



RPJPN 2025-2045: WOMEN AS SUBJECT OR OBJECT OF DEVELOPMENT?

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ABSTRACT

Gender equality is prominently featured in Indonesia's National Long-Term Development Plan (RPJPN) 2025–2045 as part of its commitment to inclusive development. However, the integration of gender perspectives across development sectors remains largely normative, lacking a clear framework for empowering women as active agents rather than passive recipients. The gap between rhetoric and practice raises concerns about whether national development planning can effectively contribute to structural gender transformation. To explore this issue, a qualitative literature review was conducted, drawing on academic publications, policy documents, and institutional reports from 2015 to 2025. Longwe's Gender Analysis Framework consisting of five levels: welfare, access, conscientization, participation, and control was employed to assess how the RPJPN addresses various dimensions of women's empowerment. The analysis reveals that while the RPJPN expands women's access to education, health, and economic programs, it falls short in promoting critical awareness, institutional participation, and control over resources and decision making. Structural barriers, including patriarchal norms, limited ownership rights, and lack of gender-responsive governance, remain largely unchallenged. The findings indicate that the RPJPN offers inclusion without empowerment. Without embedding mechanisms for redistributing power and transforming institutional cultures, gender mainstreaming efforts risk remaining symbolic, failing to achieve the transformative change necessary for long-term gender equality.

Keywords; Gender, Development, RPJPN 2025-2045, Longwe Gender Analysis, Inclusive Policy

A. INTRODUCTION

Gender and development are inherently interconnected, as sustainable and inclusive development must prioritize justice and equality for all, including both women and men (Rimbawan & Nurhaeni, 2024). Without integrating a gender perspective, development efforts risk reinforcing social and economic inequalities, leaving certain groups particularly women behind in critical aspects of life (Abdussamad, 2021) This underscores the importance of embedding gender analysis into all stages of policy formulation to ensure that development benefits are equitably distributed and truly transformative (Swaiss, 2024).

A gender-based development approach aims to ensure equal access to resources and opportunities in education, health, employment, and decision-making processes for all genders (Jumiati & Chadijah, 2024). Women often face structural barriers such as limited access to higher education, rigid gender roles, and wage disparities (Septanaya & Fortuna, 2023). These inequalities not only affect women individually but also hinder societal progress (Jaquette, 2017). When women gain access to education and economic opportunities, it leads to broader benefits, including family welfare, economic growth, and poverty reduction (Beni, 2021);(Pellu, 2024);(Salim, 2024)

Despite numerous efforts to promote gender-inclusive development, persistent challenges remain. Women continue to struggle to access capital, secure formal employment, and participate meaningfully in political and bureaucratic decision-making (Hayya & Darmawan, 2025) Patriarchal norms continue to restrict women's roles in both public and private spheres, limiting their ability to assume leadership positions (Nurcahaya & Akbarizan, 2023) . While many policies acknowledge the importance of gender, their implementation often lacks effective monitoring mechanisms and fails to produce significant impact (Lubis & Triadi, 2024)

Gender-blind policy design can exacerbate structural inequalities by ignoring how power and opportunity are distributed in society. Policies that fail to integrate gender perspectives often result in women's exclusion from development benefits and decision-making roles (Awalia et al., 2023). Even when policies address gender equality, they are frequently symbolic and fail to create systemic change (Dunggio et al., 2024)

In many development plans, women are primarily positioned as recipients of assistance—social protection, healthcare, or education—rather than as active agents of change (Sucitra et al., 2024) However, women's meaningful participation in development policy formulation and implementation has been shown to lead to more inclusive, effective, and sustainable outcomes (Kan, 2024) Although there has been progress in increasing women's participation in economic and political sectors (Dunggio et al., 2024), systemic barriers continue to hinder comprehensive gender equality. Weak enforcement, poor accountability, and lack of gender-disaggregated data further widen the gap between policy and practice (Nweje et al., 2025). Moreover, many laws and policies that recognize women's roles are not supported by concrete implementation mechanisms (Tambaip & Tjilen, 2023)

Previous studies have examined how gender issues are addressed in development policies and to what extent these policies move beyond symbolic gestures (Abdalla et al., 2024; Jaquette, 2017; Lee et al., 2019). Some research has explored women's activism in pushing for more inclusive policies (Drolet et al., 2015; Raza, 2017; Walter, 2011; Winsdel et al., 2015). However, there remains a gap in the literature regarding how the National Long-Term Development Plan (RPJPN) 2025–2045 positions women as subjects or mere objects of development.

The RPJPN 2005–2025 demonstrated a commitment to gender mainstreaming, particularly in family welfare and maternal health, but largely positioned women as passive beneficiaries rather than active agents of change (Pratama, 2025). Despite targets in education and health, it failed to address structural barriers or enhance women's participation in leadership and economic decision-making. This welfare-oriented approach highlights the need to critically assess whether the RPJPN 2025–2045 continues this pattern or marks a shift toward recognizing women as equal stakeholders in development (Dusche, 2012).

To critically assess how the RPJPN 2025–2045 positions women, this study applies the Longwe Gender Analysis Framework developed by Sara Hlupekile Longwe. This framework evaluates women's empowerment in policy through five hierarchical levels: welfare, access, conscientization, participation, and control. It begins with meeting basic needs like health and income (welfare), moves to equal access to resources such as education and jobs (access), then to fostering awareness of gender-based subordination (conscientization), ensuring meaningful involvement in decision-making (participation), and ultimately achieving equal control over policies, resources, and outcomes (control) (Ndhlovu & Majova, 2023). By probing beyond surface indicators like enrollment rates, the framework reveals the extent to which development policies genuinely transform gender power relations or simply offer limited benefits without challenging structural inequality.

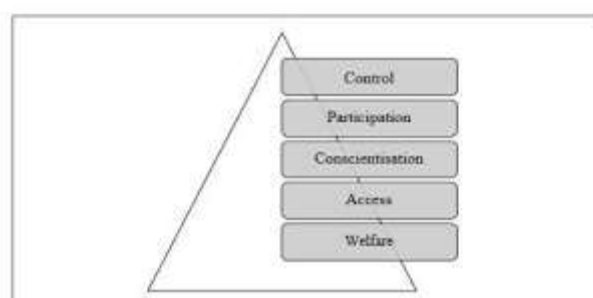
This study seeks to fill a crucial gap in gender and development research by analyzing whether the RPJPN 2025–2045 positions women as active subjects of development or passive recipients. The central questions are, To what extent are women involved in planning, implementation, and evaluation of development policies in the RPJPN? Do these policies address structural inequalities that restrict women's control over resources and decision-making? By applying the Longwe Gender Analysis, this paper provides a structured, empirical assessment of gender

responsiveness within Indonesia's long-term development blueprint. The goal is not only to critique but also to inform future gender-equitable policy design and implementation.

B. METHODS

This study uses a qualitative literature review method to critically examine how the RPJPN 2025–2045 positions women within the national development framework. The literature review enables a comprehensive synthesis of existing academic and policy sources on gender and development, identifies gaps in current approaches, and examines how empowerment is conceptualized and applied in long-term planning. It involves systematic collection and evaluation of policy documents, academic journal articles, books, and reports from civil society organizations, with a focus on literature published between 2015 and 2025 to capture recent trends in gender-oriented development policy. Keywords such as RPJPN 2025–2045, gender development, Longwe gender analysis, women's empowerment, and inclusive development policy guided the search, with sources drawn from academic databases, institutional repositories, and grey literature archives. Only official national policy documents, empirical or theoretical gender-focused research, and literature discussing the Longwe Framework were included, while opinion-based articles, unrelated policy papers, and non-transparent sources were excluded.

Figure 1. Gender Analysis Longwee



(Source: Izzaty Shahirah Nor Sham et al., 2021)

The analysis applies the Longwe Gender Analysis Framework, which evaluates development initiatives across five levels: welfare, access, conscientization, participation, and control to assess how the RPJPN reflects or limits women's empowerment. Each level served as a coding category to evaluate the RPJPN policy text and its related instruments, with the aim of determining whether the plan merely provides welfare benefits, facilitates real access, promotes awareness and social

change, encourages women's participation, and ensures their control and leadership. Through this framework, the study offers a structured, evidence-based evaluation of how national development planning supports or restricts women's roles as empowered actors in the development process.

C. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Welfare: Addressing Basic Needs Without Structural Change

At the most fundamental level of the Longwe Gender Analysis Framework, welfare refers to improvements in women's material conditions such as health, nutrition, income, and family well-being without necessarily addressing the structural roots of gender inequality (Amoah & Mensah, 2023). The RPJPN 2025–2045 demonstrates a strong welfare-oriented approach through a range of programs, including the enhancement of maternal and child health services, the expansion of early childhood education and nutritional support, the provision of social assistance for women-headed households and women in poverty, and the promotion of family resilience and reproductive rights.

Figure 2. Gender Analysis of RPJPN 2025–2045 Based on Longwe's Framework



(Source: Amoah & Mensah, 2023; Baidya, 2025)

While these policies reflect the state's recognition of women's developmental vulnerabilities, they remain largely protectionist in nature (Baidya, 2025). Women are framed as passive recipients of assistance rather than as active agents of change. There is limited focus on redistributing power within households and communities,

challenging traditional gender roles, or enabling women's meaningful participation in shaping development strategies. For example, women receiving conditional cash transfers are expected to fulfill caregiving roles such as ensuring child immunization or school attendance thereby reinforcing domestic responsibilities rather than interrogating the socio-economic structures that constrain women's autonomy (Urbina, 2020).

This approach mirrors the pattern observed in the preceding RPJPN 2005–2025, which emphasized women's health, fertility, and family planning, but failed to address the underlying power imbalances that render women structurally dependent and excluded from formal systems (Mudjib Mustain et al., 2022). By focusing predominantly on women's reproductive and caregiving roles, the policy risks reinforcing gender stereotypes rather than dismantling them. Health programs, for instance, are often designed around maternal needs without incorporating broader sexual and reproductive rights, while educational interventions seldom address curriculum bias or promote leadership development among girls.

In summary, while welfare-oriented policies within the RPJPN 2025–2045 help mitigate immediate gender-based vulnerabilities, they fall short of achieving structural transformation. In Longwe's terms, such interventions remain "ameliorative" rather than "transformative." Unlike more progressive gender-sensitive frameworks observed in countries such as the Philippines and Ethiopia which link welfare programs to economic empowerment and legal rights the RPJPN continues to approach women's development primarily through a lens of protection rather than empowerment. As such, the policy reflects gender awareness at the level of need but fails to disrupt the deeper architecture of inequality.

Access: Opportunities Expanded, but Control Remains Elusive

Within Longwe's Gender Analysis Framework, the access level refers to the extent to which women are granted opportunities to utilize resources such as education, credit, training, and employment (Amoah & Mensah, 2023). In the RPJPN 2025–2045, several policy initiatives aim to enhance women's access to development inputs. These include the promotion of female enrollment in higher education particularly in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) fields expansion of vocational and digital skills training, advancement of financial inclusion for women-led micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs), and encouragement

of women's participation in emerging sectors, such as sustainable agriculture and renewable energy.

These provisions signal a positive shift toward gender equitable development, recognizing that women must have access to both capacity building opportunities and productive capital (Kabeer, 2021). However, the existence of access alone does not equate to empowerment. The RPJPN lacks sufficient mechanisms to ensure that women exercise autonomy over the resources and opportunities they gain. Without structural support such as safe and inclusive workplaces, anti-discrimination enforcement, affordable childcare, or time-use flexibility such access risks being merely symbolic or superficial.

The policy framework falls short in addressing several key structural barriers. It does not adequately consider ownership rights, especially for rural or indigenous women, nor does it incorporate gender-responsive budgeting to address intersecting disadvantages (e.g., among women with disabilities or those living in remote regions). Persistent issues such as the gender wage gap and occupational segregation are also not substantively addressed. For example, while microcredit access may be facilitated, many women remain constrained by requirements such as spousal consent or the lack of collateral conditions that severely limit their financial autonomy (Moreno, 2023).

In contrast, policy frameworks in countries like Rwanda and the Philippines demonstrate more integrated approaches that combine access with control. Legal reforms in Rwanda, for instance, have enabled joint land ownership, offering women formal decision-making rights (Bayisenge et al., 2015). The Philippines has adopted gender-responsive budgeting practices that ensure training and funding support are accompanied by accountability mechanisms (Moreno, 2023). Meanwhile, the RPJPN 2025–2045 stops short of such transformative strategies, offering access without adequate structural backing.

In summary, while the RPJPN 2025–2045 expands women's access to education, capital, and employment, it fails to confront the institutional and sociocultural barriers that inhibit women's control over these resources. From the perspective of Longwe's framework, empowerment requires not only access but also the removal of constraints that limit agency. Without corresponding legal, institutional, and cultural reforms, such access remains procedural rather than transformative.

Conscientisation: Limited Shift in Gender Norms and Awareness

The third level of Longwe's Gender Analysis Framework *conscientization* pertains to the development of awareness regarding gender-based subordination and the understanding that unequal gender roles are socially constructed rather than biologically determined (Amoah & Mensah, 2023). At this level, policy interventions are expected to transform attitudes, challenge patriarchal norms, and empower both women and men to actively question and dismantle discriminatory structures.

The RPJPN 2025–2045 explicitly articulates a commitment to gender mainstreaming (*Pengarusutamaan Gender*, or PUG) as a cross sectoral strategy encompassing governance, education, the economy, and infrastructure. However, this commitment remains predominantly conceptual and is not accompanied by an actionable framework for shifting gender perceptions or institutional norms. While the plan endorses women's leadership and inclusion, it lacks concrete mechanisms such as gender-sensitivity training, male engagement initiatives, or the reform of discriminatory practices within key social institutions, including schools, workplaces, and religious or community organizations.

The absence of measures such as gender transformative education curricula, public awareness campaigns addressing gender stereotypes, and mandatory gender analysis beyond compliance checklists suggests that the RPJPN invests minimally in transformative conscientization (Beni, 2021). Such an omission is critical, as meaningful gender empowerment requires not only institutional reform but also a shift in the collective consciousness and social narratives that perpetuate inequality. This limits the sustainability and depth of gender mainstreaming efforts in the long term.

Comparative experiences from other national contexts demonstrate that conscientisation requires deliberate and sustained policy interventions (Dirkareshza, 2022). For example, Rwanda has implemented extensive gender training programs within civil service structures and facilitated community dialogues, thereby normalizing women's participation in leadership (Reilly, 2021). The Philippines, through the pending Gender-Fair Education Law, aims to integrate gender perspectives into school curricula, promoting gender sensitivity from an early age (Laro, 2024). In contrast, Indonesia's RPJPN acknowledges gender mainstreaming but fails to present corresponding social activation strategies, leaving prevailing gender roles largely unchallenged especially at the grassroots level (Nurhaeni & Putri, 2025).

The RPJPN 2025–2045 demonstrates rhetorical support for gender equality but lacks concrete strategies to shift societal norms, limiting its effectiveness at the

conscientisation level of the Longwe Framework. By failing to invest in education, media, and institutional efforts that challenge gender stereotypes and promote awareness, the policy framework risks granting women formal access without fostering the societal legitimacy necessary to exercise real agency. As a result, its potential for achieving transformative gender equality remains constrained.

Participation: Numerical Targets Without Substantive Influence

Within Longwe's Gender Analysis Framework, participation refers not merely to the physical presence of women in decision-making spaces but to their substantive influence over outcomes and their ability to shape policy directions (Amoah & Mensah, 2023). This level of empowerment is critical to ensuring that development strategies are responsive to the lived experiences, needs, and aspirations of women.

The RPJPN 2025–2045 articulates several commitments aimed at enhancing women's participation. These include increasing women's representation in leadership across public institutions, parliament, bureaucracy, and the private sector; promoting women's involvement in strategic sectors such as digital transformation, the green economy, and innovation governance; and encouraging participation in community-based development initiatives. While these goals represent a step forward, they are primarily framed in quantitative terms, emphasizing representation targets rather than the quality or impact of participation (Amarudin & Khorib, 2022).

For instance, the policy's stipulation that a minimum of 30% of leadership positions be occupied by women does not necessarily guarantee that these women will possess the resources, institutional support, or autonomy required to exercise meaningful influence (Wu et al., 2021). In many cases, such numerical benchmarks risk becoming symbolic gestures if not accompanied by structural enablers and cultural transformation. The RPJPN fails to address several entrenched barriers that hinder substantive participation. These include the absence of reforms to overcome gatekeeping mechanisms within political parties and bureaucratic institutions, a lack of institutionalized mentoring and capacity-building initiatives for women leaders, and the persistence of gender biases in recruitment and promotion processes. Furthermore, the double burden of unpaid domestic and care labor continues to restrict women's time and mobility, limiting their ability to engage fully in leadership roles.

Globally, experiences in other countries underscore the distinction between representation and genuine participation. India's constitutional quotas in local governance (Panchayati Raj) have enhanced grassroots-level women's involvement

in decision-making(Wu et al., 2021). Rwanda, with over 60% female representation in parliament, has leveraged both quotas and political will to drive gender-responsive legislation (Boahemaa, 2022). In Norway, voluntary gender quotas in corporate boards, coupled with leadership development programs, have resulted in substantive influence for women in both public and private sectors (Wu et al., 2021). By contrast, Indonesia's RPJPN sets numeric targets for representation but lacks the institutional scaffolding necessary to ensure that women's voices are heard and valued within leadership domains.

The RPJPN 2025–2045 emphasizes women's participation through numerical targets but lacks the institutional support and cultural reforms necessary to enable genuine influence. Without inclusive environments, leadership development, and mechanisms to dismantle patriarchal norms, women's involvement often remains symbolic rather than transformative. As Longwe's framework suggests, true empowerment at the participation level requires more than presence—it demands the authority and capacity to shape outcomes.

Control: Absence of Shared Power and Structural Transformation

In Longwe's Gender Analysis Framework, the highest level of empowerment control refers to women's ability to exercise authority over resources, institutions, and development outcomes (Amoah & Mensah, 2023). This includes not only participation, but also the capacity to shape agendas, allocate resources, and influence institutional decisions. The RPJPN 2025–2045, however, does not establish a clear pathway toward such shared control.

Although the policy framework emphasizes inclusion, it fails to institutionalize mechanisms that would grant women equal power in decision-making. There are no legal guarantees ensuring women's ownership or joint control over land, financial assets, or enterprises (Bourke Martignoni, 2021). Similarly, the RPJPN offers no concrete provisions for women's involvement in high-level governance processes such as budgeting, infrastructure planning, or climate policy. At the household and community levels, models of joint decision-making are not promoted or supported. Women are frequently framed in policy language as "beneficiaries" rather than "owners," "leaders," or "primary decision-makers."

This lack of structural transformation reflects a broader failure to challenge existing power asymmetries. Although women may be visible in areas such as microenterprise or community development, they often lack legal control over assets,

such as land titles, which remain under male ownership (Ranabahu & Tanimu, 2022). Social norms continue to constrain women's capacity to make strategic decisions independently, and power within institutions whether political parties, ministries, or corporate leadership remains overwhelmingly concentrated in the hands of men (Glasserman Apicella, 2025). Consequently, women's inclusion often becomes symbolic, with limited ability to influence outcomes.

In contrast, countries such as Ethiopia, Sweden, and Colombia have implemented mechanisms that explicitly transfer control to women. Ethiopia's joint land titling and cooperative law reforms have enhanced women's legal decision-making rights (Getachew et al., 2022). Sweden's adoption of gender-responsive budgeting and mandatory gender impact assessments has enabled women to shape macro-level policy (Lane & Jordansson, 2020). Colombia's inclusion of women in peace councils and budgeting processes has ensured their influence over post-conflict development. These examples show that meaningful control requires the alignment of legal, institutional, and cultural reforms (García-Reyes & Wiig, 2020).

The RPJPN 2025–2045 shows rhetorical support for women's inclusion but fails to institutionalize their control over resources and decision-making. Economic and political programs include women yet stop short of redistributing authority or challenging patriarchal structures. As a result, women risk being positioned as token participants rather than empowered co-leaders in national development.

D. CONCLUSION

An analysis of the RPJPN 2025–2045 through Longwe's Gender Analysis Framework reveals that, while progress has been made in enhancing women's welfare and access, the policy falls short of achieving transformative empowerment. The overall approach remains protectionist and symbolic, with limited commitment to redistributing power or addressing structural inequalities. Although the RPJPN articulates gender mainstreaming as a strategic priority, it lacks concrete mechanisms to challenge patriarchal norms, build critical gender awareness, or ensure women's substantive participation and control. At each level from welfare to control the policy framework fails to deliver the structural, institutional, and cultural reforms necessary for meaningful gender equality. As a result, empowerment remains procedural rather than transformative, and women continue to be positioned as beneficiaries rather than co-architects of national development.

A critical reflection on the RPJPN 2025–2045 underscores the inherent limitations of gender policies that prioritize inclusion without structural change. Women's empowerment cannot be achieved solely through increased access or numerical representation; it requires the redistribution of power, recognition of ownership rights, and systemic support to eliminate cultural and institutional barriers. A genuinely inclusive and equitable development agenda must frame women not as passive recipients of development benefits, but as active, autonomous, and equal agents in shaping the direction of national policy. Without this paradigm shift, gender mainstreaming risks becoming a rhetorical device rather than a catalyst for social transformation.

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