

# Gender Issues in Budgeting Function Decisions in Local Parliaments: A Comprehensive Analysis of Gender-Aware Policy Mapping

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*Abstract:* - Global gender equality only reaches 68%, while the remaining 32% still encounter gender discrimination. Politics has made the least amount of progress of any field; only 22% of it has achieved gender equality. This mainly illustrates the lack of representation of women in politics. Researchers explore how policy is developed in male-dominated environments. This article delves into the legal aspects related to budget formulation that integrates gender-aware policies. Budget policy is crucial as it allocates resources for economic stability and growth, while also promoting gender equality by funding initiatives that address gender disparities in key areas. The analysis was conducted using the social relations approach (SRA) and conflict theory. The data analysis method used in this qualitative study includes content analysis, with the assistance of Nvivo software. The study employed secondary data gathered from document analysis of plenary meeting minutes. The research findings indicate that the most frequently appearing gender policies, in order, are gender-neutral, gender-redistributive, and least gender-specific. The lack of women proposing specific gender programs reveals deeper issues in their policymaking participation, highlighting barriers that prevent them from advocating for gender-specific needs. Therefore, it is expected that men and women respond equally to gender-aware issues. In the meantime, the relationship between the budget politics and the gender-aware issue proposal submitted by the policy-making actors indicates that they have the authority to determine the gender-aware budget and implement it for the program with actual impact.

*Key-Words:* - Budget policy, budget politics, classification, gender, gender aware, gender equity, local parliament.

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## 1 Introduction

Gender issues have been the focus of international policy, as reflected in the establishment of CEDAW and CSW65, [1]. UN also launched gender equality as a point to be achieved for the sustainable development, [2]. The gender gap situation has progressed in the last 10 (ten) years, [3]. The data in Figure 1 shows that overall gender equality has

only reached 68.4%, while the other 31.6% still experience gender discrimination. In terms of sub-sectors, the field of political empowerment has the lowest level of gender equality, which is 22%. This means that gender discrimination is a significant gender barrier in the political field, [4]. The political realm is still considered a 'man's domain', hence

women often do not have a voice to contribute, [5], [6], [7].

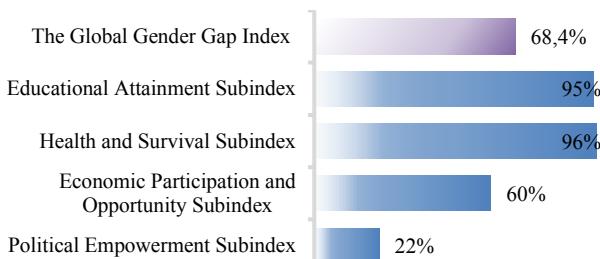


Fig. 1: Gender Equality Index by Sub-Sector Worldwide in 2023

Source: Data processed from World Economic Forum, [1]

By promoting gender equality in all areas, everyone has equal opportunities to access education, employment, asset ownership, and participation in decision-making, including women, [5], [8], [9]. In this way, women can also contribute fully to social, economic, and political development so that everyone's potential and talents can be optimized and encourage economic growth, social stability, and the sustainable development of the country as a whole, [10], [11], [12].

Gender equality initiatives may fail if gender issues are not incorporated into legal frameworks. It can encourage high inequality and gap between community groups, in turn influencing social, economic, and political development entirely. Additionally, women will face discrimination in many sectors and be at risk of violence, poverty, and limited access to essential healthcare services. These conditions hinder the optimal development of individuals, families, and communities as a whole, [4], [13], [14]. Accordingly, it is necessary to have regulations that can promote gender issues. Gender-aware budget policies play a crucial role in promoting gender equality in society, [15].

Budget policies play an essential role in promoting gender equality by addressing systemic economic barriers that lead to gender-based discrimination, [16]. The Regional People's Representative Council (Indonesian: Dewan Perwakilan Rakyat Daerah or called DPRD), through the Budget Committee, can formulate legislation or law by raising gender-aware issues to integrate gender equality into budgeting plan and decision, [17]. Through encouraging the gender-aware issue at the policy maker level, gender equality can be formulated in public policy, programs, services to community, and budget, having a significant impact, [10].

In practice, the gender gap is still very high in many countries [4], Regulations are necessary to

uphold everyone's rights and safeguard against gender discrimination. Women's barriers to accessing resources and materials contribute to the gender gap in society, [2], [18]. One of the obstacles in implementing gender issues into policy is that policymakers who do not have expertise in gender must apply a gender perspective to various fields, [19], [20].

This research is conducted based on the *Social Relations Approach* (SRA), [21]. SRA has been used in previous studies to classify the gender-aware policy, but in a more limited scope, [22]. This research develops a more comprehensive classification of gender-aware policy, including gender-neutral, gender-redistributive, and gender-specific categories. SRA framework consists of four concepts: (1) development as the improvement of human wellbeing; (2) social relations; (3) institutional analysis; and (4) gender policy. In terms of gender policy, it can be seen that policy consists of two types based on the awareness of gender issues, as shown in Figure 2.

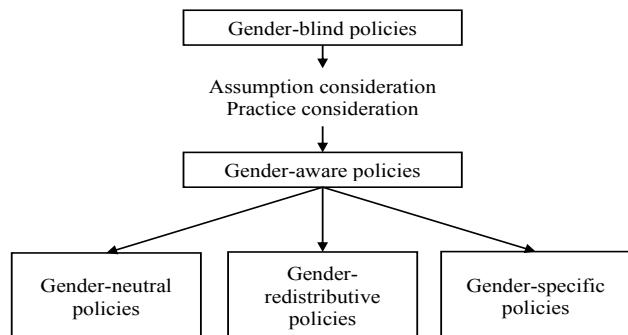


Fig. 2: Gender-aware Policy Classification  
Source: [21]

Gender-blind policies are the ones that do not recognize the difference between sexes. The policies contain biases that reinforce existing gender relations, which are still deeply rooted in patriarchal culture and domination, often leading to the neglect of women. Gender-aware policies are the ones recognizing that women and men are actors of development and they are restricted differently and often equally, as potential participants and beneficiaries in the development process. Gender-aware policies can be subdivided into three types: gender-neutral, gender-specific, and gender-redistributive policies, [21].

Gender-neutral policies are those that use knowledge on gender differences in a certain society to overcome bias in development interventions. The gender-aware policies belonging to the gender-neutral classification, for example, regulate the same marriage age for women and men. The policies

encourage equality for men and women in many aspects, one of which is the opportunity to receive equal education. Previously, women did not have the opportunity and time to get an education because they were under pressure to get married immediately.

Gender-specific policies are the ones using gender difference in certain context to respond to the gender-practical need for both women and men. Gender-specific policies divide gender resource and responsibility existing by considering the different specific needs of men and women, [21].

Gender-redistributive policies are intervention aiming to change the distribution existing to create the more balanced relation between women and men. Gender-redistributive policies touch gender-strategic interest; focus on women's gender-practical need, but do so by means of having transformation potency, helping create supporting condition for women to empower themselves, [21].

The conflict theory also guided the analysis, [23]. This serves as the foundation for social studies, [24]. Conflict theory focuses on the basic dimensions (substructure and superstructure) to explain social relations that exist in society and the conflicts that form in these interactions [23], including issues related to gender-awareness issues. The main idea of conflict theory is the interaction between the base (substructure) and superstructure that builds the social order of community groups, [23]. In this study, we interchangeably use the terms "base" and "substructure" to refer to the same concept. The base forms the social ecosystem of society, such as resources, productive forces, and ownership. In this context, the substructure forms the superstructure, which encompasses the entirety of society, including law, education, religion, and ideology, [25].

Conflict theory underlies the perspective on gender issues in which society is a place where the competition for domination occurs among social groups competing for limited resources, in this case, men and women. In this way, men can be viewed as a dominant group and women as a subordinate group in perceiving gender. Considering this, an improvement should be made in terms of the basis of society's social ecosystem by ensuring access to resources, production strength, and ownership not dominated discriminatively by one group only.

Classification can also be made by sex as suggested by those proposing the gender-aware issue, so that the difference of predisposition to the gender-aware issue can be seen among male and female members of the Regional Legislative Council (*Dewan Perwakilan Rakyat Daerah*,

hereafter called DPRD). It is intended to prove that the gender equality-related endeavor can be taken not only by women but men, also contributing to raising the gender issue as a form of change, [26].

One of the novelties of this study is demonstrated by the results of the VOS, as presented in Figure 3 (Appendix). The VOS viewer output shows that there are five clusters of issues related to gender equality. The first cluster in red represents previous research that generally discusses gender in public spaces. This cluster includes discussions about gender classification [27], gender education, gender identity [28], and gender-related policies [29]. The second cluster of research, highlighted in green, highlights the issue of the gender gap. Previous research discussed the relationship between gender and demographics [30], ethnic group [31], and risk factors [32].

The third cluster in blue pertains to gender and sex. This discussion specifically focuses on the distribution ratio based on sex, [33]. The fourth cluster pertains to women and the socio-economic issues highlighted in yellow. Socio-economic factors related to gender classification are the focus of this discussion, [31]. Socio-economic factors serve as the foundation for gender policy, [34]. This demonstrates that, despite previous efforts to classify gender-aware issues in parliamentary policies, the relationship between these issues and parliament has yet to emerge, making this study unique [35], [36].

This study aims to classify the existence of gender-aware issues in the results of the DPRD plenary meeting minutes. This is done by grouping initiatives proposed by DPRD members and noting differences in perspectives between male and female DPRD members on gender-aware issues. The researcher will examine and evaluate how closely the current budget policy reflects gender perspectives during policy-making and resource allocation procedures.

Using Naila Kabeer's Social Relations Approach (SRA) in conjunction with hand coding in NVivo, the study also presents a fresh methodological technique. With a particular focus on gender neutral, gender redistributive, and gender-specific keywords, this approach lets one examine the gender dimensions of policy debates deeper. By doing this, the study provides a more ordered and context-specific method of grouping policies based on their gender relevance instead of depending on broad theories that might miss the subtleties of actual policymaking.

This study is mostly based on direct analysis of the conversation inside regional parliaments and the

ensuing policies, so providing insightful information on whether gender-aware policies are being developed or whether gender issues are being neglected. This study raises awareness of the early phases of policy development, when most important choices are taken. By concentrating on the first legislative debates, which finally create the final policies and their execution, it determines if regional policies are gender-inclusive or reinforce already existing gender prejudices. Through careful content analysis of plenary meetings, the study offers a useful instrument for tracking and assessing regional legislative body gender inclusiveness. This is especially crucial since regional parliaments are key in distributing public money and developing policies influencing social welfare, economic growth, and gender equality. The study guarantees that gender issues are methodically included into next policymaking by identifying whether gender roles are handled fairly in debates on policies.

## 2 Methods

This study aims to expose and acquire a better knowledge of gender-aware policies included in regional budget plans by means of an in-depth qualitative method. The researcher makes use of secondary data sources, including documentation studies whereby the examined documents include minutes of plenary meetings concerning regional budgets.

The researcher applies content analysis as his method. In qualitative data, content analysis is a research technique applying a subjective yet scientific methodology to find, quantify, and examine the existence of word meaning and the relationships among every word, topic, or concept in textual form [37]. Content analysis was chosen by the researcher since the minutes of the plenary meetings seen as a legal record, therefore documenting the debates and decisions taken inside the Regional People's Representative Council (DPRD). The plenary meeting's minutes reflect policy choices taken as well as an official transcript of the discussions and intellectual exchanges among DPRD members. Content analysis makes the minutes of the plenary meeting a great source of information to grasp the opinions and inclinations of DPRD members who affect policy decisions. Examining the contents of the plenary meeting minutes helps the researcher to spot the problems covered, the opinions voiced, and the ideas guiding policy decisions. This study can give detailed understanding of the political dynamics and elements influencing DPRD decision-making.

The research location is in Magetan Regency's DPRD. The location was chosen because Magetan Regency has a relatively high Gender Development Index (IPG), indicating better gender equality compared to other regions in East Java, while still reflecting the conditions typically found in most local parliaments. The Magetan Regency DPRD then has the authority to draft the regional budget, making it relevant to the research's focus. Additionally, the Magetan DPRD is recognized for actively advocating gender equality issues through various initiatives, despite the fact that the proportion of female council members is relatively low, comprising only 13.3% of the total members, [38].

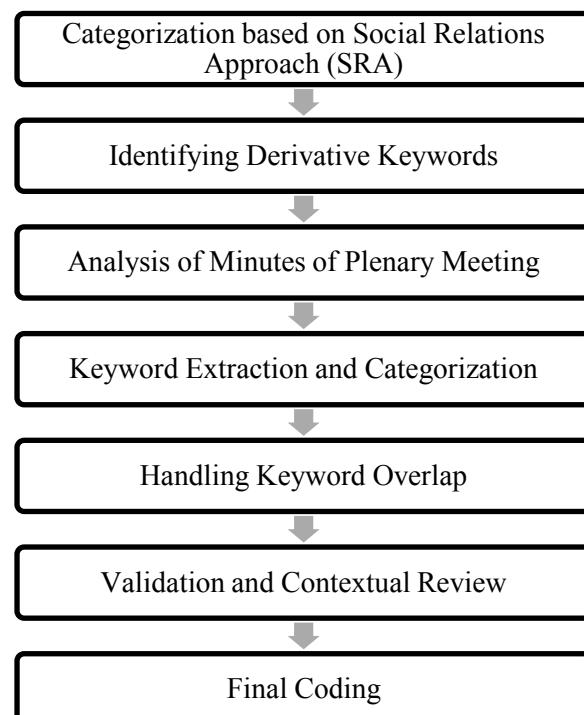


Fig. 3: Keywords Extraction Process

Keywords are determined based on Naila Kabeer's social relations approach. Therefore, there are three main keywords, including gender neutral, gender redistributive, and gender specific. Each of these three main keywords has derivative keywords that indicate the division of gender roles. The division of gender roles that does not differentiate between the roles of men and women is categorized as gender neutral. The division of gender roles that divides the roles of men and women equally or fairly is included as gender redistributive. The division of gender roles that is specific to men only or women only is included as gender specific.

Due to the broad context of the discussion of the plenary meeting of the Magetan Regency DPRD, we analyzed the content of the meeting minutes

thoroughly and extracted keywords that refer to the division of these roles and grouped them. These keywords can be seen in Table 1. The keywords serve as a tool to facilitate the search for gender-aware statements. However, researchers still need to ensure the context of the keywords used, which is why the coding process is conducted manually in NVivo.

In some cases, there is an overlap between keywords that indicate special conditions. If opposing keywords, for example, men and women, appear in the same paragraph, then the policy will be marked as a gender redistributive policy instead of gender specific. This is because it refers to a policy distributes resources by paying attention to men and women at the same time, not specifically to one group.

This may also happen to gender-neutral policies and gender-specific policies. The sentence 'female employees' can appear in one sentence, then this policy is marked as a gender-specific policy. This also applies to other sentences, where if there are keywords that are included in gender-specific policies that appear in the same sentence as the keyword gender-neutral policy, then the policy is included in the gender-specific classification instead of the gender-neutral classification.

Table 1. Keywords and coding categories

	Definition	Keywords
<b>Gender neutral</b>	All existing genders simultaneously benefit from the effective distribution of resources.	society; cleric; teacher; entrepreneur; doctor; health worker; nurse; journalist; farmer; worker; disability; elderly; equality; equal opportunity
<b>Gender redistribution</b>	Policies target both sexes, either together or separately. Policies aim for equal distribution of power and resources between men and women.	fair; resources; quota
<b>Gender specific</b>	Specific policies apply to women or men.	men; women; cleric; nyai; ustaz; ustazah; employee; female employee

Source: Adapted from [21]

The reliability of the data sources primarily depends on the meeting minutes as a legal document. As a legal document, the DPRD budget minutes adhere to applicable procedures and regulations, accurately reflecting the discussions and decisions of DPRD members. Since meeting minutes serve as an official record of discussions

and decisions, they hold legal authority and credibility in policy analysis and decision-making processes. As a legal product, the DPRD budget minutes have valid legal force and are considered official documents that describe the process and results of budget-related decision-making, [39]. This ensures the data's accuracy and reliability.

### 3 Results and Discussion

As a legislative institution, the DPRD has the authority to set policies and budgets that support gender equality. Through the budget policy mechanism, the DPRD can fight for a more equitable and fair budget allocation for the entire community, especially for groups that are vulnerable to gender inequality. We can formulate gender equality into public policies, programs, and services for the community, as well as budgets, by promoting gender-aware issues at the policy-making level, [10].

Figure 4 charts visualize the general patterns of gender friendly issues at the plenary session of the Magetan district regional representative council in budget policy planning.

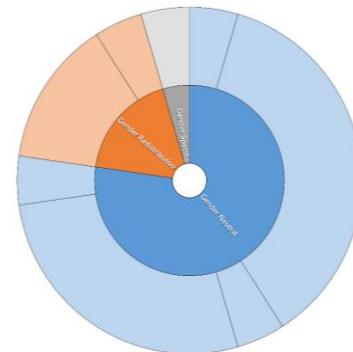


Fig. 5: Hierarchy Chart of Gender-aware Issues Policy Decisions on the DPRD's Budgeting Function

Source: Processed by Authors, 2025

The blue section represents gender-neutral issues. It covers the widest part of the entire graph, indicating that this gender-neutral classification appears most frequently in the entire minutes. The outermost blue section is split into five distinct sections. This implies that the gender-neutral classification yields five distinct categories. The five sections contain the keywords society, elderly, entrepreneurs, equality, and workers. 'Society' is the keyword that appears most often. The second most frequently appearing word is 'equality'. While the rest appear once.

The orange section in Figure 4 displays the keywords from the minutes related to the gender redistributive issue. The size of the orange section shows that gender redistributive issues appear quite often in the minutes of the meeting, but less so than gender-neutral issues. The outermost section is divided into two sections, each representing a keyword that appears in the gender redistributive issue. The following figure illustrates the outermost section in more detail. According to the figure above, the two sections consist of the words 'fair' and 'resources'. The word 'fair' has a larger section, indicating that it appears more often in gender-aware issues raised by DPRD members.

Figure 5 depicts gender-specific issues in gray. This section represents the smallest slice of the entire hierarchy, indicating that gender-specific issues are the least frequently occurring issues in the minutes of the meeting. The outermost slice consists of one section. This means that there is only one keyword that appears in gender-specific issues, namely 'women'.

While Figure 5 shows the frequency of occurrence, Figure 6 shows the gender-aware keywords that appeared in each of the minutes' analysis.

Gender-neutral nodes consist of five sub-nodes: community, workers, the elderly, equity, and all are represented in every plenary session. Gender redistributive nodes are made up of two sub nodes: fair and resource, which are only discussed at the first and third plenary sessions. Gender-specific nodes consist of one sub-node, which is female. This is discussed in the second plenary session.

### Classification of Gender-aware Issue Program Proposals in the Minutes of the Plenary Meeting on Budget

Gender inequality remains a problem in many countries, including Indonesia. Budget policy is considered to play an important role in promoting gender equality by addressing systemic economic barriers that cause gender-based discrimination. It is considered a key medium that can help empower women, increase women's fiscal independence, and close the gender wage gap, [16].

Regional parliaments, as key decision-makers in shaping regional policy, play a crucial role in overseeing and directing the allocation of public fiscal resources to ensure equitable distribution and effective utilization for community development. However, traditional budgeting practices often prioritize the needs of men, considering the proportion of parliament dominated by men. Meanwhile, women's specific needs and concerns

are being overlooked. This can lead to gender-biased resource allocation, perpetuating gender inequalities, and hindering progress towards gender equality.

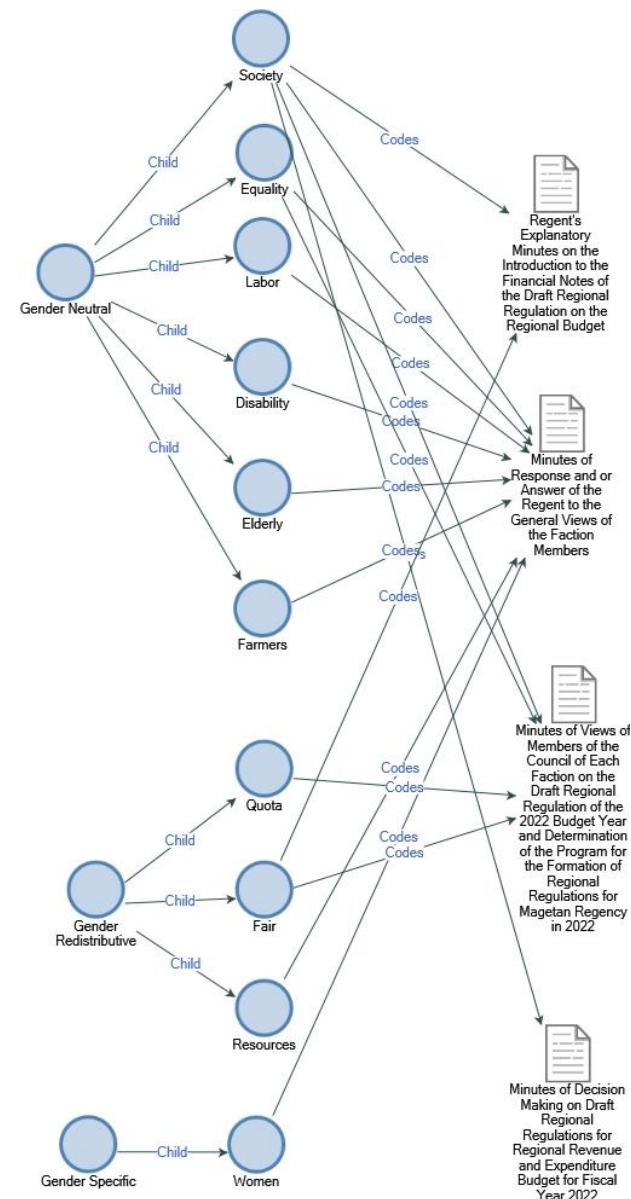


Fig. 6: Project Mapping of Gender-aware Issue  
Source: Processed by Authors, 2025

DPRD of Magetan Regency has not implemented any gender-aware framework in its policies or decision-making processes. This means that gender differences in needs, opportunities, and challenges are not explicitly considered in their governance. However, we aim to analyze their approach using a gender framework to assess how policies impact different gender groups. To do this, we apply the Social Relations Approach, which helps us examine power dynamics, access to resources, and decision-making structures from a gender perspective. By using this framework, we

can identify gaps and recommend more inclusive policies that address gender disparities effectively.

The social relations approach highlights the importance of understanding the dynamics of power and social relations in the economic sphere. This approach, when applied to the DPRD's budgeting function, emphasizes the gender dimension of budget allocation and how it affects women and men differently. Based on this approach, gender-aware issues consist of three classifications, namely gender-neutral issues, gender redistributive issues, and gender-specific issues, [21].

Specifically, the researcher presents the gender-aware issues raised in each of the plenary sessions, groups these issues into policy groups, and divides them based on Kabeer's gender-aware classification [21]. The gender of the DPRD members who delivered it was also considered. This way, researchers can analyze and identify the tendencies of DPRD members towards gender-aware issues.

Table 2 (Appendix) shows two gender-aware issues raised at the Regent's explanatory meeting regarding the introduction of the financial note. Male DPRD members raised the first issue, social assistance for COVID-19-affected poor groups, as a gender redistributive concern. This issue is important because the COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated gender inequality, especially for women from poor groups, who face the double burden of taking care of the household and earning a living. Social assistance, such as basic necessities and medical devices, can help ease their burden during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The second issue is the procurement of booster vaccines to prevent Covid-19 in the community, raised by female DPRD members. The gender-neutral classification includes this issue because the booster vaccine does not discriminate based on the recipient's gender, but instead prioritizes the health of the community. This shows the concern of female DPRD members in encouraging equal opportunities for men and women in gaining access to vaccines so that there is no gender gap in efforts to prevent COVID-19.

In the second minutes examined, namely the meeting on the views of Council Members from each faction on the draft regional regulations, there were more gender-aware issues raised, including two neutral issues and one gender redistributive issue. It is as shown in Table 3 (Appendix).

The meeting raised a variety of issues, including the equitable improvement of basic service infrastructure, the enhancement of educational facilities and infrastructure, the equalization of economic development, the development of regional

culture, the empowerment of microenterprises, the development of tourism, and the improvement of health service facilities. These issues vary in gender classification. This is demonstrated in Table 3 (Appendix). The gender-neutral classification encompasses several issues, including the enhancement of basic service infrastructure, the enhancement of educational facilities and infrastructure, the development of tourism, and the development of regional culture. This shows the importance of equal access and opportunities for men and women in various aspects of life.

Issues included in the gender redistributive classification are social assistance for poor groups affected by COVID-19 and improvements to health service facilities. These issues focus on the redistribution of resources and services that take into account existing gender disparities. To help them survive difficult conditions like the COVID-19 pandemic, efforts to reduce gender disparities and provide fair protection and services are crucial.

Analysis of the minutes was also conducted on the Regent's responses and/or answers to the general views of the faction members. It is shown in Table 4 (Appendix).

In the meeting, there were several important gender-aware issues raised by DPRD members, both male and female. One of the suggestions was to create a literacy building serving as a public education center. Children from several institutions will have equal access to quality educational facilities thanks to this literacy building, therefore promoting the development of equality. Furthermore, the literacy development can offer other teaching tools and high-quality reading materials meant to raise students' competency. With our idea, we are advocating gender equality; hopefully, kids who understand its importance will grow up to be active change agents.

One of the male DPRD members also raised issues about ecological preservation. In order to keep environmental sustainability while nevertheless boosting the economic and communal welfare, he suggested the creation of bamboo forests. The growth of bamboo trees will help men and women equally, lower inequality, and give the society more resources. Furthermore crucial for sustaining environmental sustainability are bamboo forests since they absorb carbon dioxide, stop soil erosion, and support biodiversity. From a gender equality standpoint, development of bamboo forests might offer men and women equal chances and advantages.

Members of DPRD also concentrated on the gender redistributive issue, especially with relation

to staff expenditure allocation. Female DPRD members brought up this issue and underlined the importance of an equitable budget distribution. The employee spending allocation program is supposed to supply the required money to close the gender pay gap, boost the proportion of women in leadership roles, and create a more inclusive and varied workplace. This project seeks to lower present inequalities and foster economic empowerment for all inside the framework of gender redistribution.

With an emphasis on the elderly, the conference also covered the enhancement of the facilities at the Regional General Hospital. Male DPRD members underlined the need of improving healthcare treatments catered to the elderly, especially ladies. Although women frequently live longer than males, they may find it difficult to get appropriate support and treatment. Improving hospital facilities is supposed to solve this problem and help to lower the gender differences in healthcare accessibility.

Furthermore included in the budget are projects meant to boost general community income. This initiative aims to close the pay difference between men and women and promote economic equality among them. Through increasing community revenue, the initiative also helps shield women from gender-based wage and employment discrimination. By means of these initiatives, the aim is to establish a setting whereby men and women have equal chances for personal development and financial independence.

Moreover, the parliament suggests helping socio-economically vulnerable groups—especially women and the elderly—by means of financial support to lower inequality. This stage seeks to satisfy their fundamental needs and advance a more equitable sharing of resources, therefore helping these underprivileged populations.

Furthermore, by helping local business players, DPRD members aim to promote local economic development. This plan is expected to open opportunities for women starting their own companies, therefore enhancing their economic empowerment. Further gender equality in the economy can be attained by providing equal assistance and access for men and women in the corporate sector.

At last, the conference covered management of revolving funds for cooperatives, people's business credit, autonomous group business credit, and microbusinesses. By guaranteeing financial access for everyone and generating chances for women in leadership and business, this program seeks to advance gender equality. By means of this fund

management, it is hoped that men and women will have equal access to business capital and the chance to realize their economic potential.

The last meeting held was a plenary meeting regarding the Regent's response and/or answer to the general views of the Faction Members as shown in Table 5 (Appendix).

Male DPRD members raised gender-neutral issues at the meeting. The issues were related to post-pandemic economic recovery and increasing employment through training and skills development, which are open to everyone. However, men dominated the meeting, limiting the opportunities for women to speak. Furthermore, the meeting primarily focused on revisiting previously raised issues.

In the entire meeting, there were 12 gender neutral issues, 4 gender redistributive issues, and 1 gender-specific issue raised. This shows that there is attention to gender-aware issues and efforts to improve welfare and gender equality for all members of society, as well as the commitment of DPRD members in fighting for issues that pay attention to gender justice in budgeting and public policy.

The plenary meeting of the Magetan Regency Regional Representative Council that was analyzed was still heavily impacted by post-COVID-19 conditions and recovery efforts. The most concerning aspect of the COVID-19 situation is the rising risk of discrimination and the decline in community well-being. These issues have been widely discussed, making them a key focus of the plenary meeting on the regional budget. The meeting primarily aims to restore and strengthen the regional economy, address and eliminate discrimination, and enhance the welfare and prosperity of the Magetan community. Furthermore under focus are inclusive economic recovery, helping underprivileged groups, and local sustainable development promotion.

Apart from the post-COVID-19 recovery, the 2022 budget allocation represents the last phase of the 2018–2023 Regional Medium-Term Development Plan (RPJMD), hence it is rather important. This year marks a turning point for hastening development initiatives to guarantee the effective execution of the plan, so budget decisions become even more critical in promoting long-term regional development and economic recovery.

By suggesting stimulus measures and financial support to help the community recover from the effects of COVID-19 and so promote more general economic growth, the parliament significantly guides the budget planning of the regional

administration by means of proposals. These initiatives seek to promote small enterprises, revive important industries, and fortify social welfare programs so guaranteeing a more strong economic basis.

Beyond post-pandemic recovery, the area also has to contend with growing gasoline prices, which can raise living expenses and further tax underprivileged populations financially. The budget must thus additionally dedicate funds to safeguard these at-risk groups, so guaranteeing their sufficient support via policies meant to reduce the economic load, social assistance programs, and subsidies. In DPRD Magetan Regency budget planning, gender-aware programs can include measures aimed at economic empowerment, such financial support for women-led companies, job creation programs, and skill development to enable impacted people to recover stability. Particularly in reaction to issues like rising gasoline prices, they also handle social welfare issues including healthcare access, education support, and financial security for minorities.

Gender-conscious issues first surfaced in the Magetan Regency Regional Representative Council's plenary assembly, indicating that regional parliamentarians there are cognizant of gender concerns. Not all of them, though, show up for the last meeting—that is, the ultimate decision and approval of the fiscal budget for that year.

### **The Tendency of Members of the Regional People's Representative Council (DPRD) as Policy Formulators in Proposing Gender-aware Programs**

Men are among everyone who shares the responsibility for gender equality; it is not only the concern of one gender group. Men as well as women should help to develop and carry out policies supporting equality. Comparatively analyzing the policy initiatives put up by male and female parliamentarians helps us to understand how each gender is either helping or affecting the progress of gender equality. By means of this comparison, we may evaluate the degree of participation from both sides, therefore assuring that men and women are equally helping to shape policies influencing gender-related concerns.

This study is vital since it clarifies any gender disparities in the suggested policy forms. If one gender controls some policy domains, it may indicate a lack of representation or possible biased decision-making practices. Knowing the opinions of

male members on gender issues becomes especially crucial in areas like Magetan Regency, where the parliament (DPRD) is mostly male. Since most of the decision-makers are men, their opinions on gender equality will greatly influence the laws impacting men as well as women in the area. Analyzing these points of view helps one to see that women and men have to be actively involved in advancing policies that benefit all genders since gender equality is a team effort. This will help to guarantee a more inclusive and balanced approach to policy-making, so producing more successful results regarding gender equality. Table 6 summarizes a comparison of gender-aware suggested policy initiatives by researchers (Appendix).

The mapping in Table 6 (Appendix) reveals a growing recognition of gender sensitive issues within the DPRD's budget function, particularly in the economic, social, and health sectors—areas where women have long faced discrimination and limited access to essential resources. One of the most impactful ways to address these disparities is through budget policies that close gender gaps in education. The focus on literacy programs, for example, highlights their crucial role in ensuring equal learning opportunities for men and women.

Gender-neutral issues are the most frequently occurring gender-aware policy classifications in the minutes of meetings. Overall, this issue appeared 12 times in meeting minutes. Both male and female DPRD members conveyed gender-neutral issues, demonstrating sensitivity to such issues. DPRD members prioritized gender-neutral issues in budget politics due to their lack of direct connection to gender inequality, which facilitates their acceptance by members with varying perspectives on gender equality.

The Magetan Regency parliament brings up social, economic, and health gender-aware issues. According to the analysis, there are 15 gender-aware issues raised by male DPRD members, while there are 4 gender-aware issues raised by female DPRD members. The gap in the total number of programs proposed by male and female parliament members arises naturally because men dominate the parliament in terms of numbers. With more male members, there are simply more proposals from them, leading to a higher total number of programs proposed by male members.

This gender imbalance results in a disproportionate representation of male-driven initiatives. Factors such as societal norms [40], political party structures [41], and electoral systems have contributed to the slow progress in achieving

gender parity in political leadership. As a result, the voices and perspectives of women remain underrepresented in policymaking processes, affecting the formulation and implementation of gender-aware legislation.

While women legislators are often expected to advocate for policies that directly impact women's lives, such as healthcare, labor conditions, public infrastructure, and cultural issues, the data from this study suggests a different reality. Women legislators in the case under review did not suggest any gender-specific initiatives, which begs concerns over the degree of their active advocacy for laws addressing women's particular needs. This suggests that although female participation in policymaking is significant, it does not always convert into gender-oriented policy proposals.

This result emphasizes how intricately women participate in legislative decision-making. Though underrepresented in most of Indonesia's parliamentary institutions, women in politics do not usually give initiatives meant to address gender-based concerns first priority. Political restrictions, party agendas, and more general policy priorities influencing their legislative focus could all be among the several elements influencing this. Although their presence in decision-making bodies is still vital for promoting different points of view, it is equally important to guarantee that their involvement results in genuine advocacy for gender-responsive policies.

Simply increasing the number of women in parliament is insufficient; efforts must also be made to inspire and assist them in suggesting and advocating measures aiming at gender equality. The difference between representation and actual policy influence will remain without active participation in gender-specific policymaking, therefore restricting advancement toward a more inclusive and fair government system.

While male legislators could understand the need of gender-aware legislation, their emphasis usually comes from gender-neutral and redistributive ones. Though they seek to treat people equally, gender-neutral policies sometimes ignore structural hurdles disproportionately affecting women. Gender-redistributive policies, meantime, try to reallocate resources and opportunities but might not adequately handle the particular difficulties women experience. Important concerns such as reproductive rights, childcare help, and employment protections for women could thus be neglected. Lack of a gender-aware viewpoint in mainstream policy making helps to sustain current

disparities in the political, social, and economic domains.

Notwithstanding these obstacles, conversations in the Magetan Regency DPRD's plenary meetings point to some male lawmakers growing more sensitive to gender-oriented concerns. Men's active participation in supporting gender equality is a major first step toward real change since they also play powerful roles in forming social conventions and laws. Male legislators who understand the value of gender viewpoints can support women's rights and include these factors into public projects and legislative choices, therefore fostering a more inclusive and fair society.

Three primary fields economic development, social infrastructure, and health services form the center of the suggested policy agendas. Aiming to build a more open and fair society, these areas handle important concerns including corporate growth, financial support, education, cultural development, and healthcare advances.

Budgetary politics in the economic sector can influence the creation of gender equality in economic and income distribution [42]. The realization of a region's economic development policy is contingent upon adequate budget support. Therefore, budget politics is crucial in supporting regional economic development. DPRD members have an important role in forming and approving the Regional Revenue and Expenditure Budget Plan (RAPBD), as well as overseeing its implementation. Through the budget politics mechanism, DPRD members can fight for a more equitable and fair budget allocation for the entire community, especially for groups that are vulnerable to economic inequality. All budget policies produced by the DPRD in the economic sector must pay attention to gender equality principles and encourage inclusivity for all of society, including groups vulnerable to gender inequality, [43].

The DPRD's inclination in the 2022 regional budget for the health sector, which is focused on addressing the COVID-19 issue through vaccines and enhancing health facilities to promote equitable services for both men and women, is a positive budget policy initiative that supports the management of pressing health issues in the community. The health sector budget that prioritizes handling COVID-19 can be considered a policy that is responsive to the community's current needs. In addition, improving health facilities can also increase the effectiveness of health services, which in turn can improve overall public health. This can help to create more conducive conditions for

development in other areas, thereby improving public welfare and economic growth, [42].

It is worth noting that the data suggests that male parliament members are aware of broader, gender-neutral policies that promote equality in education. But female DPRD members adopt a more community-driven approach and aggressively support laws directly addressing women's needs. Their efforts aim to eliminate gender inequalities as well as to allocate budgets more fairly, thereby honoring them. Investing in inclusive educational infrastructure helps to build the basis for a time when learning will be available to everyone, regardless of gender.

In the economic sphere, gender equality goes beyond a social concern directly influencing income distribution and economic fairness. Sustainable development in public administration depends on guaranteeing equal access to financial resources and opportunity for men and women, [4].

Crucially involved in this process is the DPRD, in responsibility of developing and running the regional budget (RAPBD). Through budget politics, they can advocate policies that correct economic disparity and more equitable distribution of resources. By funding companies experiencing financial difficulties, they help to close the wealth disparity and create more inclusive economic policies.

Actually, DPRD members have already acted to advance economic gender equality. Their work covers helping small businesses financially, supporting tourism development, and making sure cooperatives and micro-enterprises run in secure and easily reachable surroundings. These programs empower women by raising their involvement and financial independence, therefore fostering economic development.

By enhancing women's role in the economy, lowering financial inequalities, and so producing a more balanced economic scene for all, budget allocations can have a long-lasting effect. While DPRD members have tried to promote economic equality, the conversation on particular gender issues is still very lacking. Actually, just one clearly gender-related topic was mentioned in legislative debate. In times of crisis, while subsidies and social help programs are absolutely vital; nevertheless, they can also unwittingly reinforce dependency rather than autonomy. Women who depend on temporary financial aid constantly might not have the chance to grow confident, knowledgeable, or network-building skills required to succeed on their own. Furthermore, these temporary policies sometimes overlook the particular and varied

requirements of women, including those related to difficulties in obtaining appropriate healthcare, education, or employment prospects. Women may stay in cycles of dependency that keep them from realizing their full potential without thorough and continuous help. This draws attention to a major disparity in giving programs explicitly addressing women's particular economic difficulties first priority.

Deeply ingrained in Indonesian society, patriarchal ideas define men's dominance in public and governmental realms while women are often confined to home and private areas [44]. These cultural standards affect the political view on gender problems. Given male predominance in Indonesian politics, male legislators often have more ability to influence policy decisions, [45]. Although they could recognize gender concerns, they might not see them as vital or crucial when compared to other political agendas. The absence of a strong female presence in decision-making procedures reduces the impact of women's opinions and makes it more difficult for gender-related issues to be given top priority and incorporated into the ultimate choice.

The continuous fight to include gender viewpoints into economic administration shows in the inability to complete a gender-related policy. Economic equality will remain slow and uneven without strong commitment and organized systems to guarantee gender-aware policies transcend beyond debate.

Not limited to economic measures only, the lack of gender-specific debates in Indonesia's parliament affects important sectors including health. Although gender concerns in health were discussed inside the Indonesian parliament, the emphasis has stayed too broad and inadequate to meet the particular requirements of women. This lack of depth in tackling women's health issues reflects a more general problem whereby gender-aware issues are sometimes discussed in principle but not carried out with the necessary precision to solve the particular health discrepancies women experience.

Gender-specific health policies would guarantee that money and resources are distributed to solve the particular difficulties women experience, [46]. This covers funding for initiatives on reproductive rights, maternal health, gender-aware mental health treatment, and the prevention of gender-based violence, [47]. This covers funding for initiatives on reproductive rights, maternal health, gender-aware mental health treatment, and the prevention of gender-based violence.

Women's health issues can go underappreciated or handled as secondary since men make most of the

political and medical decisions. Women's reproductive health, sexual rights, and problems including domestic abuse could be considered "private" concerns or not as important as more general public health concerns. Policies resulting from this do not completely meet the complexity of women's health requirements and continue to treat these concerns with a broad, one-size-fits-all approach.

This study presents a unique perspective for gender research with a primary focus on gender issues directly in the realm of policymakers, which sets it apart from previous studies that primarily addressed gender gaps in society [48] or institutional levels [49], [50]. The main emphasis of this study is on how regional policymakers' decision-making procedures include gender factors. This study acquired a better knowledge of the legislative procedures influencing the execution of gender-related policies in male-dominated political environment by means of analysis of the plenary meeting minutes of the Magetan Regency DPRD.

#### 4 Conclusion

As seen by their active participation in bringing gender equality concerns before meetings and policy debates, DPRD members have shown a predisposition to be sensitive to gender-aware issues. Their ideas addressing gender-neutral, gender-redistributive, and gender-specific issues clearly show their dedication to these concerns. Supported by their knowledge of gender policies and appreciation of the need of include gender viewpoints in decision-making, DPRD members significantly help to solve gender-related issues. They also show that they can react properly to newly arising gender-related problems. Budget politics-wise, DPRD members might use their seats to support gender-aware measures. Their participation in the process of budget planning and allocation helps them to direct money towards projects and activities advancing women equality.

Still, this study has a narrow emphasis since it just addresses the financial aspect. Although the budget is important in improving gender equality, studying it alone offers just a limited picture of the more general complexity of gender-aware issues inside the organization and country. Moreover, this study limits its applicability to other institutional policies and just addresses the gender awareness element in the budgeting process.

Men still dominate Indonesian politics, so we need to take concrete steps to encourage women's active participation. One way to achieve such an

outcome is through the formulation of a Regional Regulation (Perda) on Gender Mainstreaming (PUG) in the DPRD. This regulation requires every Regional Apparatus Organization (OPD) to integrate gender indicators into their program planning and budgeting. By embedding gender considerations into regional governance, policies can become more inclusive and responsive to the needs of men and women.

A crucial reform needed is an amendment to Law Number 2 of 2011 on Political Parties. We recommend incorporating a provision that requires political parties to provide space for women in their internal leadership structures. Political parties must also provide training and support for female cadres to ensure that women not only run for office but are also prepared to take on leadership roles. In addition, the Magetan Regency DPRD must create regulations that require public consultation with women's groups and civil society organizations when discussing gender-related policies. Such consultation will ensure that policies reflect the real needs and experiences of women in society and are not simply determined by male-dominated political structures.

Despite female representation in Indonesia's parliament, they only propose gender-neutral policies, avoiding gender-specific issues that directly address women's unique challenges. The situation reflects systemic barriers that limit their influence, including political pressure to conform to male-dominated legislative priorities, lack of institutional support, and societal expectations that inhibit advocacy for women's rights. As a result, important issues such as maternal health care, workplace protections, and economic empowerment remain unaddressed, perpetuating gender inequality in policymaking. To change this, women legislators need stronger institutional support, political training, and data-driven advocacy to push for gender-specific policies. Establishing gender-focused committees, encouraging cross-sector collaboration with experts and NGOs, and urging political parties to prioritize gender-sensitive agendas can help create lasting change. Without these efforts, women's needs will continue to be overlooked in policy discussions, preventing meaningful progress toward gender equality in Indonesia. We recommend expanding the scope of future research to explore gender-aware policies across functions and institutions. A more comprehensive approach would offer more profound insights into the complexity of gender-related issues and improve understanding of how different policy areas contribute to gender equality.

## Declaration of Generative AI and AI-assisted Technologies in the Writing Process

During the process of writing this work, the author uses the Grammarly tool to help check grammar. After using this tool, the author reviews and edits the content as needed and takes full responsibility for the publication of the content. The author believes that using such tools enhances the quality of the writing and ensures clarity for the readers. Ultimately, the goal is to provide well-crafted content that effectively communicates the intended message.

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- Septi Wulandari, drafting, methodology, analysis, writing and funding acquisition.
- Didik Gunawan Suharto, conceptualization, methodology, writing review, and funding acquisition.
- Ismi Dwi Astuti Nurhaeni, methodology, conceptualizing, and editing.
- Manuel Ximenes, reviewed, proof reading, and transcribed the manuscript.
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## APPENDIX

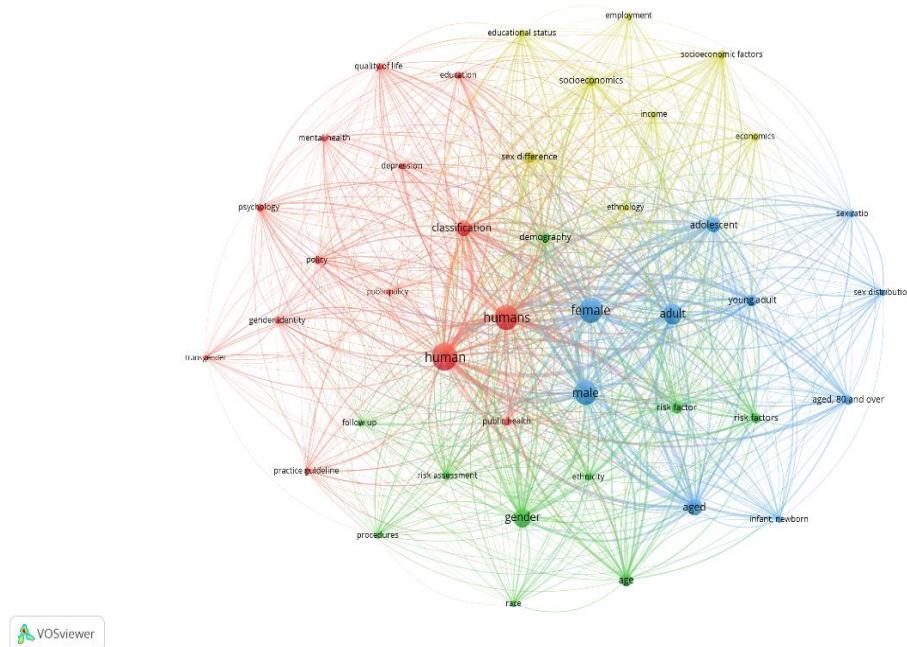


Fig. 4: Bibliographic Analysis using VOS Viewer

Table 2. Gender-aware Classification Mapping in the Regent's Explanation Memorandum to the Introduction to the Financial Note

Dimension	Issues	Budget Policy Group	Gender Neutral		Gender Redistributive		Gender-specific	
			M	F	M	F	M	F
<b>Minutes of the Regent's Explanation to the Introduction to the Financial Note</b>								
Basis	Social assistance to the poor affected by Covid-19	Subsidy spending					✓	
Superstructure	Procurement of booster vaccines for the people of Magetan Regency for the prevention of Covid-19	Shop for goods and services			✓			

Source: Processed by Authors, 2025

Table 3. Mapping the Gender-aware Classification in the Regent's Explanatory Minutes Regarding the Introduction to the Financial Note

Dimension	Issues	Budget Policy Group	Gender Neutral		Gender Redistributive		Gender-specific	
			M	F	M	F	M	F
<b>Minutes of the Views of Council Members of Each Faction on the Draft Regional Regulations</b>								
Basis	Infrastructure improvements for better basic services for all.	Shop goods and services			✓			
	Improving educational facilities and infrastructure, as well as improving the quality of education and the ease of access to the same educational services for all students.	Shop goods and services		✓				
	Economic resilience and equitable development for the benefit of everyone equally.	Financial aid spending		✓				
	Building regional culture for the community.	Capital expenditure		✓	✓			
Superstructure	Empowerment and development of micro businesses that are easier and safer.	Capital assistance expenditure		✓				
	Development of tourist destinations for the benefit of the community.	Capital expenditure		✓				
	Improvement of regional health service facilities for better service of the sick for the people of Magetan Regency.	Capital expenditure			✓			
	<b>Total</b>		<b>5</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>

Source: Processed by Authors, 2025

Table 4. Mapping the Gender-aware Classification in the Minutes of Response and/or Answers of the Regent to the General Views of Faction Members

Dimension	Issues	Budget Policy Group	Gender Neutral		Gender Redistributive		Gender-specific	
			M	F	M	F	M	F
<b>Minutes of the Regent's Response and/or Answer to the General View of Faction Members</b>								
	Construction of a literacy building as a forum for learning and education for the general public	Shop for goods and services	✓	✓				
	Conservation of ecology, water, and soil through the development of bamboo forests for economic improvement and community welfare	Shop for goods and services		✓				
	Fair allocation of employee spending for men and women	Employee Expenditure					✓	
	Improvement of Regional General Hospital facilities, especially for the elderly	Shop for goods and services			✓			
	Budget plan to increase community income	Capital assistance expenditure		✓				
	Facilitation of local business actors	Capital assistance expenditure		✓				
	Financial assistance for elderly and vulnerable women minorities	Financial aid spending					✓	
	Management of revolving funds for independent group business loans (KUKM), people's business loans (KURDA), cooperatives, and micro businesses for entrepreneur groups	Financial aid spending		✓				
	<b>Total</b>		<b>5</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>

Source: Processed by Authors, 2025

Table 5. Mapping the Gender-aware Classification in the Regent's Explanatory Minutes Regarding the Introduction to the Financial Note

Dimension	Issues	Budget Policy Group	Gender Neutral		Gender Redistributive		Gender-specific	
			M	F	M	F	M	F
<b>Minutes of Decision Making on the Regional Budget Draft for Fiscal Year 2024</b>								
	Strategies to increase labour uptake by providing free training and skills development classes to the community	Capital expenditure		✓				
	<b>Total</b>		<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>

Source: Processed by Author, 2025

Table 6. Classification of Gender Issues in Program Proposals Submitted by DPRD Members in Regional Budget Decisions

Classification	Categories	Proposed Policy Programs and The Proposer	
		Male	Female
Gender Neutral	Shop for Goods and Services	1. Security and ease of microbusiness 2. Facilitation of local business actors	The procurement of booster vaccines should be done evenly and comprehensively
	Capital Assistance Expenditure	The role involves managing revolving funds for KUKM, KURDA, cooperatives, and micro enterprises.	
	Financial Aid Spending	Increase community income evenly and comprehensively.	
	Capital Expenditure	1. Facilities and infrastructure for equal distribution of education 2. Developing tourist destinations for equal income distribution 3. Construction of literacy buildings to ensure equal access to education 4. Conservation of bamboo forests to ensure equal income distribution and environmental sustainability	1. Infrastructure improvements to reduce regional disparities 2. Buildings for literacy are being constructed to ensure equal access to education
Gender Redistributive	Subsidy Spending	Economic resilience and equitable development strategy	Regional culture for gender awareness
	Employee Expenditure		Fair allocation of employee expenditure
	Capital Expenditure	1. Improvement of regional health services 2. Improvement of Hospital Facilities for the Elderly	
Gender Spesific	Financial Aid Spending	Financial assistance for the elderly and women who are socio-economically vulnerable	

Source: Processed by Authors, 2025