

Volume: 9 Nomor: 2 Tahun 2022

[Pp. 47-54]

THE POVERTY OF INDIGENOUS WOMEN: LEARN FROM LOCAL WISDOM OF DAYAK WOMEN IN WEST KALIMANTAN

Nikodemus Niko

Postgraduate Program in Sociology, Faculty of Social and Political Sciences, Universitas Padjadjaran

Jl. Bukit Dago Selatan, No. 25, Bandung, Indonesia

Email: nikodemus15001@mail.unpad.ac.id

ABSTRACT

The issue of women today is closely related to the issue of poverty. Women who inhabit rural areas in Indonesia cannot be separated from the conditions of life that are poor and completely limited. This paper presents the role of Dayak Mali women in preserving nature and their traditions, even though their lives are still below the poverty line. This paper uses feminist ethnography research methods. Sources of data derived from primary data (interviews and observations) and secondary data from the results of the desk review. Secondary data collection through the collection of reading the results of scientific studies in the form of journal articles, policy papers and data from line ministries and institutions. Indigenous women in Indonesia, in general, face not only cultural and structural poverty but also multidimensional poverty, where there are indicators such as; social dimensions, education, health, and quality of life that are not accessible to women. On Dayak Mali women still maintain traditions such as; feed the soil, forests and plants, and animals. Then the ritual excuse to nature before opening the land to farm, before building a house, and after harvesting rice. This tradition shows that the close life between humans and nature is still intertwined. This means that the ecological and women's traditions have existed for hundreds of years in the Dayak Mali Dayak in West Kalimantan.

Keywords: *Poverty, Indigenous Women, Gender, Local Wisdom*

ABSTRAK

Isu perempuan hari ini erat kaitannya dengan isu kemiskinan. Perempuan yang mendiami wilayah-wilayah pedesaan di Indonesia tidak lepas dari kondisi kehidupan yang miskin dan serba terbatas. Tulisan ini menyajikan bagaimana peran perempuan Dayak Mali dalam menjaga kelestarian alam dan tradisi mereka, meski kehidupan mereka masih dibawah garis kemiskinan. Paper ini menggunakan pendekatan metode penelitian etnografi feminis. Sumber data berasal dari data primer (wawancara dan observasi) dan data sekunder dari hasil desk review. Pengumpulan data sekunder melalui pengumpulan bacaan hasil penelitian-penelitian ilmiah baik berupa artikel jurnal, policy paper maupun data instansi kementerian dan lembaga. Perempuan asli di Indonesia secara umum, tidak hanya hanya menghadapi kemiskinan kultural dan struktural saja, tetapi juga kemiskinan multidimensi, dimana terdapat indikator-indikator seperti; dimensi sosial, pendidikan, kesehatan dan standar kualitas hidup yang tidak dapat diakses oleh perempuan. Pada perempuan Dayak Mali hingga sekarang masih mempertahankan tradisi seperti; memberi makan kepada tanah, hutan, dan tumbuhan serta hewan-hewan. Kemudian ritual permisi kepada alam sebelum membuka

lahan untuk bertani, sebelum membangun rumah, dan setelah panen padi. Tradisi ini menunjukkan bahwa kehidupan yang dekat antara manusia dengan alam masih terjalin baik. Hal ini berarti tradisi ekologi dan perempuan sudah eksis sejak ratusan tahun lamanya di tengah-tengah masyarakat Dayak Mali.

Kata Kunci: Kemiskinan, Perempuan Suku Asli, Gender, Kearifan Lokal

INTRODUCTION

Rural Poverty is caused by the low accessibility of resources and uneven land ownership in the agricultural sector (Sender, 2002)¹. In this case, women are the most powerless in ownership and land use status.

Similar Poverty also occurs for women who live in rural villages of West Kalimantan. Badan Pusat Statistik Kalimantan Barat (BPS) (2020)² noted that in 2019, 378,041 inhabitants were on the poverty line. Meanwhile, BPS also noted that the gender development index in West Kalimantan in 2018 was recorded at 86.74, which is far from the national gender development index of 90.99 (Badan Pusat Statistik Kalimantan Barat, 2020)³.

Poverty also occurs in indigenous tribes who live in rural areas. Poverty in indigenous women occurs not only because of economic problems but structurally curbs the lives of women in indigenous communities (Niko, 2019)⁴. Balagopal (2009)⁵ also mentioned that women's Poverty in rural areas is characterized by a lack of access to health care, low income, low education, lack of access to assets, and poor nutrition.

An ethnic Dayak ethnic group that is native of the island of Borneo. Thousands of years, they live with a system of nomadic life (hunting and gathering) to settle (Niko, 2017)⁶. Despite the new stepping of the present era, Dayak ethnic communities still maintain the culture system of the past customs and traditions of their predecessors. In this case, the Dayak ethnic group is often represented as life very close to nature.

Dayak women involved much farming and tapping rubber trees. Although not many oil companies and mining companies enter the neighborhood of the Dayak people of Mali. However, privately owned community palm oil plantations have been quite a lot in the forests and settlements. Rubber plantations and rice fields are converted into palm oil plantations. This poses a tremendous ecological impact such as; floods and distress clean water, and already they have been for long. Therefore, knowledge of the local Dayak women becomes essential in order to prevent climate change.

The family of a Dayak Mali woman earns a day just Rp. 15,000 - Rp. 20,000, they cannot buy many items, while household needs must be met. Then other needs, such as the needs of their

¹Sender, J. (2002) Women's Struggle to Escape Rural Poverty in South Africa. *Journal of Agrarian Change*, 2 (1), 1-49. Doi:<https://doi.org/10.1111/1471-0366.00023>

²Badan Pusat Statistik Kalimantan Barat. (2020). *Indeks Pembangunan Gender di Provinsi Kalimantan Barat, 2010-2018* (Percentage of Poor Residents of West Kalimantan Province by Regency/City, 2009-2019). Retrieved from:<https://kalbar.bps.go.id/dynamictable/2019/02/04/208/percentage-population-provinsi-kalimantan-barat-menurut-kabupaten-kota-2009-2019-maret.html>

³Badan Pusat Statistik Kalimantan Barat. (2020). *Persentase Penduduk Miskin Provinsi Kalimantan Barat Menurut Kabupaten/Kota, 2009-2018* (Gender Development Index in West Kalimantan Province, 2010-2018). Retrieved from:<https://kalbar.bps.go.id/dynamictable/2019/02/08/239/-ipg-indeks-pembangunan-gender-di-provinsi-kalimantan-barat-2010-2018.html>

⁴Niko, N. (2017). *Perempuan Dayak Mali: Melindungi Alam dari Maut* (Dayak Mali Woman: Protecting Nature from the Death). *Umbara: Indonesian Journal of Anthropology*, 2 (2): 78-87.

⁵Balagopal, G. (2009). Access to health care among poor older women in India: how far do policies respond to women's realities? *Gender & Development*, 17 (3): 481-491. Doi:<https://doi.org/10.1080/13552070903298543>

⁶Niko, N. (2017). Women in Poverty; A Case Study on Dayak Mali Ethnic of West Kalimantan, Indonesia. *International Journal of Humanities, Religion, and Social Science*. Vol. 1, Iss. 1

children's schools, will become a new burden. Not to mention if the rainy season, Dayak Mali women can not rub rubber because rubber water will melt with rainwater. This relevance is the dependence of the lives of Dayak Mali women on nature.

Nature is believed to be sacred for the survival of the Dayaks and their future offspring. How can they watch them displaced by the current nature of modernization and capitalization? Their struggle is not only marked by men but also women who incidentally her as a symbol of nature itself; destroy nature its the same thing by destroying women. Opinion of Dao (2009)⁷ stated that women who work in the agricultural sector in rural areas in developing countries play an important role in empowering themselves and reducing poverty levels.

Land of Kalimantan is the last paradise owned, the warp of the world which gives livelihoods. Dayak Mali women, therefore, continues to preserve nature for the sustainability of their children. If the natural ecosystem has been damaged by the massive expansion of oil companies and mining companies - that it threatens the life of nature, culture, and customs - it is no longer where they make a living; firewood for cooking, vegetables to meat, fish for a side dish, and rice grains to be rice.

The double burden of work that they play has become commonplace for Dayak Mali women. Culture and customs have been handed down from their ancestors since immemorial time, so there is no problem if they also work as a breadwinner, coupled with the poor condition (Niko, 2019)⁸. They do not call it a double burden, but it is the duty of a woman or wife. Their social life was never questioned. A double workload is acted by women; as housewives as well as breadwinners. It will be gossip if there are women who do not work in the fields. Shiva (1997)⁹ Mention that women increasingly suffer from development, which further enhances modern patriarchal economies.

In a previous study conducted by Nainggolan (2012)¹⁰With the research title "Structural Poverty Analysis on Farmers" reveals that the conditions of structural Poverty faced by farmers are inseparable from the limitations of access to education, differences in wages and low incomes, limited access to land (area and status of ownership of agricultural land), and limited access to housing healthy and sanitary. The limited income of farmers and farm laborers, the unavailability of junior and senior high schools, the unavailability of public transportation, the high transportation costs and the large dependents of the family are reasons for the farming community not to continue their education after graduating from elementary school. This condition is a form of Poverty that is then structurally binding on society.

Bradwshaw, Chant, & Linneker (2017)¹¹stated that in the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) agenda, the main objective in achieving gender equality and empowering women and girls is to eradicate extreme Poverty in women. Kumurur (2009)¹² Emphasized that women's accessibility to resources must be met in order to alleviate and reduce Poverty.

The condition of structural Poverty that occurs in Dayak Mali women's groups in the form of isolation, limited access to education, health, and the economy. Government development

⁷Dao, M., Q. (2009). Poverty, Income Distribution, and Agriculture in Developing Country. *Journal of Economic Studies*, 36 (2), 168-183. Doi:<https://doi.org/10.1108/01443580910955051>

⁸Niko, N. (2019). *Kemiskinan Perempuan Dayak Benawan di Kalimantan Barat sebagai Bentuk Kolonialisme Baru* (The poverty of Dayak Benawan Women in West Kalimantan as a New Form of Colonialism). *Jurnal Pemikiran Sosiologi*, 6 (1): 58-76. Doi:<https://doi.org/10.22146/jps.v6i1.47467>

⁹Shiva, V. (1997). *Bebas dari Pembangunan: Perempuan, Ekologi dan Perjuangan Hidup di India* (Free from Development: Women, Ecology, and the Struggle of Life in India). Jakarta: Obor Indonesia Foundation.

¹⁰Nainggolan, MC (2012). *Analisis Kemiskinan Struktural Masyarakat Petani (Studi Kasus di Dusun Ciateruteun Ilir Desa Ciaruteun Ilir Kecamatan Cibungbulang Kabupaten Bogor)* (Structural Poverty Analysis of Farming Communities (Case Study in Ciaruteun Ilir Village, Cibungbulang District, Bogor Regency)). Depok: Universitas Indonesia.

¹¹Bradwshaw, S., Chant, S., & Linneker, B. (2017). Gender and Poverty: what we know, don't know, and need to know for Agenda 2030. *Gender, Place & Culture*, 24 (12), 1667-1688. Doi:<https://doi.org/10.1080/0966369X.2017.1395821>

¹²Kumurur, V. A. (2009). *Pembangunan dan Kemiskinan Perempuan Kota* (Development and Urban Women's Poverty). *Jurnal EKOTON*, 9 (1), 73-86.

programs have not touched the rural areas inhabited by indigenous Malays Dayak communities, so access to development priorities such as infrastructure, empowerment of local women, essential social services, economy, and education is minimal.

Meanwhile, Irianto (2006)¹³ Emphasized that in layered societies, there is an unusually high economic gap, in which there are groups of people who are so vibrant and politically powerful, while the very poor will be someone else in their own country.

It is essential to increase the prestige of gender awareness; community-based development is needed. Considering that there are still inequalities that result in women's Poverty in various sectors. Not only in the economic sector, but also in the employment, education and development sectors. Based on this description, the author is interested in studying more deeply about the Poverty of indigenous Dayak Mali women who are laden with local traditions and knowledge. Therefore, the research question is, how is the poverty situation of indigenous Dayak Mali women in West Kalimantan?

RESEARCH METHODS

This research uses descriptive qualitative research methods with feminist ethnography approach. Feminist ethnography is the process to represent and document experience of women in producing knowledge of the culture, oppression, and responsibility in the community or society (Schrock, 2013)¹⁴. Furthermore, McNamara (2009)¹⁵ explains that feminist ethnography to make room for giving women a voice in the event explores existing experience and wisdom.

Primary data collection techniques are observation, interview, documentation study, and I live with Dayak Mali community. Secondary data in this study were obtained through searching scientific papers such as scientific journals and books related to the theme. In the field, I interviewed five Dayak Mali women, with the following criteria: (a) comes from the indigenous family of Dayak Mali; (b) low-income family (under 2 US \$ per day). Data analysis was carried out at the same time as the writing of this research report, so data verification was also carried out at the same time. Data verification is based on data sources, such as scientific journals, so that the data validation method is the triangulation of data sources.

THE POVERTY OF INDIGENOUS WOMEN: ACCESS TO RESOURCES

*Noreh*¹⁶ and farming part of the culture of the Dayak Mali people for the viability and sustainability. The concept of farming that does apply fields to move. While the rubber is carried out in rubber plantations, each or some are applying the profit-sharing system with their families who do not have a rubber plantation. This philosophy was intended; it relies on the natural because without the natural result will disrupt local people's livelihoods.

Ethnic of Dayak Mali lives along rural in District Balai, Sanggau District, West Kalimantan. Niko (2016)¹⁷ Mentioned that the average Dayak Mali woman only completed elementary school education. Dayak Mali women get up earlier than crowing of the cock. They draw water from the river, preparing food for her husband and their children before they set off into the woods and fields to work. Then into the woods before the sun radiating light, earn a fortune by tapping rubber trees and search for wooden branches brought to the home.

¹³Irianto, S. (2006). *Apakah Hukum Boleh Berpibak? Sebuah Pertanyaan Perempuan* (Can Law be Sided? A Women's Question). *Jurnal Perempuan*, 45: 31-45.

¹⁴Schrock, R. D. (2013). The Methodological Imperatives of Feminist Ethnography. *Journal of Feminist Scholarship*, 5(5):48-60. Retrieved from: <https://digitalcommons.uri.edu/jfs/vol5/iss5/5>

¹⁵McNamara, P. (2015). Feminist Ethnography: Storytelling that Makes a Difference. *Qualitative Social Work*, 8(2):161-177. Doi: 10.1177/1473325009103373

¹⁶*Noreh* is rubber tapping, this is daily activity of Dayak Mali women.

¹⁷Niko, N. (2016). Mali Dayak Woman in a Frame of Local Wisdom. Proceedings of the National Seminar on Politics and Culture. Department of Anthropology, Faculty of Social and Political Sciences, Padjadjaran University.

In view, Mulder (2003)¹⁸The constitution stipulates that economic life is a joint effort, based on the family principle, in which the state must control Reviews those branches of production that directly Affect the livelihood of the people, alongside the country's natural resources, in order to promote the people's welfare. It has been supposed that as a civil society, every person has the right to a decent and prosperous life, including women. It is an appropriate reference to the opening of the mandate of the Act of 1945, which expressly states that "social justice for all Indonesian people." It stands to women in rural areas to have adequate access to education for justice. Regardless of race and religion, inclusive development should reach women in rural areas.

Dayak Mali women's role in keeping their nature vast (Niko, 2017)¹⁹. Before clearing forests to create fields, there are many rituals, which means it is fed to the forest. In this case, the woman was the one who usually performs this ritual. There is an intense psychological bond between women and nature, in which the old rituals still defend until the modern era today. This tradition indirectly maintains the balance of natural ecosystems; respect human nature, to maintain good relations with nature.

They return from the forest before noon, in order to prepare lunch for the family and home furniture cleaning. After passing noon, Dayak Mali women go to the fields to the leftovers with their neighbors. They return before 5 pm in order to prepare dinner for their families. So every day to continue with the same work. From an early age, both men and women Dayak, in everyday life, the nature surrounding the introduction of our lives is a top priority (Riwut, 2011)²⁰.

For women of Dayak Mali, nature is the source of the breath that matters is the source of life, where they can find food to feed their children. In his work titled *Le feminism ou la mort*, Françoise d'Eaubonne figure who first coined the term ecofeminism expressed the view that there is a direct relationship between the oppression of women and the oppression of nature (Tong, 1998)²¹. Woman preserving nature for the survival of their children and grandchildren, if there are activities that destroy nature, it can not directly touch the lives of women. Dayak Mali women are then trapped in tradition. They participate in caring for and maintaining traditions built on masculinity, benefiting other parties (men).

Women can give birth to children of their offspring, but the land will not give birth to the ground. Therefore they continue to preserve nature for the sustainability of their children. If the natural ecosystem has been damaged by the massive expansion of oil companies and mining companies-that, it threatens their customary life-it is no longer where they make a living; firewood for cooking, vegetables to meat, fish for a side dish, and rice grains to be rice.

By Karen J. Warren, beliefs, values, attitudes and underlying assumptions of the Western world against himself and his formed by the frame of the patriarchal conceptual expression of thought, which aims to explain, justify and maintain the relationship between domination and subordination in general and male domination against women in particular (Tong, 1998)²². In this case, the patriarchal framework is used as a tool for the control of natural resources. Not infrequently, they (rulers) mention the exploitation of nature as part of the development. Development for whom?

The name of development and the welfare society's sake, the reason why big companies, which are incidentally exploiting their natural resources, can quickly obtain operating permits. According to Johan Galtung, development is an attempt to daily basic human needs, either

¹⁸Mulder, N. (2003). *Toward Civil Society? Southeast Asian Images*. Yogyakarta: Kanisius Printing and Publishing House.

¹⁹Niko, N. (2017). *The marginalization of Benawan Dayak Women (Case Study in Cowet Village, Balai District, Sanggau Regency, West Kalimantan)*. Bunga Rampai, Knowledge from Women: Sexuality, Victimization, and the Elimination of Sexual Violence: National Commission on Violence Against Women, Jakarta.

²⁰Riwut, N. (2011). *Bawin Dayak: Kedudukan, Fungsi, dan Peran Perempuan Dayak (Bawin Dayak: Position, Function, and Role of Dayak Women)*. Yogyakarta: Galang Press.

²¹Tong, R. P. (1998). *Feminist Thought: Pengantar Paling Komprehensif Kepada Arus Utama Pemikiran Feminis (Feminist Thought: The Most Comprehensive Introduction to the Mainstream of Feminist Thought)*. Yogyakarta: Jalasutra.

²²Op. Cit.

individually or in groups, in ways that do not cause damage to both the social and natural environment (Triyono, 2007)²³. So the question then, for the sake of public welfare Which is the actual existence of the big companies?

In his book published in 1962, Rachel Carson warned the American people that unless they begin to pay attention to the interests of the environment, all the "vandalism committed to the environment (including) contamination of water, soil, rivers, and sea with hazardous material, and even deadly ... [certainly] would destroy or change the material that is the base form of the future "(Tong, 1998)²⁴. Carson thought is true even to this day, where the Americans control the expansion of foreign companies, dredge and exploit the country's natural wealth. Furthermore, local women (who are not educated) will forever be a spectator and victims for their mastery of nature.

In 2009, palm oil companies carried out socialization to get public attention, so the function changes forests into palm oil plantations. When that many people who do not agree. Similarly, the exploration of mining companies. The resistance of the small, including Dayak Mali women who firmly rejected the transfer functions of their forests into plantations and mining it seems futile. They do not even have access to and control of discontinuing exploitation by oil companies and mining companies operating because they do not have power and authority.

In his essay that was widely published in various anthologies, *The Land Ethic*, Aldo Leopold wrote that we should think of nature as a "fountain of energy flowing through the cycle of soil, plants, and animals" (Tong, 1998)²⁵. In this assertion, that nature is a source of livelihood for all living beings — similarly, the woman who is the source of life for humans through the cycle of birth.

Leopold thought of *The Land Ethic*, that is not a new thing for Dayak Mali women. Even the philosophy that has been handed down a tradition since the days of their ancestors. Dayak Mali women today still maintain traditions such as; feeding the soil, forests and plants, and animals. Then the ritual gave nature permission before opening the land for farming, before building a house, and after the rice harvest. This tradition shows that life is close between humans, and nature still exists either.

Ecology and women's traditions have existed in the middle of the Dayak Mali people. There is an intense psychological bond between women and nature, where they still maintain old rituals until modern times. These traditions indirectly maintain the balance of natural ecosystems; humans respect nature, maintain good relations with nature.

CONCLUSION

Based on the discussion can be explained that the tradition of life on Dayak women is an excellent example of how the relationship between humans and nature is intertwined. The value of women in the public eye Dayak tribes prized the Dayak youths are very protective and respectful of his teenage tribe girls (Riwut, 2011)²⁶. Therefore, the role of Dayak Malays meant to maintain the environmental balance in the region where they live. For women of Dayak Mali, nature is the source of the breath, which means that it is the source of life, where they can find food to feed the children and their families. Women preserve nature for the survival of their children and grandchildren, and if there are activities that destroy nature, it can not direct, it touches the lives of women.

This research is expected to be the entry point for other allied studies, namely about Dayak Mali women. Much research on the development of underdeveloped areas only touches on the

²³Triyono, Coat of Arms. (2007). *Development as Peace*. Jakarta: Obor Indonesia Foundation.

²⁴Tong, R. P. (1998). *Feminist Thought: Pengantar Paling Komprehensif Kepada Arus Utama Pemikiran Feminis* (Feminist Thought: The Most Comprehensive Introduction to the Mainstream of Feminist Thought). Yogyakarta: Jalasutra.

²⁵Op. Cit.

²⁶Riwut, N. (2011). *Bawin Dayak: Kedudukan, Fungsi, dan Peran Perempuan Dayak* (Bawin Dayak: Position, Function, and Role of Dayak Women). Yogyakarta: Galang Press.

fields of infrastructure, economics, and development strategies in advancing underdeveloped village areas. Meanwhile, not many people have studied more deeply about Dayak Mali women. In this study, Dayak Mali women are both objects and subjects of research. I hope that the recommendations from the results of this study will be in the form of a women's empowerment program.

The empowerment program for women is expected to be a role model for women's empowerment in other underdeveloped village areas in West Kalimantan. The contributions of this study are 1) the development of studies on the sociology of indigenous community; 2) contributing public policy recommendations to local government; 3) efforts to develop human resources for communities in underdeveloped rural areas by strengthening local resources 4) developing gender-based studies of indigenous communities.

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