



## Gender Equality in Batak Toba Wedding Ceremony

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**Abstract.** *Batak Toba is one of the tribes in North Sumatra. In Batak custom where men buy women in marriage. The position of men is higher in the Batak tribe because it follows the patriarchal lineage where men are the successors of the descendants or clans. In general, women do not have an important position or position in every traditional event that is carried out. Because men take all the important roles in every traditional Batak Toba event. In this analysis, because of gender is an interesting thing to discuss, especially in Batak Toba ceremony. This article use Liberal and Radical Feminism (in Tong, 2006). The objective of this research is to promote fairness and balance in the roles and responsibilities of men and women during the event is the goal of gender equality in Toba Batak wedding ceremonies. This attempts to guarantee that both partners actively participate in and enjoy the ceremony on an equal footing, and that traditions and customs do not perpetuate gender-based discrimination. Therefore, it is important to apply justice which refers to gender equality in the Batak Toba tribe. With the passage of time, it is hoped that this tradition will continue to empower women to be able to communicate with elders.*

**Keywords:** *Gender equality, Batak Toba ceremony, marriage*

### I. Introduction

This research discusses gender equality in Toba Batak ceremonies. Gender equality is the condition that men and women have the same opportunities and rights as human beings, have roles and participate in political, economic, social, cultural and social life. According to naturalism, differences between men and women are natural and cannot be changed. These biological differences provide clues and imply that the two types have different roles and responsibilities. In this research, researchers will borrow the concept of gender equality from liberal theory to better understand the concept of gender equality or justice. Radical Feminism, considered consistent with the concept of the New Men's Alliance. The gender system, according to Gayle Rubin (in Tong, 2006), is a set of parameters that society uses to transform biological sexuality into a product of human activity. According to one gender equality expert, this frees women from oppressive gender roles, namely roles used to justify gender equality. Gender oppression is used as an excuse or justification to place women in an inferior position or status. Women have no place here. In Tong (2006), Elizabeth Holtzman is quoted.



Toba Batak is one of the tribes in North Sumatra. Each tribe certainly has its own cultural customs. The Toba Batak are also a tribe that has strictly adhered to its traditions for generations. Carrying out traditional ceremonial traditions to honor the ancestors of the traditional tribe. Since ancient times, in Toba Batak traditional ceremonies, men have played a very important role in traditional ceremonies so that men are more valuable in the eyes of society compared to women. Because men are the successors of the clan in the Toba Batak tradition, it is men who have the most important rights in traditional ceremonies, including traditional wedding ceremonies.

In Toba Batak traditional wedding ceremonies, usually the man who has the right to speak becomes the host of the event. In this custom, men are given priority over women, such as having the front seat and women having to sit at the back. The usual processes in Toba Batak traditional wedding ceremonies include Mangaririt, Mangalehontanda, Marhusip, Martupol, Marhata Sinamot, Martonggo Raja, and Marsibuhai-buhai. Usually at Toba Batak traditional wedding ceremonies there is also Tudu-tudu Ni Sipanganon, Eating together, giving Dengke, distributing Jambar, Traditional food, Manjalo Tumpak, Pingan Panungkunan, and giving Ulos. In the process of traditional wedding ceremonies, this is very mandatory and usually prioritizes men.

Gender analysis in the Toba Batak Ceremony aims to educate the Toba Batak community's understanding of culture, history and social interaction. The Toba Batak tribe is an ethnic group originating from eastern Indonesia. These rituals and traditions, along with the ceremonies that accompany them, provide insight into gender roles and dynamics in society. In Toba Batak traditional values and beliefs, men and women have different traditional beliefs. Men often face bilateral challenges, such as negotiations and peer pressure, that weaken patriarchal structures. On the other hand, women are usually weak in terms of organization, communication and self-control. This work environment can be interpreted as a challenge to traditional gender norms.

Exclusively by women or girls, indicating gender-based discrimination in spiritual and religious practices. For example, in marriage or initiation rituals, certain gestures or sayings may be gender-specific and detract from moral beliefs and behavior. One indicator of gender inequality in this case study is the extent to which women participated in the case-by-case analysis. In more traditional settings, women may dominate the process of having children, but in more modern and progressive societies, women may have a greater disadvantage.

From an economic aspect, in several Toba Batak traditional ceremonies, the importance of individual economic contributions is highlighted. Women often make significant contributions to family income and the economy, which can negatively impact their status and behavior in social situations. However, whether these economic contributions can be viewed as a component of status in the marital context is a complex question. It is very important to understand how modern changes and shifting social standards influence these traditional ceremonies. A more balanced role between men and women in these situations would balance gender equality with education, globalization and increased awareness.

There is diversity within the Community, significant differences between the various Toba Batak communities in terms of gender and behavior. Factors such as geographic location, cultural norms, and educational attainment can influence how traditional practices are understood and implemented. Accommodating cultural heritage preservation with progress on gender equality is a challenge. Some people may believe that current traditional



practices are an important part of religious identity, while others advocate reforms in traditional practices that undermine gender norms. Analyzing gender equality in Toba Batak rituals requires a different understanding of their cultural practices. Although traditional roles often have gender differences, the influence of modernization, education, and global perspectives are beginning to impact these roles, potentially leading to more gender-equal practices. The researchers have compared it with the research by Febriana & Dion (2023) *The Analysis of Toba Batak Wedding Ceremony's Sign's*. It's found and showed the Signs of the Toba Batak Wedding Ceremony. It is a traditional event that must be carried out.

The previous study, research in this writing because it is still related to the Toba Batak Wedding Ceremony. Which also explains about wedding celebrations in Toba Batak traditional ceremonies which have been carried out for generations. The ceremony is carried out with various rituals in the Toba Batak tradition including "mangulosi". Previous research only focused on the Toba Batak Wedding Ceremony. Researchers want to find something different from the discussion.

Based on the discussion above, the researcher is interested and wants to conduct research entitled *Gender Equality in Toba Batak Wedding Ceremonies*. Researchers are very interested in conducting this research because there are similarities and differences regarding this research. The similarities are regarding marriage ceremonies in Toba Batak, but the difference is that previous research focused more on the signs at Toba Batak Wedding Ceremonies and our research focuses on Gender Equality in Toba Batak Wedding Ceremonies. So that people can know about Gender Equality in Toba Batak Ceremonies and can find out how the process of carrying out a wedding ceremony is carried out. The public can also find out about the process of making signs in the Toba Batak Wedding Ceremony.

Anyone who belongs to Dongan Tubu, regardless of their daily position (civil servants, wealthy people, intellectuals, if they are included in Dalihan Na Tolu, their position is equal (Silalahi, 2012). Dalihan Na Tolu can use the concept of gender proposed by social scientists to explain the difference between men and women as innate, due to God's creation, and is culturally absorbed and assimilated from an early age. This distinction is critical because natural and unnatural human (sex) characteristics are frequently confused currently (Fakih, 2014). The researchers did this analysis because gender is an interesting thing to discuss, especially in Batak Toba ceremony. Researchers saw the position of men as taking precedence over women, resulting in a separate gap for women. Therefore, it is important to apply justice which refers to Gender Equality in Batak Toba Ceremony.

### **A. Literature Review**

In this article, researchers use Rosemarie Tong's theory which states that Liberal Feminism is aware that there is no equal rights between women and men which makes them want to gain freedom and equal rights as individuals. However, with the existence of Radical Feminism theory, women are believed to be superior to men and it is believed that gender differences can be eliminated. This is one that shows that women have the same freedom as men and can do everything that men want to do, they can express themselves without limits in society.



## 1. Liberal Feminism

Liberal feminists are aware that women and men do not have equal rights, which drives them to seek individual freedom and equality. According to current research, women are the second human, or what is commonly referred to as someone who comes from a man's left rib. The woman was also the girlfriend of the man who would become her husband. A woman marries a man who is her husband's rib, so her position must be on the left, close to the man's rib, from which the woman comes. Tong (2009:34) contends that because they are side by side, women have an equal position with men, where women can freely appreciate themselves.

Women can emphasize their ability to achieve equality, therefore women's position next to men has the meaning that women are equal to men and can complement each other in a household. Women are also able to voice their rights by freely expressing themselves through fashion or lifestyle, and opinions or thoughts. For example, the Batak tribe, who usually live in rural areas, has rice fields as their livelihood, where not only men work in the fields, but women also work in the fields, which is one piece of evidence that shows that women also has the right to appreciate herself as equal to men.

## 2. Radical Feminism

According to Tong (1998), there are two types of radical feminism:

- a. Radical Cultural Feminist: This feminist considers women to be superior to men. They value traditional feminine characteristics while rejecting male characteristics. For example, they welcome emotion while avoiding force, which is a "masculine" trait.
- b. Radical Libertarian Feminists: They believe that eliminating gender differences is possible and strive to ensure that there are no differences in men's and women's behavior and characteristics. They observe cultural and social differences between genders, such as the wearing of dresses, and encourage both genders to adopt these characteristics.

Women are oppressed in radical feminism, but according to Tong, women have the right to gender equality. Women are thought to be superior in this theory. They believe that gender differences can be eliminated. This demonstrates that women have the same freedom as men; they can do anything men want to do, and they can express themselves freely in society. Women can express themselves by doing whatever they want because they are equal to men, have no limitations on what they can do, and are free to express themselves through their choices. According to the existing analysis, the use of Sortali, which is tied to the bride's head with the same gold decoration, has a meaning in which men and women are equal. This means that men and women have equal rights.

## II. Research Methods

In research, research methods are very important and feasible. This analysis is used to describe or see a phenomenon that occurs or understand different situations such as in terms of culture, social and politics. This of course can be related to seeing the existence of gender equality in Batak Toba wedding ceremony. Therefore, it can be understood that gender



equality is seen and applied in Toba Batak marriage ceremonies. The data source is an article journal from [Komunikata.id](http://Komunikata.id) entitled *The Analysis Of The Batak Toba Wedding Ceremony's Signs*. In this study, qualitative research design was carried out using Qualitative content analysis method. Data was collected through looking at various existing articles as reference sources. In collecting the data, the researchers did the following: First, collect documents from various journal articles. Second, find the data source. Third, analyze the data. The techniques used to support this research include collecting data in the form of images that match the facts and opinions of those who have seen and experienced them firsthand.

This study also includes the Gap Method. The Gap approach is an analytical method that identifies gender gaps by examining aspects of access, roles, benefits and control that men and women gain in the program. The development process is addressed from policy aspects to monitoring and evaluation. The Gap Methodology can provide insight into defining development programs, enhancing understanding of the importance of efficiency and effectiveness as well as the feasibility of thoughtful development planning to the benefit of women and men. By collecting fact-based data, the data is then collected, processed and analyzed so that it can provide insight into the problems encountered. The research design is qualitative because the researchers relate the data received based on various articles that are reference sources.

### III. Results and Discussions

One sort of discrimination against men and women is gender oppression. In a patriarchal culture, the distinctions between men and women are referred to as masculinity and femininity. Practices that discriminate against and marginalize women in their pursuit of freedom are also influenced by beliefs about what it means to be a man or a woman. Power dynamics between males and women are also shaped by oppressed gender. Women are eventually compelled to assume subservient roles in society due to the power dynamics between males and women. The Batak Toba continues to have a negative view on women. Women in Batak Toba culture continue to deny women their independence and humanity. The Batak Toba society itself continues to value men above women.

According to Batak Toba cultural customs, marriage outside of a specific tribe group is subject to the law on exogamy. This is demonstrated by the reality that, in Batak-Toba society, individuals do not marry within their own clan group (Namariboto). Select wives from within their own clan group (Namariboto); the marriage is patrilineal, with the intention of keeping the husband's line alive in the male line. The women depart from their group and join the husband's group. In the line of men only males are eligible to inherit rights to land, property, names, and positions.

While according to Bajapuik custom, a man is regarded as being one level above a woman. This is demonstrated by the proposal procession, in which the woman picks up and proposes to the man in accordance with the Bajapuik custom, using Bajapuik money as a purchase for the man. The individual purpose of Bajapuik is to support one another. This custom For the closeness between families who use the Bajapuik custom to carry out the marriage process, this tradition is helpful. The marriage ceremony follows the Bajapuik custom, which signifies respect for each partner equally. In this research, researchers found several processes carried out in Toba Batak traditional wedding ceremonies for analysis, one of which is Marhusip. Marhusip means discussing the procedures that must be carried out



by the paranak party in accordance with local customary provisions (ruhut adat in huta i) and in accordance with the wishes of the parboru (female party). At this stage there is no discussion of the dowry (sinamot). The relationship between Marhusip in Toba Batak custom and gender equality can be seen from various perspectives.

Marhusip is a tradition in Toba Batak society related to marriage and relationships between families. Traditionally, Marhusip involves negotiations and agreements between the families of the bride and groom regarding various aspects of the marriage, including "Dowry money". Certain aspects of Marhusip can be viewed as a reflection of patriarchal values that may still be present in Toba Batak society when it comes to gender equality. For instance, a male-dominated power structure may be evident in the negotiation and payment process, which typically involves male figures from both families. Nonetheless, attempts have been made in contemporary society to modify this custom in accordance with the principles of gender equality, such as providing women a bigger say in marital negotiations and decision-making. Lastly, marriage also known as proposing, is the process by which a man asks a woman to join his family. Only immediate family members and delegates from Dongan Tubu, Boru, and Dongan Sahuta attend Marhusip.

#### IV. Conclusions

Differences between women and men in the form of masculinity and femininity not only confirm that there are biological differences between men and women but also give rise to discrimination against women in society. This discriminatory behavior kills women's freedom because women cannot freely develop and express themselves. Gender oppression is not only discrimination against women but also the power relations of men over women. This male power ultimately threatens women's freedom because it gives men the legitimacy to limit women's freedom. Sexist oppression still occurs in Batak Toba society.

In Batak Toba society, women are regarded differently in terms of their physical appearance, behaviour and habits compared to men. The experience of a Hamatean Anak, Boru Hangoluani, has been one of the perspectives that have hindered the Batak Toba community. In this respect, women are people who have a duty and responsibility to serve their husbands and children and cannot refuse or ignore that duty. In the Batak Toba community, women who do their work deserve to be regarded as excellent and highly valued.

Gender oppression is a form of discrimination between women and men. The differences between women and men in a patriarchal society are called masculinity and femininity. Views on masculinity and femininity also shape practices that discriminate and marginalize women in their efforts to achieve freedom. Gender inequality also affects the power relations of men and women. As a consequence of the power structure between men and women, females are forced to play secondary roles in society. The Batak Toba's views on women are not good at all. Women in the Batak Toba society are not humanizing women, and they do not provide them with freedom. The Batak Toba society still sees men and ignores women. Women in the Batak Toba society are not entitled to inheritance from their families. The Batak Toba people claim that women are not the family's heirs, and they consider men to be its heir.



The family's entitled to inheritance of their assets. Men are thought to be the successors of a clan, 'cause men in Batak Toba's community are regarded as inheritors of their father's clan, and women are only considered those who serve their husbands and families. There are no women who have been underestimated in Batak Toba's community, because they don't lead a clan. The Batak Toba society also allows males to dominate females. Women of Batak Toba society are not regarded as human beings that have rights and freedoms. Men's view of power marginalizes them in exercising their rights and discriminates against women in society. In the end, women will not realize their freedom as humans and will be defeated by men. It is therefore necessary that women in this case be able to fight for their rights and freedoms.

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