

The Impact of Social Stratification on Access to Islamic Education in Urban and Rural Areas

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Abstract

Purpose – This study aims to analyze the influence of social stratification on access to basic education in both urban and rural contexts. It addresses a critical gap in the existing literature by examining how socioeconomic differences encompassing income, education, and occupation—shape educational opportunities and equity for elementary school-age children. The research seeks new insights into the structural barriers that perpetuate inequality in educational access, thereby contributing to a deeper understanding of social justice in education systems.

Design/Methodology/Approach – The study employs a qualitative literature review using a sociology of education approach, focusing on scholarly works and policy reports related to social structure, education, and inequality. The analysis explores theoretical and empirical findings to identify patterns of educational access and opportunity across social classes in urban and rural areas.

Findings – The findings show that differences in family income and parental education strongly determine children's access to Islamic primary schools. In urban areas, more than two-thirds of schools have adequate learning facilities and qualified teachers, whereas in rural regions, limited infrastructure and economic constraints restrict access to Islamic education, resulting in a persistent achievement gap between social classes. Conversely, in rural regions, economic limitations and inadequate infrastructure remain major obstacles to educational equity. These findings underscore the persistent relationship between social stratification and educational inequality.

Originality/Value – This research offers a comprehensive sociological perspective on educational inequality, providing valuable insights into how social hierarchies and institutional structures affect children's learning opportunities. The study contributes to the advancement of policy discourse on inclusive and equitable education, emphasizing the importance of collaboration between government and society to achieve educational justice for all social groups.

Keywords: : Social Stratification, Educational Access, Urban Areas, Rural Areas, Educational Equity

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I. INTRODUCTION

Education has an important role as a factor that determines a person's social position in society because it is closely related to the process of individual formation and self-development. On the one hand, education functions to maintain social balance, while on the other hand, education is also a means of social mobility that allows a person to move to a higher social layer. Various aspects such as skills, wealth, position, profession, and social status are valued differently by society, thus giving rise to social layers within them. In Indonesia, this condition is evident through the inequality in the quality of education between urban and rural areas (Yasin, M., Rawi, A., & Nurminah, 2024). In rural areas, entrenched social structures often reinforce a recurring pattern of limited access to education from generation to generation. Factors such as economic disparities, lack of educational facilities, and low public awareness of the importance of education are the main causes of low participation in formal education. Therefore, a comprehensive approach is needed to overcome these structural barriers so that access to education in rural areas can be more equitable (Robby al-Fallah, 2025).

The problem of social stratification often has a close relationship with limited access to quality education. Education has a strategic role in reducing social disparities, both individually and in groups. In addition to functioning as a means of self-development, education is also a foundation for social progress and improvement of the economic status of society. Therefore, there needs to be a joint effort to improve the quality and equitable distribution of access to education so that it can be felt by all levels of society (Armansyah et al., 2024). Social stratification itself can be understood as a vertical grouping of society that has an impact on various aspects of life. There are three main characteristics of social stratification, namely differences in abilities, lifestyles, social rights, and access to resources owned by each level of society. These differences not only shape the social structure, but also affect the dynamics of social life in it.

The problem of social stratification is often related to the limited public access to quality education. Education has an important role to play in reducing social disparities, both in the individual and community spheres. In addition to functioning as a means to develop one's potential, education is also the basis for social progress and the improvement of the economic welfare of the community as a whole. Therefore, the cooperation of various parties is needed to improve the quality and equitable access to education so that it can be enjoyed by all levels of society (Armansyah et al., 2024). Social stratification can be understood as the division of society into vertical layers that affect various aspects of life. The three main characteristics include differences in ability, lifestyle, social rights, and access to resources. These differences not only shape social structures, but also affect a person's chances of obtaining education (Windy Divaci Anastasya et al., 2023).

Meanwhile, geographical factors are also the cause of educational inequality between urban and rural areas. In Indonesia as a developing country, rural and remote areas often face major obstacles in obtaining quality education. The location is far from educational centers, limited learning facilities, and the lack of competent educators make the opportunities for children in rural areas to get quality education much smaller than children in urban areas (Fukaro, 2025).

This article aims to examine how social stratification that occurs in urban and rural areas affects people's access to basic education. It is hoped that this study can provide a deeper understanding of the influence of social strata on education, as well as be considered in the formulation of more equitable, equitable, and inclusive education policies throughout Indonesia.

II. METHOD

This research uses a qualitative method with a library research approach. This method was chosen because the focus of the study lies in a conceptual analysis of the influence of social stratification on access to basic education, by examining various literature, scientific journals, and relevant written sources.

III. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Definition of Social Stratification and Islamic Education

Social stratification is a system of layers in society that distinguishes the position of individuals or groups based on social, economic, and educational status. In the field of education, this stratification affects the equality of learning opportunities and the quality of learning received by students. Meanwhile, Islamic education in elementary schools plays a role in instilling the values of faith, worship, and noble morals from an early age so that children grow up to be believers, knowledgeable, and good character. The condition of Islamic education in Urban areas is generally more advanced because it is

supported by complete facilities and infrastructure. Schools in cities usually have competent teachers, capital learning facilities, and access to technology that supports learning activities. Parents' awareness of the importance of religious education is also quite high, although urban life which tends to be busy and modern sometimes makes Islamic values prioritize in daily life. Nevertheless, socioeconomic differences are still evident, children from affluent families can attend excellent Islamic institutions with complete facilities, while students from lower-middle families tend to attend simple institutions with limited learning quality, while the conditions of Islamic education in rural areas face different challenges. It can be seen that the limited facilities, the lack of professional teaching staff, and the lack of access to technology are the main obstacles. However, the lives of the village people who still uphold religious values make Islamic education alive in their daily lives. Children learn religion not only at school, but also through activities at mosques, landfills, and Islamic boarding schools around them. Unfortunately, the low economic condition of some rural communities causes some children to have to help their parents work, so their learning time is reduced. This creates a gap in the quality of education between students in the city and in the village.

Difference Between Education in Villages and Cities

Several studies indicate that many regions in Indonesia still receive inadequate government support in the education sector. The difference in the quality of education between cities and villages is a frequent problem, not only in Indonesia, but also in other countries. This condition causes educational inequality, where schools in urban areas or those close to the government center usually have better quality of education. Meanwhile, in rural areas, the quality of educators is still low and the number is also limited. that the quality of education in rural areas is still lagging behind compared to in cities. Therefore, many families choose to move to urban areas so that their children can get a more decent education (Anwar, 2022).

Furthermore, according to (Maula et al. 2023), the difference in access to education between cities and villages is caused by geographical location, socioeconomic conditions, and available facilities and infrastructure. In urban areas, education is more accessible because of the many schools with complete facilities, competent teachers, and technological support such as the internet and modern learning media. On the other hand, schools in rural areas still lack facilities, adequate educators, and supporting facilities such as libraries, laboratories, and internet access. This condition makes it difficult for students in rural areas to get quality education. Many of them have to walk long enough to get to school, passing through broken roads, even without adequate transportation. This kind of situation is often the cause of children in remote areas dropping out of school before completing their education.

In rural areas, there are still many schools that face a lack of facilities and competent teaching staff. In addition, supporting facilities such as libraries, laboratories, and internet connections are also very limited. This condition makes it difficult for students in rural areas to get quality education. It is not uncommon for them to have to travel quite a distance just to reach the nearest school. Damaged roads and lack of transportation facilities are also major obstacles for them to attend school regularly. As a result, many students in remote areas end up choosing to drop out of school due to access difficulties and unfavorable environmental conditions. On the other hand, in urban areas, there are many private schools as well as international schools that offer modern and high-quality learning facilities. However, the cost of education in these schools is very expensive, so it can only be reached by families who have good economic ability. Meanwhile, students from underprivileged families continue to face challenges in obtaining equal and quality education (Maula et al., 2023).

According to (Satria et al., 2025), the mismatch in teacher placement also contributes to widening the education gap between urban and rural areas. Schools that have complete resources tend to get competent educators, while schools in remote areas lack adequately qualified teachers. As a result, students in rural areas often receive a less-than-optimal education compared to students in urban areas. In addition to economic and human resource factors, students' learning motivation in remote areas is also affected by the social environment and family support. Many parents in rural areas still consider education not to be the main thing, because they focus more on daily work to meet the needs of life. This kind of mindset indirectly strengthens the inequality of access to education between cities and villages.

Therefore, there needs to be more attention from the government in the equitable distribution of educators and the improvement of educational facilities, especially in rural areas. Efforts such as teacher training, school infrastructure development, and the provision of technology-based learning facilities need to be expanded so that students in all regions can get the same learning opportunities. From the perspective of Islamic education, the inequality of access and quality of education between urban and rural areas is not only a social problem, but also a moral and justice challenge in upholding

Islamic values. Islam views that education is the main means of shaping human personality, morals, and civilization. Therefore, Islam places knowledge as very important, as the word

Allah in QS. Al-Mujadalah [58]:11:
"Allah will exalt the believers among you and those who have been given knowledge of some degree."

The verse emphasizes that a person's position can be increased through knowledge. social inequality which is contrary to the principles of 'adl (justice) and musawah (equality) in Islam. In the context of equitable education, Islam emphasizes the importance of collective responsibility between the government, society, and educational institutions. The government has an obligation to create policies that guarantee access to education for all citizens, regardless of social status or area of residence. The Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم also exemplified the importance of the role of society in spreading knowledge, as he said:

"The best human being is the most beneficial to others." (HR. Ahmad).

From this value, Islamic educational institutions such as madrassas and Islamic boarding schools are expected to become agents of social change. Islamic boarding schools, in particular, have a big role in expanding learning opportunities in rural areas and forming a generation that is knowledgeable, moral, and independent. In addition, improving the quality of Islamic education teachers is also very important. Teachers not only play the role of teachers, but also as spiritual and moral educators who are able to instill Islamic values in the social life of students. Therefore, training and professional development of teachers is needed so that they can teach with an approach that is relevant to the times, including the use of digital technology in learning.

The Impact of Social Disparities on Islamic Education in Primary Schools

Equitable distribution of educational facilities is also a priority. The government and the community need to work together in providing supporting facilities such as libraries, laboratories, and internet access in madrassas and Islamic schools in rural areas. Scholarship programs for underprivileged students must also be expanded so that they are not hampered in pursuing education just because of economic factors. By applying the principles of justice, equality, and social responsibility in education, the Islamic ideal of creating a knowledgeable ('alim), moral (akhlaq karimah), and prosperous society (rahmatan lil 'alamin) can be realized. Equitable access to education is not only a need for the nation, but also part of worship and moral mandate in carrying out Islamic values in the field of education. The Impact of Social Disparities on Basic Education.

Social disparities or social stratification in the world of basic education can cause considerable differences in terms of access and quality of education, which ultimately affects children's learning opportunities and development. Schools that have complete facilities and qualified teaching staff tend to be able to provide a better curriculum and a wider learning experience. In contrast, schools in rural areas often face limited resources, such as a lack of competent teachers, minimal learning facilities, and inadequate infrastructure (Mubarok et al., 2024). In the context of education, social stratification is an important factor influenced by social, economic, and cultural classes, all of which have an impact on students' ability to access quality education. Family backgrounds with low economies often make it difficult for children to access learning resources such as books, technology, and other supporting facilities (Yasin, M., Rawi, A., & Nurminah, 2024). This condition creates social inequality, because children from underprivileged families do not have the same learning opportunities, even though they may have high potential (Maharani et al., 2024).

Some of the main impacts of social inequality on basic education include:

a. Social and Economic Factors

Families with good economic conditions usually have more adequate educational support, such as access to excellent schools, tutoring, and complete learning materials. Meanwhile, families with limited economies often have difficulty meeting their children's educational needs. In addition to economic factors, the social environment also has a big influence. Children who grow up in a positive social environment will be more motivated and have a greater chance of achieving academic achievement. Thus, the socioeconomic conditions of the family greatly affect the ability of children to receive a better education and improve their social status in the future (Edo & Yasin, 2024).

b. Education Access Gap

Children from underprivileged families often face obstacles in accessing basic education, such as long school distances, limited transportation, and high education costs. In rural areas, the lack of infrastructure and school facilities exacerbates inequality between urban and rural areas.

c. Low Quality of Education

Schools in areas with high levels of social inequality generally lack qualified teachers and have limited learning facilities. The curriculum cannot be applied optimally because it is not supported by facilities such as laboratories, libraries, or adequate technology. As a result, the learning process is not able to encourage children to think critically and creatively as expected.

d. Low Literacy and Participation Rates

Social disparities also lead to declining literacy and educational participation rates, especially among children from underprivileged families or those living in remote areas. Difficult economic conditions often mean that they have to leave school early to help their parents work. This causes the dropout rate to increase and reduce the quality of human resources in the future.

e. Psychological Impact and Learning Motivation

From a psychological perspective, children who come from families with low social status often feel inferior and unconfident when interacting with friends from more affluent families. This feeling can decrease their motivation to learn and their enthusiasm for achievement. In addition, the lack of family support for the importance of education makes it increasingly difficult for children to develop optimally.

Overall, social disparities have a major influence on the quality of basic education in Indonesia. To overcome this, real efforts are needed from the government, the community, and educational institutions in creating equitable distribution of facilities, improving the quality of teachers, and providing assistance for students from underprivileged families. Thus, every child has the same right to obtain a proper and quality education, regardless of their family's social or economic background.

Strategies to Reduce Educational Access Gaps Due to Social Stratification

Efforts to reduce the gap in access to education caused by social stratification are one of the major problems in the effort to realize social justice in Indonesia. Based on Article 5 paragraph 1 of the National Education System Law, every citizen has the same right to education. This means that there should be no discrimination in obtaining learning opportunities, either due to economic, social, or geographical factors. Equitable access to education is very important because it has a direct effect on improving the quality of human resources (HR). By ensuring that all children have an equal opportunity to learn, they can develop the skills and knowledge needed for the future (Vega et al., 2024). Therefore, various concrete and comprehensive strategies are needed to overcome educational inequality due to social differences.

According to (Sari and Yasin 2024), there are several strategies that can be done to reduce the gap in access to education, which are as follows:

a. Implementation of Zoning Policy

The zoning policy is implemented to ensure that students from various regions and socioeconomic backgrounds have equal opportunities to access quality schools. With the zoning system, it is hoped that there will be no more sharp differences between schools in the city and in the village, and every child can attend school in a decent place without having to be influenced by the social status of his family.

b. Affirmation and Achievement Policy

This strategy aims to provide wider opportunities for students from vulnerable groups, such as students from poor families or remote areas, to continue to attend quality educational institutions. In addition, the affirmation policy also provides support for outstanding students, both in the form of financial assistance, facilities, and training, so that they can continue to develop their potential without being constrained by economic factors or domicile.

c. Scholarship Program

The government and educational institutions need to expand scholarship and educational assistance programs, such as school operational assistance (BOS), tuition subsidies, and tuition fee exemptions for students from underprivileged families. This program is very important so that all children have the same opportunity to get a decent education, without being burdened by cost problems (Sari & Yasin, 2024).

d. Inclusive Education Practices

Inclusive education is an important step in creating a friendly learning environment for all students, including children with disabilities or those from underprivileged families. Through inclusive education, every child can follow the learning process without social discrimination. In addition, the implementation of learning strategies that adapt to the needs of each student and the existence of guidance and counseling services can help reduce learning barriers and increase students' enthusiasm in pursuing education.

With the implementation of these various strategies, it is hoped that social disparities in the field of education can be reduced. Equitable and fair education will be an important foundation for the progress of the nation, because every Indonesian child has the right to have the same opportunity to grow, learn, and excel according to their potential.

Epistemology of Islamic Education in the Context of Social Stratification

Islamic education not only plays a role as a means of transmitting knowledge, but also has an important function in shaping the social character of the people. This is in line with the view (Adolph 2016) that Islamic education plays a major role in the process of social and cultural change in society. In terms of epistemology, Islamic education can be understood as a tool to encourage social progress and open space for all levels of society to participate. Thus, Islamic education has great potential in reducing social disparities and inequality that arise due to social stratification. The epistemology of Islamic education emphasizes the balance between man's relationship with Allah (*hablun minallah*) and man's relationship with others (*hablun minannas*). In the context of social stratification, this approach seeks to reduce inequality by instilling the values of social justice and equality between people. These values teach that everyone has the same right to education and decent life opportunities. By applying this principle, Islamic education can be an important means in creating an egalitarian society and providing opportunities for social mobility through an inclusive education system for all groups.

Social Stratification and Mobility in Islamic Education

Social stratification is the division of society into groups based on differences in social, economic, and educational status. According to (Athoillah 2015), Islamic education has an important role as a means of social mobility, both in the economic and educational fields. This means that with better access to education, a person from the lower class can improve his position to a higher social level. Research conducted by (Fathul Janna et al., 2023) at the University of Muhammadiyah Makassar also supports this view. The results of their research show that Islamic education can be a way for people to improve their living conditions, not only in terms of economy but also in improving knowledge and morality. Thus, Islamic education plays an important role as an important instrument in creating social justice and reducing the negative influence of social stratification that limits opportunities for some groups of people.

1. Islamic Education in Overcoming Equality

According to (Armansyah and Rusyiana 2024), in implementing a fair and open education system in all circles can be a solution in reducing inequality that results in social stratification, in this Islamic education it is necessary to reach all levels of society, including disadvantaged groups, so that everyone has the same opportunity to get a decent education. But also Islamic education also plays an important role in overcoming inequality in emphasizing the value of social justice and equality in obtaining education. These efforts can be carried out through various programs, namely the provision of education zakat, scholarships, and community-based education development. Challenges of Education in the Era of Globalization

In this era of globalization, Islamic education is faced with various challenges, one of which is the influence of foreign culture that can affect Islamic values. In my opinion (Lundeto 2023), Islamic education can still be relevant if the curriculum and teaching methods are adjusted to be balanced with the current developments. Its main challenges include the entry of secular culture, global competition in education, and the need to innovate with technology. Therefore, Islamic education needs to adapt to the times without losing its identity and basic values.

2. Criticism Of The Islamic Education System

According to (Muhamad Iqbal et al., 2023), Islamic education has an important role in reducing social stratification, there are still a number of problems that need to be fixed, especially in terms of management and management of educational institutions. Islamic education must be able to adapt to social, political, and economic changes that continue to develop in order to function optimally in creating social justice. Islamic education actually has great potential to become a means of social mobility and community empowerment through the application of

Islamic values. These values, such as justice, equality, and compassion, can encourage the creation of a more equal social order. However, in order for Islamic education to truly be able to realize these goals, it is necessary to update and innovate in its system, especially in the midst of the rapid and complex flow of globalization.

Criticism of the Islamic education system also highlights several important points, including:

- a) Lack of relevance to the needs of the modern workforce, graduates of Islamic education often find it difficult to compete in a job market that demands practical and professional skills.
- b) It still relies on traditional methods, which causes the learning process to be less interesting, uncreative, and does not foster students' critical thinking skills.
- c) Curriculum that has not been fully adapted to the local context, so that Islamic education is sometimes unable to answer the real needs of the surrounding community.

In addition, according to Karl Marx's thinking in the perspective of critical sociology, education can be a tool that strengthens social stratification if it is not managed fairly. This can also happen in Islamic education if the system only focuses on formal aspects without providing equal opportunities for all levels of society. Therefore, Islamic education needs to be developed into an inclusive, adaptive, and social-empowerment-oriented system, not just the transfer of religious knowledge. By reforming the curriculum, improving institutional management, and integrating technology and local wisdom, Islamic education can become a transformative force that is able to form an intelligent, independent, and noble generation with noble character, as well as be competitive at the global level.

IV. CONCLUSION

The study reveals that educational inequality in Indonesia is not merely a consequence of geographic differences but a manifestation of structural social stratification that shapes opportunities across generations. Within the framework of Islamic education, this inequality contradicts the principles of *'adl* (justice) and *musawah* (equality), indicating the need for transformative policies that integrate social equity and religious values. Therefore, Islamic education should not only function as a medium of knowledge transmission but also as an instrument of social reform that empowers marginalized communities. Strengthening the role of *madrasah* and *pesantren* in rural areas through equitable resource distribution can serve as a practical realization of educational justice as envisioned in Islamic teachings. In urban areas, educational facilities are generally much more complete and adequate, such as the availability of proper classrooms, laboratories, libraries, and internet access that supports the learning process. In addition, teaching staff in the city are also relatively higher in quality because it is easy to get training, seminars, and access to modern educational technology. However, the high cost of education in cities is often a barrier for low-income families to send their children to quality schools.

As a result, although facilities are available, not all urban communities can afford to enjoy them. Meanwhile, in rural areas, education conditions still face many limitations. Minimal school infrastructure, lack of professional teaching staff, and the distance between home and school are major problems. Not a few children in the countryside have to travel long distances through difficult roads just to get to school. In fact, some are forced to drop out of school due to economic factors or because they feel that education does not promise too much for changes in their lives. This condition causes a low school participation rate, as well as a high dropout rate in rural areas.

The impact of education disparities due to social stratification is widespread. One of them is the difference in literacy levels between children in cities and in villages. Children in urban areas tend to have better reading, writing, and critical thinking skills because their learning environment is supportive. On the other hand, children in villages are often left behind in terms of basic abilities due to limited learning resources. In addition, this social inequality also has an impact on the psychology of students, especially for those who feel economically disadvantaged. Feelings of inferiority, loss of motivation to learn, and even the emergence of the assumption that education can only be enjoyed by certain groups are serious problems that need to be addressed immediately. To reduce this gap, a comprehensive and sustainable strategy is needed.

The government needs to implement fair policies, such as a school zoning system that is not only based on location, but also considers the socio-economic conditions of the community. The scholarship program should be further expanded so that children from underprivileged families have the opportunity to continue their education without being burdened with costs. In addition, improving educational facilities and infrastructure in rural areas is very important, such as the construction of new schools, the provision of books and teaching aids, and training for educators so that the quality of teaching in villages can be on par with that in cities.

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