

## Why Always Women?: Gender Inequality in Rusmini's "Kenanga" (A Feminist Criticism Study)

Apriani Riyanti<sup>1</sup>, Umul Khasanah<sup>2</sup>, Indriyati Kamil<sup>3</sup>, Ni Putu Juliani Lestari  
Dewi<sup>4</sup>, Imelda S. Lolowang<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Universitas Binawan Jakarta, Jakarta, Indonesia  
E-Mail: [apriani.riyanti@binawan.ac.id](mailto:apriani.riyanti@binawan.ac.id)

<sup>2</sup>Sastra Jepang, Universitas 17 Agustus 1945 Surabaya, Surabaya, Indonesia  
E-Mail: [umulkhasanah@untag-sby.ac.id](mailto:umulkhasanah@untag-sby.ac.id)

<sup>3</sup>Ilmu Komunikasi, Universitas Langlangbuana, Bandung, Indonesia  
E-Mail: [Rindriya73@gmail.com](mailto:Rindriya73@gmail.com)

<sup>4</sup>Pendidikan Bahasa Inggris, Universitas Persatuan Guru 1945 NTT, Kupang, Indonesia  
E-Mail: [putujuliani59@gmail.com](mailto:putujuliani59@gmail.com)

<sup>5</sup>Pendidikan Bahasa Inggris, Universitas Negeri Manado, Tondano, Indonesia  
E-Mail: [imeldalolowang@unima.ac.id](mailto:imeldalolowang@unima.ac.id)

### ARTICLE HISTORY      ABSTRACT

Receive: 02 January 2023  
Accepted: 09 March 2023  
Published: 13 March 2023

### KEYWORDS

Gender Inequality  
Patriarki  
Novel  
Rusmini's Kenanga  
Feminist Criticism



This is an open access article under the CC BY SA license.  
Copyright © 2023 by Author,  
Published by English Education Department, Universitas Negeri Manado

\*Corresponding Author:

**Apriani Riyanti**  
Universitas Binawan Jakarta  
Email: [apriani.riyanti@binawan.ac.id](mailto:apriani.riyanti@binawan.ac.id)

The issue of gender equality is no longer a new one. It arises along with the stereotype of men who have a higher nature than women. In addition, in terms of strength and rights women are also below men. This aspect of gender inequality is one of the aspects developed by Rusmini in her novel "Kenanga". It tells the story of women who live under the pressure of men due to their gender. This research was then made to examine every gender inequality behavior that occurs in this novel. Using a qualitative method, the research then applies a feminist approach in analyzing each event of gender inequality that occurs in Rusmini's novel "Kenanga". The results show that, gender inequality against women mostly occurs due to stereotypes from the society in which they live. This gender inequality occurs starting from the aspect that women's nature is under men, therefore women must always obey men. Moreover, in terms of education, women are also prohibited from getting a proper education than men because basically, women's job is only to take care of men. In addition, women from the poor are often treated harshly because the customs enforced in society greatly differentiate between castes. From this research, a new direction is given that gender inequality needs to be a concern because considering today's developments, it allows everyone including women to develop and have a career.

## INTRODUCTION

Literature is an art form that deals with expression and creation, always growing and developing. Literature was born as a result of the basic human urge to express himself, to take an interest in human problems and humanity, to take an interest in the reality that lasts throughout the ages. Literature can be used as a communication tool that expresses something related to real human life, which of course will have many problems such as gender injustice for women who are oppressed by economic conditions, family, husbands, and others (Frueh, 2018). Thus, literature has its most prominent function as entertainment, but the function of literature can also change with the times according to the needs and interests of society.

As mentioned by De Lauretis (2018) that the function of literature is entertainment, meaning that the literature created must be useful and enjoyable. In addition, literature is also a tool to continue the traditions of a nation in a positive sense, for contemporaries and future communities, including beliefs, ways of thinking, habits, historical experiences, a sense of beauty, language and forms of culture. Among the obvious literary functions that have been realized such as the novel "Kenanga" which indicates that the culture of a woman who is only at home has now changed. In the past, women were not allowed to work, study, and be superior to men (Todd, 2018). Now these stereotypes are gradually eroded by circumstances. It is presented through literary works, one of which is the novel "Kenanga". Novels have distinctive characteristics, namely telling about the lives of characters who will usually experience changes in fate by experiencing various conflicts that occur with a fairly long storyline (Mu'is, 2021). Novels have many types according to the needs and interests of readers in choosing the stories they want to read because novels have various types of novels such as romantic novels, horror novels, popular novels, and others, this is what makes novels attractive to readers. Moreover, Asri & Arief (2020) believe that novels must have building blocks or intrinsic elements such as theme, plot, characterization, setting, mandate, language style, character, and point of view to build a more interesting story so that the story in the novel can be built well and the story is directed.

Talking about novels as a form of literature, one of the problems contained in literary works is about gender issues. The creation of differences between men and women that develop in society causes them to have different positions. Bachmann *et al.*, (2018) state that gender issues will not arise if gender differences are in harmony so that the male and female genders can complement and respect each other. Meanwhile, according to Barry (2020) gender issues can include gender

relations, the relationship between women and men that is socially constructed, which describes the situation when women are under male domination. This gender issue results in inequality or injustice occurring between men and women. Gender injustice, according to Cohen & Karim (2022) can occur at various levels of society, such as marginalization (economic marginalization or impoverishment), subordination, stereotyping, violence and double workload.

The world of literature has developed in terms of writers, which can be seen from the emergence of feminist works, especially from female authors. This also illustrates that female authors color the world of literature and produce works that are worth reading and researching. The issue of themes raised is inseparable from the world of women, such as the problem of gender injustice experienced by women has received considerable attention. One of the female authors who discusses the problem of gender injustice against women is illustrated in one of Oka Rusmini's novels entitled *Kenanga*. This novel describes how the lives of women with the atmosphere of life in Bali. Bhopal (2019) states that novels are narrative works that rely on the power of imagination in the process of creation. Novels are built on two elements, namely intrinsic and extrinsic elements. Furthermore, Asri & Arief (2020) explain that intrinsic elements are elements that build from within the fiction itself, while extrinsic elements are external influences behind the creation of the work, especially the influence of the author.

The novel "*Kenanga*" tells the story of a woman named Kenanga who lives in Bali (Satriyani et al., 2018). The novel begins with Kenanga's story with Intan, a Sudra caste girl who turns out to be her biological daughter. Kenanga has a younger sister named Kencana, they have conflicting traits. Kenanga is a stubborn, ambitious and educated woman. However, Kenanga chooses to sacrifice everything for her sister and family. Problems arise when Kenanga becomes pregnant and is raped by Bhuana, the man her sister loves. The forbidden love story continues secretly without anyone knowing. Intan also struggles with Kenanga to deal with the problem of their position as women in the Balinese traditional environment that Intan is considered a lower class who is lucky to live with Kenanga. However, Kenanga did not care about the opinions of others including her parents who initially opposed. Kenanga with all her secrets remains unanswered and a secret until the end of the story. Departing from the existence of women's roles in novels, the event of gender inequality is still one of the big problems and is often written about in literary works. Therefore, this research is important to find out how the factors that cause gender injustice occur, thus giving birth to forms of injustice that tend to affect women. In this case, especially those experienced by Balinese women

in the novel *Kenanga* by Oka Rusmini. Based on the descriptions above, this research will focus on describing the forms of gender injustice against women in the novel "*Kenanga*" by Oka Rusmini.

## REVIEW OF LITERATURE

### *Concept of Feminism*

Renzetti (2018) reveals that the definition of feminism contains three components, namely: A belief that there is no difference based on sex (sex quality), which is against the hierarchical position between the sexes. Equality of rights lies in quantity and quality. Hierarchical relational positions produce superior and inferior. In addition, Bhopal (2019) argue that a recognition in society there has been a social construction that harms women. Also, Feminism challenges differences that mix sex and gender so that women are made into a separate group in society.

### *Feminist Criticism*

Barry (2020) states that there are several varieties of feminist literary criticism, namely ideological literary criticism. This feminist literary criticism involves women, especially feminists, as readers. The center of attention in her research is the stereotype of women in literary works (Frueh, 2018). In addition, it also examines misconceptions about women and the reasons why women are often excluded or almost completely ignored in literary criticism. Basically, this type of feminist literary criticism is one of the literary studies based on the views of feminism which wants justice in viewing the existence of women.

### *Concept of Gender Inequality*

Fournier (2021) explains that gender is a concept that refers to the roles and responsibilities between men and women that occur due to the social and cultural circumstances of society. Gender roles are formed through various value systems including customary values, religion, education, economy, politics, and so on. Renzetti (2018) believe that gender is a process of social construction that shows what exists and will continue to exist or which will later undergo changes. Gender identity rests on the asymmetrical relationship between women and men caused by two things, namely the biological aspects between women and men that are different and the prevailing stereotypes about what is considered appropriate regarding attitudes and behavior between women and men. Stereotypes and values that are used as guidelines for behavior between women and men make differences

in the way one particular gender, namely women, is perceived. Nielsen (2019) explains that when viewed from a study of women and law in Indonesia, it concludes how marginal the position of women is. This indication proves clearly that gender inequality in relations between men and women in Indonesia is still very strong.

## **METHOD**

This type of research uses a qualitative method, which is research that does not conduct a calculation. This method refers to the description method. The description method is a method that is aimed at solving problems that exist in the present and are as they are (Satriyani, 2018). This research on the novel "Kenanga" by Oka Rusmini is a study of feminism. The data collection technique of this research, namely reading and understanding the novel Kenanga by Oka Rusmini, searching and recording data related to gender injustice against women in the novel Kenanga by Oka Rusmini. The data analysis techniques used in this research are: (1) describing the inventoried data, (2) identifying the data, (3) interpreting the data, and (4) drawing conclusions.

## **FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION**

In this section, we will present the results of the findings of the data analysis that has been carried out previously. The data in this study are presented using descriptive qualitative methods, data analysis applies feminism studies with a main focus on gender injustice in the novel "Kenanga" by Oka Rusmini. Further data presentation can be seen below:

### ***Gender Inequality toward Kenanga and Kemuning***

The characters in the novel Kenanga are divided into two parts, namely protagonists and antagonists with different character dimensions seen from the physiological dimension, sociological dimension, and psychological dimension. The protagonists are represented by Kenanga and Intan. Kenanga is described as a female character who from a physiological point of view has a loving and stubborn character (Satriyani, 2018). She is also a woman who does not boast about her caste, the brahmna caste. Her kindness is only known to those closest to her such as Bhuana and Intan. The antagonists are represented by Ida Bagus Bhuana Putra, Kencana, and Dayu Galuh. Bhuana is a male character who loves Kenanga and Intan very much. However, Bhuana has an arrogant, selfish, and violent character. He often commits violence against Kenanga, causing her to suffer, including raping

her, which makes Kenanga have to bear it alone when the doctor states that she is pregnant.

Gender injustice in this study only focuses on three characters, namely, Kenanga, Jero Kemuning, Intan and Dayu Made. The three female characters experience gender injustice because Balinese society always upholds a culture that requires them to submit and must sacrifice themselves so that they do not realize that they have become victims of gender injustice. The first gender injustice is experienced by took Kenanga, where:

“Sama sekali tak pernah terlintas dalam benaknya untuk menyentuh tubuh Kenanga secara paksa dan biadab. Tapi, kadang kenyataan tak memiliki moralitas. Perbuatan bejat itu justru terjadi, diluar kehendak siapa pun, dan seorang perempuan harus menanggung akibatnya” (Kenanga, 2017: 45).

The inequality experienced by the character Kenanga lies in the sentence *“Sama sekali tak pernah terlintas dalam benaknya untuk menyentuh tubuh Kenanga secara paksa dan biadab dan diikuti kalimat Perbuatan bejat itu justru terjadi dan seorang perempuan harus menanggung akibatnya”*. Bhuana has done the heinous thing of raping Kenanga forcibly and savagely so that it has a traumatic impact on Kenanga. This makes Kenanga deprived of her body's authority by Bhuana, and bear the consequences of Bhuana's heinous actions. In this context, women are often treated arbitrarily by men. They take away women's right to life, impose all their will without wanting to hear what women really want.

Not only that, Kenanga also gets behavior that puts her as if she doesn't have the right to get an education just because of her condition as a woman, this can be seen in: *“Ya, mana mau dokter ganteng itu dengan dia, biar pun seribu kali pintar dibanding adiknya. Lalu, minggatlah dia ke Yogya. Katanya sekolah. Sekolah apa? Sudah jadi dosen kok sekolah. Cari-cari alasan saja”* (Kenanga, 2017: 56).

This quote gives a very clear picture of the stereotype of people in the kenanga neighborhood who think that school is only something that must be done when they are young. In fact, school and learning are things that can be done until the end of life. Everything that is rarely done by people around is considered unnatural by Kenanga's neighbors. This is evidenced in the sentence He said school. *“Sekolah apa? Sudah jadi dosen kok sekolah, Cari-cari alasan saja”*. The assumption that women will only be able to work in the domestic sphere makes many people speculate that higher education is just a waste that they will not use

later. In addition to the character Kenanga, another character named Kemuning also experienced the same actions from people in her environment, where Kemuning could be handed over at any time to be married because she was a woman:

“Perkawinan dengan paman Rahyuda boleh dibilang merupakan keterpaksaan, demi agenda perjodohan orang-orang zaman dulu. Ibu paman Rahyuda meminta kepada ibu Kemuning agar menyerahkan anak perempuannya ke griya untuk dikawinkan dengan anaknya” (Kenanga, 2017: 70).

The placement of female characters in an unimportant position in making decisions for themselves is evidenced in the sentence *“Ibu paman Rahyuda meminta kepada ibu Kemuning agar menyerahkan anak perempuannya ke griya untuk dikawinkan dengan anaknya”*. Kemuning was forcibly handed over by her mother to be married off to the man of her family's choice. This puts Kemuning in a position of being unable to determine her rights over her life. Kemuning's bodily authority and right to determine her life have been taken away by the patriarchal culture adopted by her family. They put her in a position where she can only accept everything that has been determined by her family, including her husband's class without involving her voice in it. This proves that subordination in patriarchal families is indeed very toxic for women. They take away women's rights to determine their marriage. Not only that, Kemuning's fate as a woman seems to be very much tied to what has been determined:

“Sejak palu perjodohan diketukkan, semua pintu telah tertutup bagi Kemuning. Tugasnya tinggal melayani kemauan laki-laki yang telah disediakan untuknya, tanpa boleh memasukkan kemauannya sendiri. Tidak ada pilihan lain, kecuali menjadi seorang istri yang “baik”, artinya cocok dengan apapun yang dimau oleh suami” (Kenanga, 2017: 70).

The treatment that positions women, especially those experienced by the female character in the quote above, is evidenced in the sentence *“Tugasnya tinggal melayani kemauan laki-laki yang telah disediakan untuknya, tanpa boleh memasukkan kemauannya sendiri”*. Kemuning's arranged marriage meant that she could only obey the rules and wishes of her future husband. Kemuning is placed in an unfavorable position, where she can only submit to her husband's orders without being allowed

to protest and insert her own will. Women's voices in expressing opinions about their future are sometimes not heard by patriarchal families. They assume that women do not have the right to speak out. The assumption that women lack reason and rational logic makes their voices in public often doubtful.

### *Negative Stereotypes and Inequality toward Dayu Made and Intan*

Negative stereotypes are negative labeling attached to a person. In the novel *Kenanga* by Oka Rusmini, there is a form of stereotyping against female characters that causes the characters to be in an unfair position. This is evidenced in the character of Dayu Made, who portrays a woman who is obedient and loyal to serve her husband: "Kalau sampai terjadi keributan, Dayu Made justru selalu berpihak ke suaminya, ke keluarga besar suaminya, tak peduli apa pun masalahnya. Itulah sebabnya Dayu Putu cenderung menahan diri saja" (Kenanga, 2017: 163).

This quotation clearly illustrates that Dayu Made never protests, even Dayu Made's sister, Dayu Putu, can only hold back. Although, when there was a big argument between her husband and her own sister, Dayu Made would not dare to take her sister's side and chose to silently obey her husband. Therefore, Dayu Putu chose to restrain herself because it was useless if there was a fuss.

In the novel *Kenanga* by Oka Rusmini, it is not only because women have no rights compared to men, because their nature is female so they should obey men, in terms of education, women in this novel also experience unequal treatment. This is evidenced by a Sudra female character named Intan who experiences educational restrictions. "Kalau Jegeg tidak keberatan, tiang ingin merawat dan menyekolahkan. Sampai tamat SD saja, sekedar bisa baca dan tulis. Lumayan. Apalagi sekarang ini sulit sekali cari wang jero yang bisa dipercaya" (Kenanga, 2017:3)

It is narrated that Intan is part of the Sudra caste. Balinese society considers Sudra caste women, such as Intan, especially working as a maid (wang jero) is not appropriate for high school. Even if they want to be educated until they finish elementary school, it is appropriate. It is normal for Sudra women in Bali when children from poor families choose to work in the griya. In addition, Brahmin women who marry outside the caste also experience a form of marginalization that results in a condition of exclusion. This ostracization is seen in the characters Biang Mayun and Bu Susila in Oka Rusmini's novel *Kenanga*. Brahmin women are not allowed to marry men outside their caste.



## Discussion

### *Violences, Inequality, Stereotypes and Patriarchy against women in Rusmini's "Kenanga"*

The presence of feminist literary criticism in the realm of literature is one of the varieties of literary criticism that analyzes a literary work by focusing on women who are barely taken into account and even get unfair treatment in literary works using a feminist approach. According to Fournier (2021) feminist literary criticism is a type of literary criticism that utilizes the theoretical framework of feminism in interpreting and evaluating literary works.

Li *et al.*, (2019) stated that the forms of gender inequality problems are stereotypical views of women and men, views of the subordinate position of women, the double burden of women, marginalization and violence against women. Sulistyowati (2021) argues that basically the obligations and importance of the state's commitment to the achievement of women's human rights and gender equality have been included in various legal products in Indonesia. However, in reality, when viewed from poverty conditions, more girls do not complete the 9-year compulsory education program compared to boys. This causes many girls in Indonesia to marry at a young age. Through this incident, it can be said that gender equality in Indonesia cannot be said to be truly equal, because there is still a gap between women and men in terms of education.

In accordance with the findings above, this research is consistent with research conducted by (Satriyani, 2018) with the title "*Kajian Feminisme Novel Kenanga Karya Oka Rusmini Dan Relevansinya Dengan Bahan Ajar Bahasa Indonesia Di SMA*" discussing gender-based violence in their research discussion where patriarchal power is so dominating that patriarchal power not only controls people's lives but also controls women's lives where men have power over this control. Usually the control of power only applies to men, which causes acts of gender-based violence committed by men against women.

In addition, Tantimin & Sinukaban (2021) claimed that most gender violence is not only left unpunished but tolerated in the silences of society and victims who experience violence. There are several fears such as fear of retaliation, sexual problems, shame and blame and acceptance without tradition and the grip of male power that causes women who are victims to silence the treatment. Gender-based violence occurs in the characters Jero Kemuning Kenanga, and Dayu Made. Jero Kemuning experienced violence committed by her husband. Jero Kemuning was willing to be beaten to a pulp, berated, and even cursed by her own husband and

her husband would not stop committing acts of violence if Jero Kemuning did not immediately ask her husband for forgiveness. Although she often received harsh treatment from her husband, it did not make Kemuning hold a grudge against her husband. Kenanga experienced violence in the form of rape and torture. Bhuana raped and tortured Kenanga because of Kenanga's cold attitude towards Bhuana. Bhuana's torture took the form of harsh words and also Bhuana's rude attitude which Bhuana often did to Kenanga when Kenanga and Bhuana met secretly without anyone knowing.

Suparman (2019) explains that in patriarchal cultures, individual discrimination against women occurs mainly by individual patriarchy in the household, while in the public context this distinction is more collective. In personal patriarchy, the most important patriarchal strategy is exclusion, while in public this strategy is called segregation and subordination. Sulistyowati (2021) states that patriarchal culture places women in a lower position compared to men, women are positioned as *konco wingking* who must be loyal and devoted to men (husbands). Diana *et al.*, (2018) explained that patriarchal culture creates confusion which correlates with ignorance of the proper position of men and women in family life, society, the environment, and so forth.

### ***Inequality against women in Education, Social Structure, Women-Nature***

These findings are in line with Satriyani (2018); Satriyani *et al.*, (2018); (Mu'is, 2021) which shows that gender inequality does not only occur in the social environment, the novel also describes how gender inequality occurs in the field of education, where it occurs due to strict customary rules. The social structure of Balinese society that upholds the rights and obligations of men and women has made everyone have their own limits. In this case, women are more disadvantaged. Basically, gender itself does not solely refer to one sex. But more than that, gender also relates to all behaviors related to social settings. The following are some quotes to support this from the novel *Kenanga* by Oka Rusmini:

“Anak kita? Bhuana, dimana otakmu? Kau lelaki, bisa bicara apa saja semaumu. Menanggung anak ini, membiayainya. Enak saja. Kau pikir aku tidak sanggup? Persoalannya tidak sederhana itu. Mungkin bagimu ini soal mudah, buatku berat! Tubuh laki-laki bisa bebas membuang benihnya kemanapun, tapi perempuan?” (Kenanga, 2017: 49).

“Suatu kali Tuniang berceloteh tentang Dayu Ratna. Mahendra tahu, yang dimaksud adalah seorang perempuan berumur lima puluh tahun, tetapi masih lajang, dan manajer hotel berbintang. Lingkaran pergaulannya memang luar biasa. Meski bagi Mahendra, sebetulnya itu biasa-biasa saja untuk ukuran zaman sekarang. Mungkin masalahnya hanya karena dia dayu, dan tinggal di griya. Tak pelik lagi, jadilah perempuan itu sasaran pergunjingan. Para perempuan griya, termasuk Tuniang, suka sekali memvonisnya yang tidaktidak” (Kenanga, 2017: 208-209).

The quotation above shows that women are portrayed as someone who has a degree below men. The form of gender injustice experienced is very detrimental to women. A woman when choosing to reach her goals and career is considered deviant because it is not in accordance with traditional rules. In fact, in the modern era as today it is very natural for women to have the same rights as men. Based on the quote above, it can be concluded that Oka Rusmini raised a socialist feminist story, which is an understanding of the oppression of women which is understood that men have certain material interests in dominating women. This is what underlies the form of gender injustice in the novel *Kenanga* by Oka Rusmini.

Marentek *et al.*, (2021) explain that the actual involvement of women in the world of work and education does not automatically improve the status of women. This is in line with the rolling nuances of secular democratization, the women's movement increasingly realizes how the real underdevelopment of women is not caused by ignorance and poverty, but is structural-systemic. Bachmann *et al.*, (2018); Agustin & Wardiah (2022) argue that in fact, in society there is a wrong view of the position between women and men. The position of women is considered lower than that of men. This is a reflection of the patriarchal culture that assumes that power is in the hands of men and women are placed in a position below men. This can also be seen from how social conditions in the novel determine the level of education of a woman: *Jegeg ingin merawat dan menyekolahkanannya. Sampai SD saja, sekadar bisa baca dan tulis. Lumayan. Apalagi sekarang ini sulit sekali cari wang jero yang bisa dipercaya”* (Kenanga, 2017: 3).

This quotation shows the unequal treatment experienced by one of the female characters named Luh Intan. This is located in the sentence Jegeg wants to take care of her and send her to school. Up to elementary school, just to be able to read and write. This sentence proves the number two position of girls who are considered unnecessary to get a proper and high education. The character *Kenanga*

who intends to send Luh Intan to college is opposed by her mother who only wants to send her to elementary school. Mrs. Kenanga's actions towards Luh Intan clearly show subordination behavior by limiting Luh Intan's space to get equal space with men in the aspect of education. The assumption that a woman will not be in the public sphere and can only work in the domestic sphere, makes many women constrained in getting the opportunity to have a high education. This is in accordance with the reality that occurs in society, which views women as not needing to get a high level of education.

Naturally, it is recognized that there are differences between men and women in biological aspects (Dwipayana & Astawan, 2021). These differences are always used to determine gender relations, such as the division of status, rights, roles and functions in society. In fact, gender really refers to the socially constructed roles of men and women. These social roles can be learned, change over time, and vary culturally and interculturally. By nature, Bhopal (2019) claimed that it is recognized that there are differences between men and women in biological aspects. These differences are always used to determine gender relations, such as the division of status, rights, roles and functions in society. In fact, gender really refers to the socially constructed roles of men and women. These social roles can be learned, change over time, and vary culturally and interculturally.

Despite being one of the most natural and obvious issues in modern times, gender equality has not yet reached this point. For women, gender equality or rather gender inequality remains an initial challenge to overcome in various areas of life. As such, gender equality is about achieving a balance between the roles and relationships of men and women. It is a social construct where both sexes can make choices without being commented on or restricted by a preconceived notion of prejudice.

The various forms of gender inequality that occur in society also occur in the world of education. In fact, educational institutions are considered to play a major role in socializing and preserving the values and perspectives that underlie the emergence of various gender inequalities in society (Marentek et al., 2021). Broadly speaking, the phenomenon of gender inequality in education can be classified in several dimensions, including; (1) Lack of participation. In terms of participation, almost women around the world face the same problem. Compared to men, women's participation in formal education is much lower. The number of female students is generally only half or a third of the number of male students; (2) The lack of representation of women as teaching staff or leaders of formal education institutions shows the tendency that the dominance of men in this regard is higher

than women; (3) Unfair treatment. Learning activities in the classroom are often disadvantageous to female students. Teachers unconsciously tend to put more hope and attention on male students than female students. Teachers sometimes still think that women do not need to get higher education.

Literary works are mirror of society. This is in accordance with the opinion in the mimetic theory (Satriyani, 2018). As a mirror of society, literary works are a reflection of the social reality that exists in society. The position of women in the social environment has been constructed for a long time. This position is unpleasant for most women because there are only a few who enjoy their position in society. In the world of literature, depictions of gender injustice experienced by women are very much found. Various phenomena of gender and women become the driving factor for authors to present them in a literary work (Todd, 2018). One of them is the gender gap in education. This needs to be addressed, otherwise women will forever be marginalized in this realm. In other words, gender equality in education is absolutely necessary so that women have the same opportunities as men in advancing the world of education. In an effort to fulfill gender equality, education needs to fulfill its basis, namely delivering every individual or community to get education so that it can be called equality-based education.

Gender inequality in different regions varies in nature and level. Gender itself if interpreted is the distinction of roles, attributes, traits, attitudes and behaviors that grow and develop in society (Bhopal, 2019). Not only that, gender roles are divided into productive roles, reproductive roles and social roles. There are striking differences that have long been associated with a set of social demands about appropriateness in behavior, and in turn rights, resources and power. There are social groupings that determine one's life path and participation in society and economic activities. For example, in a family, the mother plays the role of caring for the children, while the father works. This condition can sometimes change drastically if there is a change in policy.

## **Conclusion**

Based on the results of the research analysis, the researcher formulates the conclusion that the gender inequality experienced by several female characters in this novel is quite diverse. For example, education in the novel *Kenanga* by Oka Rusmini found 3 types, namely, violence experienced by Kemuning's character, violence in the form of physical and psychological abuse committed by Kemuning's husband. Then, the placement of an unimportant position experienced by the characters Luh Intan and *Kenanga*, namely placing Luh Intan in a position that is

not so important because she is considered a sudra woman, while Kenanga is considered an unimportant woman because she has a lower education than the character Bhuana. In addition, the stereotype experienced by the characters Kenanga and Luh Intan, namely getting negative labeling if women dare to live single and choose to get a higher education than men, even sudra women like Luh Intan. Women are considered inappropriate to go to high school and appear to lead in public.

Gender inequality itself is not merely seen as equal rights and obligations without consideration. Given that the issues that arise regarding the issue of gender equality are interpreted to be everything, be it rights or obligations, absolutely the same as men. Women will certainly not be able to bear the responsibilities of men, and vice versa. Therefore, it is necessary to have sustainable development whose every point of purpose does not forget to uphold human rights to achieve gender equality and women's empowerment so that women get a decent position not because of pity, but hard work to influence their surroundings.

## REFERENCES

- Agustin, M., & Wardiah, D. (2022). Citra Perempuan Dalam Ketidakadilan Gender Pada Novel Perempuan Yang Menangis Kepada Bulan Hitam dan Novel Bidanari Berbisik. *Jurnal Educatio FKIP UNMA*, 8(2), 678-686. <https://doi.org/10.31949/Educatio.V8I2.2225>
- Asri, Y., & Arief, E. (2020). Contesting the Patriarchal Authority: Portrait of Millennial Women in the Indonesian Novel. *3rd International Conference on Language, Literature, and Education (ICLLE 2020)*. <https://www.atlantispress.com/proceedings/iclle-20/125945960>
- Bachmann, I., Harp, D., & Loke, J. (2018). Through a Feminist Kaleidoscope: Critiquing Media, Power, and Gender Inequalities. *Feminist Approaches to Media Theory and Research*, 1-15. [https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-90838-0\\_1](https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-90838-0_1)
- Barry, P. (2020). Feminist criticism. *Beginning Theory (Fourth Edition)*, 123-140. <https://doi.org/10.7765/9781526153524.00011>
- Bhopal, K. (2019). Gender, 'race' and patriarchy: A study of south Asian women. *Gender, "Race" and Patriarchy: A Study of South Asian Women*, 1-205. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780429456305/Gender-Race-Patriarchy-Kalwant-Bhopal>
- Cohen, D. K., & Karim, S. M. (2022). Does More Equality for Women Mean Less War? Rethinking Sex and Gender Inequality and Political Violence. *International Organization*, 76(2), 414-444. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0020818321000333>
- de Lauretis, T. (2018). Aesthetic and Feminist Theory: Rethinking Women's Cinema. *Feminist Art Criticism*, 133-152. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780429500497-8>

- Diana, D., Asri, Y., & Hayati, Y. (2018). *Representation of Women's Struggle in Indonesia Contemporary Novels: Liberal-Feminist Studies*. 542–546. <https://doi.org/10.2991/ICLLE-18.2018.91>
- Dwipayana, A. K. I., & Astawan, N. (2021). The Domination of Patriarchism In Inheritance Customary Systems. *RETORIKA: Jurnal Bahasa, Sastra Dan Pengajarannya*, 14(1), 1–13. <https://doi.org/10.26858/retorika.v14i1.13874>
- Fournier, L. (2021). *Autotheory as Feminist Practice in Art, Writing, and Criticism*. MIT Press. [https://books.google.co.id/books?hl=en&lr=&id=kM\\_tDwAAQBAJ&oi=fnd&pg=PR7&dq=feminist+criticism&ots=IGwiz0r5bt&sig=s-GfuJzup0UQOiYrtm\\_naBoMSE8&redir\\_esc=y#v=onepage&q=feministcriticism&f=false](https://books.google.co.id/books?hl=en&lr=&id=kM_tDwAAQBAJ&oi=fnd&pg=PR7&dq=feminist+criticism&ots=IGwiz0r5bt&sig=s-GfuJzup0UQOiYrtm_naBoMSE8&redir_esc=y#v=onepage&q=feministcriticism&f=false)
- Frueh, J. (2018). Towards a Feminist Theory of Art Criticism. *Feminist Art Criticism*, 153–165. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780429500497-9>
- Li, J., Zhang, J., Zhang, D., & Ji, Q. (2019). Does gender inequality affect household green consumption behaviour in China? *Energy Policy*, 135, 111071. <https://doi.org/10.1016/J.ENPOL.2019.111071>
- Marentek, C., Palar, W. R., & Pangemanan, N. J. (2021). Citra Perempuan dan Ketidakadilan Gender dalam Novel "Saat Hati Telah Memilih" Karya Mira W dan Implikasinya bagi Pembelajaran Sastra di Sekolah. *Literary Studiies*, 2(1).
- Mu'is, A. (2021). Women's Representations in Novel Negeri Perempuan by Wisran Hadi and Novel Kenanga by Oka Rusmini: A Study of Literature Sociology. *Proceedings of the 4th International Conference on Language, Literature, and Education (ICLLE-4 2021)*, 604, 1–6. <https://doi.org/10.2991/ASSEHR.K.211201.001>
- Nielsen, J. M. (2019). *Feminist Research Methods: Exemplary Readings In The Social Sciences*. Routledge. [https://books.google.co.id/books?hl=en&lr=&id=HUyFDwAAQBAJ&oi=fnd&pg=PT8&dq=feminist+criticism&ots=xvG3kjW6z-&sig=0Ds9yFDUqHr9kNsh0rcbfKefTcA&redir\\_esc=y#v=onepage&q=feministcriticism&f=false](https://books.google.co.id/books?hl=en&lr=&id=HUyFDwAAQBAJ&oi=fnd&pg=PT8&dq=feminist+criticism&ots=xvG3kjW6z-&sig=0Ds9yFDUqHr9kNsh0rcbfKefTcA&redir_esc=y#v=onepage&q=feministcriticism&f=false)
- Renzetti, C. M. (2018). Feminist perspectives. *Routledge Handbook of Critical Criminology*, 74–82. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315622040-7>
- Rusmini, Oka. (2017). *Kenanga*. Jakarta: Grasindo.
- Satriyani, L. D. (2018). *Kajian Feminisme Novel Kenanga Karya Oka Rusmini Dan Relevansinya Dengan Bahan Ajar Bahasa Indonesia Di SMA [UNS (Sebelas Maret University)]*. <https://digilib.uns.ac.id/dokumen/62926/Kajian-Feminisme-Novel-Kenanga-Karya-Oka-Rusmini-Dan-Relevansinya-Dengan-Bahan-Ajar-Bahasa-Indonesia-Di-SMA>
- Satriyani, L. D., Suyitno, S., & Ulya, C. (2018). Feminisme Novel Kenanga Karya Oka Rusmini: Kajian Kerelevansian Dengan Pembelajaran Bahasa Indonesia. *BASASTRA*, 6(1), 168–183. [https://jurnal.fkip.uns.ac.id/index.php/bhs\\_indonesia/article/view/12232](https://jurnal.fkip.uns.ac.id/index.php/bhs_indonesia/article/view/12232)

- Sulistiyowati, Y. (2021). Kesetaraan Gender Dalam Lingkup Pendidikan Dan Tata Sosial. *IjouGS: Indonesian Journal of Gender Studies*, 1(2), 1-14. <https://doi.org/10.21154/IJOUGS.V1I2.2317>
- Suparman, N. (2019). Ketidakadilan Gender Dalam Novel Perempuan Di Titik Nol Karya Nawal El-Saadawi. *Telaga Bahasa*, 7(1), 97-108. <https://doi.org/10.36843/TB.V7I1.60>
- Tantimin, T., & Sinukaban, E. (2021). Perlindungan Hukum Terhadap Hak Tenaga Kerja Perempuan Terkait Ketidaksetaraan Gender Di Indonesia. *NUSANTARA: Jurnal Ilmu Pengetahuan Sosial*, 8(3), 395-406. <https://doi.org/10.31604/JIPS.V8I3.2021.395-406>
- Todd, J. (2018). *Feminist Literary History*. John Wiley & Sons. [https://books.google.co.id/books?hl=en&lr=&id=oMFQDwAAQBAJ&oi=fnd&pg=PP6&dq=feminist+criticism&ots=maGUE\\_026K&sig=K2aRC9Q6otfUsM6Tc7AZOpt6Vug&redir\\_esc=y#v=onepage&q=feminist criticism&f=false](https://books.google.co.id/books?hl=en&lr=&id=oMFQDwAAQBAJ&oi=fnd&pg=PP6&dq=feminist+criticism&ots=maGUE_026K&sig=K2aRC9Q6otfUsM6Tc7AZOpt6Vug&redir_esc=y#v=onepage&q=feminist criticism&f=false)