arrangements, and persistent gender norms that assign primary parenting responsibilities to mothers.

Feminist economics challenges the neoclassical economic assumption that labor force participation is a free individual choice made by rationally calculating actors. Instead, it reveals how constrained choices are structured by gendered institutions, unequal power relations within households, and policy frameworks that fail to recognize or support care work. Himmelweit (2019) demonstrates that women's labor supply decisions must be understood within the context of household bargaining, where women often have less power to negotiate the distribution of care responsibilities and where their own economic aspirations may be subordinated to family needs. In North Lombok, the traditional Sasak culture, which emphasizes women's roles as wives and mothers, likely reinforces these constraints, making it socially difficult for women to prioritize market work over family care even when they might wish to do so.

Moreover, the data on unemployment reveals another dimension of gender inequality. The open unemployment rate in North Lombok is 1.85 percent overall, but when disaggregated, women's unemployment rate (1.93 percent of the labor force) is higher than men's (1.80 percent), despite women's lower labor force participation. This suggests that even when women overcome barriers to labor force entry and actively seek employment, they face additional obstacles in securing jobs. The unemployment data by education level shows particularly high unemployment rates among women with vocational high school education (8.20 percent) and university education (7.14 percent), compared to zero unemployment for men with vocational education and 3.48 percent for men with university education. This pattern suggests that educational attainment alone is insufficient to overcome gender barriers in the labor market, and that discriminatory hiring practices, employer biases, and occupational segregation continue to restrict women's employment opportunities even when they possess formal qualifications.

Concentration in the Informal Sector: Precarity and Economic Vulnerability

The second major dimension of gender inequality in North Lombok's labor market is the stark difference in formal versus informal sector employment. Among employed men, 32.17 percent work in the formal sector, meaning they have positions as employees with regular wages or as employers with permanent hired workers, which typically entails greater job security, social protection, and legal rights. In contrast, only 17.72 percent of employed women work in the formal sector, while a staggering 82.28 percent are concentrated in the informal sector. This 14.45 percentage point gap in formal sector access represents a significant dimension of gender-based economic inequality, as informal sector work is characterized by precarity, lack of social protection, irregular income, and vulnerability to exploitation.

The distribution of employment status provides deeper insight into this informal sector concentration. Among employed women, 39.32 percent work as own-account workers (self-employed without employees), 17.16 percent are employees/wage workers, 7.62 percent are casual workers, and most significantly, 35.90 percent are unpaid family workers. This last category is particularly important from a feminist economics perspective, as it represents work that contributes to household economic survival and

market production but generates no independent income for the women performing it. These are women working in family farms, small businesses, or cottage industries owned by male family members, contributing substantial labor but receiving no wages and having no control over business decisions or income distribution. In contrast, only 8.80 percent of employed men are unpaid family workers, while 45.74 percent are own-account workers with control over their own enterprises, and 30.52 percent are employees with wage income.

This pattern reflects what feminist economists describe as women's "secondary worker" status, where their economic contributions are treated as supplementary to male breadwinners' earnings even when essential for household survival. Kabeer (2021) argues that unpaid family work represents a form of intrafamilial exploitation where women's labor is appropriated without compensation under ideologies of family duty and feminine sacrifice. The classification of such work as "economic activity" in labor statistics obscures the reality that these women have no economic autonomy, no control over the fruits of their labor, and are economically dependent on male family members despite working long hours in productive activities.

The sectoral distribution of employment further illuminates gendered occupational segregation. In the agricultural sector, which employs 47.49 percent of working women and 50.59 percent of working men, women are disproportionately concentrated as unpaid family workers (65.55 percent of women in agriculture) compared to men (13.76 percent). This means that while both genders work extensively in agriculture, men typically work as farm owners or agricultural wage laborers with some level of income and decision-making power, whereas women predominantly work as unpaid helpers on family farms. In the manufacturing sector, which employs 10.04 percent of women and 10.63 percent of men, women again show higher rates of own-account work (64.03 percent) and unpaid family work (16.28 percent), suggesting concentration in small-scale, home-based manufacturing activities with limited capital and market access. The services sector employs 42.47 percent of women and 38.78 percent of men, representing the highest share of women's employment. However, even in services, only 35.98 percent of women are employees with regular wages, compared to 60.00 percent of men in the sector, indicating that women's service work is more likely to be in informal activities such as small-scale trading, domestic work, or personal services.

Education level analysis reveals that formal sector access improves significantly with higher education for both genders, but gender gaps persist at all educational levels. Among those with elementary education or less, only 7.92 percent of women work in the formal sector compared to 16.39 percent of men. For those with junior high school education, 13.41 percent of women versus 37.66 percent of men access formal employment. Even at the university level, where formal sector access is highest, only 59.93 percent of women work formally compared to 82.96 percent of men. This persistent gap across all education levels indicates that discrimination and structural barriers, not just human capital deficits, constrain women's access to quality employment.

The concentration of women in the informal sector has profound implications for economic security and wellbeing. Informal sector workers typically lack written contracts, social security coverage including health insurance and pensions, paid leave, or legal recourse against unfair treatment. Women informal workers face additional

vulnerabilities including sexual harassment, discrimination during pregnancy, and the double burden of combining income-generating work with unpaid domestic responsibilities. The COVID-19 pandemic has starkly revealed these vulnerabilities, as informal workers experienced dramatic income losses without social protection safety nets (ILO, 2023). For North Lombok, where more than four out of five employed women work informally, this represents a massive population of women workers living in economic precarity without adequate social protection.

Intersectionality of Gender, Age, and Educational Attainment

A comprehensive understanding of gender disparities in employment requires examining how gender intersects with other social categories such as age and education to produce differentiated experiences and outcomes. Intersectionality theory, originally developed by Crenshaw (2020) and applied to economic analysis by feminist economists, recognizes that gender inequality operates differently depending on other aspects of social location, and that multiple systems of oppression can compound to create unique forms of disadvantage.

The age-disaggregated employment data reveals how gender inequality manifests differently across the life course. Among the youngest workers aged 15-19, 64.86 percent of employed males work as own-account workers or employees, while 46.70 percent are unpaid family workers, reflecting that many young men begin their working lives in family enterprises before establishing independence. For young women in the same age group, however, 49.68 percent are unpaid family workers, and notably, zero percent are own-account workers, indicating that young women rarely have opportunities to establish independent enterprises and are channeled into assisting family businesses. This early patterning of gender-differentiated work experiences sets trajectories that can persist throughout working life.

In the prime working ages of 25-39, patterns diverge further. Men in these age groups show increasing rates of own-account work (ranging from 29.95 to 41.67 percent) and declining rates of unpaid family work (from 3.79 to 6.76 percent), suggesting a life-cycle pattern of moving from dependent to independent economic positions. Women in the same age groups show more variable patterns, with substantial proportions remaining as unpaid family workers (28.79 to 35.09 percent in the 25-34 age range) and lower rates of own-account work, suggesting that many women do not achieve economic independence even in prime working years. The intersection of gender with the reproductive life cycle clearly structures these patterns, as these are the years when women face the most intensive childcare and domestic responsibilities.

Educational attainment intersects with gender to produce complex patterns of labor market outcomes. Among workers with only elementary education or less, gender gaps in formal sector access are substantial (7.92 percent of women versus 16.39 percent of men), and the majority of both genders work in agriculture, though women are more likely to be unpaid family workers. For this group, limited education restricts options for both genders, but gender norms and discrimination create additional constraints for women. At the junior high school level, educational attainment begins to open pathways out of agriculture, particularly into manufacturing and services. However, women with junior high school education show much lower rates of employee status (13.41 percent)

compared to men (33.21 percent), and higher rates of unpaid family work (36.08 percent versus 26.20 percent for men), suggesting that even with this level of education, women struggle to access wage employment.

Senior high school education shows interesting patterns: for men, 38.11 percent access employee positions, but for women, the rate is 29.57 percent, and 22.86 percent remain unpaid family workers. Women with senior high school education show a distinctive sectoral pattern, with 68.21 percent working in services compared to 56.15 percent of men, suggesting that educated women are channeled into particular types of service work, possibly including teaching, nursing, retail trade, and personal services. Vocational high school (SMK) graduates show the highest rates of employee status for both genders (60.80 percent for men and 60.19 percent for women), reflecting that vocational training provides job-specific skills valued by employers. However, even among vocational graduates, women face higher unemployment rates (8.20 percent versus zero for men), suggesting that the transition from school to work is more difficult for young women.

University education shows paradoxical patterns. Men with university education achieve the highest formal sector access (82.96 percent) and predominantly work as employees (80.91 percent), mostly in professional and administrative positions in the services sector (95.89 percent). Women university graduates also show high employee rates (57.89 percent) and services sector concentration (87.86 percent), but their formal sector access is lower (59.93 percent), and surprisingly, 12.14 percent remain as unpaid family workers despite tertiary education. This suggests that even higher education cannot fully overcome gender barriers, and that some university-educated women find themselves constrained by family obligations or labor market discrimination that prevents them from utilizing their qualifications in formal employment.

The intersection of gender with education reveals that while education is protective against informal sector work and improves employment prospects for both genders, gender gaps persist at every educational level. This pattern is inconsistent with human capital theory, which would predict that education equalizes labor market outcomes by providing productive skills. Instead, it confirms feminist economic analysis showing that discrimination, occupational segregation, and the gendered division of reproductive labor create structural barriers that educational attainment alone cannot overcome.

Working Hours, Time Poverty, and the Double Burden

Analysis of working hours provides additional insight into gender inequality in employment, revealing patterns of time poverty and the double burden that women workers face. The data shows that among employed persons, 1.41 percent work zero hours (temporarily absent from work), 6.00 percent work 1-9 hours weekly, 24.39 percent work 10-24 hours, 16.87 percent work 25-34 hours, 19.32 percent work 35-44 hours (considered standard full-time), and 32.01 percent work 45 or more hours (long hours). When disaggregated by gender, significant differences emerge. Men show a distribution skewed toward longer hours: 40.88 percent work 45 or more hours, and 21.58 percent work 35-44 hours, meaning 62.46 percent work standard or long full-time hours. Women show a very different pattern: only 20.40 percent work 45 or more hours, 16.36 percent work 35-44 hours (totaling just 36.76 percent in full-time work), while 36.64 percent work only 10-24 hours weekly, and 8.22 percent work 1-9 hours.

This concentration of women in part-time work might superficially appear to indicate work-life balance preferences, but feminist time-use analysis reveals a more complex reality. The average working hours data shows that men work 39.42 hours weekly in their economic activities while women work 30.42 hours, a gap of 9 hours per week. However, this measures only market work time and ignores unpaid domestic and care work. International time-use surveys consistently show that when both paid and unpaid work are counted, women work longer total hours than men (UN Women, 2020). Women in part-time market employment are not working less overall; rather, they are combining reduced market work hours with substantial unpaid care work hours, creating long total work weeks but only partial income.

The sectoral breakdown of working hours is revealing. In agriculture, men average 34.89 hours weekly while women average only 22.48 hours, reflecting women's concentration as unpaid family workers who may work intermittently around domestic responsibilities. In manufacturing, the pattern reverses somewhat: men average 47.11 hours while women average 24.99 hours, but this likely reflects men's dominance in formal manufacturing employment with regular schedules versus women's concentration in home-based informal manufacturing that can be combined with domestic work. In services, hours are more similar: men average 43.22 hours and women 40.59 hours, reflecting that service sector jobs often have more standardized schedules and that women in services are more likely to be employees rather than unpaid family workers.

Education level also intersects with working hours in gendered ways. Women with elementary education or less average only 29.56 hours weekly compared to 37.73 for men, reflecting women's concentration in unpaid and underemployment in this group. Interestingly, university-educated women average only 29.07 hours weekly compared to 41.85 for university-educated men, suggesting that even highly educated women may work reduced hours to manage family responsibilities or may face barriers to full-time professional employment.

The data on part-time work (less than 35 hours weekly) shows that 31.80 percent of all employed persons work part-time, but this comprises 37.64 percent of employed men and a much higher 62.24 percent of employed women. Among these part-time workers, those classified as "underemployed" are seeking additional work or willing to accept additional hours, while those classified as "voluntary part-time" are not seeking additional work. The data does not directly disaggregate these categories by gender, but international evidence suggests that much of women's part-time work is involuntary, driven by lack of childcare options, inflexible work arrangements, or labor market discrimination, rather than genuine preferences for reduced hours.

This pattern of reduced market working hours among women reflects what feminist economists call "time poverty"—the shortage of discretionary time after meeting both market work and unpaid care work obligations. Time poverty constrains women's ability to engage in full-time employment, skill development, political participation, leisure, and self-care, with negative implications for economic autonomy, health, and wellbeing. In North Lombok, where women bear primary responsibility for childcare, cooking, cleaning, water and fuel collection, and elder care, the time constraints on market work participation are substantial. Policy interventions to address gender disparities in employment must therefore address time poverty through investments in care

infrastructure, including childcare services, elder care facilities, and time-saving public infrastructure such as water supply and energy access.

Economic Implications: Wage Gaps, Poverty, and Household Wellbeing

While the available data does not directly report wage levels by gender, the structural patterns observed—women's concentration in unpaid family work, informal sector employment, part-time work, and lower-status occupations—inevitably translate into substantial gender gaps in earnings and economic autonomy. International evidence shows that gender wage gaps persist even when controlling for education, experience, and hours worked, with remaining gaps attributed to occupational segregation, discrimination, and women's weaker bargaining power (Blau & Kahn, 2017). In North Lombok, where 35.90 percent of employed women receive no direct wages because they are unpaid family workers, and where the majority of women workers are in the informal sector with no minimum wage protection, the gender income gap is likely even more severe than in contexts with stronger labor market institutions.

The concentration of women in informal and unpaid work has profound implications for poverty and economic security. Women without independent income have limited bargaining power within households, restricted ability to leave abusive relationships, and vulnerability to poverty in the event of widowhood or separation. Sen (2020) emphasizes that women's economic participation must be assessed not only in terms of labor force participation rates but also in terms of the extent to which work provides economic autonomy and agency. By this standard, the situation in North Lombok is concerning: while 68.56 percent of women are classified as employed, more than one-third receive no wages, and the majority work in precarious informal arrangements without social protection or economic security.

From a household welfare perspective, women's constrained economic participation represents a significant loss of potential income and wellbeing. Households where women can access quality employment and earn decent incomes show better outcomes in terms of child nutrition, education, and health, as women tend to allocate larger shares of their income to household welfare (Duflo, 2021). The barriers to women's employment in North Lombok therefore not only harm women individually but also constrain household welfare and intergenerational mobility. Children growing up in households where mothers are educated but unable to utilize their education in employment, or where mothers work long hours in unpaid family labor, experience both the economic costs of foregone maternal earnings and potentially reduced maternal time availability for childcare and education support.

At the macroeconomic level, gender disparities in employment represent inefficient utilization of human capital and foregone economic growth. The World Bank (2022) estimates that gender gaps in labor force participation and earnings cost economies between 10-37 percent of GDP. For North Lombok, the 22 percentage point gap in LFPR alone represents approximately 20,000 women who could potentially be contributing to the measured economy. If these women could access quality employment at average productivity levels, the local economy would expand substantially, generating additional tax revenue for public services and creating multiplier effects through increased household consumption. Moreover, the underutilization of educated women—including

university graduates working as unpaid family workers—represents a particularly wasteful misallocation of human capital investment.

D. CONCLUSION

This analysis of gender disparities in employment in North Lombok Regency reveals profound structural inequalities that systematically marginalize women in the labor market. The 22.06 percentage point gap in labor force participation, the concentration of 82.28 percent of employed women in the informal sector, and the reality that more than one-third of working women receive no wages as unpaid family workers collectively demonstrate that gender inequality in employment is not a matter of individual choices or human capital deficits but rather a product of patriarchal structures, unrecognized reproductive work, and discriminatory labor market institutions. Feminist economic analysis reveals that mainstream economic frameworks, which ignore unpaid care work and treat labor supply as a free individual choice, fundamentally misunderstand the gendered constraints that shape women's economic participation. Addressing these disparities requires transformative policy interventions including: public investment in care infrastructure to reduce women's unpaid care burdens; labor market reforms to promote women's access to formal employment and eliminate discrimination; social protection expansion to cover informal workers; land and asset rights reforms to provide women with independent economic resources; and cultural transformation efforts to challenge gender norms that confine women to domestic roles. Only through such comprehensive approaches that recognize both the economic value of women's contributions and the structural barriers they face can genuine gender equality in employment be achieved, unlocking not only women's rights and wellbeing but also broader economic development and social progress.

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