

## Gender Equality in an Era of Crisis: Adaptation and Innovation Strategies for the Future

Gede Wirata<sup>1\*</sup>, I Wayan Astawa<sup>2</sup>, Sri Sulandari<sup>3</sup>, Misiyah<sup>4</sup>  
Universitas Ngurah Rai, Indonesia

**Corresponding Author:** Gede Wirata [gedewirata17@gmail.com](mailto:gedewirata17@gmail.com)

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### ABSTRACT

This study aims to analyze how crises affect gender relations and identify adaptation and innovation strategies developed by individuals and communities in maintaining and strengthening equality in various sectors of life. The research approach uses mixed methods with a sequential explanatory design, starting with a survey of 80 male and female respondents of productive age in Denpasar City who were affected by the crisis, then continued with in-depth interviews with 8 key resource persons consisting of workers, business actors, community activists, and policy makers. Quantitative data is analyzed in a simple descriptive and inferential manner, while qualitative data is analyzed thematically to explore the meaning, adaptive strategies, and dynamics of innovation in depth. The results show that the crisis has widened the burden of gender roles, reinforcing inequalities in economic access and career opportunities, but at the same time driving the emergence of social innovation, community solidarity, and a more equal transformation of domestic roles. This study concludes that community-based adaptation strategies and social innovation are key in strengthening gender equality in times of crisis, while making an important contribution to the development of social change theories and policy formulation that is more responsive to gender equality.

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## **INTRODUCTION**

The issue of gender equality is becoming increasingly urgent amid the multidimensional crises that have hit the world, ranging from the COVID-19 pandemic to economic disruption and climate change. Various global reports show that the crisis disproportionately impacts women, especially in access to employment, health, and education (Azcona et al., 2020; UN Women, 2021). The pandemic forced millions of women out of the labor market, exacerbated domestic workloads, and slowed down the achievement of gender equality targets that have been built for decades (Yavorsky et al., 2021). On the other hand, men are also facing new socio-economic pressures, especially in sectors that have been restructured due to the crisis (ILO, 2022). This situation shows that the crisis is not a gender-neutral phenomenon, but rather reinforces existing structures of injustice. Therefore, the study of gender equality in the context of crisis is important not only as a social study, but also as a basis for policy formulation that is more responsive to change.

In the local context, Bali faces its own challenges related to gender equality, especially due to its dependence on the tourism sector which has been severely affected by the pandemic and global economic shocks. Data shows that the sharp decline in the number of international tourists since 2020 has resulted in many workers losing their jobs, including women who previously dominated the hospitality, culinary, and creative economy sectors (BPS Bali, 2023). Inequality is also seen from the Gender Inequality Index (GI) which has tended to increase in the last three years, showing that women are still lagging behind in economic access and political participation (Purwanta & Putri, 2022). In addition, patriarchal cultural norms slow down the transformation of gender roles in the household and in public spaces (Hapsari, 2023). With this complexity, Denpasar is a relevant location to research how crises change gender relations and how society responds through adaptation and innovation strategies.

Globally, cutting-edge studies show that the crisis is not only widening the gender gap, but also testing people's social and economic resilience. Kaber (2021) emphasized that the post-pandemic economic crisis increases the risk of "feminized poverty" because women lose access to stable sources of income. Meanwhile, research by Baird et al. (2022) found that crises are driving an increase in gender-based violence, which has a long-term impact on women's participation in development. On the other hand, the crisis also raises opportunities for transformation, for example through the digitalization of micro-enterprises and the improvement of women's leadership in community organizations (OECD, 2023). This means that the context of the crisis presents two contrasting sides: structural challenges that widen inequality and innovative opportunities to reconstruct gender equality in a more progressive direction.

Although various studies have addressed the relationship between crises and gender equality, most studies are still macro or normative, and not many have explored the dynamics of community-based adaptation at the local level. For example, Kwon (2023) highlights the decline in women's academic productivity due to increased domestic burdens, but does not describe society's adaptive strategies in a concrete way. In Indonesia, research on gender and crisis

often focuses on economic impacts without highlighting social innovations and adaptation strategies that emerge from people's experiences (Nugroho et al., 2022). Research that combines quantitative and qualitative data to produce contextual adaptation models is still limited. Therefore, this study is important to fill the literature gap through an in-depth analysis of how individuals and communities in Denpasar are developing adaptation and innovation strategies in the face of crises.

This research explicitly aims to: (1) analyze changes in gender relations, the distribution of domestic roles, and the economic access of the Denpasar community in times of crisis; (2) identify adaptation and innovation strategies carried out by male and female workers, business actors, community activists, and policymakers in dealing with these dynamics; and (3) formulate a sustainable adaptation model as the basis for contextual gender equality policy recommendations. The goal is expected to provide a comprehensive picture of the social processes that take place at the individual and collective levels in crisis situations.

This study uses a mixed methods approach with a sequential explanatory design that combines the power of quantitative and qualitative data. The first phase was conducted through a survey of 80 male and female respondents of productive age in Denpasar affected by the crisis, while the second phase was in the form of in-depth interviews with 8 key speakers consisting of male and female workers, business actors, community activists, and policy makers. Quantitative data was analyzed using simple descriptive and inferential techniques, while qualitative data was analyzed thematically to explore more in-depth adaptation and innovation strategies. This approach is relevant because it allows for a comprehensive analysis of the dynamics of gender equality from multiple perspectives.

Theoretically, this research is expected to enrich the literature on gender and social resilience by offering an adaptation model rooted in people's real experiences in crisis situations. The results of the study can expand the theory of social change through the analysis of the role of communities, domestic structures, and public policies in supporting gender equality. In practice, this study provides concrete recommendations for local governments, empowerment institutions, and the private sector to design more gender-sensitive programs, such as domestic role redistribution, women's economic empowerment, and inclusive MSME innovation support (World Bank, 2023). These findings are also relevant for local communities in building solidarity and strengthening social networks as a form of collective adaptation.

Through an in-depth analysis and a comprehensive approach, this research is expected to make a significant contribution to the development of gender equality science and practice in the era of crisis. Research findings can serve as a basis for policymakers to design interventions that are not only reactive, but also proactive in facing future challenges. In addition, the resulting adaptation and innovation models can be replicated in other regions with similar socio-economic characteristics. Thus, this research contributes to a more inclusive, gender-just, and sustainable development in the long term.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

### ***The Impact of the Crisis on Gender Inequality: Global Evidence***

The COVID-19 pandemic and related crises have exposed and exacerbated gender-based vulnerabilities on a global level. Alon et al. (2020) stated that recessions caused by social restrictions disproportionately affect sectors with a concentration of female workers such as tourism and retail, thereby triggering a decline in women's income and the risk of women's exit from the labor market. The UN Women report (2020) confirms that disruptions in care and education services, as well as less gender-sensitive recovery policies, increase the burden of care borne by women and reduce their capacity for economic participation (Azcona et al., 2020). The World Bank (2021) adds evidence that the impact of the crisis is multidimensional, including aspects of health, social access, and economic opportunities that have direct implications for the decline in the achievement of gender equality if policy interventions are not on target. These findings provide an empirical basis for the research focus on gender relations in crisis contexts and underlie the need to explore adaptation strategies at the local level (Alon et al., 2020; UN Women, 2020; World Bank, 2021).

### ***Care Burden and Household Dynamics***

A number of empirical studies show that the burden of household care increased drastically during the crisis, with women taking a large proportion of such unpaid work. Sevilla and Smith (2020) and Yavorsky, Qian, and Sargent (2021) documented an increase in childcare hours and housework that were systematically more covered by women, suppressing their formal work participation. Cross-country analysis (Andrew et al., 2022; Sánchez et al., 2021) indicate variations in household responses, where some couples share the burden more evenly while the majority exhibit reproduction of traditional gender patterns that have implications for post-traumatic stress disorder women's economic recovery opportunities. This research on domestic dynamics is relevant to understand the internal mechanisms of the family that affect the ability of male and female workers in Denpasar to adopt economic adaptation strategies and role transformation.

### ***Labor Market, Informal Sector, and Micro Enterprises***

The crisis also affected the structure of the labor market and highlighted the importance of the informal sector and micro, small, and medium enterprises as economic buffers. The ILO (2021) and the World Bank (2021, 2023) note that informal workers, of which women often make up a high percentage, are a vulnerable group due to limited access to social protection and capital. Empirical studies on small businesses show that digitalization and business model innovation are important strategies for resilience (Santos, 2023; Manolova et al., 2020). However, technology adoption is often constrained by access to infrastructure, digital literacy, and a greater domestic burden on women (Rahayu, 2023). Therefore, the literature suggests the importance of policies that support digital access, gender-friendly microcapital, and training for women entrepreneurs so that innovation can be an inclusive recovery path.

### ***The Role of Social Innovation and Community Networks***

A number of studies highlight the role of community organizations and social innovation in responding to crises. Evidence synthesis by Walcott et al. (2023) shows that women's groups and grassroots organizations can increase household resilience through collective savings mechanisms, food support, and access to information. Roels et al. (2021) and Fleming et al. (2023) emphasize that community networks serve as an initial buffer before formal interventions are present, providing adaptive services and initiating local economic initiatives. This literature indicates that innovation at the local level is often contextual, social capital-based, and can drive empowerment practices relevant to the adaptation model in Denpasar.

### ***Public Policy, Recovery Programs, and Gender-Sensitive Responses***

The evaluation of recovery policies emphasizes the need to integrate gender perspectives in program formulation. UN Women (2022) recommends investment in care services, gender-sensitive social safety nets, and support for women-owned businesses. The World Bank (2021, 2023) and ILO (2021) reports emphasize that policies that ignore women's specific needs such as access to credit or the provision of national childcare services risk deepening inequality. The OECD and other global analyses show the effectiveness of a combination of policies such as social protection, liquidity support for micro, small and medium enterprises, and digital training to facilitate an inclusive recovery (World Bank, 2023; OECD, 2023). The implication for this study is the need to assess how local policies in Denpasar interact with the adaptive practices of the community.

### ***Research Gaps: The Need for a Contextual Mixed Methods Approach***

Although the global and sectoral evidence is quite strong, the literature indicates a gap in two respects: first, the lack of research that simultaneously measures quantitative effects such as changes in economic access and domestic division of labour and second, the limitations of studies linking community social innovation to the effectiveness of local policies. Some macro studies suggest interventions, but few test the pathways of adaptation mechanisms in the context of urban tourism such as Denpasar (Alon et al., 2020; World Bank, 2021). Therefore, the literature review points to the need for contextual mixed methods studies that combine surveys for mapping and in-depth interviews for understanding practice and innovation, an approach adopted by this study.

### ***Implications for the Denpasar Case Study and the Theoretical Framework of the Research***

The combination of the above findings forms a theoretical framework that blends the literature on gender resilience, social capital, and community innovation. For the context of Denpasar, a city whose economy depends on tourism and has certain cultural characteristics, it is important to assess the interaction between cultural norms, local labor market structure, and community innovation capacity (BPS Bali Province, 2024). This study will draw on insights from global studies to design instruments that measure the economic, domestic,

and innovation dimensions of communities, while interpreting quantitative findings through narrative interviews to generate contextual and implementable policy recommendations.

## **METHODOLOGY**

### ***Types and Approaches to Research***

This study uses a mixed methods approach with a sequential explanatory design that combines quantitative and qualitative data in stages. This approach was chosen because it was able to provide a more comprehensive understanding of the dynamics of gender equality in the crisis era, where quantitative data serves to map general patterns, while qualitative data is used to explore the deep meaning of the social experiences of informants (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2021). Sequential explanatory design is relevant in contemporary social research because it allows the integration of statistical results with qualitative narratives in producing more contextual adaptation models (Fetters, 2020).

### ***Population and Sampling Techniques***

The population in this study is people of productive age who live in Denpasar City and are affected by multidimensional crises, such as pandemics and economic disruptions. The quantitative respondents amounted to 80 people consisting of male and female workers from various sectors. The sample selection was carried out using purposive sampling techniques based on certain criteria, namely productive age (20–55 years), experience directly affected by the crisis, and involvement in economic and domestic activities. This non-probability sampling approach was chosen because it allows researchers to capture information in depth from participants who have direct relevance to the phenomenon being studied, as well as being able to represent variations in experiences in complex social contexts (Palinkas et al., 2021; Campbell et al., 2023). Furthermore, the qualitative stage involved eight key speakers consisting of male and female workers, business actors, community activists, and policy makers, thus providing diverse perspectives and enriching the interpretation of research findings.

### ***Data Collection Techniques and Instruments***

Data collection is carried out through two stages. The quantitative stage uses a structured questionnaire containing indicators related to the division of domestic roles, economic access, and social participation. The questionnaire instruments were compiled based on adaptations of previous research on gender equality and the impact of crises (Sevilla & Smith, 2020; Yavorsky et al., 2021). Content validity was tested through expert judgment involving three academics in the fields of gender and development, while reliability was tested using Cronbach's Alpha coefficient to ensure the internal consistency of the instruments. The qualitative stage is carried out through in-depth interviews with semi-structured interview guidelines, which allow the interviewees to explain adaptation strategies, social innovation, and daily experiences narratively (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2021).

### ***Research Procedure***

The implementation of the research begins with the preparation stage which includes the preparation of instruments, initial trials, and the management of research ethics permits from related institutions. After the preparation stage was completed, questionnaires were distributed to 80 respondents consisting of 40 men and 40 women aged 20-55 years in Denpasar City who were affected by the socio-economic crisis. Respondents were selected based on criteria of active involvement in the formal and informal work sectors and experienced a direct impact on domestic roles and economic access due to the crisis.

After the quantitative data is collected and analyzed initially, the next stage is an in-depth interview to enrich the findings and understand the context of adaptation in more depth. Interviews were conducted with 8 key speakers who were purposively selected based on their strategic roles in the dynamics of gender equality, namely: two male workers and two female workers from the crisis affected service and tourism sectors; two micro and small business actors (one man and one woman each) who carried out business innovations during the pandemic; one community activist involved in gender empowerment programs at the local level; and one policymaker from a local government agency that handles gender equality and community empowerment issues. All interviews were conducted face-to-face and online for 60–90 minutes with the permission of the participants, then transcribed verbatim for the qualitative analysis process.

### ***Data Analysis Techniques***

Quantitative data were analyzed using simple descriptive and inferential statistics through the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) software version 26. Descriptive analysis was used to map the distribution of gender roles, economic access, and domestic workload, while simple inferential analysis was used to identify differences based on gender variables. Qualitative data were analyzed thematically following the Braun and Clarke (2021) procedure, which included the coding stage, theme identification, and interpretation. The integration of the two data is carried out through a method triangulation approach, so that the results of the study not only reflect numerical trends, but also pay attention to social contexts, individual experiences, and community innovations (Fetters, 2020).

## **RESEARCH RESULT**

### ***Changes in Gender Relations and Distribution of Domestic Roles***

The results of a quantitative study on 80 productive age respondents in Denpasar City show that the multidimensional crisis, especially the COVID-19 pandemic and economic disruption, has had a profound impact on the dynamics of gender relations, especially in the division of domestic roles at the household level. This change is evident in the increasingly unequal pattern of housework and parenting responsibilities. As many as 72.5% of women reported an increase in domestic workload during the crisis, including childcare, elder care, children's distance education, and daily household chores. This figure is much higher than the 35.0% of men who experienced a similar increase. These findings suggest that

the crisis is actually reinforcing the reproduction of traditional gender norms, where women are once again positioned as the main bearers of unpaid work, even though many of them are also experiencing economic pressure due to lost income.

This condition was strengthened by in-depth interviews with a number of speakers. A female worker from the service sector said, "*Since the pandemic, I have had to take care of school children from home, cook, wash, and find additional income from home. Everything feels stacked*" (PP-01, July 14, 2025). Meanwhile, another resource person added, "*We women are like returning to the starting point, because even though we are working, we are still considered fully responsible for homework*" (PP-02, July 18, 2025). This statement shows that the double burden of women is increasingly real and internalized in the household structure during the crisis.

In addition to domestic burdens, the crisis also affects the pressure of men's role as breadwinners. As many as 61.3% of male respondents stated that they experienced significant economic pressure due to job loss or decreased income after company restructuring. These pressures are not only economic, but also social and psychological as traditional expectations of masculinity roles are still strong. A male worker revealed, "*As the head of the family, losing my job makes me feel like a failure, especially when household needs increase during the pandemic*" (PL-01, July 20, 2025).

However, the results of the interviews also show that there are new dynamics in some households. About 28.0% of couples began to implement a more equal division of domestic roles, such as sharing childcare or household chores, especially in young families or couples with higher education backgrounds. This change shows the potential for a transformation of gender roles in the midst of a crisis, although the scale is still limited. A male entrepreneur stated, "*After my business was affected, I helped my wife a lot to take care of her children and housework. It was never thought of in the past*" (UL-01, July 23, 2025). The following table illustrates changes in domestic role-sharing before and during the crisis:

Table 1. Changes in Domestic Roles Based on Gender in Denpasar City

Types of Domestic Roles	Women Before the Crisis (%)	Women During Crisis (%)	Men Before the Crisis (%)	Men During Crisis (%)
Childcare and home education	58.2	79.5	19.5	31.7
Care for the elderly or family members	45.3	70.2	22.7	36.8
Routine housework	61.0	85.0	24.1	37.5
Primary Financial Responsibilities	32.5	37.2	67.5	62.8

The data shows that the shift in domestic roles has not led to full equality. Despite a slight increase in men's involvement in household activities, the burden

remains dominated by women. These findings reinforce the argument that the crisis is an important moment to revisit social constructions regarding gender roles in households and encourage a more equal sharing of responsibilities.

***The Impact of the Crisis on Economic Access and Employment Opportunities***

The multidimensional crisis that has hit since 2020 has not only disrupted household life, but also created deeper inequalities in economic access between men and women. The study found that 57.5% of female respondents lost their jobs or experienced a significant decrease in income, compared to 42.5% of men. Women working in the tourism, hospitality, and service sectors – sectors that are the backbone of Denpasar's economy – are most severely impacted. Many of them are laid off without severance pay, face difficulties finding new jobs, or have to switch to the informal sector with unstable incomes.

In-depth interviews show the real challenges women face. One worker from the tourism sector stated, *"When the hotel where I work closes, I don't know where to go. I don't have any other skills, let alone the capital to start a business"* (PP-01, July 14, 2025). Another statement affirmed, *"Women like me find it difficult to compete in digital jobs because they do not have training or access to technology"* (PP-02, July 18, 2025).

In contrast, men are more flexible in switching sectors of work, although not always with an improvement in quality of life. As many as 38.7% of men managed to get a new job within six months, compared to only 21.2% of women. Many of them are turning to the logistics sector, delivery services, or digital platform-based jobs. One male worker said, *"I tried to become an online courier after losing my job at a restaurant. Indeed, the income is smaller, but at least there is income"* (PL-02, July 21, 2025).

These disparities in access reflect not only skills gaps, but also structural barriers that women face. These barriers include high domestic burdens, limited access to digital training, lack of business capital, and lack of policy support that is responsive to women's needs. On the other hand, this study also found that some women and men have managed to develop adaptive strategies to survive, such as running a home-based micro-business. A female entrepreneur revealed, *"I started selling food online from home. It was small at first, but now it is the family's main source of income"* (UP-01, July 25, 2025). The following table shows the distribution of the impact of the crisis on respondents' employment status:

Table 2. The Impact of the Crisis on Employment Status by Gender

<b>Employment Status After the Crisis</b>	<b>Female (%)</b>	<b>Male (%)</b>
Total job loss	31.2	22.5
Significant decline in revenue	26.3	20.0
Successfully land a new job	21.2	38.7
Move to the informal/digital sector	14.0	16.5
Starting a self-help business	7.3	9.8

### ***Role Adaptation and Transformation Strategy***

The findings of the study show that the adaptation strategies of households and individuals in dealing with crises are diverse and dynamic, reflecting people's efforts to maintain economic stability while adapting to rapid social change. Around 64.0% of female respondents reported diversifying their sources of income as a form of adaptation, ranging from opening a home business, selling products through online platforms, to joining community cooperatives. These measures signal the emergence of a new economic role that is more active and independent for women, although it often starts from a small scale and with limited capital. This diversification is not only a survival strategy but also paves the way for the transformation of gender roles, where women no longer only play the role of household managers, but also as family economic drivers.

In-depth interviews provide a concrete picture of this transformation. A female micro entrepreneur stated, "*At first I only sold food to neighbors, but due to a lot of demand through social media, my business has grown and now has regular customers*" (UP-01, July 15, 2025). A female worker also said, "*I learned how to market handicraft products online. It is not easy, but the results can help household finances*" (PP-01, July 17, 2025). Meanwhile, a male worker affected by the layoffs revealed, "*After losing my job, I switched to becoming an online motorcycle taxi driver. This job provides flexibility while still being able to help the wife take care of the children*" (PL-01, July 21, 2025).

In addition to women, around 47.5% of men also showed similar adaptive strategies, such as switching to digital platform-based work (delivery services, online logistics) or opening a small business based on social networks. These changes signal that crises can be a catalyst for the transformation of gender roles, especially when individuals have access to technology, social capital, and community support.

Table 3. Types of Adaptation Strategies Implemented by Respondents

<b>Types of Adaptation Strategies</b>	<b>Female (%)</b>	<b>Male (%)</b>
Opening a home business	35.0	27.5
Online product sales	29.0	18.7
Join a cooperative/economic community	17.0	8.5
Switch to digital/informal work	12.0	32.0
A combination of two or more strategies	7.0	13.3

The table above shows that adaptation strategies are not single, but rather a combination of several steps tailored to individual contexts and resources. This shows that crises not only generate pressure, but also create space for the innovation of gender roles and the redefinition of gender responsibility, both domestically and publicly.

***The Role of Social Innovation and Community Networks***

The role of local communities has proven to be crucial in strengthening community resilience, especially for women's groups, during times of crisis. As many as 58.7% of respondents admitted to being involved in community-based activities, such as savings groups, women's cooperatives, skills training programs, or economic empowerment programs. Participation in this community network not only provides access to economic resources such as microcapital, training, and marketing, but also strengthens social solidarity and a sense of collectivity that is essential to face the pressures of the crisis together.

In-depth interviews show how the role of community is a catalyst for change. A community activist explained, "We created digital literacy training for women so that they can market products online. As a result, many have managed to maintain their businesses and even expand the market" (AK-01, July 19, 2025). A male entrepreneur also revealed, "Through a small business group, I got access to unsecured capital that helped me start a food business" (UL-01, July 23, 2025). Meanwhile, one of the female workers stated, "The community savings group gives us the motivation to keep going. We help each other in terms of capital and marketing" (PP-02, July 20, 2025).

Community programs not only focus on economic aspects, but also create solidarity-based social innovations. For example, household exchange initiatives, collective soup kitchens, and community-based childcare programs help reduce domestic pressures for women. These forms of solidarity strengthen people's adaptive capacity, expand social networks, and build new foundations for more equal gender relations.

Table 4. Forms of Community Support in Gender Resilience

<b>Types of Community Support</b>	<b>Percentage of respondents (%)</b>
Access to micro capital and loans	34.5
Digital skills training	27.8
Product marketing support	21.3
Collective food support program	10.7
Community-based childcare programs	5.7

This data shows that social innovations emerging from communities are not only economic, but also touch social and domestic aspects, creating an adaptive ecosystem that allows the transformation of gender roles to take place more effectively.

***Government Involvement and Policy Effectiveness***

The role of the government in supporting gender equality during crises is one of the important factors that determine the effectiveness of community adaptation efforts. However, the results show that the level of effectiveness of public policies is still limited. Only 31.2% of respondents stated that they received

direct benefits from government programs, such as social assistance, entrepreneurship training, or economic empowerment programs. The most frequently cited obstacles include a lack of targeted information, complex bureaucratic procedures, and policies that are not responsive to women's specific needs, such as support for domestic burdens and more inclusive access to capital.

Interviews with local policymakers reveal challenges and opportunities in the formulation of gender-sensitive policies. *"We realize that women have different needs during crises, so in the future assistance programs will be accompanied by support services such as childcare and digital training"* (PK-01, July 24, 2025). One male worker added: *"Information about government aid is uneven. Many of us don't know how to apply"* (PL-02, July 21, 2025). Meanwhile, women entrepreneurs said, *"Business capital from the government is very helpful, but the process is too long and there are many conditions"* (UP-01, July 25, 2025).

Table 5. Respondents' Perception of Government Programs

Types of Government Programs	Percentage of Respondents Who Feel Benefits (%)
Cash social assistance	18.7
Entrepreneurship training	6.5
Access to capital for micro enterprises	4.5
Community empowerment programs	1.5
Domestic service support (childcare)	0.0

The table shows that although various programs have been launched, their reach and effectiveness are still far from optimal. These findings point to the need for more responsive and integrated policies, which not only focus on economic aspects, but also accommodate social and structural needs that contribute to gender inequality. Gender-sensitive government support can accelerate the recovery process, strengthen community resilience, and encourage the creation of more equal social structures in the future.

## DISCUSSION

The results of this study show that multidimensional crises such as the COVID-19 pandemic and economic disruption are not gender-neutral, but rather reinforce existing inequality structures, especially in the context of domestic relations. The data shows that 72.5% of women experienced a significant increase in domestic workload, far exceeding 35% of men. This phenomenon is consistent with gender role theory, which states that the division of labor in households is often based on social constructs that place women as the primary caregivers (West & Zimmerman, 2020). These findings are in line with research by Yavorsky et al. (2021) and Sevilla and Smith (2020), which found an increase in the

workload of women's households globally during the pandemic. As a consequence, women experience a double burden in the form of unpaid work at home and economic pressure due to lost income. However, the emergence of a tendency of 28% of couples to divide roles more equally indicates that there is an opportunity for gender role transformation, especially among young and highly educated families. This indicates that the crisis can be a reflective momentum to deconstruct traditional gender norms.

The crisis also has major implications for the gap in economic access and employment opportunities between men and women. As many as 57.5% of women have lost their jobs or experienced a significant decrease in income, compared to 42.5% of men. These findings confirm a global study that states that women tend to work in economic sectors that are more vulnerable to shocks, such as tourism, hospitality, and services (ILO, 2022; Baird et al., 2022). In addition, the high domestic burden and limited access to digital training narrow women's opportunities to adapt in the new technology-based job market (Kabeer, 2021). The difference in flexibility between men and women in switching sectors shows that there are structural and cultural barriers that limit women's economic mobility. This condition reinforces the theory of structural inequality, which explains that crises can deepen gaps when socio-economic systems are not designed in an inclusive manner (Fraser, 2022).

On the other hand, this study also found that crises trigger the emergence of adaptation strategies that are innovative and transformative. The diversification of income sources by 64% of female respondents through home-based businesses, online sales, or involvement in cooperatives shows a shift in women's role from passive domestic actors to active economic agents. These findings are in line with the research of Manolova et al. (2020) who stated that crises can be a catalyst for women's economic empowerment through micro-entrepreneurship and digitalization. This transformation has important implications for the theory of social adaptation, in which societies are able to change their roles and strategies to maintain their survival in unstable conditions (Sasa et al., 2023). For men, the shift to digital platform-based work shows the adaptation of masculinity to a new, more flexible economic structure.

The role of local communities has proven to be one of the most important factors in strengthening social resilience during times of crisis. As many as 58.7% of respondents admitted to being involved in community activities, which not only provide economic access but also build social solidarity. This is in accordance with the concept of social capital put forward by Putnam (2020), where social networks are able to strengthen adaptive capacity through collective support. Forms of social innovation such as women's cooperatives, digital literacy training, and community-based parenting programs create adaptive ecosystems that promote gender equality more systemically. These findings are reinforced by the study of Fleming et al. (2023), which show that community-based solidarity is able to reduce household economic vulnerability and drive long-term social transformation.

However, the effectiveness of government policies in supporting gender equality during the crisis is still far from optimal. Only 31.2% of respondents felt

the direct benefits of government programs, indicating a gap between policies and the real needs of the community. This reflects weaknesses in policy designs that are not yet fully gender-sensitive, such as the lack of support for domestic burdens or childcare services. These results are consistent with the findings of UN Women (2022), which states that post-crisis recovery policies often fail to reach women's groups because they do not consider social and structural factors. The low effectiveness of the program also reflects governance issues, such as complicated bureaucracy and uneven distribution of information (OECD, 2023). Improvements in governance and program design are essential to accelerate a more equitable and inclusive recovery.

The consequences of this study's findings are significant, both theoretically and practically. Theoretically, this research expands the understanding of the relationship between crises and gender dynamics by showing how traditional norms can be reproduced as well as challenged in the context of social change. In practice, the results of this study provide a basis for the formulation of more gender-sensitive policies, such as the provision of digital training for women, access to inclusive capital, and domestic support services. Community-based programs can also be strengthened as part of a sustainable recovery strategy. In addition, the results of the study show the importance of a multidimensional approach in addressing gender inequality, including economic, social, cultural, and policy interventions.

However, this study has several limitations that need to be considered. First, the sample size limited to 80 respondents and 8 key speakers may not fully represent the diversity of gender experiences across the Bali region. Second, descriptive survey and interview approaches can be strengthened with longitudinal analysis to see changes in gender roles in the long term. Third, variables such as educational background, social class, and ethnicity have not been analyzed in depth even though they have the potential to affect the dynamics of gender equality. Further research needs to expand geographic and methodological scope, including cross-regional comparative approaches and evidence-based policy analysis, to produce more comprehensive recommendations.

Overall, this research makes an important contribution to the development of the social sciences, particularly gender studies, social adaptation, and public policy. The results confirm that the crisis not only exposes existing inequalities, but also opens up space for social innovation and the transformation of gender roles. By strengthening synergies between individuals, communities, and public policies, gender equality can become a pillar of social resilience that is not only important in times of crisis, but also in the face of increasingly complex future challenges.

## **CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION**

This research confirms that gender equality is an increasingly crucial strategic issue in the context of multidimensional crises such as pandemics, economic disruptions, and rapid social change. The results of the analysis show that the crisis has broadened the burden of gender roles, especially for women

who experience a significant increase in domestic responsibilities as well as economic pressures due to job loss or reduced income. On the other hand, men also face social pressure as breadwinners, although some families are beginning to show a shift towards a more equal division of roles. These findings confirm that the crisis not only reproduces existing gender inequalities, but also creates opportunities for the transformation of gender relations through changes in domestic roles and patterns of economic participation.

In addition, this study shows that community-based adaptation strategies, social innovation, and collective solidarity are important keys in strengthening gender equality in times of crisis. Participation in cooperatives, micro business development, use of digital technology, and support from community networks have been proven to increase individual and collective resilience. However, the effectiveness of government policies still needs to be improved through programs that are more responsive to gender needs, such as access to digital training, domestic support services, and inclusive capital. Thus, this research contributes to the development of social change theory as well as provides concrete recommendations for designing gender-just, adaptive, and sustainable policies to face future challenges.

#### **ADVANCED RESEARCH**

The findings of this study open pathways for advanced research focusing on the integration of gender-responsive digital innovation, policy design, and community-based resilience models in post-crisis contexts. Future studies could develop a comparative framework across regions with diverse socio-cultural structures to examine how local norms, digital literacy levels, and social capital interact in shaping adaptive gender strategies. Advanced analytical models such as structural equation modeling (SEM) or system dynamics simulation can be employed to map causal relationships between crisis exposure, innovation behavior, and gender equality outcomes. Moreover, longitudinal and cross-sectoral research is needed to assess how sustained digital empowerment, inclusive microfinance systems, and participatory governance influence gender transformation over time. By expanding methodological rigor and theoretical integration, subsequent research can contribute to building a holistic gender resilience framework that not only mitigates the short-term impacts of crises but also institutionalizes equality and innovation as long-term pillars of sustainable development.

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