BETWEEN THE PUBLIC AND THE PRIVATE: INEQUALITY IN EDUCATION POLICY IN BONDOWOSO

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Abstract

Education has a strategic role as the main pillar in national and regional development. This article aims to evaluate the direction and implementation of education policy in Bondowoso Regency within the framework of equitable national development. With a qualitative approach and descriptive-analytical methods, this study analyzes national and local policy documents as well as the scientific literature related to public policy and social justice in education. The results of the analysis show that the implementation of education policies in Bondowoso still faces various challenges, such as inequality between public and private schools, low regional institutional capacity, and central policies that tend to be unresponsive to the local context. Private schools, especially those based on community and religion, have not received proportionate funding despite having an important role in expanding access to education. Therefore, it is necessary to reformulate education policies based on local needs, strengthen the capacity of local governments and multi-sector collaboration to encourage inclusive, equitable and quality education as a pillar of sustainable regional development.

Keywords: *Education Policy; Regional Development; Social Justice; Private Schools; Education Decentralization.*

Abstrak

Pendidikan memiliki peran strategis sebagai pilar utama dalam pembangunan nasional dan daerah. Artikel ini bertujuan untuk mengevaluasi arah dan implementasi kebijakan pendidikan di Kabupaten Bondowoso dalam kerangka pembangunan nasional yang berkeadilan. Dengan pendekatan kualitatif dan metode deskriptif-analitis, penelitian ini menganalisis dokumen kebijakan nasional dan daerah serta literatur ilmiah terkait kebijakan publik dan keadilan sosial dalam pendidikan. Hasil analisis menunjukkan bahwa implementasi kebijakan pendidikan di Bondowoso masih menghadapi berbagai tantangan, seperti ketimpangan antara sekolah negeri dan swasta, kapasitas kelembagaan daerah yang rendah, serta kebijakan pusat yang cenderung kurang responsif terhadap konteks lokal. Sekolah swasta, khususnya yang berbasis masyarakat dan agama, belum mendapatkan

pendanaan yang proporsional meskipun memiliki peran penting dalam memperluas akses pendidikan. Oleh karena itu, diperlukan reformulasi kebijakan pendidikan berbasis kebutuhan lokal, penguatan kapasitas pemerintah daerah, dan kolaborasi multisektor untuk mendorong pendidikan yang inklusif, berkeadilan, dan berkualitas sebagai pilar pembangunan daerah yang berkelanjutan.

Kata Kunci: *Kebijakan Pendidikan; Pembangunan Daerah; Keadilan Sosial; Sekolah Swasta; Desentralisasi Pendidikan.*

A. Introduction

The disparity in education policy between public and private schools in Bondowoso Regency reflects a structural problem that has long been a concern in the national education discourse. Although various government programs such as School Operational Assistance (BOS), Smart Indonesia Card (KIP) and the Tis Tas free education scheme have been rolled out to encourage equal access and quality, the reality is that implementation at the local level still creates significant inequality (Yani & Syahbudi, 2022), (Dian et al., 2020)and (Government, 2017). Public schools, which are supposed to be the main pillars of public education services, still often burden students through unofficial levies such as committee fees, uniforms and other activity fees (Sholeh, 2023), (Mukti, 2025) and (Hadiansah et al., 2021). This encourages increasing public interest in private schools, which are considered superior in innovation, service and religious values (Wiranata, 2019), (Khotami, 2023)and (Rodhi, 2024). This phenomenon not only has an impact on public perception, but also causes a crisis in the existence of public schools, such as a decrease in the number of students to the closure of elementary school units in rural areas of Bondowoso (Aini et al., 2023) and (Miyasto, 2014).

Previous studies have shown that the difference in quality between public and private schools in Indonesia is not only a matter of resources, but also closely related to school management, the effectiveness of public policies, and the socio-economic context of the region (Lasmita, 2025) and (Zulkarnain, 2025). (Newhouse & Beegle, 2006) It found that although public schools have more stable financial support, private schools tend to be more adaptive to student needs, especially in areas with high poverty rates. Meanwhile, (Musfah, 2022 and Tudescu, 2024) highlighting the weak governance of regional education budget allocation and the uneven impact of national policies such as BOS on improving the quality of education at the local level. A study by the World Bank (Chu-Chang et al., 2013) He even said that the decentralization of the education sector has not been balanced with adequate managerial capacity in disadvantaged areas. In the context

of East Java, (Fauzi et al., 2019) stated that areas such as Bondowoso still face obstacles in the distribution of teachers, lack of pedagogic innovation and low public participation in education supervision.

Although Bondowoso Regency has now been released from the status of a 3T area, there are several issues that need to be considered so that Bondowoso Regency is no longer a 3T area. The first issue is the equitable distribution of education. The Bondowoso Regency Government needs to pay more attention to realizing equal education in Bondowoso Regency. The Bondowoso Regency Government needs to ensure the availability of educational institutions in rural areas so that people there can access education that is close to where they live. If ensuring the availability of educational institutions in rural areas is difficult to do immediately, then at least the Bondowoso Regency government needs to ensure adequate transportation for residents to access other nearby educational institutions. Furthermore, the Bondowoso Regency government needs to ensure that the quality of accommodation and education personnel in educational institutions is at the ideal and best quality. Easy access to educational institutions and ideally accommodation and educational instruments will directly maintain and improve the quality of education in Bondowoso Regency (Chu-Chang et al., 2013; Tudescu, 2024).

The improving quality of education in Bondowoso Regency does not only have an impact on its citizens who are of compulsory educational age. The quality of education in Bondowoso Regency will also have an impact on other sectors in Bondowoso Regency gradually. First, of course, the economy. (Lubis, 2014) explained that a good education sector will produce output in the form of a better and high-quality workforce. The workforce will have qualified competencies so that elements in the economic sector will improve. The sector that will simultaneously experience development is the agricultural sector (Muhtarom, 2015; Oktavia et al., 2017; Subroto, 2014). Bondowoso Regency is an area that has botanical wealth that can become national commodities such as coffee and tobacco. The improved quality of the workforce due to the improvement in the quality of education will produce agricultural agents who can make Bondowoso Regency's produce better. Bondowoso Regency is also an area with abundant natural tourism potential. Superior tourism people as a result of the evenness and improvement of the education sector will be able to realize better tourism conditions in Bondowoso Regency through advanced steps such as certification (Oktavia et al., 2017).

In the national education system, there are two main paths of formal education that develop side by side, namely general education and religion-based

education such as madrasas. Both have a strategic function in educating the nation's life. However, there is a fundamental distinction in the orientation and purpose that underlie both. General education tends to be directed to equip students with rational, empirical and technical worldly sciences, with the main goal of preparing them to enter the world of work, continue their studies, or become part of a productive social structure. On the other hand, madrasah education not only teaches general sciences, but also emphasizes religious sciences with a strong spiritual orientation, namely to get closer to Allah SWT.

In other words, general education is often interpreted as a means to obtain the knowledge of the teacher, a symbolic term to refer to the knowledge of the worldly, while the madrasah is aimed at obtaining the knowledge of Allah, which is the knowledge that brings people closer to the Creator and forms morality and spiritual piety. This distinction shows that there is a paradigm difference in viewing the essence of education itself: whether as a tool to achieve material success or as a path to spiritual maturity and salvation in the hereafter. However, in practice, these two education paths often overlap and even complement each other. Therefore, there needs to be a more in-depth study of how these two orientations are translated in the curriculum, learning practices and character formation of students.

The fundamental difference between general education and madrasah education lies not only in the curriculum and teaching materials, but also in the epistemology or perspective on the sources and methods of acquiring knowledge. In general education, knowledge is generally obtained through a rational deductive approach that relies on reason as the only valid instrument to attain truth. The deduction and induction method is the basis for the preparation of teaching materials and the learning process. This is in line with the principles of modern science that emphasize observation, analysis and logic as the main path to understanding reality.

In contrast, madrasah education offers a broader and deeper epistemological approach. In addition to acknowledging the role of reason in understanding the world, madrasas also recognize the existence of six learning objects or paths of attainment of knowledge that include spiritual and transcendental dimensions. Among them are revelation, inspiration and mukasyafah which are forms of spiritual intuition and *kasyf* of the revelation of divine meanings that can only be achieved through the purity of the soul and spiritual approach. In this framework, knowledge is not only *outwardly*, but also *inward*. Knowledge is not only the result of rational processes, but also the result of purification of the heart and closeness to Allah SWT.

Thus, the madrasah is not only an educational institution, but also a space for *tazkiyatun nafs* (purification of the soul) and *tafaqquh fid-din* (religious deepening) that makes students not only intellectually intelligent, but also spiritually sharp. Departing from this reality, it is important to examine more deeply how these differences in epistemological paradigms affect the character, life orientation and way of thinking of students formed by these two types of education. This study is not only academically important, but also strategic in building a more complete and integrative national education system.

Of course, in the national education system, there is still a striking disparity between public schools and private schools, especially in terms of funding and facilities. Public schools receive full support from the state, both in the form of land and building provision, teacher and education staff salaries, cleaning services, libraries, laboratories and textbooks. Teachers in public schools receive a decent salary, even reaching an average of Rp 4.5 million per month, while administrative and *cleaning service* personnel also receive a fixed honorarium financed by the state budget.

On the contrary, the reality in private schools, especially those based on religion such as madrasas or Islamic boarding schools, is often far from adequate. Many of them are only attached to the mosque environment or use makeshift rooms for teaching and learning activities. Facilities such as libraries, laboratories and even textbooks are very limited or even not available at all. Even more concerning, teachers in private schools are often paid between Rp100,000 to Rp200,000 per month, far below the standard of living viability. Not to mention *cleaning services*, administrative personnel and other daily operations that depend on community donations or student dues.

This inequality raises critical questions about fairness in the distribution of educational resources and the extent to which the state is present to ensure equal access and quality of education, both in public and private schools. In fact, both of them carry out a strategic function in educating the nation's life. If this inequality continues to be left unchecked, an education gap will be formed that not only impacts the quality of learning, but also perpetuates social inequality. Therefore, an in-depth critical study of public policy in the field of education is needed, highlighting the issues of justice, recognition and the role of the state in supporting private education, especially those based on religious values.

In essence, every Indonesian child is a child of the nation, regardless of whether they are educated in public or private schools. The state should be present as a protector that provides equal rights for all citizens to obtain a proper education, without discrimination based on the status of educational institutions.

Ironically, the reality on the ground shows that there is unequal treatment between public and private schools in terms of funding, facilities and the welfare of educators. This has the potential to cause structural injustices that not only hinder the progress of education, but also injure the values of unity and equality that are the basis for the establishment of this republic.

Furthermore, if we look at the history of the ancestors of this nation, the fighters whose names are now engraved on the graves of heroes are more from ordinary people, from Islamic boarding schools, from people's schools that do not have magnificent buildings or complete facilities. They did not grow up in air-conditioned classrooms or modern laboratories, but their passion for fighting for the nation's independence was unparalleled. They struggle not because of material overload, but because of excess spirit and devotion. So it is very unfair if now, in the realm of independence, their children and grandchildren who study in private institutions have to receive unequal treatment in educational rights.

Education should be a unifying tool, not a separator; to be a means of liberation, not systemic oppression. Therefore, it is important for the state and policy makers to review the pattern of allocation of educational resources, so that all the nation's children have equal opportunities to grow, learn and contribute to the country, whether they come from public schools, madrasas, Islamic boarding schools or other private institutions

The general paradigm that develops in society often associates the quality of education with the physical splendor of the institution: sturdy buildings, state-of-the-art laboratories, well-equipped libraries and other modern facilities. Madrasas, especially those in remote areas or based on community self-help are often underestimated. The classrooms are cramped, the roof is leaking and the facilities are minimal, it is not often referred to as a 'chicken coop' because of its physical condition that is far from ideal standards. But reality shows that the substance of education is not always reflected in its physical packaging.

An astonishing fact emerged in 2022, when exemplary students at ITB majoring in Physics and excellent students at UGM majoring in Medicine, both of whom were graduates of madrasah who were physically modest, turned out to be not only able to compete in the best academic environment, but also won the laude predicate. Moreover, they memorized 30 juz of the Qur'an, indicating that their academic achievements were accompanied by extraordinary spiritual fortitude. This is clear evidence that madrasas, despite all the limitations of facilities, are able to produce a superior generation both intellectually and spiritually. (Delivered by the Minister of Religious Affairs at the International Conference on the

Transformation of Islamic Boarding Schools (ICTP) at the Grand Sahid Jaya Hotel, Central Jakarta, Tuesday (24/6) night).

This reality arouses the awareness that the measure of educational success is not solely determined by the completeness of infrastructure. Success is born from the perseverance, sincerity of teachers and the strength of spiritual values that are the core of madrasah education. Therefore, the state and policy makers need to give recognition and affirmative support to madrassas not only as alternative educational institutions, but as centers for the formation of a complete national character based on science and faith.

However, the majority of these studies are still generalist and do not touch on the local context in depth. There is little research that explicitly examines education inequality in Bondowoso Regency by considering policy dimensions, public perceptions and factual conditions of implementation in the field. Therefore, this research is important to answer two main questions: first, why are education equity programs not able to touch the fundamental problem of public and private inequality in Bondowoso? Second, what is the perception of the public and education actors towards existing policies, and what are the factors that contribute to the disparity in quality and public trust? Through a qualitative case study approach, this research offers an important contribution to the development of local education studies in Indonesia by presenting empirical evidence from underdeveloped areas that have not been widely studied.

More than that, this study fills a gap in the literature that has so far focused on urban areas or national aggregates by adding community-based perspectives and field conditions. This research also strengthens the critical analysis of education as developed by (Subkhan, 2023), which emphasizes the importance of reading education policy as a non-neutral socio-political practice. Thus, the results of this study are expected to provide concrete policy input for local governments, especially the Bondowoso Regency Education Office, in formulating strategies to improve the quality and equitable distribution of education that are more inclusive and socially just. In addition, the findings of this study can serve as a basis for further studies in other marginalized areas in Indonesia as well as enrich the educational literature on structural inequalities between public and private schools in the local context.

B. Research Methods

This study uses a qualitative approach with a case study type to explore the inequality of education policy between public and private schools in Bondowoso Regency. The research was conducted during the period from January to June 2025

with research locations in several sub-districts representing urban and rural areas in Bondowoso, such as Bondowoso, Jambesari Darus Sholah, Wonosari, Tlogosari, Cermee and Grujugan Districts.

The target of the research is formal educational institutions at the primary and secondary levels as well as universities, both public and private (including madrasas). The subjects of the study included school principals, teachers, parents of students, representatives of school committees, as well as officials of the Bondowoso Regency Education Office and the Office of the local Ministry of Religion. Data collection was carried out through field observations, in-depth interviews and documentation of school policies and financial statements (Scott, 2017). The research instruments are in the form of semi-structured interview guidelines and observation sheets to assess facilities, learning quality, and community participation.

The data collection technique was carried out by purposive sampling by considering the diversity of school conditions and socioeconomic background of the community at the research site. Data are collected through a triangulation approach of sources and techniques to improve the validity of results (B. Milles & Hubrman, 2007). The data analysis technique uses the thematic analysis method, starting from the process of data reduction, categorization, pattern identification, to interpretation of the meaning of the findings. The analysis was carried out simultaneously with the data collection process, following an interactive model from Miles & Huberman that includes three main stages: data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion/verification (Ridder, 2014).

This research also pays attention to the local socio-political context as an important part in reading the implementation of education policies in the regions, in accordance with a critical policy analysis approach that emphasizes the ideological and pragmatic dimensions of public policy (Subkhan, 2023).

C. Results and Discussion

In this study, the Inequality of Education Policy in Bondowoso will be discussed in depth. Therefore, the focus of this study is a Portrait of the Conditions of Education in Bondowoso, Perception of the public and education actors towards the policies of the Bondowoso Government and the Relevance of Inequality in Education Policy in Bondowoso to National Development. This topic will be thoroughly and thoroughly analyzed in this study which includes the following discussions:

1. Portrait of the Condition of Education in Bondowoso

Bondowoso Regency is one of the administrative areas in East Java Province which is dominated by rural and mountainous areas. This geographical character poses its own challenges to the development of the education sector, especially in terms of equal access, distribution of human resources and the availability of adequate educational infrastructure in all sub-districts.

Based on data from the Bondowoso Regency Education Office and the Central Statistics Agency (BPS) of Bondowoso Regency, in the 2018/2019 school year, the total number of active educational units in Bondowoso was 507 schools, with a total of 4,956 teachers and 56,656 students (Indonesian Central Statistics Agency, 2020) *Total-Schools*, n.d.). These schools are spread from primary to secondary education levels, both public and private. Although these figures show that quantitatively the provision of educational services is quite wide, in terms of quality and fairness of distribution, there is still a significant gap between public and private educational institutions.

Public schools receive full support from the government, both in terms of operational funding, placement of teachers with the status of State Civil Apparatus (ASN), and the development of physical infrastructure. Public schools also routinely receive allocations from the General Allocation Fund (DAU) and Special Allocation Fund (DAK) as well as school operational assistance from the central government (BOS) and local governments (BOSDA). In contrast, private schools mostly rely on foundation self-help, student contributions and community donations which are not always stable. Access to BOS funds is also limited and often experienced delays in disbursement, while regional BOSDA funds do not always include private schools.

The distribution of teachers also shows serious inequality. Most civil servant teachers are placed in public schools, while private schools have to rely on honorary teachers with low incentives and uncertain employment status. This condition has an impact on declining motivation and quality of learning, as well as the high turnover rate of teachers in private educational institutions.

In fact, the existence of private schools in Bondowoso has a strategic position, especially in reaching remote areas that have not been served by public schools. Unfortunately, this contribution has not been fully recognized and supported by local governments in the form of affirmative policies or equal partnerships. This is contrary to the principle of distributive justice which should be the basis for the formulation of education policies in the regions, as affirmed in Law Number 20 of 2003 concerning the National Education System article 11 paragraph (1), that the government and local governments are obliged to provide services and facilities, as

well as ensure the implementation of quality education for every citizen without discrimination (Indonesia, 2003).

In addition to primary and secondary education, inequality between public and private institutions is also reflected in the higher education sector in Bondowoso. Based on data from the Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology (Kemendikbudristek). (2023). Higher Education Database (PDDIKTI) and Higher Education Service Institutions (LLDIKTI) Region VII East Java. (2023) until 2024 there are 2 state universities and 9 private universities actively operating in Bondowoso Regency.

The two state universities received full support from the central and regional governments in terms of funding, accreditation and recruitment of lecturers with the status of state civil servants (ASN). The facilities and competitiveness are also relatively higher, so they are more in demand by prospective students from various circles. On the contrary, nine private universities must struggle independently, both in terms of operational financing, improving the quality of lecturers, and accreditation of study programs. Many of them have not been accredited A and still rely on non-permanent lecturers, and face challenges in terms of increasing research capacity and community service.

This inequality reflects a common phenomenon in Indonesia, where the private sector in higher education often does not receive adequate policy incentives, even though they play a major role in absorbing the number of high school/vocational school graduates who are not accommodated in state universities. In Bondowoso, this condition shows that the local government has not been optimal in building synergy between public and private universities as strategic partners in the development of regional human resources.

Thus, the portrait of education in Bondowoso Regency shows a paradoxical condition: on the one hand, the number of schools, teachers and students seems to be sufficient in terms of numbers; But on the other hand, there is a deep disparity in policy treatment between public and private schools. This inequality reflects systemic problems in the design and implementation of regional education policies that have not fully aligned with the principles of educational justice, sustainability and inclusivity.

2. Public perception and education actors on the Bondowoso Government's policies

The inequality of education policy in Bondowoso Regency is not only reflected in statistical data, but is also directly felt by the community and education actors. The growing perception shows that there is an inequality of treatment between public and private educational institutions/madrasas, both in the

attention of the government, the distribution of resources, and the welfare of educators.

One example that is often put forward by education actors is the handling of damaged school infrastructure. When public schools are damaged, such as collapsed or unfit for use, local governments generally act quickly. Within a few months, the school has been renovated or rebuilt using special allocation funds (DAK) from the State Budget or Regional Budget. This reflects that public schools are in the top priority of regional education development policies (Indonesian Central Statistics Agency, 2022).

On the other hand, when a private school or madrasah is damaged, the repair process is much more complicated. School principals and foundation administrators often have to seek funds independently, submit proposals to various parties or even use personal funds. Local governments tend to be passive about this condition, arguing that private schools are not the direct responsibility of the government (Dawimatus, Bondowoso, 2025).

The perception of inequality is also evident in terms of teacher welfare. Civil servant teachers who teach in public schools receive a fixed salary, professional allowances, and pension guarantees. This allows them to focus on teaching and innovate in learning. Meanwhile, teachers in private schools and madrassas have to face the fact that their income is often insufficient to make ends meet. Not a few of them have to find additional jobs after school, such as being farm workers, online motorcycle taxis, mobile traders, or other odd jobs.

This condition not only affects the professionalism of teachers, but also has an impact on the overall quality of education. When teachers cannot focus due to economic burdens, the quality of learning decreases. On the other hand, this raises a social perception that private schools and madrassas are second-class educational institutions, both in terms of quality and government attention.

In addition to inequality at the primary and secondary education levels, a form of policy injustice is also seen in access to higher education cost assistance. The Bondowoso Regency Government has an annual scholarship program allocated through the People's Welfare (Kesra) section. This program is intended to help students from Bondowoso who are pursuing higher education, both at public and private universities, with a nominal assistance of around IDR 3,000,000 per student per year (*Decree on Determination No. 903 of 2024.Pdf*, n.d.).

However, based on field research and internal data from the Regency Government, this program is still dominated by students studying at state universities. This is not only due to the assumption of quality or prestige of state institutions, but also because the administrative and technical requirements of

scholarships tend to be easier for PTN students to meet, such as study program accreditation, high GPA and the existence of a neat academic information system.

As a result, students from private campuses or high madrasas in Bondowoso are often eliminated, even though they are no less in need of help. Students from underprivileged families who study at private universities generally face a higher cost burden because they do not receive state subsidies like at state universities. Unfortunately, affirmative policies for private students have not received special attention from the Bondowoso Regency Government and scholarship schemes have not been designed in an inclusive manner to correct these structural inequality.

This condition creates a social perception and disappointment from private university managers and the community, that the local government has not been completely fair in facilitating the development of local human resources as a whole, without discriminating the status of their educational institutions. If this inequality continues to be left unchecked, it will widen the gap between state universities and private universities, both in terms of quality, access and institutional sustainability.

Overall, the perception of the public and education actors shows that the policies of the Bondowoso local government are still exclusive and discriminatory, tend to favor public schools and ignore the contributions of private schools and madrasas. In fact, in the context of an area like Bondowoso which has many rural areas, the role of private schools and madrassas is very vital in reaching the education of grassroots communities (Nurmadiansyah, 2016). This inequality needs to be addressed immediately through affirmative policies and a fairer distribution of resources (Indonesia, 2003).

3. The Relevance of Inequality in Education Policy in Bondowoso to National Development

The inequality of education policy between public and private schools/madrassas in Bondowoso is not just a local issue, but a reflection of national development challenges, especially in realizing educational justice and equal access to the quality of human resources (HR).

Within the framework of National Development, as stated in the 2020–2024 RPJMN (National Medium-Term Development Plan), the government places human development and strengthening the quality of human resources as top priorities (Muhyiddin, 2020). This goal emphasizes the importance of equal access to quality educational services, including for community groups attending private institutions and madrasas. When regional policies are still discriminatory, such as prioritizing public schools in terms of infrastructure assistance, teacher welfare,

and scholarship distribution, the national strategic goal of building superior human resources is hampered.

Furthermore, Law Number 20 of 2003 concerning the National Education System expressly states that the government is responsible for the provision of education for all citizens without discrimination (Indonesia, 2003). Private educational institutions are actually referred to as strategic partners of the state in fulfilling people's educational rights. Inequality such as the one that occurred in Bondowoso shows that there is a discrepancy between the implementation of policies in the regions with the constitutional mandate and national development goals.

Recently, the Constitutional Court of the Republic of Indonesia has affirmed that primary and secondary education is a constitutional right of every citizen that must be fulfilled by the state. In its various rulings, the Constitutional Court stated that the provision of free primary and secondary education is part of the fulfillment of human rights in the field of education. This affirmation also strengthens the mandate of Article 31 of the 1945 Constitution, which requires the state to implement a national education system and ensure the availability of an education budget of at least 20 percent of the state budget and regional budget. Therefore, the provision of free schools at the primary and secondary levels is not only a political policy, but also a legal and constitutional obligation of the state in guaranteeing the educational rights of its citizens in a fair and equitable manner.

Education is a basic right of every citizen, as mandated in the constitution. Easy access and high quality education are not an option, but a must. Efforts to ground education, namely making it accessible to all circles, is a mandate of the Constitution of the Republic of Indonesia. The right to education is not only intended for people in urban areas, but also for those living in remote areas and disadvantaged areas. Every citizen, without exception, has the right to equal opportunities to receive education.

The state, through the government, has the responsibility to fulfill these rights. In line with that, the compulsory education policy was enforced as a concrete form of the state's commitment to ensuring minimum education for all citizens, at least up to the secondary school level. The implementation of the compulsory learning system requires the government to ensure the availability of equitable and barrier-free access to education in all corners of the country (Inkiriwang, 2020). Thus, the guarantee of education is not only rhetoric, but a real obligation that must be realized by the state in the life of the nation and state.

From the above inequality, not only at the institutional level, but also in the pattern of social and economic inequality in the long term. If students from public

schools/universities benefit more from access to scholarships and private schools have difficulty improving infrastructure or improving the quality of teachers due to limited support, then the quality of graduates from these institutions will continue to lag. This leads to the reproduction of inequality in the world of work, political participation and the quality of life of the community.

Therefore, fair and inclusive education policies at the regional level are an integral part of the national development agenda. The ongoing inequality not only perpetuates disparities between educational institutions, but also hinders the achievement of the Golden Indonesia 2045 vision, namely the realization of a highly educated, competitive, and just society (Hidayat, 2021).

D. Conclusion

The disparity in education policy in Bondowoso between public and private institutions reflects structural problems that hinder the achievement of justice and equitable access to education. Although quantitatively education in Bondowoso shows development, in terms of quality and equity, there is still policy discrimination, especially in funding, infrastructure and the welfare of educators. This inequality not only has an impact on the quality of local education but also has a long-term impact on national human resource development and the achievement of the Golden Indonesia 2045 vision. Therefore, affirmative policies that are more inclusive and fair are needed for all educational institutions regardless of state or private status. Further research is recommended to explore a model of strategic partnership between local governments and private educational institutions/madrasas.

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