

The Nias Community's Perception of Educational Marginalization in Siopat-Opat Neighborhood in 2025

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Abstract

Marginalization in Indonesia remains a complex issue, particularly affecting women who often face limitations in accessing education. This phenomenon occurs within the Nias community in Tapan Nauli Village, Neighborhood III Siopat-opat, reflecting the marginalization of women, especially in education. This study aims to explore the perceptions of the Nias community regarding the educational marginalization of women in Neighborhood III Siopat-opat. This study aims to explore the perceptions of the Nias community regarding the educational marginalization of women in Neighborhood III Siopat-opat. This study used a phenomenological qualitative approach involving five informants selected through purposive sampling, consisting of neighborhood heads, traditional leaders, and community members. Data were collected through in-depth interviews and field observations with neighborhood heads, traditional leaders, and community members, as well as field observations. Data analysis was conducted thematically to identify patterns and meanings in the community's perceptions of the marginalization of women's education. The results of the study show that the marginalization of women's education is influenced by economic factors, limited access to schools, and the persistence of patriarchal culture. However, there are signs of a shift in public opinion towards supporting educational equality between men and women. The marginalization of women's education still occurs, but there is potential for social change through the role of the government and traditional leaders in promoting more inclusive education based on the local context.

Keywords: Perception, Marginalization, Nias Community, Education

Introduction

The issue of educational equality remains a challenge in Indonesia, even though the national primary school enrollment rate is approaching parity. A report by the Ministry of Education shows that gender parity has been achieved at the primary school level, but disparities remain at higher levels and in the quality of education (ACDP Indonesia, 2013). This situation is exacerbated in remote or culturally strong areas, where structural and cultural barriers limit access for vulnerable groups, including women and the poor (East Asia Forum, 2024). Therefore, understanding local communities' perceptions of education is important to understand how marginalization is formed and perpetuated.

Educational marginalization refers to a condition in which certain groups do not have equal opportunities to access educational services. This can take the form of limited facilities, gender discrimination, or unequal distribution

of resources (Setyaningsih, 2021). Several studies link marginalization to structured social and economic inequalities, in which local culture and power also influence educational opportunities (Yuliani, 2020). Geographical barriers such as distance from schools and high education costs are often factors that reinforce marginalization, especially in rural areas (Purba, 2022).

Gender inequality in education in Indonesia is not only about the number of male and female students participating, but also relates to the quality and sustainability of education. Studies show that gender inequality in education has a direct impact on regional economic growth, especially outside of Java (Susanti & Pratama, 2022). On the other hand, gender stereotypes that are still embedded in the curriculum and the mindset of society often position women as secondary in education (Agustin, 2023). This shows that an understanding of the local context is needed to know how the community perceives the role of education for boys and girls.

The Siopat-Opat neighborhood, which is predominantly inhabited by the Nias tribe, has unique socio-cultural characteristics. The still-strong patriarchal value system, local traditions that place women in the domestic sphere, and the priority of education for boys can reinforce inequality in access to education (Harefa, 2021). This condition is exacerbated by low family income and limited educational facilities in the region. In such situations, women and poor communities are most at risk of dropping out of school. Understanding community perceptions is important so that strategies can be designed to suit local needs.

Based on these conditions, this study aims to explore the perceptions of the Nias tribe regarding educational marginalization in the Siopat-Opat neighborhood in 2025 through a qualitative approach. The focus of the study is on how the community views the obstacles, causes, and impacts of educational marginalization, and what their expectations are for change. A qualitative approach was chosen so that the voices of the local community, including traditional leaders and residents, could be heard in a more contextual manner. The results of this study are expected to contribute to the literature on educational marginalization and serve as recommendations for more inclusive educational policies that are in line with local cultural values.

Although various studies have discussed educational inequality and marginalization in Indonesia, studies that specifically examine the perceptions of the Nias tribe regarding the marginalization of women's education in the Siopat-opat community are still limited. In fact, community perceptions play an important role in shaping educational practices and sustainability. Therefore, this study aims to analyze the perceptions of the Nias tribe regarding the forms, causes, and impacts of the marginalization of women's education in the Siopat-Opat III neighborhood in 2025.

Methods

This study uses a qualitative approach with a phenomenological design to explore the perceptions of the Nias tribe regarding the marginalization of women's education in Tapan Nauli Neighborhood III Siopat-opat. Research informants were selected using purposive sampling techniques, consisting of neighborhood heads, traditional leaders, and members of the Nias tribe. There were five informants, determined based on the principle of data saturation, which is the condition when the data obtained has been repeated and no new significant information or themes have been found.

Data were collected through in-depth interviews and field observations. Interviews were conducted using semi-structured interview guidelines to explore informants' views on the forms, causes, and impacts of marginalization of



women's education. The data collection process was carried out with due regard for research ethics, including obtaining informed consent from all informants.

Data validity was maintained through source triangulation, by comparing information obtained from various informants, as well as member checking, which is informing the informants of the interview results to ensure the accuracy of the data. Data analysis was conducted thematically through several stages, namely transcription of interview data, initial coding, grouping of codes into themes and sub-themes, and interpretation of themes based on the socio-cultural context of the Nias tribe.

Table 1. Research Informants

Informant 1	Head of the Neighborhood
Informant 2	Traditional Leader
Informant 3	Community 1
Informant 4	Community 2
Informant 5	Community 3

(Primary Data, 2025)

Results

The results of the study exploring the Perceptions of the Nias Tribe Community regarding Educational Marginalization in the Siopat-Opat Environment in 2025 are as follows.

Table 2. Themes and Sub-themes of the Nias Tribe's Perceptions of Educational Marginalization in the Siopat-Opat Area in 2025

Main Theme	Sub-theme/Indicator	Verbatim Quotes (Summary)	Informant
Access to Education	Many poor girls still drop out of school	"Access is still lacking, but there are still girls from poor families who drop out of school."	Neighborhood Head
	Remote class program to facilitate access	"There are remote classes to facilitate access to education."	Neighborhood Head
	Distance of secondary school is far	"Access to education is available, but high schools are quite far away, so many children drop out."	Community 3 (Farmer)
Economic Factors	Cost is a major constraint	"My children are all in school, but money is a problem."	Community 1 (Elementary school teacher)
	Uneven assistance	"The local government distributes it, but it has not been evenly distributed to people far from densely populated areas."	Neighborhood Head
	Poor girls most vulnerable to dropping out of school	"Poor girls usually drop out of school the most."	Community 1 (Elementary school teacher)
Patriarchal Culture	Higher priority for boys in school	"In the past, society prioritized boys to go to high school, while girls were considered enough to help their parents or marry young."	Traditional Leaders
	Women don't need to go to high school	"Women don't need to go to school, they just need to be able to read and write and help their families."	Community 3 (Farmer)
	Boys are prioritized	"It's more important for boys to go to high school, for girls, if they can go to school, that's good, but if not, that's fine too."	Community 1 (Elementary school teacher)

Main Theme	Sub-theme/Indicator	Verbatim Quotes (Summary)	Informant
Role of Government & Traditional Leaders	Shift to a more equal view	"I don't agree that women are limited, they also have the right to go to university and achieve their dreams."	Community 2 (housewife)
	The government makes remote classes	"There are remote classes to facilitate access to education."	Neighborhood Head
	Traditional leaders provide education	"Now I am trying to convey to society that both men and women should have equal opportunities in education."	Traditional Leaders
Community Expectations	More scholarships	"Maybe there needs to be more scholarship assistance, as a bridge to achieve children's dreams."	Community 1 (Elementary school teacher)
	Parents' awareness is further enhanced	"The best solution is scholarships and increased parental awareness."	Community 2 (housewife)
	Schools closer to residential areas	"If you want to reduce the problem, maybe the government should make schools closer."	Community 3 (Farmer)

(Primary Data, 2025)

These themes were obtained from in-depth interviews and field observations. Based on the table above, it can be seen that educational marginalization in the Siopat-Opat neighborhood is influenced by several main factors, as follows.

Access to Education Remains Limited

Some informants assessed that access to education in the Siopat-Opat neighborhood still faces obstacles, particularly in relation to the distance to high schools and limited facilities. Informant 1 (head of the neighborhood) said, "Access is still lacking, but it is true that girls from poor families still drop out of school." A similar point was made by a member of the farming community: "Access to education does exist, but the distance to high school is quite far, so many children drop out" (Informant 5).

Economic Factors as the Main Cause of School Dropouts

Almost all informants emphasized that economic factors are the biggest obstacle to the continuity of children's education. The interview results showed that "My children all go to school, but the costs are a problem" (Informant 3). The neighborhood head also added that government assistance is still not evenly distributed to communities living far from residential centers.

Patriarchal Culture and Education

Patriarchal culture still strongly influences the community's perception of girls' education. A traditional leader said, "In the past, the community prioritized boys to attend higher education, while girls were considered sufficient to help their parents or marry young" (Informant 2). The community expressed a similar view: "Girls don't need to attend higher education, it is enough if they can read and write and then help the family" (Informant 5). However, there has been a shift in values among the younger generation. A different view from other members of the community stated, "I disagree that women should be restricted; they also have the right to higher education and to achieve their dreams" (Informant 4).

The Role of the Government and Traditional Leaders in Education

The village government is considered to have made efforts to improve access to education, one of which is through a remote classroom program. However, limitations in the distribution of aid remain an issue. The neighborhood head stated, "There are remote classes to facilitate access to education" (Informant 1). Meanwhile, traditional leaders admit that they are trying to participate in educating the community. "Now I am trying to convey to the community that both men and women should have equal opportunities in education" (Informant 2).

Community Expectations for Education in the Future

The community has high hopes that education will become more inclusive and equitable. Scholarships and the construction of schools closer to home are considered the main solutions. "Perhaps there needs to be more scholarships, as a bridge to achieving children's dreams" (Informant 3). Another community member emphasized, "If you want to reduce the problem, maybe the government should build schools closer to home. Or build facilities that help children" (Informant 5).

Discussion

Limited Access to Education & Geographical Barriers

This shows that geographical barriers contribute to school dropout rates, especially in rural areas. Ananda et al. (2025) explain that educational disparities in Indonesia are caused by the uneven distribution of teachers and limited educational infrastructure in villages. This condition confirms that physical access remains a central issue in realizing equitable education.

As a result, girls are more often sacrificed because they are considered "not really needing" higher education. Bergeron's (2019) study in a global context also found that physical access is a key requirement for educational equality, especially for minority groups or women. This shows that improving educational infrastructure must be a priority in order to reduce marginalization.

The role of village governments in providing remote classrooms is a first step toward addressing the issue of access to education. However, informants believe that this program has not yet reached all areas and is still unevenly distributed. This effort remains important because it provides opportunities for children to continue their education despite limited facilities. Supianto et al. (2023) emphasize that strategies for providing schools in remote areas must be tailored to local needs in order to be effective. Therefore, access to education in Siopat-Opat must continue to be strengthened by providing closer and higher quality schools.

Economic Factors as a Cause of School Dropouts

Girls are usually the first to drop out of school because they are considered less of a priority than boys. This finding is in line with Setyadi's (2022) research, which found that educational inequality in Indonesia is greatly influenced by the socio-economic background of the family. Therefore, government intervention to help poor families through scholarships is very important.

Economic conditions also create an "opportunity cost" dilemma for families. Some parents choose to have their children help with household chores or work rather than continue their education because they can provide short-term economic contributions. This shows how pressing economic needs cause long-term education to be neglected. The study by Hidayat & Nuruzzaman (2022) also emphasizes that poor families often face a dilemma between education costs and

daily needs. Thus, education policies must consider the economic realities of poor families so that children can continue to attend school.

Informants from the community proposed an increase in scholarships that are more targeted. Scholarships are considered an important bridge to realizing the dreams of children from poor families. This shows that the community is aware of the importance of education, but requires real financial support. Research by Karimah & Susanti, (2022) proves that reducing gender inequality in education has a positive impact on regional economic growth. Thus, financial support not only reduces marginalization but also contributes to regional development.

Patriarchal Culture and Gender Norms

The results of the study show that girls are more often asked to help with household chores than to continue their education. This reinforces the traditional view that men are more suited to higher education. Research by Handayani et al. (2024) also confirms that patriarchal gender stereotypes limit women's access to education. Thus, cultural norms still play a strong role in perpetuating inequality.

Culturally-based educational marginalization does not only occur in Nias, but also in other regions in Indonesia. For example, research by Dewi & Tobing, (2025) shows that the patriarchal system in Bali also causes discrimination against women in education and inheritance. This condition shows that patriarchy as a social construct has strong roots in various communities. The same thing can be seen in Siopat-Opat, where traditional norms are difficult to change because they are ingrained. Therefore, a cultural approach must be involved in efforts for change.

However, this study also found a shift in community attitudes towards greater support for women's education. Traditional leaders have even begun to emphasize the importance of equal opportunities for men and women. This indicates a change in social values that opens up opportunities for educational equality. The study by Hidayat & Nuruzzaman (2022) also emphasizes that changes in community attitudes are an important asset in developing inclusive education in rural areas. Thus, even though patriarchy is still strong, signs of social transformation are beginning to appear in Siopat-Opat.

The Role of the Government and Traditional Leaders

The village government has a significant role in reducing educational marginalization through remote classroom programs and aid distribution. Although not yet evenly distributed, this measure is considered to help children from remote areas access education. However, limited resources mean that this policy is not yet fully effective. Research by Ananda et al. (2025) states that the education gap in rural areas can be reduced through the redistribution of teachers and improvements in digital infrastructure. This shows that local government policies need to be continuously strengthened to be more equitable and sustainable.

Traditional leaders also have a major influence in changing people's mindset towards education. One of the traditional leaders interviewed emphasized that customs should not limit education, but rather support equal opportunities. This role is important because traditional leaders are often role models in traditional societies. Research by Supianto et al. (2023) found that education policies in remote areas are more effective when local leaders are involved. Thus, traditional leaders can become agents of change in eliminating educational marginalization.

Collaboration between village governments and traditional leaders is a potential strategy for creating inclusive

education. The government can provide facilities and assistance, while traditional leaders promote social legitimacy so that the community is willing to support educational equality. This dual approach can overcome structural and cultural barriers simultaneously. The study by Hidayat & Nuruzzaman (2022) also emphasizes the importance of multi-actor involvement in creating inclusive education. Therefore, collaborative efforts are key to reducing educational marginalization in Siopat-Opat.

Community Expectations & Policy Implications

The results of the study show that the community wants more scholarships so that children can stay in school. This shows that despite patriarchal views, awareness of the value of education is beginning to grow. Research by Hidayat & Nuruzzaman (2022) emphasizes that community participation is an important component of inclusive education in rural areas. Thus, the voice of the community can form the basis for policies that are more responsive to local needs.

The community also wants schools that are closer to reduce distance barriers. This proposal is realistic because physical access has been proven to be the main cause of educational marginalization in rural areas. Supianto et al. (2023) mention that providing satellite schools in remote areas is an effective strategy to expand access. With closer facilities, children will have greater opportunities to continue their education. Therefore, the construction of local schools should be a priority for the government to consider.

This expectation has important implications for regional development. If educational equality can be achieved, the quality of human resources will improve and contribute to local economic growth. Karimah & Susanti, (2022) emphasize that gender equality in education has a significant impact on regional economic growth in Indonesia. This means that investment in education is not only a social issue but also an economic development strategy. Thus, policies that respond to the community's expectations will bring double benefits to Siopat-Opat.

Conclusion

This study concludes that the marginalization of women's education in Siopat-Opat Neighborhood III is still influenced by family economic conditions, limited access to education, and the persistence of patriarchal culture. However, there are signs of a shift in public opinion regarding educational equality between women and men.

Therefore, more contextual education policies are needed, such as scholarships for poor families, improved access to education, and the involvement of traditional leaders and the community in education on equality. This study has limitations in terms of the number of informants and the scope of the research area, so the findings cannot be generalized broadly. Further research is recommended to involve a wider area and a variety of methodological approaches.

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Author Contribution and Competing Interest

The author contributed fully to the research design, data collection, analysis, and writing of this article. The author declares that there are no conflicts of interest related to this research or the preparation of this manuscript.

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