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TRANSFORMING POLICY APPROACHES: EMPOWERING GENDER MAINSTREAMING IN ENVIRONMENTAL POLICIES OF SOUTH KALIMANTAN

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Abstract

This socio-legal study highlights the pressing need to incorporate women's voices and experiences in Indonesia's natural resource management policies, particularly in South Kalimantan. This research employs an interdisciplinary approach, utilising qualitative and normative methods. The study investigates how to integrate gender perspectives into policy environments that are often gender-neutral and why it is crucial to include these perspectives in policy-making, especially in the context of South Kalimantan. The finding reveals that women's exclusion from the policy-making process is attributed to the policymakers' belief that the field should be gender-neutral. However, this approach has had adverse effects, resulting in increased gender discrimination instead of mitigating it.

I. Introduction

January 2021 recorded the heaviest flood ever to hit South Kalimantan. Almost 75% of its area went down underwater. Bridges ruptured, and one district, Hulu Sungai Tengah, was isolated for weeks due to the severe impact of the flash flood. Many lost their lives, and thousands of people displaced lost their houses². Meanwhile, the COVID-19 pandemic is waiting in an alert position, ready to harshen the situation. Floods are not new to the residents of South Kalimantan, but this recent flood received much larger attention due to its severity and coverage. While some of the officials accused the heavy rain as the main reason, scientists and activists pointed out that the flood would never cause an impact that severe if not for the environmental damage caused by haphazard mining and deforestation activities. Nevertheless, the environmental policy in South Kalimantan needs to be reviewed to prevent such

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² A. Muh. Ibnu Aqil, "Environmentalists Consider Suing Govt over South Kalimantan Flood," *The Jakarta Post* 2021; Jihad Akbar, "Jatam: Bukan Hujan Yang Picu Banjir Di Kalsel, Tapi Curah Izin!," *IDN Times* 2021..

disasters in the future.

During a disaster, women are among the most vulnerable victims³. They had to face the fact that their source of livelihood was destroyed. On the other hand, they had to maintain the life continuity of their family. It must be underlined that women closely relate to their environments, especially indigenous women. Their life is centred around the lands and waters; farms, gardens, forests, rivers, and seas. They nurture the lands and waters and cultivate them to put food on the table without environmental damage. Yet, when the lands and waters critical to their livelihood were subjected to plantation or mining concessions, they were left out and had to watch their lands and waters confiscated out of their hands, and they fell into poverty. By then, their connection with the environment has been severed, alienating them from the natural source vital to their existence. Therefore, when disaster hits, it hits them harder. CEDAW also supports this view on General Recommendation No. 37 on Gender-related dimensions of disaster risk reduction in the context of climate change, that in this emergency situation, women have the least access to food, health, education, training, job opportunities, and other needs.

This paper is an extension of a previous research study conducted between March and July 2021 titled "Feminist Approach to Natural Resource Management Policy in South Kalimantan," which was financially supported by the Indonesian Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology. This study revealed that women's voices are frequently marginalised, and their involvement in the policy-making process is often limited, resulting in a reduced capacity to advocate for their interests to be considered. These findings raise the following questions that are explored in this paper. Specifically, it examines how to integrate gender perspectives into policy environments that are often gender-neutral and why it is crucial to include these perspectives in policy-making, especially in the context of South Kalimantan.

2. Research Method

This study is a socio-legal study within the critical ecofeminism research framework. Socio-legal study, according to Wheeler and Thomas quoted by Banakar, does not refer to sociology or social sciences. Instead, it serves as an interface that recognises the context in which law operates⁴. While the feminist method is necessary to evaluate the efforts to integrate women's voices and their diverse experiences into many issues ranging from rape and sexuality to the policies of the environment to be discussed in a

³ Keiko Ikeda, "Gender Differences in Human Loss and Vulnerability in Natural Disasters: A Case Study from Bangladesh," *Indian Journal of Gender Studies* 2, no. 2 (1995); Elaine Enarson and Betty Hearn Morrow, "Why Gender? Why Women? An Introduction to Women and Disaster," *The gendered terrain of disaster: Through women's eyes* (1998).

⁴ Reza Banakar, Max Travers, and Law Oñati International Institute for the Sociology of, *Theory and Method in Socio-Legal Research*, Theory and Method in Socio-Legal Research (Portland, Or.: PoHart, 2005).

gender-sensitive way, the ecofeminism framework advances the way we observe the relationship between gender issues and mother nature. The critical approach provides functional analyses and enhancements to the current policy. The critical ecofeminism research framework aims to pursue environmental justice for vulnerable and marginalised groups.

This study used an empirical approach that requires investigation and analysis of how the local government translated and applied the law's mandate to mainstream gender in making the natural resource management policy. This interdisciplinary method started with identifying and analysing policies related to the topic and was followed by the qualitative method as the primary method to understand how the government, presented by the heads of the government offices, related to the field. Interviews and Focus Group Discussions (FGD) were adopted to collect data. The fieldwork was carried out in South Kalimantan Province. The respondents were the representations of South Kalimantan Provincial Government; Law Bureau of South Kalimantan Province, Environmental Services, Energy and Mineral Resources Office (ESDM), Women Empowerment and Children Protection Office, non-governmental organisations, and women activists.

3. Results and Discussion

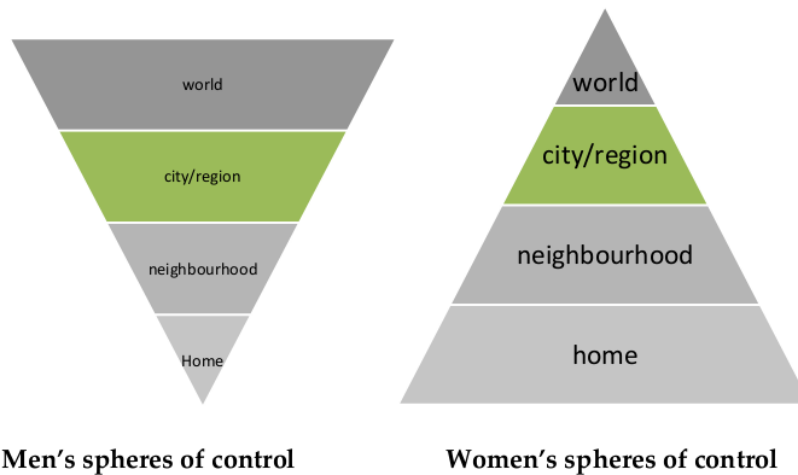
Women and Natural Environment Policy in South Kalimantan

In addressing the issue of women's engagement in making natural environment policy in South Kalimantan, we must first understand women's position in the area. The role of gender in different communities is diverse. South Kalimantan is predominantly a patriarchal community. Men are the leaders of the community, and their presence is essential. Although in some parts like Hulu Sungai, the patriarchal values may less persist, they are still there.

It has to be underlined that in the world of patriarchy, women are expected and designed by the community to concentrate in the domestic sphere. Even if in a smaller number, compared to men, some women can step outside domestication and enter the public sphere. While men are more dominant in the public sphere like the world, city and region, women are forced to occupy the more diminutive and domestic spheres like house and neighbourhood, as shown in the following graphic designed by Paterson et. al⁵ :

⁵ Rebecca Peterson, Gerda R Wekerle, and David Morley, "Women and Environments: An Overview of an Emerging Field," *Environment and Behavior* 10, no. 4 (1978).

Figure 1: Sphere of influence by sex



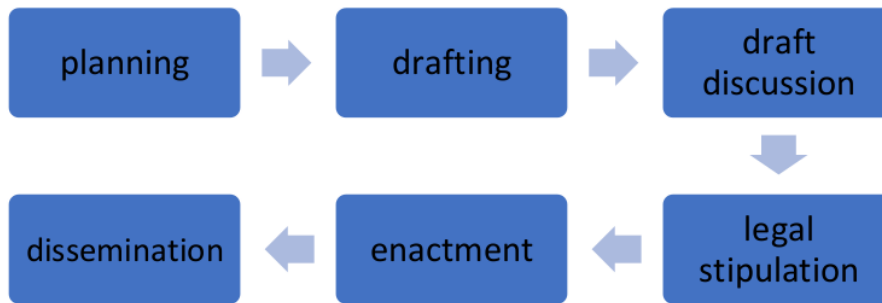
Even though women dominate in the smaller spheres, key decisions are made by city, regional, or national institutions⁶. Although these institutions apply a non-discriminatory gender policy in accepting or accelerating their employees, only a few women can penetrate these levels and make their presence significant to the policies made. These women are particularly those in positions of power that are determined by the number of capitals they possess. Borrowing Bourdieu's four main species of capital⁷, the term capital here is not merely in the means of money or fortune as in the economic capital, but it is also social capital which includes social capital like connections with beneficial individuals, cultural capital like proper education, and symbolic capital which provides for prestige and social honour that someone has in the community.

In the hierarchy of Indonesian laws, the provincial, regional regulation (Peraturan Daerah) is placed beneath the Constitution, Decree of People's Consultative Agency Government Regulation In Lieu Of Law, and followed by the district/municipal regional regulation in the lowest position. Perda is enacted by the head of the province (Governor) and the regional legislative council (DPRD). It can be proposed either by regional legislative members or the regional government. The following figure shows the process of the making of Perda:

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ {, 2018, The Oxford handbook of Pierre Bourdieu}

Figure 2: The Perda Making Process



Whether initiated by the Regional People's Representative Council (DPRD) or the provincial government, the regional regulations (perda) planning and drafting process plays a crucial role in shaping policies. This stage brings together diverse interests and agendas that contribute to the development of the perda. Experts, usually academics, are vital in preparing an academic draft, serving as a foundation for discussions and subsequent drafting. During this process, it is essential to acknowledge that women and men have different experiences shaped by their upbringing, influencing their understanding of gender roles and expectations. As previously discussed, women often face societal expectations that assign them to micro-management roles. Consequently, it is essential to recognise that the creation of perda is not exempt from these gender dynamics.

Table 1 Number of Provincial Civil Servants by Agency and Sex

	2019		2020	
	Male	Female	Male	Female
Government Agencies				
Provincial Civil Servant	276	140	275	139
Provincial Secretary, Assistant, Experts, Bureau, Council Secretary	4299	4217	3911	3977
Offices and Technical Implementary Offices	644	333	618	312
Technical Offices	666	966	711	1056
Hospitals	5885	5656	5515	5484

Source: Personnel Board of Kalimantan Selatan Province

Table 2. The Number of Vertical Civil Servants by Agency and Sex

Occupation	2019		2020	
	Male	Female	Male	Female
Specific Functional	2911	3572	3377	3787
Staff General Functional	3315	2264	2539	6352
Structural				
5th Echelon	36	54	33	95
4th Echelon	684	252	279	886
3rd Echelon	78	27	36	128
2nd Echelon	12	2	15	6
1st Echelon	0	0	0	0
Total	7036	6171	6680	14646

Source: Personnel Board of Kalimantan Selatan Province

As presented by the tables above, there is an imbalance number of women occupying high-rank positions in the provincial government. In 2019, women shared only 14% of the pie as echelon 2 (the highest rank in the hierarchy of provincial civil servants) compared to 86% share for men in the positions. Although women's raised to 28% in 2020, yet the significant imbalance continues. In the lower ranks, the numbers are not better.

Meanwhile, table 1.2 presented another concerning data. Few women were placed in the critical provincial offices related to making the policy, such as the office of the provincial secretary, assistants, expert staff, bureau, and office of the provincial council secretary. Otherwise, in lower offices, technical implementer offices (UPTD/UPPD), and hospitals, women outranked men in numbers.

What do these numbers indicate? They illustrate the underrepresentation of women in policy-making positions. Even when women were present, it raised the question of whether their voices authentically represented the concerns and perspectives of women. Additionally, it is essential to assess whether their voices held sufficient influence to shape policies that effectively address the needs of women. Answering these questions requires thorough examination and analysis. It is essential to acknowledge that integrating the gender mainstreaming agenda into environmental policies in South Kalimantan is a long-term strategy. The true impact of these efforts may take several decades to materialise fully. Nonetheless, it is crucial to persist in these endeavors for the betterment of future generations and the realisation of a more inclusive and equitable future.

The Impact of Environmental Damage on Women in South Kalimantan

South Kalimantan is a province enriched with natural resources such as oils, coals, titanium, coal, nickel, kaolin, gold, iron ore, diamond, etc. Located in the southern part of Kalimantan, Indonesia, East Kalimantan Province neighbours it in the north, Central Kalimantan Province in the west, and Makassar Strait in the east. The province covers about 38.744,23 kilometres square or about 6.98% of the island of Borneo. It is divided into 11 regencies and 12 municipalities as follows:

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 Table 3. Regency and Municipality of South Kalimantan, 2021

No	Regency/Municipality	Capital	Total Area (square kilometres)
1	Tanah Laut	Pelaihari	3631.35
2	Kotabaru	Kotabaru	9482.73
3	Banjar	Martapura	4668.00
4	Barito Kuala	Marabahan	2996.46
5	Tapin	Rantau	2700.82
6	Hulu Sungai Selatan	Kandangan	1804.94
7	Hulu Sungai Tengah	Barabai	1472.00
8	Hulu Sungai Utara	Amuntai	892.70
9	Tabalong	Tanjung	3766.97
10	Tanah Bumbu	Batulicin	5006.96
11	Balangan	Paringin	1878.30
	Municipality		
1	Banjarmasin	Banjarmasin	72.00
2	Banjarbaru	Banjarbaru	371.00
	South Kalimantan	Banjarmasin	38744.23

About 29,56% of the land is forest, and others are plantations (17.19%), rice (10.44%),

residential (2.33%), and mining (1.55%)⁸. The province's population is 4.073.584, with women around 2.011.201 and men 2.062.383.

Banjar and Dayak are the indigenous ethnic peoples of the province with Banjar as the largest (82.4%), while Dayak is only 1.2%⁹. Banjar people live in Banjarmasin, Banjar, and their surrounding areas¹⁰. They live along the riverbanks and so have developed a river-based culture. Banjar people who migrated upstream of the rivers are called 'Urang Pahuluan,' and those who migrated downstream are called 'Urang Banjar Kuala.' Dayak people live on the mountains, around the upstream and downstream rivers. Some Bugis descendants occupy the east coast. Banjar people identify as Muslim¹¹, while Dayak people are more diverse. In past times, Dayak people who converted to Islam were considered to change their identity into Banjar. There were some debates whether Banjar is an autonomous ethnic group or part of Dayak. Some research claimed Banjar originated from Dayak¹². When Java brought Islam, the conversion to Islam encouraged the application of Malay lifestyle and language, which Dayak people perceived as the language of Islam and Muslim government. Hawkins pointed out that Banjar people (*Urang Banjar*) are not indigenous nor identify as primordial; instead, it emerged simultaneously with Indonesia as a nation¹³.

South Kalimantan produced 63.2 million tons of coal in 2020 (BPS, 2021), and in the past, delivered 16,36 per cent of the entire national coal stock, primarily for export. The mining production shared the highest investment realisation; 1.798.324 billion Rupiah in 2020, compared to plantation production, which achieved Rp. 1.471.366 billion¹⁴. South Kalimantan is among the highest five provinces in coal mining production¹⁵. It has to be noted that the mining industry in South Kalimantan began with the Dutch Colonization. As history recorded, the most intense battle in the liberation war in South Kalimantan was the battle to win the coal mining in Pengaron, Banjar District, which

⁸ BPS, "Provinsi Kalimantan Selatan Dalam Angka; South Kalimantan Province in Figures," (Banjarmasin: BPS-Statistics of South Kalimantan Province, 2021).

⁹ *Kewarganegaraan, Suku Bangsa, Agama Dan Bahasa Sehari-Hari Penduduk Indonesia Hasil Sensus Penduduk Tahun 2010*, ed. Badan Pusat Statistik (Statistics Indonesia), 2102032 vols., vol. 1 (Jakarta: Badan Pusat Statistik (Statistics Indonesia), 2011).

¹⁰ Alfani Daud, *Islam Dan Masyarakat Banjar: Deskripsi Dan Analisa Kebudayaan Banjar* (Jakarta: RajaGrafindo Persada, 1997).

¹¹ Mary Hawkins, "Becoming Banjar: Identity and Ethnicity in South Kalimantan, Indonesia," *The Asia Pacific Journal of Anthropology* 1, no. 1 (2000).

¹² Jean Gelman Taylor, *Indonesia: Peoples and Histories* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2003); Anna Lowenhaupt Tsing, *In the Realm of the Diamond Queen Marginality in an out-of-the-Way Place* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1993).

¹³ Hawkins, "Becoming Banjar: Identity and Ethnicity in South Kalimantan, Indonesia."; Tsing, *In the Realm of the Diamond Queen Marginality in an out-of-the-Way Place*.

¹⁴ DPMPPTSP Kalsel, "Tren Realisasi Investasi," DPMPPTSP Provinsi Kalimantan Selatan.

¹⁵ PRIMA, "Https://Www.Jaringanprima.Co.Id/Id/5-Provinsi-Penghasil-Batu-Bara-Terbesar-Di-Indonesia," 2021, <https://www.jaringanprima.co.id/id/5-provinsi-penghasil-batu-bara-terbesar-di-indonesia>.

Pangeran Antasari, the national hero of South Kalimantan, led¹⁶. Since then, the mining industry, particularly coal mining, has remained at the core of economic development in the area and has always been a significant source of conflict¹⁷. Particularly on environmental sustainability.

The ongoing debates surrounding the mining industry's impact on surrounding communities are never-ending. Barkatullah highlights one of the advantages of the South Kalimantan mining industry: its potential to create job opportunities for job seekers, thereby instilling hope among locals in an economic sense. This perspective acknowledges the potential economic benefits that mining operations can bring to communities while also recognising the ongoing discussions and differing viewpoints on the industry's overall impact¹⁸.

While recognising the positive impacts of the mining industry, it is imperative to address the negative repercussions it has had, particularly on women in South Kalimantan. Notably, the mining industry has adversely affected pregnant women, significantly increasing cases of chronic energy deficiency (known as Kurang Energi Kronik or KEK) during pregnancy, as highlighted by Pasaribu. The prevalence of KEK among pregnant women in the region surpasses the national average in Indonesia, raising concerns about the impact of mining activities, which resulted in environmental damage on maternal health and nutrition in the area¹⁹.

Furthermore, it is evident that environmental damage in South Kalimantan also contributes to the occurrence of child marriages in the region. Erlina's study establishes a significant relationship between the degradation of natural resources and child marriage, particularly in Tapin, a district known as a substantial centre of the mining industry in South Kalimantan. Her research indicates that areas experiencing severe

¹⁶ SS Nugroho Nur Susanto, "Toponimi Benteng Pengaron Dan Peristiwa Awal Perang Banjar (the Toponym of Pengaron Fortress and the Initial Event of the Banjar War)," *Naditira Widya* 12, no. 2 (2018); Jamalie Zulfa, *Pedagang Dan Gerakan Perlawanan Terhadap Kolonial Belanda Pada Masa Perang Banjar (1859-1905)* (Yogyakarta: Kepel Press, 2017).

¹⁷ Nurul Listiyani, "Dampak Pertambangan Terhadap Lingkungan Hidup Di Kalimantan Selatan Dan Implikasinya Bagi Hak-Hak Warga Negara," *Al'Adl: Jurnal Hukum* IX, no. 1 (2017); Tessa Toumbourou et al., "Political Ecologies of the Post-Mining Landscape: Activism, Resistance, and Legal Struggles over Kalimantan's Coal Mines," *Energy Research & Social Science* 65 (2020); Murdiansyah Herman and Muhammad Uhaib As'ad, "Local Elections, Local Actors and Political Patronage Networks (Understanding Involvement of Coal Mining Bosses in the Local Elections in South Kalimantan Province" (paper presented at the Iapa Proceedings Conference, 2019).

¹⁸ Abdul Halim Barkatullah, Ifrani, and Lena Hanifah, "In Seeking of Legal Protection : Local Workers in Wetland Area of Tanah Bumbu District," *Journal of Wetlands Environmental Management; Vol 4, No 2* (2016): July-December (2016).

¹⁹ Luxi Riajuni Pasaribu, "Gambaran Kondisi Pertambangan Batu Bara Pada Kejadian Status Gizi Ibu Hamil Di Provinsi Kalimantan Selatan (Analisis Lanjut Riskesdas 2007)," *Indonesian Journal of Reproductive Health* 5, no. 3 (2007).

environmental degradation tend to have higher rates of child marriage²⁰.

This situation is not uncommon in areas abundant with natural resources. Kenya, for case, has exhibited violations of women's rights and environmental degradation associated with mining activities in the region²¹. Even in a developed state like Australia, the mining industry still placed women in a substantial social and economic disadvantage to men²². While technical and economic issues are detailed in the mining plan, how the project will affect individual, family, and community health is seldom scrutinised²³, especially on how such a project will impact women and their livelihoods. Women's interests are often marginalised, resulting in their voices being unheard, alienated, and considered insignificant within the mining industry. It not only poses a threat to the rights of women but also exacerbates their vulnerability. There is a pressing need to promote and actively involve women's interests in mining matters, particularly in environmental policy development and implementation.

Mainstreaming Gender Perspectives in Environment Policies

The efforts to promote gender equality and women's interests in national policies have been underway for several decades. Women activists have spearheaded various movements since colonisation, with multiple women's organisations leading the charge. These organisations include Putri Mardika (1912), Wanita Utomo (1921), Aisyiyah (1917), Perserikatan Dunia Isteri (1923), Wanita Katolik Republik Indonesia (1924), and Istri Sedar (1930). In 1928, the First Indonesian Women's Congress addressed crucial women's issues such as education, child marriage, and polygamy. The congress aimed to foster the development of Indonesian women while simultaneously striving for Indonesian independence²⁴. This movement has since flourished and continued to make significant progress.

In 1980, the Indonesian government took a significant step by signing the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) and subsequently implementing Law 7/1984 to ensure its enforcement. Furthermore, Indonesia took another significant step in 2005 by ratifying the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights through Law No. 12 of 2005. Article 26 of this law explicitly

²⁰ Erlina Erlina, "Penelitian: Kajian Ekofeminisme Pada Kasus Pernikahan Anak Di Kabupaten Tapin," (2021).

²¹ Maarifa Ali Mwakumanya, Mwikamba Maghenda, and Hamida Juma, "Socio-Economic and Environmental Impact of Mining on Women in Kasigau Mining Zone in Taita Taveta County," *Journal of Sustainable Mining* 15, no. 4 (2016).

²² Sanjay Sharma, "The Impact of Mining on Women: Lessons from the Coal Mining Bowen Basin of Queensland, Australia," *Impact Assessment and Project Appraisal* 28, no. 3 (2010).

²³ Joan Kuyek and Catherine Coumans, *No Rock Unturned: Revitalizing the Economies of Mining Dependent Communities* (MiningWatch Canada Ottawa, 2003).

²⁴ M Amini, *Sejarah Organisasi Perempuan Indonesia: 1928-1998* (Gadjah Mada University Press, 2021); Susan Blackburn, *Women and the State in Modern Indonesia, Women & the State in Modern Indonesia* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004).

declares that "all persons are equal before the law and entitled without any discrimination to the equal protection of the law." It further emphasises that discrimination on any basis, including race, colour, sex, language, religion, political affiliation, national or social origin, property, birth, or any other status, is strictly prohibited. This reaffirmed Indonesia's commitment to upholding equality and ensuring all individuals are afforded equal legal rights and protections. These advances marked a crucial milestone in acknowledging women's rights within Indonesian policies.

The Indonesian government has also prioritised gender mainstreaming as a critical agenda in alignment with the UN Millennium Development Goals by issuing Instruksi Presiden Republik Indonesia No. 9 Tahun 2000 tentang Pengarusutamaan Gender dalam Pembangunan Nasional (*Presidential Instruction No. 9 of 2000 on Gender Mainstreaming in the National Development*). Gender mainstreaming is a strategic approach aimed at integrating a gender equality perspective into the entire process of planning, implementing, monitoring, and evaluating national policies and development programs. This commitment demonstrates Indonesia's dedication to ensuring that gender equality is effectively incorporated at all policy and program development stages, fostering a more inclusive and equitable society.

Following this, South Kalimantan attempted to demonstrate its commitment to women's empowerment, child protection, environmental management, corporate responsibility, and establishing dedicated units to protect women and children at the provincial level, by enforcing several policies as follows:

1. Perda No. 11/2018 tentang Pemberdayaan Perempuan dan Perlindungan Anak (Regional Regulation No. 11/2018 on Women's Empowerment and Child Protection): This regulation focuses on promoting women's empowerment and ensuring the protection of children.
2. Perda No. 2/2017 Tentang Rencana Perlindungan Dan Pengelolaan Lingkungan (Regional Regulation No. 2/2017 on Environmental Protection and Management Plan): This regulation aims to safeguard and manage the environment effectively.
3. Perda No. 1/2014 Tentang Tanggung Jawab Sosial Dan Lingkungan Perusahaan (Regional Regulation No. 1/2014 on Corporate Social and Environmental Responsibility): This regulation outlines the responsibilities of companies in promoting social and environmental well-being.
4. Pergub No. 073/2019 Tentang Pembentukan, Organisasi, Dan Tata Kerja Unit Pelaksana Teknis Daerah Perlindungan Perempuan Dan Anak Pada Dinas Pemberdayaan Perempuan Dan Perlindungan Anak Provinsi Kalimantan Selatan (Governor's Regulation No. 073/2019 on the Establishment, Organization, and Work Procedures of the Technical Implementation Unit for the Protection of Women and Children in the Agency of Women's Empowerment and Child

Protection of South Kalimantan Province): This regulation establishes a technical unit responsible for the protection of women and children at the provincial level.

However, policies on paper are not enough. According to Haigh's citation of Carolyn Hannan, integrating gender mainstreaming should adhere to the following fundamental principles:

- a. Establishing appropriate mechanisms for accountability to monitor progress effectively.
- b. Ensuring that issues and problems are identified across all areas of activity in a manner that allows for identifying gender differences and disparities.
- c. Avoiding assumptions that issues or problems are gender-neutral from a perspective of gender equality.
- d. Conducting gender analysis as a routine practice.
- e. Demonstrating clear political will and providing sufficient resources, including additional financial and human resources, if necessary, to effectively implement gender mainstreaming.
- f. Undertaking efforts to promote women's equitable participation at all decision-making levels²⁵.

4. Conclusion

During the fieldwork that involved officials, women activists, and NGOs, we found that the policy-making process is gender-neutral. As mentioned earlier, women, especially indigenous people, have an intimate relationship with environments. According to scholars, this is because women believe they have responsibilities for the family and concern for future generations' well-being. However, these voices are not mainstreamed in the policy-making process. Although there are regulations to ensure the gender agenda is mainstreamed in every provincial policy, the officials assumed that the representation of women in the meetings is proper to respond to the obligation. The provincial government has made efforts to integrate women's interests into various policy frameworks. However, as mentioned earlier, the underrepresentation of women in policy-making positions raises concerns about the effectiveness of these policies in practice. It is not enough to merely have gender mainstreaming included in policy documents; it is crucial to ensure its implementation to address inequalities and mitigate the severe impacts experienced by women when environmental damage occurs. Therefore, to ensure a comprehensive and inclusive approach, active participation from relevant officials and experts, regardless of gender, is necessary. By incorporating diverse perspectives and experiences, the policy-making process can strive for greater gender equality and address potential biases arising from prevailing patriarchal norms. Action must be taken to bridge the gap between policy intentions and on-the-ground realities, ensuring women's needs and perspectives are genuinely considered and prioritised.

²⁵ Kanchana Ginige, Dilanthi Amaratunga, and Richard Haigh, "Mainstreaming Gender in Disaster Reduction: Why and How?," *Disaster prevention and management: an international journal* (2009).

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