

Women In East Sumba Society Based On A Human Rights Perspective

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Abstract.

This study examines the protection and fulfillment of women's rights in East Sumba society from a human rights perspective. The focus of the study is directed at various forms of gender inequality that are still influenced by social structures, traditional culture, and power relations that impact women's access to education, health, social participation, and legal protection. The study uses an empirical juridical method with a legislative and socio-cultural approach. Data were obtained through literature studies, analysis of laws and regulations, and a study of social practices that have developed in East Sumba society. The results show that women still face various obstacles in obtaining their rights equally, even though they are normatively guaranteed by national and international human rights instruments. This article analyzes the gap between legal norms and social reality and identifies factors that influence the effectiveness of women's rights protection. The research findings indicate the need for policy strengthening, increasing public legal awareness, and synergy between the government, traditional institutions, and the community to realize more effective and equitable protection of women's rights in East Sumba.

Keywords: *human rights, East Sumba women, gender equality, legal protection and traditional culture.*

I. INTRODUCTION

Women are a group that holds a crucial position in social, cultural, economic, and legal development. However, in various indigenous communities in Indonesia, women still face challenges in achieving equal fulfillment of their rights. One interesting phenomenon to study is the East Sumba community, which still maintains various customary values as part of its cultural identity. The existence of a strong customary social system often influences women's position in family and community life, raising questions about the extent to which women's rights are protected in accordance with human rights principles.

The issue of protecting women's rights is important because Indonesia has guaranteed equality and protection of citizens' rights through the 1945 Constitution of the Republic of Indonesia, Law Number 39 of 1999 concerning Human Rights, and various ratified international instruments, including the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW). However, various reports and research findings indicate that women in a number of indigenous areas still face obstacles in gaining access to education, decision-making, economic rights, and protection from discriminatory practices rooted in social and cultural constructs.

Scholars have extensively studied women in indigenous communities. Some studies highlight the relationship between patriarchal culture and gender inequality in traditional societies. Others emphasize the importance of harmonizing customary law and national law in protecting vulnerable groups, including women. Furthermore, several studies have shown that cultural preservation does not necessarily conflict with human rights protection, as long as customary values can be interpreted progressively and adaptively to modern societal developments. However, most research focuses on general cultural and gender aspects, while studies specifically linking women's positions in East Sumba society to a human rights perspective are relatively limited.

These limitations indicate a research gap that needs to be filled. This article seeks to more deeply examine how women's positions in East Sumba society are understood from a human rights perspective, and how national and international legal norms can be used to assess social practices that develop within indigenous communities. Thus, this research not only provides an overview of the conditions of women in East Sumba society but also offers a normative analysis of the protection of women's rights based on universal human rights principles.

This research uses an empirical juridical method with a legislative, conceptual, and sociocultural approach. Data were obtained through a literature review supported by an analysis of various laws and regulations, human rights documents, and literature relevant to women's and indigenous peoples' issues.

This article aims to analyze the position of women in East Sumba society from a human rights perspective and identify various factors influencing the fulfillment and protection of women's rights. The main question posed is how women's conditions are within the social structure of East Sumba society and to what extent these conditions align with human rights principles. The research findings are expected to contribute academically to the development of legal and human rights studies, as well as serve as a basis for consideration for the government, traditional institutions, and the community in strengthening the protection of women's rights.

II. FIRST ASPECT DISCUSSION

The Position of Women in the Social Structure of East Sumba Society

The people of East Sumba are known for upholding traditional values in regulating social life. The developed social structure not only functions as a system for regulating relationships between community groups but also determines the roles and positions of individuals based on gender, age, and social status within the community. In this context, women play a crucial role, particularly in family life, cultural preservation, and household economic activities.

East Sumbanese women play a vital role in managing family needs, caring for children, and preserving cultural values passed down through generations. In various traditional ceremonies, women also make significant contributions through their involvement in ritual preparations, the production of traditional woven fabrics, and other social activities. The presence of women in cultural aspects demonstrates that they are not merely complementary to the social system but also crucial actors in maintaining the identity of indigenous communities.

Despite this, women's position in strategic decision-making is often still influenced by a patriarchal system that places men as the dominant party within family structures and traditional communities. This situation is evident in women's limited involvement in traditional deliberation forums that determine important policies or decisions within the community. As a result, women's aspirations and interests are not always optimally accommodated in the decision-making process.

From a human rights perspective, every individual has equal rights without discrimination based on gender. The principle of equality requires that women have equal opportunities in education, economics, social, cultural, and political spheres. Therefore, the existence of social practices that limit women's participation requires critical examination to ensure their compliance with the principles of non-discrimination and respect for human dignity.

An analysis of women's positions in East Sumba society reveals a complex relationship between cultural preservation and human rights protection. On the one hand, traditional culture provides space for women to contribute to social life. On the other hand, some social practices still have the potential to create gender inequality if not adapted to modern human rights principles. Therefore, efforts are needed to strike a balance between respecting local cultural values and protecting women's rights as part of universal human rights.

III. DISCUSSION OF THE SECOND ASPECT

Protection of Women's Rights from a Human Rights Perspective

Human rights are a set of fundamental rights inherent in every human being from birth, regardless of gender, race, ethnicity, religion, or social status. In the context of women, the principle of human rights affirms that women have equal status with men and have the right to protection against all forms of discrimination, violence, and degrading treatment. Therefore, protecting women's rights is not only a moral obligation but also a legal obligation that must be guaranteed by the state.

Recognition of women's rights has been regulated in various international and national legal instruments. At the international level, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights affirms the principle of equal rights and freedoms for all human beings without discrimination. This principle was further strengthened by the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women

(CEDAW), which requires participating countries to take effective steps to eliminate all forms of discrimination against women. Indonesia, as a state party, has a responsibility to implement these principles into its national legal system and public policy.

At the national level, the protection of women's rights is constitutionally based on the 1945 Constitution of the Republic of Indonesia, which guarantees equality before the law for all citizens. Furthermore, Law Number 39 of 1999 concerning Human Rights recognizes women's right to equal protection, opportunity, and treatment in various areas of life. Various other regulations have also been established to strengthen women's protection, including regulations on the elimination of domestic violence, child protection, and criminal acts of sexual violence.

In East Sumba society, the implementation of human rights principles often confronts social realities influenced by local customary and cultural values. The community's adherence to traditions passed down through generations creates a complex relationship between customary law and state law. On the one hand, customary law plays a crucial role in maintaining social order and the community's cultural identity. However, on the other hand, some social practices have the potential to restrict women's rights if not balanced with the principles of equality and non-discrimination.

One aspect that requires attention is women's access to education. Education is a fundamental right closely linked to improving women's quality of life, social participation, and economic independence. From a human rights perspective, every woman has the right to equal educational opportunities without barriers based on gender or social status. Although access to education in East Sumba has improved in recent years, challenges remain stemming from economic factors, culture, and societal perceptions of women's roles within the family.

In addition to education, women's right to participate in decision-making is also a crucial component of human rights protection. This participation encompasses not only government institutions but also social structures and customary institutions. Women's representation in decision-making processes can strengthen the protection of women's interests and encourage the creation of more inclusive policies. However, male dominance in various customary forums remains a challenge that requires special attention.

Another equally important aspect is protecting women from all forms of violence and discrimination. Violence against women is a human rights violation that can occur in various forms, including physical, psychological, sexual, and economic. In societies that still maintain strong patriarchal structures, women are often vulnerable to various forms of injustice. Therefore, effective legal protection mechanisms and social support are needed to ensure women's safety and dignity.

From a modern human rights perspective, protecting women's rights is not intended to eliminate a society's cultural identity, but rather to ensure that cultural values develop in line with respect for human dignity. Culture and human rights should not be positioned in a conflicting relationship. Instead, they can coexist harmoniously if the principles of justice, equality, and respect for the rights of every individual serve as the foundation for the implementation of traditions and social life.

Based on this analysis, it is clear that protecting women's rights in East Sumba society requires a comprehensive approach. This approach must include strengthening legal regulations, raising public awareness, empowering women, and involving traditional institutions in human rights protection efforts. This way, women's rights can be effectively realized without neglecting the cultural values that define the East Sumba community..

IV. DISCUSSION OF THE THIRD ASPECT AND SO ON

and Strengthening the Protection of Women's Rights in East Sumba Society

The protection of women's rights in East Sumba society is inextricably linked to various challenges stemming from social, cultural, economic, educational, and legal factors. Although various legal instruments guarantee women's equality and protection, their implementation in community life still faces a number of obstacles that impact the effectiveness of such protection. This situation indicates a gap between applicable legal norms and the prevailing social realities in society.

One of the main challenges is the strong patriarchal cultural construct that places men as the dominant party in various aspects of social life. In such a social system, women are often positioned as having limited decision-making power, both within the family and within traditional communities. As a result, women's rights to express opinions, make life choices, and participate in development processes have not been fully realized.

The next challenge relates to education. The relatively low level of education among some women in rural areas can impact their ability to understand their rights and the legal mechanisms available to protect them. Limited access to education also impacts women's economic opportunities and participation in various public sectors. Education plays a strategic role in increasing women's legal awareness, independence, and capacity to advocate for their rights.

Economic factors also pose a significant obstacle. Economic dependence on male family members often leaves women vulnerable to various forms of discrimination and violence. In certain situations, women choose not to report human rights violations they experience due to fear of losing their livelihood or facing social pressure from their environment. This situation demonstrates that legal protection must be supported by economic empowerment programs that can increase women's independence.

Furthermore, barriers to access to justice persist. Not all women have the ability to access legal institutions, obtain legal aid, or understand available dispute resolution procedures. Geographical factors, cost, and lack of information often hinder women from obtaining effective legal protection. Therefore, efforts are needed to expand access to easily accessible legal services for the community, especially women in remote areas.

To address these challenges, strengthening the protection of women's rights requires a multidimensional approach. The first approach is strengthening regulations and legal implementation. The state must ensure that all policies and regulations related to women are effectively implemented at the regional level. Law enforcement against various forms of discrimination and violence against women must also be consistent to create legal certainty and a deterrent effect.

The second approach is women's empowerment through education and capacity building. Both formal and non-formal education programs need to be directed at raising women's awareness of their rights as citizens and as human beings. Furthermore, skills training and economic capacity building can help women gain independence and improve their bargaining power in social and family life.

The third approach is strengthening the role of customary institutions in protecting women's rights. Given the strong influence of customary law in East Sumba society, the involvement of customary leaders is a crucial factor in driving social change. Customary institutions can act as partners with the government in developing interpretations of cultural values that align with the principles of justice, equality, and respect for human rights. In this way, women's rights can be protected without diminishing the cultural identity that characterizes the local community.

The fourth approach is to increase collaboration between the government, civil society organizations, educational institutions, and local communities. This collaboration is necessary to build a comprehensive protection system, ranging from prevention and education to victim support, to restoring the rights of women who experience violations. Effective collaboration will strengthen women's protection efforts while raising collective public awareness of the importance of respecting human rights.

Based on this description, it is clear that protecting women's rights in East Sumba society requires a strategy that is not solely focused on legal aspects but also takes into account social, cultural, economic, and educational dimensions. An integrative approach is key to achieving sustainable protection of women's rights in accordance with human rights principles.

Table 1. Indicators of Protection of Women's Rights in East Sumba Society Based on a Human Rights Perspective

Indicator	Very good	Good	Enough	Low	Information
Access to Women's Education	-		-	-	Access to education has

Participation in Customary Decision Making	-	-	-	increased, but is not evenly distributed in rural areas.
Economic Opportunity	-	-	-	Women's involvement is still limited in traditional forums Women play a role in weaving, agriculture, and local trade.
Human Rights Awareness	-	-	-	Understanding of human rights still requires strengthening
Access to Legal Protection	-	-	-	Legal aid is available but does not yet reach all areas.
Protection from Gender Discrimination	-	-	-	Certain cultural practices still have the potential to create gender inequality.
Protection from Violence against Women	-	-	-	Improvement of prevention and case handling mechanisms is needed
Role in Cultural Preservation	-	-	-	Women have a central role in maintaining local traditions and culture.
Kesimpulan Umum	-	-	-	The fulfillment of women's rights shows positive developments but still faces structural and cultural challenges.



Gambar 1. Kerangka Hubungan antara Budaya Adat, Posisi Perempuan, dan Perlindungan Hak Asasi Manusia di Sumba Timur
Sumber: Diteliti Penulis, 2020.

V. CONCLUSION/CONCLUDING REMARKS

This study demonstrates that women in East Sumba society occupy a significant position in preserving cultural values, maintaining family welfare, and contributing to local economic activities. Despite their important role, women continue to face various challenges in exercising their rights fully, particularly in relation to participation in decision-making processes, access to legal protection, educational

opportunities, and economic empowerment. These challenges are influenced by the interaction between customary traditions, social structures, and gender relations that remain embedded within the community.

From a human rights perspective, the protection of women's rights in East Sumba has been recognized through national and international legal instruments that guarantee equality, non-discrimination, human dignity, and access to justice. However, the implementation of these principles has not yet been fully realized in practice. The findings indicate that there is still a gap between legal norms and social realities, requiring continuous efforts to strengthen the protection and fulfillment of women's rights.

This article argues that the protection of women's rights should not be viewed as contradictory to the preservation of local culture. Instead, customary values and human rights principles can coexist through an adaptive and inclusive approach that respects cultural identity while promoting equality and justice. Strengthening legal awareness, expanding educational opportunities, improving women's economic capacity, and increasing the involvement of women in social and customary decision-making processes are essential measures to achieve this objective.

Future research is recommended to conduct empirical field studies involving women, customary leaders, local government institutions, and civil society organizations in East Sumba. Such studies would provide a deeper understanding of the practical challenges and opportunities in implementing human rights principles within customary communities and contribute to the development of more effective policies for the protection of women's rights.

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