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**Enhancing the livelihoods of marginalized  
indigenous women through customary forests in  
Bali, Indonesia**

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**Abstract:** This study examines how, why, and under what conditions marginalized women of customary communities can contribute and gain access to the benefits of the social forestry programme. We found that customary communities' dependence on forest resources creates a structure that divides labour and situates women within a particular set of socio-economic roles in the family and in the public economic spheres. These roles are subject to continuous negotiation of power as the customary community responds to the challenges brought by dynamic economic processes, demographic change, and the impacts of climate change. The communitarian-based local community, which asserts a rigid puritanism ideology, is able to maintain social identity, territory, and preservation of customary forests. On the downside, marginalized indigenous women who are involved in exogenous marriages are denied access to natural resources, local leadership, and residence rights. This is a part of a product of intersectional gendered relations that form the material bases of women's working lives and cultural roles as part of a broader customary community.

**Key words:** marginalized women, puritanism, social forestry, communitarian

**JEL classification:** Q23, R28

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# 1 Introduction

## 1.1 Social forestry: forging a new political space for marginalized indigenous women?

The linkage between social forestry and gender mainstreaming deserves deeper academic scrutiny with reference to its policy implications. In the late 1980s, Indonesia adopted a social forestry agenda to improve forest management and to address land tenure conflict and poverty issues (Lindayati 2002). In 2014, President Widodo's government adopted social forestry as a national priority programme, aiming to assign 12.7 million ha to local community management by 2019 (Dirjen PSKL 2015; Moeliono et al. 2017; Sahide et al. 2020). Then, in 2016, the Indonesian Ministry of Environment and Forestry outlined five social forestry schemes, namely village forests, customary forests, community forests, community plantation forests, and partnership forests (Ministerial Regulation No. 83/2016).

Gender mainstreaming has been adopted as one of the normative principles in forestry policy in Indonesia since it was advocated in 1995 at the 4th United Nations World Conference on Women (Desmiwati 2016). It aims to achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls in line with Goal 5 of the Sustainable Development Goals. Other objectives are to curb deforestation and support sustainable forest management, and to reduce poverty by providing access rights to manage forest lands and create jobs for villagers living in and around forest fringes. Although social forestry is one of the government's strategic priorities, its achievements have been rather limited. Out of 12.7 million ha of the targeted areas, only 3.1 million ha were formally recognized in 2020, with an increase to 4.8 million ha being recognized in 2021, still well below the ambitious goal of 12.7 million ha. However, the total area achieved to date includes 1.1 million ha of customary forests (MoEF 2021; Moeliono et al. 2017; Wibowo et al. 2020).

Despite such limitations, social forestry remains a fundamental part of the broader resistance strategy among civil society and reformist bureaucrats against the historical enclosure of forests in Indonesia (Afiff and Rachman 2019). This relates to the reallocation of resources in the implementation of social forestry, which is often associated with the issue of funding frequently raised by the national government, its link with community livelihoods, and the prevalence of inequality and elite capture (Moeliono et al. 2015). The community participation aspect has also been highlighted, particularly regarding the limited capacity of communities in running business enterprises and expanding their market networks (Agarwal 2010). Other critics have emphasized how gender mainstreaming policies have limited impacts in transforming masculine norms, such as being strong and brave (Thomas 2006).

These problems are exacerbated by the absence of women from the decision-making and implementation processes. While research shows that women's effective presence in decision-making and their associated empowerment benefits their families and their communities (Agarwal 2010), women also often bear the greatest impact of poverty through their irreplaceable role in the family and household. In a wider context, the absence of explicit support for women in forestry policies is also associated with the lack of recognition of women's access to natural resources. Men are still more commonly represented and involved in government programmes as they are typically the nominated heads of the family. Many government officials assume that men are the only or primary decision makers and the main recipients of information, which is further entrenched by a typically patriarchal local culture that discourages women from participating (Murdiningrum 2015).

Ratnasari et al. (2020) showed that abandoned state lands are one avenue for landless women to get access to land. However, the legalization of land access through social forestry projects may

actually lead to landless women's access worsening as the formal land registration papers from the government deny their rights to land. In an Indonesian context, previous studies noted that the lived experiences of marginalized women should be analysed through a process that involves self-representation. It also needs to take account of the history of forest policy and governance as well as forest politics (Siscawati and Mahaningtyas 2012). Such opportunities and constraints should therefore be examined carefully with respect to women's emancipatory potential, which can be achieved through political participation.

## 1.2 Structural exclusion

In seeking to understand the nature of women's exclusion from social forestry, previous studies tended to focus on the technical aspects of barriers to women's participation, and this has led to continuous de-politicization of their participation within the community. To a certain extent, high rates of deforestation are heavily associated with technical problems such as weak law enforcement and weak forest monitoring. These problems are assumed to be addressed through technical solutions (e.g., more information, more training). Some studies, however, have provided a valuable foundation for delving deeper into the structural aspects of women's exclusion. A study by Dauvergne (1994) stated that deforestation is associated with political forces and interests which drive various actors to exploit the forest. Hobley (2007) emphasized the links of local elites with national and transnational elites. Colchester (2002) pointed to property rights, while Agarwal (2001) focused on political equality concerning the voices of marginalized indigenous women. Wibowo (2012) asserted that in a patrilineal society like Java, Indonesia, the head of a family is usually the person invited to attend a meeting, which typically excludes women from discussions. Power and conflict, therefore, are largely absent from discussions on gender equality and this absence limits the political space for substantial transformation (Andersson et al. 2018).

Several studies have been conducted within the scope of customary communities' engagement with social forestry projects in Indonesia. With reference to the cases discussed in this study, earlier literature about Tenganan Village and Kuku Village in Bali Province were useful for identifying the research gaps. Nurjaya (2001) examined the management of the Tenganan customary forest with the aim of understanding the role of the indigenous legal instrument (*Anig-Anig*) in preserving the forest. Karidewi et al. (2012) examined the internal and external factors that affect the effectiveness of *Anig-Anig*. Meanwhile Candrawati (2019) studied the foreign language skills of the local guide working at Alas Kedaton customary forest tourism in Kuku Village. Another study by Baskara et al. (2021) emphasized the aspect of rights to inheritance which are related to the endogamy and exogamy marital systems that determine men's and women's positions. For example, in a marriage between a man from one village and a woman from another village, sanctions usually apply to the man. His position will be demoted from the first to the second strata in the village institution (*Gumi Pulangan*).

## 2 Research aims

In contrast to previous studies, our study examines the gender dimensions of customary forestry in Bali. In particular, it aims to:

- a) understand the ways in which women are involved in and benefit from social forestry, especially before and after legal recognition of customary forestry;
- b) understand the conditions (i.e. socio-cultural and political) that constrain and enable women in participating in the social forestry programme; and

- c) identify strategies to improve women's participation in Indonesia's social forestry programme.

### 3 Theory

#### 3.1 Conceptual framework

We apply theories of the 'powers of exclusion' (Hall et al. 2011) and 'access' (Ribot and Peluso 2003) to create a conceptual framework for this study. Access and exclusion can be viewed as two sides of a coin that work in the same space and time. In their work on the power of exclusion, Hall et al. (2011) showed the powers embedded in the geographical–historical space and the influence of Southeast Asian society, which changes over time. They also showed the processes, actors involved, differential impacts on those that gain and lose, and the counter forms of exclusion that occur (Luthfi 2011). Exclusion is not a random process but is structured by power relations. In rural Southeast Asia, the conditions and processes for exclusion are created by the interactions of four components of power: regulation (policy); force (strength); the market (economics); and legitimacy (recognition) (Hall et al. 2011; Luthfi 2011).

Ribot and Peluso (2003: 153–54) defined access as '... the ability to benefit from something'. This definition is an extension of the classic definition of property as '... the right to benefit from something'. Access, in this context, is understood more as a 'bundle of powers' than the notion of property which means a 'bundle of rights'. Such an access formulation includes a broader range of social relationships that limit or enable the benefits of resource use rather than purely property relationships.

Some people and institutions control access to resources, while others maintain their access through them and the institutions that have control over that access. Analysis of access helps us to understand why some people and institutions benefit from resources, regardless of whether or not they have rights to those resources. This is the main difference between access and property analysis. While the study of property is concerned with understanding claims, which MacPherson (1978) defined as rights, the study of access is concerned with understanding the different ways in which people benefit from resources. To maintain access, subordinate actors often transfer some of the benefits to those who control them (Ribot and Peluso 2003). Illegal access operates through coercion, such as violence or threats, and, clandestinely, forming relationships among those who seek to gain, control, or maintain access (Thompson 1975).

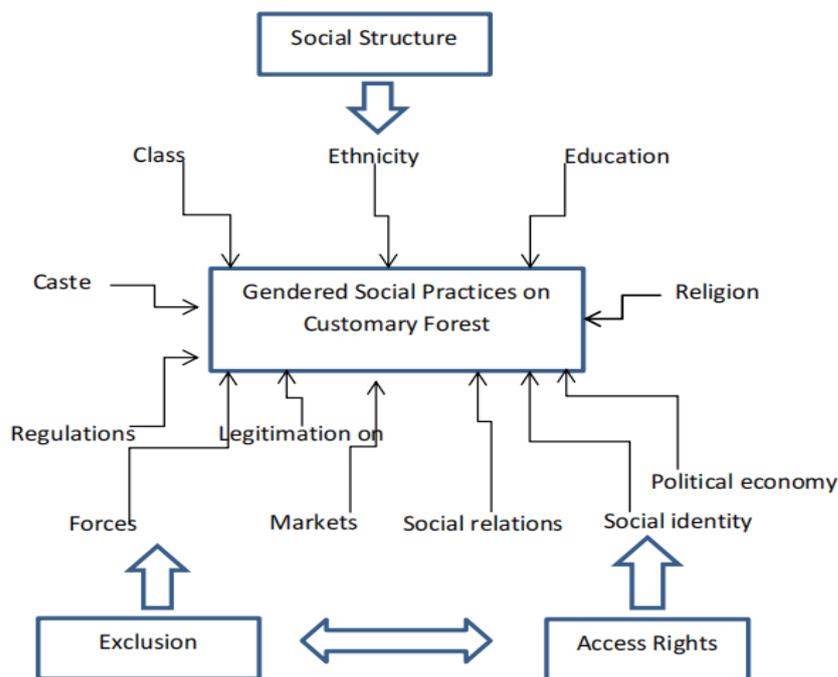
Blaikie (1985) asserted that social capital and identity influence who has priority access to resources. Ribot and Peluso (2003) provided nuance and broadened this discussion by exploring other factors such as technology, capital, markets, knowledge, authority, social identity, and social relations that can shape or influence access. Access is often mediated by social identity groupings based on age, gender, ethnicity, religion, status, profession, place of birth, general education, or other attributes that make up social identity (Moore 1986).

This research also applied the lens of an intersectional feminist approach to identify barriers to women's participation in the implementation of the social forestry programme. Intersectional feminism can be identified in some of the most-attributed work, such as that of Kimberly Crenshaw (1991). Intersectional feminism highlights the importance of the entangled structures or overlapping oppressions that shape gendered social practices. The intersectional dimensions place gender identity and roles in their encounters with class, ethnicity, caste, level of education, and religious affiliation of the gendered subjects. This is concerned with access to forest resources, the

absence of political representation in the decision-making chain, a lack of access to education, the absence of community social institutions, as well as unequal social and economic development as a backdrop of weak collective mobilization to negotiate spaces of participation within the existing power structure (Gabriel et al. 2020). The socio-cultural context, therefore, is mostly associated with situated and localized patriarchy, which structures gender roles. This also highlights the importance of examining the differentiated marginalization associated with the social dimensions of risks and vulnerability (Ravera et al. 2016).

Through the lens of intersectional feminism, it is possible to view the broader context in which the experience of indigenous women is assumed to be a product of culturally built exclusions across different stages of participation (Agarwal 2001). Multidimensional exclusion can be reproduced, for example through hereditary relations (mainly caste), which provides a rigid delineation of insiders and outsiders in organizing access to and control over social forestry-related resources (Elias et al. 2020). We use the intersectional feminist lens in this study to analyse the social forestry programme and its relevance to the structure that sustains the marginalization of indigenous women. Figure 1 illustrates the complexity of the variables or factors which shape the gendered social practices that lead to gender inequality and injustice. The four components of the ‘power of exclusion’ that can lead to the practice of gender inequality interact with the bundle of rights and social structure. Furthermore, gender-based social practices are also influenced by social attributes such as social class, ethnicity, social identity, social relations, education level, and religious affiliation.

Figure 1: Structure of exclusion framework informed by intersectional feminism, exclusion, and access theories



Source: authors' illustration based on Crenshaw (1991), Hall et al. (2011), and Ribot and Peluso (2003).

Regulation is often, but not exclusively, associated with state–legal instruments, which stipulate the rules for access to land and the conditions for its use (Hall et al. 2011). For instance, the social forestry regulation (No. 83/2016) stipulates which farmers are able, or not able, to get access to and benefit from forest lands by using criteria such as farmer’s residence in the designated social forestry areas. The regulation is periodically enforced with violence or threats of violence, whether

by the state or non-state actors (Hall et al. 2011). Prabowo (2017) stated that law enforcement efforts by joint forces involving the army, police, and local government officials were able to remove the forest encroachers who occupied land designated as part of a social forestry project (Prabowo 2017). The market refers to the power of exclusion at work which restricts access in the form of 'price' and the creation of an 'incentives mechanism' (Hall et al. 2011). For instance, Nugroho et al. (2014) showed foreign tourists cancelling their planned visits to Bali due to exchange rate fluctuations. Legitimation determines the basis for moral claims and, of course, in making regulations, markets, and power, so that it becomes the basis of political exclusion and what is considered as socially acceptable (Hall et al. 2011). Prabowo (2017) showed that law enforcement on state forest land in Mesuji which was prone to occupation by illegal encroachers was strengthened by the legitimacy (recognition) of the existing regulations concerning state forest control in the forest area.

## **4 Research methodology**

### **4.1 Data collection**

This study conducted qualitative research with the general aim of exploring meaning and insight produced in certain social situations (Levitt et al. 2017; Strauss and Corbin 2008). This allowed the researchers to explore information and meaning in detail from the viewpoint of actual human experience (Creswell 2009) and the social world in which we live (Polkinghorne 2005). We used an actor-mapping approach, in-depth interviews, field observations, and analysis of secondary data.

Actor mapping was conducted to better understand the main, secondary, and tertiary actors and their power and influence (Walker et al. 2008) in customary forest management. It was also helpful to map the extent to which women play a role in power relations between actors in the context of customary forest management in relation to management, institutional, and decision-making activities at various levels.

In-depth interviews were conducted by engaging selected key informants who could identify and analyse contemporary problems faced by indigenous people in both of the selected villages. The interviews were conducted using hybrid methods, namely virtual (during January 2022) and direct (in person during March 2022) interviews. We used purposive sampling (Acharya et al. 2013), with a primary requirement that informants should have sufficient knowledge and experience related to the topic being studied. The 20 in-depth interviews were conducted with national policy makers and key informants in two villages: Kuku Customary Village (Tabanan District) and Tenganan Pegrisingan Customary Village (Karangasem District), Bali Province, Indonesia. We conducted interviews with three women and five men in Tenganan Village and with two men and four women in Kuku Village. Other informants who engaged in in-depth interviews included one policy maker at the national level and two field facilitators, two officers from the Provincial Forest Management Unit, and one lecturer. We used an open-ended questionnaire to guide the interviews, with each interview lasting between two and three hours. The list of respondents, which included nine men and eleven women, and their affiliations and roles are provided in Tables A1 and A2 in the Appendix.

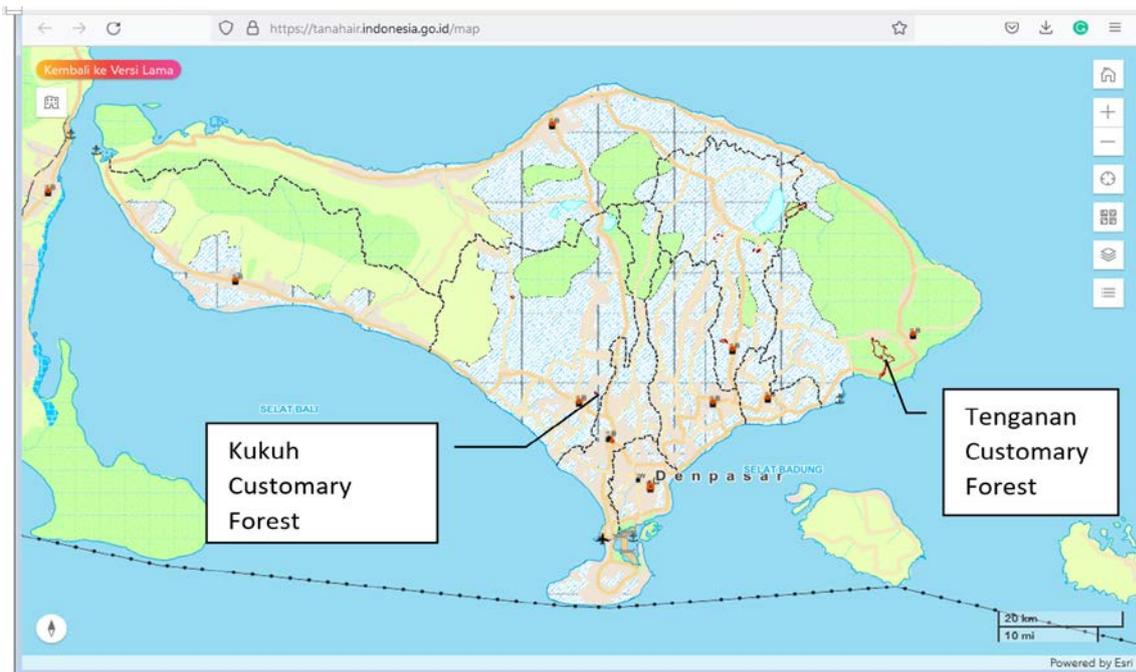
## 4.2 Data analysis

We adopted case studies that involved small samples with many variables (Tsang 2014; Yin 2012). Referring to Miles et al. (2014) and Miles and Huberman (1984), the data and information collected from the field were then transcribed, coded, and grouped according to the relevant and irrelevant information. We analysed the data gathered from the field using critical social analysis, meaning that theory was used as a template for analytical generalization (Lincoln and Guba 2000; Yin 2012). In the data analysis process, we used computer software, especially Microsoft Word and Excel. Word was used to store data and information from the transcription of key informant interviews as well as from secondary data. Excel was used for the coding and data reduction processes from the interviews and secondary data, such as statistical data from village and district government. The final data analysis stage occurred when the authors brought each dataset together to identify key themes that were supported by more than one dataset—a process commonly referred to as triangulation. For example, cross-referencing of emerging themes or topics from one dataset (e.g. key interviews) with other datasets (e.g., literature review, observation, secondary data) to explore what is consistent or supported by multiple lines of evidence gives researchers greater confidence in the validity of their results.

## 4.3 Research sites

Our research sites are Tenganan Village and Kuku Village, both of which are customary villages situated in Bali Province. The location of the sites is presented in Figure 2.

Figure 2: Map of Bali and research sites



Source: map accessed at <https://tanahair.indonesia.go.id/portal-web> (November 2022); with additions from the authors (boxes).

Kuku Village is located in Tabanan District, Bali, where the size of the customary forest is 8.83 ha. For the purpose of this study, the customary village of Kuku represents a village which has strong socio-cultural influences from the Majapahit Kingdom, as illustrated in Table 1. The Ministry of Environment and Forestry issued the Decision Letter (SK.9337/MENLHK-PSKL/PKTH/KUM.1/11/2019) for Kuku Adat Village as a Customary Law Community (MHA) permit holder.

Tenganan Village is situated in the Eastern part of Bali Island, 67 km from Denpasar and 17 km from Amlapura, with an area of 917,200 ha. This village was legally recognized by the Ministry of Environment and Forestry in 2019. Representing Bali Aga Village or the Ancient Traditional Village, it has more than 338 ha of recognized customary forest. It also has a forest area classified as a limited use area (protected area) which covers the widest area of 583,035 ha (66.41 per cent) of the total area of the village (917,200 ha). The forest area in the Tenganan Pegriingsingan Traditional Village is mixed land which, as well as being protected, is also used as plantation land by the local indigenous people. This forest area is located in a hilly area which is higher than residential areas. It includes Kangin Hill, Kauh Hill, and Kaja Hill, with an average slope of 40 per cent. Land ownership in the forest areas is split between individual property and customary village property, but the management of all these lands remains under the authority of the indigenous village (Karidewi et al. 2012).

Table 1: Profiles of Kukuh and Tenganan Villages

Village name	Community characteristics and livelihoods	Socio-historical background	Total size of village area	Size of area recognized as customary forest
Kukuh Customary Village	Located in lowland area; farmers, artisans, tourism and officers. The total population (2016) is 5,523 people consisting of 2,752 males and 2,771 females (1,816 heads of household).	Hinduism influenced by the Majapahit Empire	350 ha	8.83 ha
Tenganan Customary Village	Located in hilly area; land-own farmers but land cultivated by farmers outside the village, artisans, weavers, officers. The total population (2016) is 4,627 people consisting of 2,248 males and 2,379 females (1,203 heads of household).	Ancient Hinduism (not influenced by the Majapahit Empire)	917 ha	338 ha

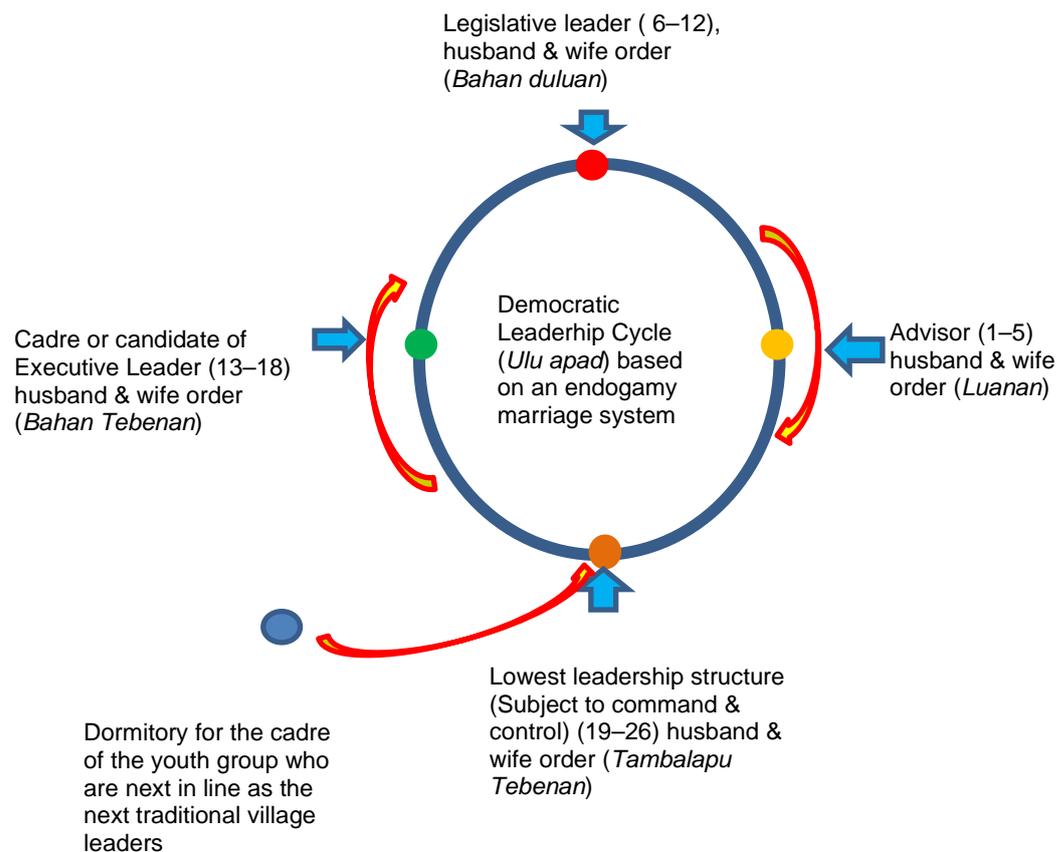
Sources: authors' illustration based on Kukuh Village (2022) and Wikipedia (2022).

The justification for choosing these villages is that this location represents the Bali Aga Traditional Village which is socially different to the Apanage Traditional Village. Bali Aga Traditional Villages are generally located in hilly or highland areas or are relatively isolated. Villagers work as artisan craft workers producing woven bamboo, carvings, paintings, Tenganan special woven fabric, and liquor from fermented sugar.

#### 4.4 Cultural puritanism and the process of women's exclusion

Tenganan Ancient Village is a village that has a unique and systematic local leadership and governance system, as illustrated in Figure 3. The criterion of strong leadership in the ancient village is based on seniority in the length of marriage rather than on the age of an individual. Those who sit in traditional leadership positions can be younger but have a longer length of marriage than others in the same village. The leadership model is based on the representation of a married couple (i.e. husband and wife) and reflects a limited democratic vertical mobility cycle. Endogamous marriage between natives of Tenganan is a prerequisite for accessing a position in the traditional village administrative institution (*ulu apad*). The leader is mandated to preserve the culture of the community and the natural landscape of Tenganan Village. To maintain the purity of the tradition, culture, and identity, ethical norms in *Awig-Awig* prohibit exogamous marriages. Violations of this rule have serious legal consequences, especially for women. These consequences mean that any women who marry men outside the Tenganan Village will lose their socio-political rights. For example, women who marry outsiders will lose their right to reside in the village and any land tenure rights.

Figure 3: Democratic leadership cycle of Tenganan Customary Village



Note: democratic leadership means that in Tenganan Village every member of the community has the same rights and opportunities to sit as traditional leaders on condition that they are husband and wife.

Source: constructed by the authors based on interviews with key informants from Tenganan.

The leadership cycle in Kukuh Traditional Village is different from the one in Tenganan Ancient Village. In Kukuh Village, leadership does not follow a collegial rule. Changes in leadership can be based on election, while some are hereditary. In Kukuh Traditional Village, the election process involves members from *kelihan* (Adat leader) and *prajuru* elements (board members) such as a Deputy Adat leader and a secretary Adat leader as well as representatives from *Banjar* (Hamlet) residents. The leadership term of office of a traditional village head is five years and the person can be re-elected. Women are not allowed to be traditional village leaders (*bendesu*) because they are members of a patrilineal institution.

To maintain the purity of the indigenous people of Tenganan Village, women are prohibited from marrying men from outside the village. (Ancient villages are Balinese Hinduism communities that were affected by the Majapahit Empire). This is not just a response to the influence of external culture; it is also part of the political strategy of defending the territory which covers an administrative area of 917 ha. As the key informant from Luanan, Tenganan Traditional Village stated: ‘Maintaining the purification of traditions, customs and culture as well as ethnic identity is also related to the political aspect’. When women violate this regulation, they are expelled from the village. According to two respondents who are both traditional figures, women are ‘not only expelled, they will also lose all their rights, both economic rights to gain access to housing and natural resources as well as political rights to be elected and become part of the leadership of the Tenganan community in the Ulu Apad system’.

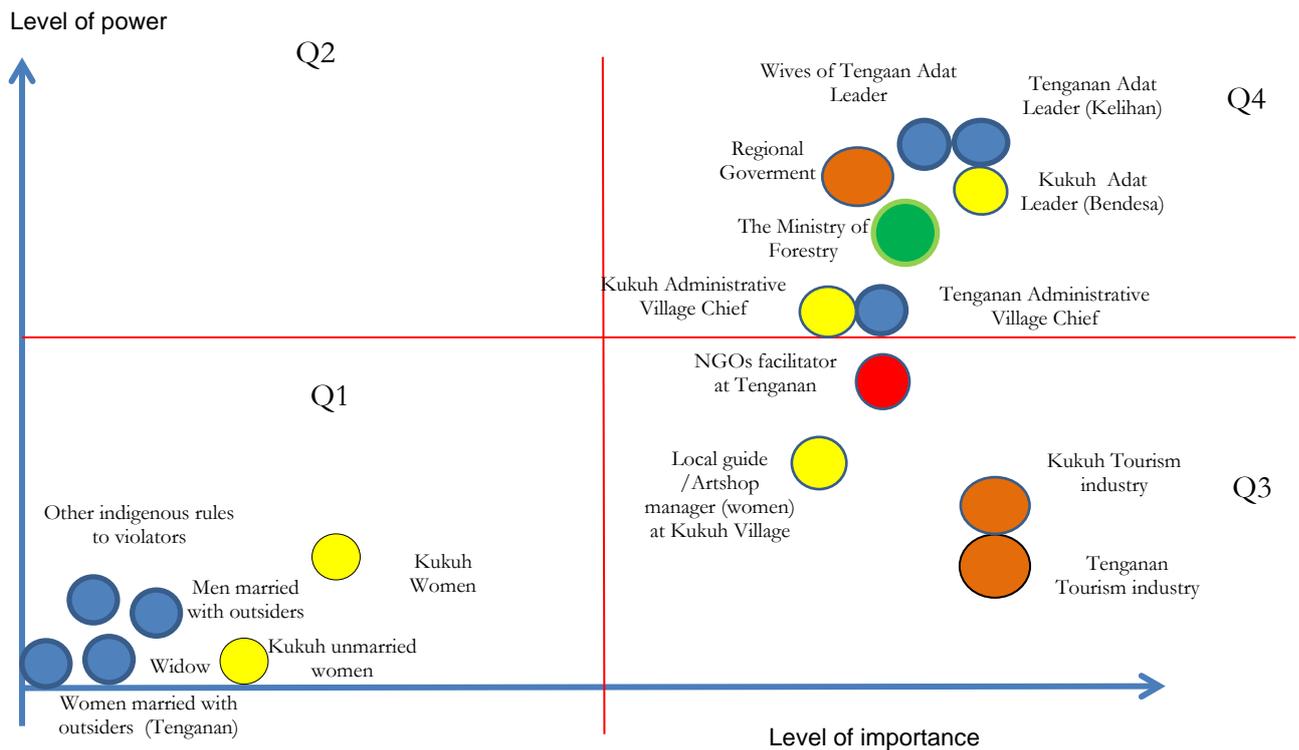
Hall et al. (2011) discussed the phenomenon of exclusion and showed that there are two main powers, namely regulation and legitimacy, which cause women who marry men from outside the traditional village to lose their social, economic, and political rights. Legitimacy is related to the moral claims against women who marry men from outside the village. The challenge which the people of the Tenganan Ancient Village currently face is the globalization and modernization of the education sector, which increases awareness of the opportunities for people to undertake higher education outside the traditional village structure (and even outside the province of Bali) and leads to them mixing with others from around the world and even to some finding a partner from outside the village.

The circulation of tiered and collective leadership in the mechanism of local leadership changes through the power of cultural symbolism. Tiered leadership is leadership that is hierarchical in nature and is distinguished by its duties, functions, and responsibilities. Collegial collective leadership is leadership that involves several leaders in decision- or policy-making with a certain mechanism which is pursued through deliberations to reach consensus or voting by prioritizing the spirit of togetherness (Muntafi'ah 2018). This is represented by married couples as a single unit, which positions women as being equal to men but also suppresses the political opportunity for women to become leaders. In practice, the important decision-making positions are still held by men, although some respondents disputed the dominance of men because all decisions being taken in the meeting have already been discussed within their respective families. Meanwhile, in Kukuh Traditional Village, the circulation of leadership is through elections with the formation of an election committee that has a five-year term of office and the possibility of being re-elected. In this election process, it seems that the traditional leadership roles are still held by men.

#### **4.5 Map of actors**

Figure 4 gives a map of actors and the levels of importance and influence of each actor within the customary institutions in the two villages. In both villages, the role of Adat leader is the strongest, even in comparison to the administrative village head. In Tenganan Village, marital rules mean that women who marry outsiders lose their entitlement and customary influence and are marginalized. If this happens to men, their role is still relatively important. In the case of Kukuh Village, when a woman from a higher caste marries an outsider, she then becomes part of the lower caste. Up to now, this form of exogenous marriage has still largely been avoided. Overall, women have relatively weaker rights to inherit because the position of men is considered more important in the patrilineal system.

Figure 4: Map of actors in Tenganan Village and Kuku Village based on their level of power and influence



Note: the blue colour represents actors operating in Kuku Village, while the yellow colour represents actors who work in Tenganan Village. The brown sugar colours are local government institutions. Lastly, the green colour is the central institution. In both villages, the role of Adat leader is the strongest in comparison to other actors both in terms of level of power and importance. Especially in Tenganan, the traditional leadership is comprised of pairs of husbands and wives based on endogamy marital status. Women who are married to outsiders in the village have a position of influence and the lowest level of interest compared to other actors. Meanwhile, in Kuku Village, the lowest community group is unmarried women.

Source: authors' construction based on in-depth interviews with key informants from Tenganan, facilitators, and other relevant respondents.

#### 4.6 Gendered social practices in customary forest management

The relationships between villagers and the forest form the foundation of a socio-cultural system which strongly preserves the material bases of women's productive economic activities. In both communities there is a long and evolving cultural system to conserve and preserve the forest, protecting it from over-exploitation and massive industrial pressures. The forest is treated as a common resource so that the land cannot be converted into a legal certificate or be treated as a tradeable good in the market. The Head of Tenganan Customary Village explained that no land has been converted into private property and that villagers can harvest forest resources for daily and communal use, particularly for customary rituals and house construction. Some forms of economic utilization such as tourism are allowed, with very strict regulation of areas subject to such purposes. Technically, communities in both villages are involved in customary forest management. For example, the local community (both men and women) of Kuku Village is directly involved in the management of the Alas Kedaton Tourist Destination Area.

#### 4.7 State policy framework for addressing gender inequality and exclusion

A section head of the forest management unit in charge of the area designated as South Bali said that women today have begun to have the same opportunities and positions as men. Women have become more involved in the management of aspects of tourism, for example managing tourist reception counters and working in cleaning services and as animal feeders. However, he said that

women are not much involved in decision-making. In addition, in Kuku, he admitted that women do not have inheritance rights due to the patrilineal system. Regarding customary forests, the *Anwig-Anwig* local regulation only regulates the protection and utilization of forest products and does not regulate women's rights in forest management. In brief, forest management has been managed and dominated by men. This respondent from Kuku Village stated that: 'This *Anwig-Anwig* can only be changed every 5–10 years, according to articles within the *Anwig-Anwig*'.

A non-governmental organization (NGO) local facilitator respondent argued that 'the *Anwig-Anwig* is basic norms that regulate the pattern of rights and responsibilities among member of indigenous communities'. He argued that 'the development of the *Anwig-Anwig* is a long process and is made involving all structures or elements of indigenous communities in contrast to other regulations such as *Pararem*'. *Pararem* is the Adat rules made in an Adat meeting involving limited participants of indigenous communities. *Pararem* can be the implementation regulation of the *Anwig-Anwig*. The *Pararem* can also be a new rule which aims to regulate new matters in the village (Sari et al. 2022) such as the involvement of women in customary forest management. A respondent from a university said that articles within a *Pararem* can be changed monthly or annually according to the needs of the community.

In contrast, two officers of the Technical Unit of Bali Social Forestry and Environmental Partnership stated that in Bali, women's participation is still quite limited. Women are still working behind the scenes because Balinese culture still adheres to a patriarchal system. In the context of social forestry management, in Tabanan, men play a role in collecting tree sap and dominate the management roles. Meanwhile, women are more involved in selling derivative products from the tree sap such as brown sugar. A respondent from the Technical Unit of Bali Social Forestry and Environmental Partnership also suggested:

There are many gender issues that can be raised in social forestry management, but since there are no policies that regulate it yet, we are limited to promoting best practices. For example, for technical verification activities, we provide a condition that the subject to be technically verified is a woman, even though the policy has not been stated in the form of written text. We also suggest that 20 per cent of social forestry managers should consist of women. It is hoped that the involvement of women can be regulated by the Director General of Social Forestry, so that it can provide us with a basis in the field to carry out technical verification. (Respondent from the Technical Unit of Bali Social Forestry and Environmental Partnership)

In Kuku Village, community members are involved in the daily management of the Alas Kedaton Tourist Destination Area. The economic utilization of forest resources provides women with some employment opportunities (janitors, local guides, food and clothing sellers). Women are also members of the Tourism Awareness Groups (Pokdarwis) and Alas Kedaton Traders Group (KPAK), which are actively engaged in trading commodities such as food, drinks, clothing, souvenirs, sculptures, paintings. However, male representatives, namely Bendesa Adat and the Operational Manager, are still in charge of the organization of these economic activities (Pratama and Bhaskara 2019).

On the issue of women's limited involvement, two officers of the Technical Unit of the Bali Social Forestry and Environmental Partnership reported that they had proposed to include women as field facilitators in social forestry projects. For example, in Bali there are 85 permits and six of the 22 field facilitators are female. However, they realized that the gender mainstreaming programme in social forestry policies in Bali had only been conducted for two years. A senior staff member of the Director General of Social Forestry and Environmental Partnership did not agree that there

were technical rules for involving women. He stated that if there were such special regulations, this would seem inappropriate. He preferred the involvement of women to take place naturally from the community itself. He confirmed that many women were not involved in the institutional structure but they still played a role as key informants. A respondent from academia rejected this opinion by stating that a natural change in gender roles within the community would be a long and uncertain process given the inherent challenges women face within the local community.

A senior staff member from a local NGO stated that gender inequality could be seen from the economy, cultural customs, and government policies. She said that we have to view the issue case by case and ask whether this case is the most dominant. She argued that most Balinese do not perceive any inequalities in terms of the cultural customs. However, from an outsider's perspective of Balinese culture, there seem to be some inequalities. According to the same respondent, inequality occurs when one party feels forced, but if it occurs consciously then it should not be deemed as a form of inequality, even though, from the outsider's perspective, this can be termed as culturally acceptable inequality.

According to a customary law expert from a local university, men usually play a more dominant role in forest management groups and so many women are not as involved in these groups, even though women tend to be more creative and mature than men. A key informant from Tenganan Village argued that the Adat institution and men perceive that forest management matters are the responsibility of men. A customary expert said that it is necessary to provide policy guidance, awareness, and enlightenment for the roles of women. If there is no policy guidance, there will be no change to women's roles in forest management. As an example, he stated that, in the past, Balinese women did not want to be legislative candidates because they perceived politics as a corrupt and dirty job. In this case, he suggested there should be a policy that encouraged the nomination of female candidates. To increase the involvement of women, the senior lecturer suggested the following actions:

- 1) educating about the importance of the role of women in preserving customary forests;
- 2) providing forest conservation training in the relevant institutions; and
- 3) having a legal breakthrough in inheritance law so that women get the same inheritance rights.

#### **4.8 After recognition: distribution of gender roles**

According to a customary law expert from a university in Bali, the recognition of social forestry has not changed the role of women in forest management. As communities believe that the village is independent, they can look for investors to create commercial plantations on communal land or village forest. In brief, the configuration of women's involvement in customary forest management institutions has not changed substantially, even though the social forestry policy, through the recognition of customary forests, provides a mandate to implement gender mainstreaming,

Confirming this, a respondent from Tenganan Village admitted that, following recognition, there had been promotion related to social forestry and gender, but the top-down approach and lack of dialogue made it ineffective. He compared the more participatory approach of the NGOs who became the facilitators of the Tenganan Traditional Village. As the promotion approach tends to be superficial, some villagers fail to understand the aims and objectives of social forestry. For example, when there was a push to form a social forestry business group (KUPS), it created conflict between residents because there was a community initiative business group that did not ask the traditional institutions for permission to establish KUPS. Women's involvement was limited to the formation of the gringsing cloth-weaving craft group, where gringsing cloth-weaving had already been practised long before the formation of the group and customary forest recognition. The

formation of this group was part of an effort to support the implementation of the social forestry policy. However, the group still has an appointed male leader whose involvement was agreed by the members of the group. A senior female member of the group argued that males have better organizational abilities, such as being more agile in moving business units

A senior staff member from a local NGO stated that the process of obtaining the Recognition of Tenganan Customary Forest Decision Letter involves youths and women. Husbands and wives are involved in the decision-making so that there is gender balance. In participatory mapping, there are more men. When it comes to lobbying, for example, lobbying the governor is usually done by men.

In Kukuh Village, there is almost no significant different in the role of women in forest management before and after the recognition. Women are still not a part of policy-making in the Alas Kedaton customary forest. The position of Head of Kukuh Customary Village (*Bendesa*) and the operational managers of the customary forest are still held by customary administrators, who are generally male. According to the Kukuh Administrative Village Chief, management of Alas Kedaton is currently conducted by people, especially the general manager and the holder of the promotion position, who do not have any basic knowledge of the tourism industry. According to him, only 5 per cent of the current management staff are professionals. He said: 'If there is no change then the management will only come and go and there will be no innovation'. The impact of women having a minimal role in Alas Kedaton Forest management is that women who have a lot of knowledge, experience, and skills in managing the tourism industry do not have the opportunity to be involved in the higher levels of decision-making or management.

## **5 Discussion**

### **5.1 Implications of gender mainstreaming**

The recognition of customary forests by the Ministry of Environment and Forestry has had almost no impact on improving the position and role of women in forest management. Gender mainstreaming at the local level has still failed to bring about a significant change in the role of women in forest management, especially in relation to increasing women's participation in leadership and decision-making. Failure of the gender mainstreaming approach appears to be due to the fact that it does not provide enough space for women to be involved in dialogue and negotiation within the prevailing structural and cultural constraints. According to a local youth leader: 'Promotion of gender issues only occurs during the initial social forestry meetings'.

A factor that contributes to the exclusion of women from having roles in various social activities in the two villages, including in forest management, is the social norms (patriarchy culture) which are still enforced and followed in the day-to-day practices of the people in the two villages. Meanwhile, ethnicity, as in Tenganan Village, is also an influential factor, as shown by Crenshaw (1991). Our study found that the participation of marginalized indigenous women in Indonesia's social forestry programme is a product of intersectional gendered relations. Such relations form the material bases of women's productive life and women's cultural roles as part of the broader customary community. The customary community's dependence on forest resources establishes a structure of division of labour that situates women within a particular set of socio-economic roles in the family and in the public economic spheres. These roles are subject to continuous power negotiation as the customary community responds to the challenges created by the dynamic economic processes. Intersectionality is shaped through the plural positions that women hold in their socio-economic and cultural gendered norms. The future policy framework for improving

the participation of marginalized indigenous women should be concerned with the reorganization of access to and control over the utilization of forest resources and their cultural significance associated with women's historical advantages and disadvantages in gendered social relations.

For both women and men in Tenganan Village, sanctions in the form of losing access to socio-economic and political rights (to become leaders and gain access to natural resource management) are considered culturally and socially appropriate to preserve the endogamous marriages tradition. However, for the sustainability of forest management, such practices are likely to deter women's socio-economic participation when the women have professional knowledge and skills in forest management. The eviction of women from the Tenganan Village area is clearly a form of marginalization and punishment from the perspective of an intersectional feminist approach. Divorced women and women who are part of a polygamy practice are those whose positions and roles are negatively affected by the practice of this cultural norm. Women in these minority categories are generally excluded from having access to and control of economic resources and inheritance. They are also subject to cultural stigmas which place them in an unequal position with 'appropriately' married women.

The absence of any substantial transformation in gender mainstreaming at the site level has been caused by many factors. One such factor is the lack of promotion of gender mainstreaming. Another is the limited budget for social forestry (i.e. customary forestry) and an approach that prioritizes the target area and permits for social forestry management over the *quality* of the achievements of social forestry, including gender equality. An additional factor is the absence of technical regulation and guidelines that require women's involvement in forest management. The proposal for women to have 20 per cent involvement in various institutions or activity programmes is still not enough and could be increased to 50 per cent.

The involvement of women in forest management will have a positive impact on marginalized indigenous women and forest management when followed by capacity-building and constructive engagement with men within the customary communities. Furthermore, such management must have an impact on the role of women in welfare production. There are concerns that increasing women's involvement in protecting customary forests will increase the social burden on women. From the perspective of gender equality, it then becomes a challenge that the transformation of the role of marginalized indigenous women in customary forest management will only become a burden for them when the institutionalization of women's involvement does not have an impact on their welfare, especially if they have a greater responsibility to protect customary forests than anyone else in the community. In this context, the involvement of marginalized indigenous women must be placed within the broader framework of the involvement of all communities. This relates to the involvement of both men and women in forest management in order to create better forest management traditions and practices and improve the welfare of the community, because this is not just about improving the position of women.

## **5.2 The making of gendered social order**

Gender inequality and injustice have their roots in the influence of the Majapahit Empire (dating back to the 1340s), which was later strengthened by the Dutch colonial government (1908–18). This phenomenon was emphasized by a senior staff member from a local NGO (Wisnu Foundation), who stated that after the expansion of the Majapahit Empire to Bali, there was a distinction between men and women. Before then, the kingdom was only made up of villages and sects. After the Majapahit Kingdom assumed power, there was cultural acculturation (Javanese, Balinese, Chinese) and social classes emerged along with the formation of upper and lower strata, which consequently defined the roles of men and women.

The organization of gender roles in both customary communities involves two spheres of power negotiation: the first between men and women and the second among women. In both spheres, the marriage institution plays a central role. In Tenganan Village, marital status determines the socially accepted position of a person within the community. Marital institutions provide an arena in which women's cultural identification is levelled relatively to other groups and within the group. Community members value the dignity of a person from their ability to construct a holy married life, preserving their regeneration through having children, and contributing to meaningful social life by participating in the fulfilment of customary rights and obligations. Those who are not married, namely female teenagers, are not yet considered to have sufficient social capacity to act as community leaders. They are subject to the internalization of cultural norms and norm socialization. According to a university expert in customary law, in Bali, marriage is based on patrilineal or paternal lines. If a family has a daughter, she is considered of lower status than a male.

Married couples whose origins are from Tenganan Village can level up their influence in the decision-making processes within the structure of the Adat institutions. The hierarchical structure in Adat representation is accessible for men and women within the marital arrangement to climb the leadership ladder. A head of the forest management unit on duty in East Bali asserted that a local leader must be someone who already has a wife. This means that any decision must involve the role of women: 'In the ancient village the leaders are in pairs'. It means that men and women hold the same position. The head of a forest management unit asserted: 'Yes, women cannot be polygamous. Women are involved in management and meetings (*sangkep*). The decision of the head of the family is made in full with the wife'. The village chief added: 'The *Bendesa* (customary head) is the husband and wife. This means that there is gender equality'.

From the results of virtual interviews with six respondents, we concluded that gender inequality remains, although currently women have a better opportunity to be involved in various development programmes. For example, a resource person who acts as a field facilitator stated: 'Balinese women by work ethic are individuals who are diligent, tenacious and multitasking (domestic affairs, economy, helping with fields/farming, cleaning, and planting seeds). However, women are still placed in the back (food and beverage section) during traditional ceremonies'. Another field facilitator said:

In the administrative village, there is a lot of involvement of women, especially since the existence of the Village Consultative Body (BPD). Women have begun to be encouraged to participate in village development in the context of utilizing village funds, but in the traditional village there is none. In Tenganan Village for instance, women can express their opinions through their husbands as the man is viewed as the representative of the family. (Field facilitator)

The field facilitator also mentioned that before the meeting (*Paruman*), there is a ritual offering with a philosophy that it is closely witnessed by humans and their ancestors, so there is a sense of reluctance or fear of betraying any agreements reached during the meeting. *Paruman* is a deliberation meeting attended by villagers to discuss certain issues and is held at the village hall routinely or incidentally.

Communities in both villages are part of the formal customary forest management, albeit with a different management system. In Kuku Village, women have direct roles, such as guides, entrance ticket officers, and cleaning staff, to be involved in the operational management of tourism destinations. In contrast, in Tenganan Village, women generally have indirect roles in extracting forest resources and there are no groups of women that specifically manage customary forests. The main roles in forest management, therefore, are assumed by men. However, women have

direct and dominant roles in the production of traditional gringsing cloth, where they take materials for dying cloth from the forest, which means that women produce economically beneficial products that are sold in the market. Women generally engage in economic activities that require the extraction of resources needed for handicraft and cloth-making as well as food and beverage production. In such an economically productive sphere, the roles of women are generally more evident. Some female teenagers have also started to develop their skills to promote the local products through social media-based marketing as they are learning from knowledge acquisition in the digital economy sector.

## **6 Conclusions and recommendations**

### **6.1 Conclusions**

Gender inequality and injustice still occur in the two customary villages explored in this research, although there is an evolving process subject to power negotiation. This study found that the expression of gender inequality and injustice is more prevalent in one village than the other. The cultural value reassignment of patrilineal culture gives more power leverage to *purusa* (men) compared to *predana* (women), which is very evident in influencing gender-based social practices. The communitarian-based local democracy which maintains a rigid puritanism ideology, as in Tenganan, is able to maintain social identity, territory, and preservation of customary forests. On the downside, marginalized indigenous women involved in exogenous married are barred from having access to natural resources, local leadership, and residence rights. The recognition of customary forests for both areas is considered to provide opportunities for women to be more involved in forest management on an equal basis. The social forestry programme, through legal recognition of the two villages, actually has a mandate for gender mainstreaming to the level of forest management and utilization, but the absence of effective implementation has prevented the mainstreaming policy from working.

### **6.2 Recommendations**

#### *Short-term policy actions*

Based on the findings of this study, there are several policy steps that could be taken at the local, regional, and national levels. At the local level, as the independent legal instrument (*Awig-Awig*) has not been reviewed for hundreds of years, customary institutions should be encouraged to review this regulation with regard to the position of women and their involvement, especially marginal women in Tenganan Village (for example, women who marry outsiders and widows), in terms of their access rights to natural resources and politics. Meanwhile, a respondent from the Administrative Village Chief said: 'Kukuh Village's step to suggest reorganizing the customary forest managers by placing women in top professional management positions in respect of ecotourism, was an urgent step to get women involved in the tourism industry after the Covid-19 pandemic'. Consequently, the local economic situation could improve quickly.

The roles of central and local government also need to be reorganized. District and provincial governments need to take concrete steps in the capacity-building of women and men in forest management through training, for example in forest management, ecotourism marketing (digitalization), and network development with national and international tour operators. Meanwhile, the central government could provide incentives for people who are able to manage the forests sustainably through ecologically based fiscal transfers. In addition, the central government, in this case the Ministry of Environment and Forestry, could also make technical

regulations at the ministerial level or regulations at the directorate general level relating to the involvement of women in concrete forest management.

In order to increase women's participation, there is a need to strengthen the role of women in preserving customary forests, to provide space for knowledge generation and production involving technical institutions related to forest conservation. There is also a need to promote a legal breakthrough in inheritance law so that women get the same inheritance rights as men.

#### *Long-term policy actions*

In the long term, a strategic policy step that the village government could take would be to create synergy between the official village government and traditional villages, with a focus on creating programmes for deeper involvement in and fair distribution of roles between men and women in relation to better forest management. In this context, the basis for this programme would be the creation of more inclusive village regulations which better reflect the aspirations and voices of women. This is particularly relevant to marginalized indigenous women in customary forest management which embraces democratic principles without disturbing the substance of local traditions and norms.

District and provincial governments, along with traditional assemblies at the sub-district and district levels, should promote policy dialogue and reallocate funds for the involvement of women in customary forest management which goes beyond ceremonial issues. Forest management should also take a concrete step to improve the welfare of marginalized indigenous women.

The central government's long-term step is to review all gender mainstreaming activities at the site level, not limited to the two research villages, so that lessons can be learned, applied, and strengthened by these good practices in the two research villages. To support gender mainstreaming at the site level, understanding the context, tradition, and uniqueness of a village is necessary so that generic policy steps can be avoided. Understanding policies in a local context and local political dynamics, as well as social traditions and norms, can only be achieved through more intense participatory dialogue and adequate budgetary support. All activities related to institutionalizing the involvement of women must take account of the welfare-related context and the burden associated with women's historical roles in their private and public spheres.

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## Appendix

Table A1: List of Interviewees

No	Key Informants interviewed virtually	Position	Male/female	Duties
1	The Ministry of Environment and Forestry	Head of Customary Forest Section	M	Manages the customary forest recognition process proposed by indigenous people
2	Technical Implementation Unit of the Ministry of Environment and Forestry	Senior officer	F	Identifies, verifies, and manages customary forest data, and processes administrative requirements for proposal of customary forest recognition at the site level
3	Technical Implementation Unit of the Ministry of Environment and Forestry	Senior officer	F	Identifies, verifies, and manages customary forest data and processes administrative requirements for proposal of customary forest recognition at the site level
4	Field facilitator from a local NGO (Wisnu Foundation)	Gender expert and senior officer	F	Facilitates gender mainstreaming and local empowerment
5	Field facilitator from a national NGO (WRI)	Local facilitator	M	Facilitates local empowerment
6	Academia	Senior lecturer in customary law	M	Teaches customary law and conducts research on customary forests
7	Board of indigenous (Adat) institution	Head of indigenous institution of Tenganan Village	M	Makes local regulation plan and commands and controls the implementation of indigenous legal instruments ( <i>Awig-Awig</i> )
8	Weaver	Wife of head of Adat of Tenganan Village	F	Weaves and participates in traditional rituals
9	Member of indigenous institution	Candidate for the board of Tenganan Village	M	Implements responsibilities given by the board of institution
10	A key village elite member who married a woman from outside of Tenganan Village	Member of board of advisers of Tenganan Village	M	Delivers and advises when asked by the board of indigenous institution
11	A widow	Artshop owner	F	Sells gringsing cloth and arts products
12	Youth women	Traditional dance organizer and seller of gringsing cloth online	M	Coordinates and organizes traditional dance performances in traditional rituals
13	Village member	Owner of small alcohol drink processing industry	M	Collects and ferments materials from local trees ( <i>Arenga Pinatta</i> ) supplied by customary forest users
14	Village members	Field tourist facilitators	M	Facilitate visitors to customary forests
15	Administrative Kukuh Village Board	Head of Kukuh Village	M	Manages village's internal programmes and external programmes from the suprastructure (i.e. district, provincial, and national governments)
16	Woman officer of Administrative Kukuh Village Board	Head of data management	F	Manages administrative and programme database
17	An elite member of Kukuh Village	Deputy Head of Kukuh Adat Village	M	Assists in managing the customary forest of Alas Kedaton
18	Women from Kukuh Village	Local guide and owner of local art shop	F	Guide visitors and tourists to Alas Kedaton Forest
19	Women from Kukuh Village	Local guide and owner of local art shop	F	Guide visitors and tourists visiting Alas Kedaton Forest
20	Women from Kukuh Village	Owner of local art shop	F	Sell souvenirs for visiting Alas Kedaton Forest

Source: authors' compilation.

Table A2: Distribution of roles between men and women

Activities	Tenganan Village		Remarks	Kukuh Village		Remarks
	Men	Women		Men	Women	
Cooking		X	Women's predominant role		X	Women's predominant role
Child bearing		X	Women's predominant role		X	Women's predominant role
Before the recognition of customary forest	X		Women involved mostly in customary ceremonies to honour the forest	X	X	Women are more involved in administrative technical work while men hold higher positions at the management level
After the recognition of customary forest	X		Women involved indirectly in collecting materials from the forest, but are directly involved in managing the Social Forestry Business Unit (KUPS)	X	X	Women are more involved in administrative and clerical work while men mostly hold higher positions at the management level
Income-generating activities	X	X	Cloth-weaving	X	X	Variety of work with burden twice as heavy as men's
Traditional rituals	X	X	Most men and women are involved when discussing traditional rituals	X	X	Most men and women are involved when discussing traditional rituals
Decision-making	X		Men's predominant roles	X		Men's predominant role

Source: authors' compilation based on interview with key informant Head of Kukuh Village Service and interview with key informant couple in Tenganan Village.

Table A2 shows that women in the two villages are still not involved in the decision-making process. What slightly distinguishes Tenganan from Kukuh is that, in forest management, women in Kukuh Village are more directly involved in forest use, especially as local guides, cleaners, and traders in art products and crafts. In both villages, however, women are still in charge of domestic duties and earn a living.