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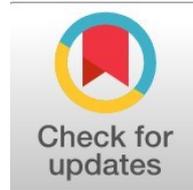
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Dual Role Burden among Female Agricultural Laborers in Rural Indonesia

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Abstract

General Background: Women's participation in public economic activities has increased alongside evolving gender roles in Indonesian society, yet normative legal frameworks emphasize balanced rights and obligations within households. **Specific Background:** Female agricultural laborers in Ramban Kulon Village simultaneously engage in income-generating activities and domestic responsibilities, reflecting a complex interaction between socio-legal norms and rural realities. **Knowledge Gap:** Despite formal recognition of gender equality in Islamic family law and national legislation, discrepancies persist in the practical division of household roles, particularly in agrarian communities. **Aims:** This study aims to analyze the forms of problems experienced by female agricultural laborers and identify the social and economic factors contributing to these challenges. **Results:** Findings reveal excessive double workloads, limited recovery time, and unequal domestic role distribution, driven by patriarchal norms and unstable household income. Women's economic participation does not alter domestic responsibilities, resulting in sustained role conflict and structural burden. **Novelty:** This study highlights the interaction between socio-cultural structures and economic necessity in shaping persistent dual role conditions among rural women within a socio-legal framework. **Implications:** The findings underscore the need for gender-responsive policies and community-based interventions addressing structural inequality and promoting equitable role distribution in rural households.

Highlights:

- ♦ Simultaneous domestic and agricultural responsibilities create continuous physical and emotional strain.
- ♦ Patriarchal cultural norms maintain unequal household task allocation despite income contribution.
- ♦ Seasonal and unstable earnings drive women's labor participation without shifting family role structures.

Keywords: Women's Dual Roles, Farm Laborers, Family Problems

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Introduction

Women's participation in the public sector has continued to increase alongside social development in Indonesian society. Women are regarded as both income earners and managers of household affairs [1]. This condition aligns with modern gender role theory, which emphasizes that women should be allowed to take part in social and economic activities outside the home. However, these changes have generated new challenges in family life, particularly regarding how roles between husbands and wives are divided [2].

From both legal and Islamic perspectives, marriage is regarded as a sacred union (*mitsaqan ghalizan*) that requires a harmonious balance of rights and responsibilities between husband and wife, representing a firm and solemn covenant as emphasized in Q.S. An-Nisa (21).[3]. This principle underscores that family life is built on justice, cooperation, and mutual protection [4]. The husband is obligated to provide financial support and protection, while the wife plays a role in household management, yet both remain in equal positions as family partners [5].

Juridically, this principle of equality is also affirmed in the 1945 Constitution of the Republic of Indonesia and Law Number 1 of 1974 on Marriage, as amended by Law Number 16 of 2019. Article 31 paragraph (1) stipulates that the rights and legal status of husband and wife are equal, while Article 34 regulates the husband's obligation to provide financial support and the wife's responsibility to manage the household [6]. These provisions indicate that national law positions husbands and wives as equal partners; however, in social practice, a fair division of roles is often not fully realized [7].

This reality of inequality is clearly evident in the lives of female agricultural laborers in Ramban Kulon Village, Cermee District, Bondowoso Regency, an agrarian area with a population of 4,559 people consisting of 2,329 women and 2,230 men [8]. The village population density of approximately 762 people per square kilometer increases household economic needs, resulting in many women of productive age engaging in agricultural work. They contribute to household income while continuing to bear full domestic responsibilities, thereby experiencing a double workload [9].

This situation reflects a disparity between legal principles that promote justice and equality and social practices that continue to exhibit gender bias. Women working as agricultural laborers face not only economic challenges but also an unequal distribution of roles within the household, which may lead to domestic conflict and structural injustice. [10]. Therefore, the dual roles performed by female agricultural laborers in Ramban Kulon Village warrant careful examination to gain a more comprehensive understanding of family socio-legal dynamics, while also providing a foundation for developing gender-responsive policies and empowerment initiatives in rural communities.[11]

Method

This study employs a qualitative approach with a descriptive research design. This approach is selected because it enables a comprehensive portrayal of lived experiences, conditions, and the dynamics of role division within the households of female agricultural laborers. In addition, this method allows for an evaluation of whether these practices are consistent with the norms of Islamic family law and Indonesian positive law [12].

The types and sources of data in this study consist of primary and secondary data [13]. In-depth interviews are conducted with married female agricultural laborers in Ramban Kulon Village, their husbands, and community leaders or village officials who are familiar with the local social conditions. Secondary data are obtained from official village documents, population data, statutory regulations such as the Marriage Law and the Compilation of Islamic Law, as well as books and scholarly literature relevant to women's dual roles and Islamic family law [14].

Data collection techniques are carried out through three main methods, namely in-depth interviews, observation, and documentation [13]. In-depth interviews are used to explore experiences, perspectives, and the division of roles between husbands and wives within the household [15]. Observation is conducted to directly examine the daily activities of female agricultural laborers in performing domestic and public roles. Documentation involves collecting village profiles, population figures, socio-economic conditions, and other supporting documents relevant to the research focus [16].

Subsequently, data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing are conducted to analyze the collected data. Data reduction is carried out by selecting and focusing on essential data from interviews, observations, and documentation. Data presentation is conducted in the form of systematic descriptive narratives to facilitate understanding [17]. Finally, conclusions are drawn inductively to obtain a comprehensive picture of the issues surrounding the dual roles of female agricultural laborers and their conformity with the principles of justice and equality in Islamic family law [18].

Result and Discussion

A. Problematics of Women's Dual Roles (A Study of Female Agricultural Laborers) in Ramban Kulon Village, Cermee District, Bondowoso Regency

The increasing participation of women in the public sector is not the sole factor underlying the phenomenon of the dual roles of female agricultural laborers [19]. This phenomenon is also closely related to how family roles are performed and interpreted in everyday life. In this context, the issue of dual roles should be viewed as a dynamic of gender relations within the household that affects the balance of rights and obligations between husband and wife, rather than merely as a form of

women's economic participation. Field realities indicate that changes in the division of domestic labor are often not accompanied by adjustments when women engage in productive work. As a result, layered burdens emerge and adversely affect the quality of family life [20].

In gender sociology studies, this condition can be analyzed through role conflict theory and structuration theory, which emphasize that individual actions occur within social structures that both constrain and shape their choices [21]. This framework is applied to analyze the lives of female agricultural laborers in Ramban Kulon Village by comparing ideal norms of equality and cooperation within the family, as regulated by national law and Islamic family law, with the actual practices of role division in everyday rural life [22].

An understanding of role conflict theory, gender theory, and Anthony Giddens's structuration theory is crucial to this study, as all field findings related to the issue of women's dual roles among female agricultural laborers are analyzed based on this theoretical framework. After understanding dual roles from a theoretical perspective, a systematic and focused comparison between theoretical concepts and the social situations experienced by female agricultural laborers in Ramban Kulon Village can be conducted.

The findings of the study show that female agricultural laborers in Ramban Kulon Village carry demanding dual responsibilities. They handle domestic duties while simultaneously working to earn additional income for their households. These roles are assumed not out of personal preference, but as a result of economic pressures that necessitate extra earnings. However, their participation in the public sphere is not matched by any decrease in the domestic burdens they continue to shoulder.

One of the main problems faced by female agricultural laborers in Ramban Kulon Village is the double workload. Women not only carry out household duties as home managers, child caregivers, and companions to their husbands, but also seek additional income as agricultural laborers. In their daily activities, both roles are performed simultaneously without a clear division of time or responsibilities.

Field findings show that women's daily activities begin in the early morning with the completion of domestic tasks such as cooking, cleaning the house, washing clothes, and preparing children's needs before going to the fields to work until midday or afternoon. After returning from the fields, they must still perform domestic work, leaving very limited time for rest.

Based on role conflict theory, the experiences of female agricultural laborers reflect a tension between domestic and public roles carried out concurrently. Women frequently encounter situations in which meeting the demands of one role compromises the other, as both require considerable time, energy, and responsibility. Because these roles unfold within a continuous cycle of daily activities, women have limited opportunity to clearly separate time allocated to public work from that devoted to household responsibilities.

Women thus experience role overload, as they are expected to fulfill multiple responsibilities whose demands surpass their physical and psychological capacities. Consequently, female agricultural laborers are prone to physical fatigue, emotional stress, and insufficient time for rest and recovery. In addition, sustained role conflict may adversely affect the quality of family relationships, since women are still expected to perform domestic duties flawlessly despite their exhaustion. Therefore, role conflict theory clarifies that the challenges faced by female agricultural laborers arise from an unequal structure of role expectations, rather than simply from individual limitations in managing time.

From the perspective of Anthony Giddens's structuration theory, however, female agricultural laborers can be viewed as active agents in sustaining the family economy. Women's decisions to work as agricultural laborers reflect awareness and reflexive action regarding household economic conditions that cannot be fully met by their husbands' income alone. In this context, women do not occupy a passive position, but instead play an active role in supporting the family economy through their involvement in the agricultural sector.

Nevertheless, women's agency does not operate within an entirely free environment. In Ramban Kulon Village, cultural norms, patriarchal principles, and gender constructions influence women's efforts. These structures assign women primary responsibility for household affairs such as domestic work and childcare, regardless of whether they are engaged in public-sector employment. Consequently, social structures do not undergo significant change in the division of domestic roles, even though women make substantial economic contributions.

Furthermore, structuration theory suggests that such social structures are continually reproduced through routine social practices. Women who accept and carry out dual responsibilities without negotiating the division of roles with their husbands inadvertently reinforce structures that place a burden on them. This situation leads to the normalization of double workloads, which are seldom questioned by either the women themselves or their surrounding social environment. Hence, the difficulties encountered by female agricultural laborers in managing dual roles reflect not only economic pressures within the family but also the interaction between agency and social structure in the everyday lives of rural women.

Accordingly, women working as agricultural laborers in Ramban Kulon Village face difficulties arising from the interaction between family economic pressures and social structures that do not allow for a more equitable distribution of roles. This condition indicates that changes in gender relations within families and communities must be accompanied by efforts to strengthen women's economic roles.

B. Social and Economic Factors Influencing the Emergence of Problems Faced by Female Agricultural Laborers

Based on the results of interviews conducted with female agricultural laborers, their husbands, and community leaders in Ramban Kulon Village, social factors constitute one of the main influences on the emergence of women's dual role problems. Social factors in this context relate to family relationship patterns, the division of roles between husbands and wives, societal views regarding women's positions and responsibilities within household life, domestic work, and the responsibilities assigned to them in managing household affairs.

Most female informants also stated that their husbands' income cannot be relied upon when they work as agricultural laborers or casual workers. Daily wages depend on planting and harvesting seasons. When there is no work in the fields, household income also declines. This condition encourages women to work in order to meet household needs. It indicates that economic factors push women to participate in paid work, but do not immediately improve their bargaining position within the family.

1. Social Factors

An understanding of social factors is essential in analyzing the problems faced by female agricultural laborers, as norms, values, and patterns of social relations strongly influence the division of roles between men and women within the family. From the perspective of gender theory, social factors are understood as constructions embedded in social life that serve as the basis for determining roles considered appropriate for women and men.

The findings reveal that prevailing social norms in Ramban Kulon Village still assign women the primary responsibility for domestic duties such as cooking, house cleaning, and childcare. This view remains dominant even when women are actively working as agricultural laborers. In social terms, women's participation in the public sphere has not yet been fully recognized as a basis for a more balanced distribution of domestic responsibilities. Such role divisions are continually reproduced through daily practices, habits, and interactions within both the family and the broader community. Women seldom negotiate role-sharing with their husbands and tend to accept the existing arrangement. Furthermore, men's involvement in household tasks is generally seen as mere assistance rather than a shared obligation. This pattern illustrates a deeply rooted social construction of gender relations within the family.

From the perspective of Anthony Giddens's structuration theory, these social norms and values constitute structural components that guide repetitive social practices and constrain women's actions. By simultaneously performing roles within the household and in the public sphere without altering the existing division of roles, women indirectly reproduce social structures that place them in a more disadvantaged position.

Furthermore, women's understanding of their dual roles is influenced by the surrounding social context. Findings from the field indicate that female agricultural laborers tend to perceive their double workload as a moral duty and familial obligation, rather than as an imbalance of roles that warrants questioning. This perspective reflects a deep internalization of gender norms. Consequently, women are more inclined to adjust to existing conditions than to negotiate or pursue changes in the division of roles within the household.

This situation suggests that social factors function internally through normative pressures within society, as well as through the shaping of women's awareness and perceptions of their roles. From the standpoint of structuration theory, such awareness emerges from the continuous reproduction of social structures through everyday practices. Structures that place a greater burden on women become further entrenched when women accept and carry out dual roles without resistance. Therefore, social factors not only contribute to the formation of unequal role patterns but also sustain the long-term challenges faced by female agricultural laborers. In this regard, social factors play a crucial role in perpetuating the persistence of women's dual role issues in Ramban Kulon Village.

2. Economic Factors

In Ramban Kulon Village, one of the primary drivers of women's involvement in work as agricultural laborers is economic necessity. Due to unstable economic conditions, limited husbands' income, and increasing living costs, women in farming households feel compelled to help sustain the family economy. Consequently, economic factors function not merely as a background condition but also as a structure that shapes the choices women make in their daily lives.

Research findings indicate that husbands' income is insufficient to meet household needs, leading most women to work as agricultural laborers. Family economies are vulnerable because agricultural income is seasonal and highly dependent on natural conditions. In this context, women's participation in agricultural work is viewed as a strategy to maintain household economic stability and to meet basic needs such as food, children's education, and other household necessities.

From the perspective of Anthony Giddens's structuration theory, economic pressures motivate women to take on roles as economic contributors within the household. In adapting to these conditions, women actively choose to work; however, this expression of agency is not accompanied by shifts in the domestic division of labor. Consequently, women carry both income-generating and household responsibilities at the same time, resulting in a greater overall burden. This situation suggests that women's agency is oriented more toward adaptation than transformation in responding to economic constraints. Although women are capable of adjusting to restrictive economic structures by engaging in agricultural labor, such adaptation does not lead to changes in how domestic roles are allocated. In other words, their agency is primarily directed at sustaining the family's economic stability rather than altering the social structures that disadvantage them.

The continued persistence of an unchanged domestic role structure reflects underlying gender inequality despite women's economic contributions. Their position within the household remains largely the same even after contributing to family income. While women's economic activities are often viewed as supplementary, they are still regarded as chiefly responsible for domestic duties. This condition indicates that women have yet to be fully acknowledged as economic actors, thereby limiting opportunities to negotiate a more equitable distribution of roles.

According to Anthony Giddens's structuration theory, this situation reflects a process of structural reproduction through everyday social practices. Women perform both economic and domestic work simultaneously without altering the division of tasks, and this practice indirectly reinforces structures that burden them. Although economic pressure should create opportunities for changes in role relations, the solutions adopted remain individual in nature and do not address the structural roots of the problem. Instead, economic pressure merely sustains inequality. Therefore, economic factors both encourage women's participation in the public sector and perpetuate the problem of dual roles among female agricultural laborers.

Conclusion

Women working as agricultural laborers in Ramban Kulon Village face a central problem: they are required to manage all household tasks while simultaneously working in agriculture to help meet their families' financial needs. This condition results in physical exhaustion, emotional stress, limited rest time, and reduced opportunities for family interaction. Although women contribute to household income, they remain almost entirely responsible for domestic work, while husbands continue to show limited involvement in household duties. This situation is shaped by patriarchal culture and traditional gender constructions that regard domestic work as women's responsibility. Economic factors, such as insufficient household income and instability in the agricultural sector, also contribute to this condition. As a result, women's participation in income-generating activities is not accompanied by a shift in family roles, causing the double workload to persist and become a structural problem within agricultural labor households.

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