



Achieving the Sustainable Development Goals for Gender Equality: What are the Factors?

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Abstract

Gender equality is one of the main pillars in the sustainable development goals. Gender inequality is still a problem, especially in access to education, employment opportunities, and participation in decision-making. This study aims to analyze the effect of poverty rate, economic growth, high school enrollment rate, illiteracy rate, labor force participation rate, and early marriage on gender development index and gender empowerment index. This research uses a quantitative approach with a descriptive-analytical method. Data were analyzed using multiple linear regression of panel data. The results showed that partially, only the poverty rate variable had a significant effect on the gender empowerment index. Meanwhile, simultaneously, all independent variables have a significant effect on the gender empowerment index. This finding indicates that gender empowerment is affected by various socioeconomic factors collectively. The implications of these results indicate the importance of integrated multisectoral policies to promote women's empowerment through poverty reduction, increased access to education, and prevention of early marriage.

INTRODUCTION

Gender equality is a key aspect in sustainable development, as reflected in the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) point five, namely gender equality and women's empowerment (D.S, 2020; Mustakimah et al., 2023; Qomariah, 2019; Sudirman & Susilawaty, 2022). In Indonesia, the achievement of gender equality is still a challenge, as seen from the survey conducted by the Global Gender Gap Index 2023 which shows a decline in rank and a level of gender equality that is still far from full experienced by Indonesia. As the survey in 2023 Indonesia was ranked 87 and decreased to rank 100, reaching 69.7% for gender equality globally (Arifin, 2020; Bayumi et al., 2022; Khairunnisak et al., 2023; Judiasih, 2022).

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The phenomenon of gender equality issues in Indonesia is a structural problem seen in various sectors, such as the world of work, education, and the public sphere (Musahwi et al., 2022; Trisnawati & Widiansyah, 2022). Quoted from the official website of the Ministry of Women's Empowerment and Child Protection in 2025 shows that women's participation in education, labor, and politics in Indonesia is still low, with only 27% of women working in the technology sector, 35.7% of female academics at technology institutes, and 41.6% of women studying medical specialties (Gusmansyah, 2019; Sinukaban, 2021). In the political sphere, women's representation only reached 22.14%, while the National Women's Life Experience survey in 2024 showed that one in four women experienced physical or sexual violence. This shows that gender inequality is still a serious issue that requires attention and systematic solutions. So gender inequality is still a big challenge in Indonesia despite various efforts to overcome it, where there is still work to be done to achieve full equality (Edwar, 2024; Febriana, 2021).

Globally, the achievement of gender equality and justice is measured using several main indices, namely the Global Gender Gap Index, Gender Inequality Index, Human Development Index, and Gender Development Index. While in Indonesia, the main indicators of achieving gender equality and justice are the Gender Development Index which is used to measure access to resources that support a decent standard of living and the Gender Empowerment Index which is used to assess the extent of women's involvement and role in politics and the economy (Kertati, 2021; Rahmawati & Hidayah, 2020).

Measurement indices for gender equality tend to use a “one-way” scale that only measures how close women are to achieving parity with men, without considering if there are gaps that favor women or other factors that influence the measurement results. Adding that many other factors play a role in determining the value of a gender equality index, which is often not measured in approaches that only compare men and women (Pambudi & Setiadi, 2024). Therefore, researchers will examine other factors that influence the gender equality achievement index, especially in districts and cities in Jambi Province. Based on BPS data, it is known that Jambi Province shows dynamics in the acquisition of the Gender Development Index and Gender Empowerment Index values. As presented by researchers in the following figure (BPS, 2023).

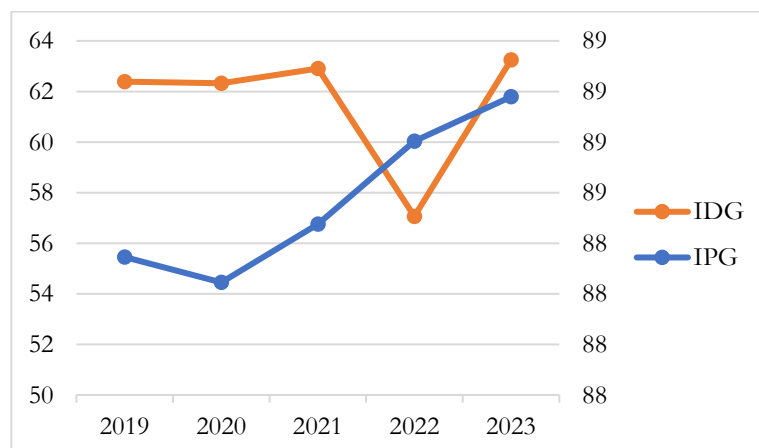


Fig 1. Achievements of the Gender Development Index (IPG) and Gender Empowerment Index (IDG) of Jambi Province for the 2019-2023 Period

The figure above shows that the Gender Development Index (IPG) in the districts and cities of Jambi Province experienced a gradual upward trend from year to year, indicating a stable upward trend. However, there is still a significant gap compared to the National Gender Empowerment Index (IDG) value. Although Jambi Province recorded IPG and IDG slightly above the national average, there are significant differences between districts and cities. Jambi city still faces inequalities in access, participation, control and benefits in education (Siregar et al., 2024). The data findings also show that some areas such as Tebo and Sungai Penuh City showed low achievements. This indicates the need for further efforts in reducing gender inequality, making Jambi relevant for the analysis of factors that influence IPG and IDG. Therefore, to analyze the factors affecting IPG and IDG, Jambi Province is a relevant choice, as well as contributing to policy efforts to reduce the gender gap in the area.

Generally, poverty, economic growth, and education have a major influence on not achieving gender equality (Direja & Paramitasari, 2022; Kabeer, 2018; Klasen, 2002; Pambudi & Setiadi, 2024; Septari et al., 2022). An area with a high poverty rate shows that women are often hindered in accessing education equal to men, thus limiting their opportunities to participate in the labor market or get a decent job (Khaerani, 2017; Monika & Dora, 2025; Mulasari, 2015). Previous studies show that women in poor families tend to experience constraints in continuing their education, which negatively impacts their participation rate in the workforce. poverty is a fundamental driver of gender inequality, which hinders women's economic and social empowerment (Dellie et al., 2024; Muzakkir & Yunanda, 2021; Wijayanti & Jatiningsih, 2022).

In addition, the economic growth of a region or commonly measured by Gross Regional Domestic Product (GRDP), also plays an important role in creating inclusive and gender-friendly employment opportunities to achieve gender equality (Astuti & Priyono, 2020). Countries with higher Gross Regional Domestic Product (GRDP) levels tend to have more policies that support gender equality, such as access to education and women's participation in the workforce (Damayanti, 2021; Nurhayati & Aji, 2020). In addition, in the world of work, inequality is reflected in unequal wage payments where women get lower wages than men. In many developing countries, although women have higher levels of education, they still face major barriers to entry into the labor market, such as gender discrimination and a lack of policies that support female workers (Assaad, 1997; Indiworo, 2017; Siregar et al., 2024).

Another factor that influences gender inequality is school enrollment (Devi & Iftihanah, 2024; Naharin et al., 2023). High school or equivalent low school enrollment rates, especially at the secondary and tertiary levels, are directly correlated with low employment opportunities for women, as well as with gender disparities in various sectors of life. Women's low school enrollment reduces their chances of getting decent jobs and participating in decision-making. that while education has improved, equality in earnings and leadership opportunities has remained stagnant. Thus the School Participation Rate in Jambi Province can relevantly affect IDG and IPG.

This is also closely linked to illiteracy rates, where women with low literacy levels will find it more difficult to obtain opportunities to work or take leadership roles in society. high illiteracy rates among women limit their ability to participate in the formal economy and decision-making in the family and community. high illiteracy rates among women remain a constraint to gender development, especially in rural areas.

Furthermore, early marriage also affects women's empowerment. In countries or regions with high rates of early marriage, women are often forced

to drop out of school and focus on domestic roles, which limits their ability to achieve economic and social equality. Early marriage hinders women's education and limits their participation in the workforce, as they often have to prioritize domestic and family roles at a young age (Raj, 2010). The high percentage of early marriages negatively impacts women's access to education and economic empowerment, and increases the risk of intergenerational poverty. Early marriage also indicates that many children drop out of school. Dropping out of school is one of the factors that influence gender inequality. In the research, early marriage has become an obstacle and barrier to the implementation of gender equality.

Women's empowerment in Ethiopia is influenced by individual factors such as education level and wealth status as well as geographical location. The economic dimension contributes significantly to the variation in the gender inequality index. The measurement of inequality in economic and labor participation has a major impact on the results given to the index. In addition, other factors such as education, health, and social conditions also play an important role in determining the level of gender inequality. There are significant differences between men and women in completing higher education, with women having a lower probability of completing higher education than men.

Thus, researchers will examine other factors that affect gender equality (IPG and IDG) in Jambi Province, such as Poverty Level, Economic Growth (GRDP), High School Participation Rate or equivalent, Illiteracy Rate, Labor Force Participation Rate and Early Marriage Ratio to gender equality in each district and city in Jambi Province. It is important to further analyze the local factors that influence the value of IPG and IDG in Jambi Province. This research will provide deeper insights into the causes of existing gender equality underachievement and how policies can be optimized to improve these conditions, especially in districts/cities that have lower IDG values.

METHODS

This research is a quantitative study with a descriptive-analytical approach (Alia, 2022; Natalis, 2020; Yani, 2024; Rismayana & Azhar, 2024; Nadhirah et al., 2023; Rahma & Azhar, 2024; Rachmawati & Surya, 2025). This study aims to analyze the factors that influence the Gender Development Index and IDG in Jambi Province during the 2019-2023 period. This study uses statistical data to test the relationship between independent and dependent variables. There are two dependent variables used in this thesis, namely the Gender Development Index and the Gender Empowerment Index and there are six independent variables, namely the Economic Growth Poverty Rate, the High School / Equivalent School Participation Rate, the Illiteracy Rate, the Labor Force Participation Rate, and Early Marriage. The coverage area in this study is 11 districts and cities in Jambi Province, for the period 2019-2023. Data sources are secondary data from the Central Bureau of Statistics and local government reports related to gender empowerment policies and programs for the 2019-2023 period.

Table 1. Data on the dependent variable (Y)

District (Code)	Kerinci (1)	Merangin (2)	Sarolangun (3)	Batanghari (4)	Muaro Jambi (5)	Tanjab Timur (6)	Tanjab Barat (7)	Tebo (8)	Bungo (9)	Jambi (10)	Sungai Penuh (11)
Period	IPG (Y1)										
2019	86,68	88,01	90,67	85,17	80,29	87,76	85,68	90,23	88,63	94,14	94,44
2020	86,65	88,14	90,55	85,01	80,08	87,50	85,66	90,06	88,54	94,03	94,31
2021	86,81	88,24	90,81	85,23	81,06	87,43	85,79	90,40	88,49	94,42	94,41
2022	87,03	88,35	91,65	85,44	81,55	87,68	86,17	90,92	88,61	94,80	94,49
2023	87,15	88,82	91,38	85,57	82,12	87,90	86,51	91,63	88,83	95,01	94,54
Period	IDG (Y2)										
2019	59,96	54,25	60,07	75,56	63,18	68,81	68,31	51,98	59,18	68,48	52,87
2020	59,51	54,60	60,20	75,32	62,70	68,93	68,89	51,71	59,23	68,11	52,77
2021	60,00	58,51	60,25	73,12	63,05	69,28	73,20	51,66	59,19	67,88	52,78
2022	60,36	58,51	58,68	71,85	63,70	68,98	73,46	49,67	58,68	68,60	53,40
2023	65,16	56,71	61,08	73,87	62,97	69,19	73,39	51,23	56,05	68,71	52,51

Source: Indonesia Central Statistics Agency

Table 1 shows data on the two dependent variables under study, namely the IPG and IDG. As presented, this data was obtained through BPS Indonesia over a 5-year perio.

Table 2. Independent variable data (X)

District (Code)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
Period	Poverty Level (X1)										
2019	7,13	8,48	8,45	9,75	3,83	11,54	10,56	6,47	6,60	8,12	2,81
2020	7,30	8,63	8,42	9,65	3,83	10,95	10,29	6,26	5,80	8,27	3,03
2021	7,71	9,11	8,87	10,05	4,53	11,39	10,75	6,68	6,23	9,02	3,41
2022	7,57	8,70	8,48	9,63	4,47	10,91	10,00	6,34	5,38	8,33	2,97
2023	7,54	8,90	8,54	9,45	4,43	10,85	9,79	6,46	5,29	8,24	3,00
Period	Economic Growth (X2)										
2019	4,23	4,25	4,26	5,07	4,79	4,21	5,01	4,76	4,19	4,73	5,01
2020	3,81	0,78	-0,25	-0,43	0,35	-3,44	-0,29	-0,03	-0,48	-4,24	-0,16
2021	3,89	5,24	6,61	4,85	3,96	0,14	1,36	4,29	4,99	4,13	3,67
2022	4,43	5,72	6,73	12,27	8,05	0,57	2,56	6,29	4,73	5,38	4,44
2023	5,73	5,28	4,02	3,70	6,28	2,17	3,51	4,50	4,66	6,61	4,92
Period	School Participation Rate (X3)										
2019	79,20	61,05	64,88	75,03	78,86	62,98	74,03	69,20	62,49	84,01	88,70
2020	78,03	60,02	65,27	75,02	79,08	63,33	74,27	70,83	62,03	82,95	88,13
2021	78,48	60,39	65,29	74,65	78,19	62,89	74,77	70,51	62,89	83,41	88,57
2022	71,84	64,18	75,96	78,93	84,51	51,95	70,84	67,55	43,58	90,22	89,44
2023	71,46	62,25	73,38	76,83	83,59	50,8	67,79	67,78	57,14	87,8	87,81
Period	Illiteracy Number (X4)										
2019	3,09	1,18	1,60	2,28	1,36	5,13	1,27	2,19	1,70	0,75	1,76
2020	3,03	2,32	1,83	1,90	0,58	3,43	0,91	2,31	1,71	0,57	1,26
2021	2,20	1,83	2,12	1,58	1,34	3,43	1,63	2,25	1,94	0,86	2,76
2022	3,23	2,31	3,14	1,19	1,94	2,61	1,13	2,68	1,53	0,45	3,32
2023	2,44	1,61	2,83	2,29	2,01	3,46	1,16	2,7	1,26	0,44	2,24
Period	Labor Force Participation Rate (X5)										
2019	66,26	68,91	65,20	60,35	59,16	69,84	70,42	70,17	63,78	66,30	63,18
2020	69,55	70,17	68,58	67,02	61,63	74,18	74,83	71,13	64,89	64,12	65,99
2021	70,90	69,85	64,86	68,81	62,78	71,22	73,89	70,65	63,58	63,12	64,92
2022	73,53	69,50	66,74	63,42	67,21	72,85	70,00	69,02	67,83	64,52	63,02
2023	71,89	71,17	66,52	62,01	74,38	67,56	70,17	70,13	70,30	64,85	68,24

Period	Early marriage (X6)										
2019	52,75	51,85	44,51	37,90	29,45	44,80	41,94	45,80	51,47	18,44	36,23
2020	49,91	44,10	46,79	31,63	28,37	42,14	42,68	42,20	47,48	16,66	37,59
2021	48,92	46,53	41,02	32,23	30,27	43,79	36,88	43,90	50,65	12,22	32,49
2022	49,57	49,57	46,46	33,58	32,38	38,93	40,35	42,38	45,78	18,15	34,88
2023	46,99	45,93	41,92	37,59	33,85	38,41	40,46	41,78	48,03	16,05	33,85

Source: Indonesia Central Statistics Agency

Data analysis using multiple linear regression analysis of panel data through Eviews Software with Common effects, Fixed effects and Random effects approaches.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

At this stage, a panel data regression test will be carried out, which is an analysis method that combines cross-section data (data from several individual units at one time) and time-series data (data from one individual unit over several times). There are three main models in regression, namely CEM, FEM, and REM, for model selection is done by Chow test, Hausman test, and LM test. In this first stage, the chow test was conducted.

Table 3. Chow test results

	Y-X	Statistic	d.f	Prob
IPG (Y1)	Cross-section F	680.666484	(10,38)	0.0000
	Cross-section Chi-Square	285.680124	10	0.0000
IDG (Y2)	Cross-section F	40.620204	(10,38)	0.0000
	Cross-section Chi-Square	135.228134	10	0.0000

Based on table 3 above, it can be seen that the chow test results obtained a Cross Section F probability value of $0.000 < 0.05$, which means that the most appropriate model used in estimating the regression equation in this thesis is the Fixed Effects Model, and because the fixed effects model is selected, the hausman test is then carried out.

Table 4. Hausman test results

	Y-X	Chi-Sq.Statistic	Chi-Sq. d.f	Prob
IPG (Y1)	Cross-section random	0.799923	6	0.9921
IDG (Y2)	Cross-section random	5.064136	6	0.5356

Table 4 shows the acquisition of a random cross section probability value of $0.9921 > 0.05$ and Prob $0.5356 > 0.05$, this indicates that the model selected for use in this thesis is the Random Effect Model (REM). and because the random effect model is selected, the next stage is the LM (Lagrange Multiple) test.

Table 5. Test Results (Lagrange Multiple)

	Y-X	Cross Section	Hypothesis Test Time	Both
IPG (Y1)	Breusch-Pagan	105,224536...	2,26094839...	107,485484...
		(0.0000)	(0.1327)	(0.0000)
IDG (Y2)	Breusch-Pagan	74,8331650...	1,11950542...	75,9526704...
		(0.0000)	(0.2900)	(0.0000)

From the Lagrange Multiple test results in the table above, it shows that the Breusch-Pagan cross section probability value is $0.000 < 0.05$, meaning that

H_0 is rejected. Then the most appropriate model used in estimating the regression equation is the Random Effect Model. From the three test results, it shows that there are 2 tests that produce the Random Effect Model, namely the Hausman Test and the Lagrange Multiplier Test. Thus, it can be concluded that the best model approach used to determine the effect of poverty rate (X1), economic growth (X2), high school enrollment rate (X3), illiteracy rate (X4), labor force participation rate (X5), and early marriage (X6) on IPG (Y1) and IDG (Y2) is the Random Effect Model (REM). Therefore, the further analysis carried out is the classic assumption test, but only the multicollinearity test and heteroscedasticity test are relevant.

Table 6. Multicollinearity test results

	X1	X2	X3	X4	X5	X6
X1	1.000000	-0,158231	-0,411881	0,140426	0,361905	0,090035
X2	-0,158231	1.000000	0,162416	-0,017787	-0,204861	0,021254
X3	-0,411881	0,162416	1.000000	-0,261052	-0,363539	-0,608741
X4	0,140426	-0,017787	-0,261052	1.000000	0,278056	0,492384
X5	0,361905	-0,204861	-0,363539	0,278056	1.000000	0,421255
X6	0,090035	0,021254	-0,608741	0,492384	0,421255	1.000000

Based on table 6, it can be concluded that the correlation between variables is <0.8 , which means there is no indication of multicollinearity so that it can be included in the regression model.

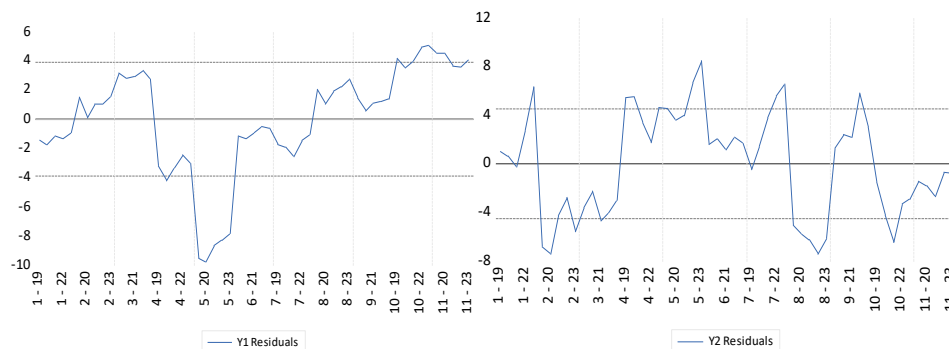


Fig 2. Heteroscedasticity Test Results

Based on the graph data above, it shows that the residuals (blue color) do not cross the boundaries (-500 and 500), and the residual points are randomly scattered and do not form a certain pattern. Thus it can be concluded that the research data does not occur symptoms of heteroscedasticity, which means that this research data passes the heteroscedasticity test and can continue the panel data regression stage. The regression results:

$$\text{IPG (Y1)} = 90.1292 - 0.1873\text{TK} - 0.0622\text{PE} + 0.0232\text{APS} + 0.5622\text{ABH} + 0.0148\text{TPAK} - 0.0944\text{PD}$$

$$\text{IDG (Y2)} = 66.4069 + 2.4468\text{TK} - 0.1023\text{PE} + 0.1021\text{APS} - 0.6660\text{ABH} - 0.3064\text{TPAK} - 0.1936\text{PD}$$

Table 7. Simultaneous F test results

Variable Y	F count	F table	Prob	Description
IPG (Y1)	0,6855	2,2946	0,662	Not Simultaneously Affected
IDG (Y2)	15,97466		0.000	Significantly affected simultaneously

Furthermore, the results obtained from the coefficient of determination test with an adjusted R² value of the Gender Development Index (IPG) of

0.036200, which means that only 3.62% of the variation in the Gender Development Index can be explained by the independent variables (TK, PE, APS, ABH, TPAK, PD). Meanwhile, the adjusted R² value of the Gender Empowerment Index (IDG) is 0.624604, which means that about 62.46% of the variation in the Gender Empowerment Index can be explained by the independent variables (TK, PE, APS, ABH, TPAK, PD) in the model.

Table 8. Partial t test results

IPG (Y1) on X	t count	Prob	Conclusion	IDG (Y2) on X	t count	Prob	Conclusion
X1	0,714	0,478	No effect	X1	8,089	0.000	Significant effect
X2	0,313	0,755	No effect	X2	0,446	0,657	No effect
X3	0,323	0,748	No effect	X3	1,23	0,224	No effect
X4	0,832	0,409	No effect	X4	0,854	0,397	No effect
X5	0,08	0,93	No effect	X5	1,57	0,112	No effect
X6	1,105	0,274	No effect	X6	1,964	0,05	No effect

As presented, it can be seen that poverty rate (X1), economic growth (X2), high school enrollment rate (X3), illiteracy rate (X4), labor force participation rate (X5), and early marriage (X6) have no partial or simultaneous effect on HDI (Y1). It is also known that poverty rate (X1), economic growth (X2), high school enrollment rate (X3), illiteracy rate (X4), labor force participation rate (X5), and early marriage (X6) have a simultaneous effect on IDG (Y2). Furthermore, it is known that only the Poverty Rate (X1) has a significant partial effect on IDG.

The results showed that the Poverty Level had no partial effect on the Gender Development Index but had a significant partial effect on the Gender Empowerment Index. These results are in line with research conducted by (Dellie et al., 2024), which states that the level of community poverty significantly affects women's empowerment, it is also stated that in general poverty limits women's self-determination and limits their participation in the economic, social, and political fields. It is widely recognized that poverty is a basic driver of gender inequality, which hinders women's economic and social empowerment. Likewise, poverty has a negative and insignificant effect on the Gender Development Index. This is because the Gender Development Index reflects gender inequality or equality in various aspects of life, such as health, education, economic participation, and political power. Although poverty can affect women's overall social and economic conditions, not all gender development factors are closely related to poverty levels. One of the reasons why poverty is no longer the main cause of gender inequality is because of the government's efforts to achieve equitable education through the compulsory education program. The compulsory education program has provided equal opportunities for boys and girls to get an education. Thus, this program helps to reduce the gender gap that occurs in education which will further improve the calculation of the Gender Development Index in the education dimension.

This finding reveals that only the Poverty Level has a partial influence on IDG. However, none of the other variables examined in this study have a partial influence on IPG or IDG. In line with the Gender Development Index and Gender Empowerment Index has a positive but insignificant relationship with Economic Growth, because gender empowerment on economic growth takes time to develop. Women's empowerment, such as higher education or participation in the labor market, does not immediately result in significant

economic growth in the short term. As well as the lack of access to education and employment for women so that the Gender Development Index still does not reflect an equal reality on the ground. Economic growth has a positive but insignificant effect on the Gender Development Index. This is due to positive but uneven economic growth, this situation occurs when there is an increase in overall economic activity but the benefits are not felt fairly by all levels of society or regions. The weak influence of economic growth is driven by the concentration of resources and investment in urban areas/regions with industrial sectors. This lack of improvement in community welfare can hinder the quality of social development, which in turn will affect gender development.

The High School Participation Rate / Equivalent partially had no significant effect on the Gender Development Index (Gadoth & Heymann, 2020). Dang & Nguyen, (2021), which states that the Labor Force Participation Rate variable is the least significant variable on the Gender Development Index. In a study conducted by Duku et al., (2022), it was also stated that marital status had no significant effect on the concept of gender equality. However, descriptively expressed by Ardiningrum et al., (2021), that early marriage can be an obstacle in the implementation of achieving gender equality, which can limit women's participation in education and other social access.

CONCLUSION

This study shows that economic and social factors have diverse influences on the Gender Development Index and Gender Empowerment Index in Jambi Province. The poverty rate has a negative relationship with the IPG but a positive effect on the IDG, while economic growth, school enrollment rate, illiteracy rate, labor force participation rate, and early marriage generally have insignificant relationships with the IPG and IDG. The limitations of this study lie in the use of secondary data that may not fully reflect local socio-cultural conditions, as well as the quantitative approach that does not explore qualitative factors in depth. The implications of these findings emphasize the need for more comprehensive policies in improving gender equality, not only through economic aspects but also social empowerment and education. In the future, further research can be conducted by considering cultural factors, local policies, and qualitative approaches to gain a more holistic understanding.

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