
WOMEN'S DOUBLE BURDEN IN POOR COMMUNITY IN SURAKARTA, INDONESIA

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ABSTRACT

This research aimed to find out double burden the wives assume in Kelurahan Semanggi, Pasar Kliwon Sub District, Surakarta. In addition, this research was also intended to find out how the wives play the two roles all at once: in domestic and public sectors. This research employed case study research method, with purposive sampling technique being the technique of selecting informant and women coming from poor community living in Kelurahan Semanggi being the unit of analysis. Data collection was carried out using in-depth interview, observation, and documentation on activities related to the wives' double burden in poor community in Kelurahan Semanggi, Pasar Kliwon, Surakarta. Validity test was carried out using data source triangulation with an interactive model of data analysis. The result of research showed that many wives compelled to work because their husbands' working income is very insufficient to suffice all of their family's needs. Eventually, it made the wives playing double roles: domestic one as housewives and public one requiring them to work. The two roles played by the wives in poor family results in unequal job distribution for wives dominated and assuming double burden from the two roles they play at one time.

KEYWORDS: poor community, double burden, domestic sector, public sector, double burden.

1. INTRODUCTION

Recently, poverty problem becomes interesting and still attracts much attention among academicians. Poverty still becomes a theme interesting to study in developing countries, including Indonesia. In Indonesia, not only poverty problem occurs in rural community, but in urban areas community (people) with below-average economy is also found, including in Surakarta City. Poverty, according to Lewis (in Ernayanti and Ita 1996: 1) is the consequence of community with dense population, limited resource, limited access to consumption products, low health level, and unequal opportunity of attending education.

Considering Lewis' explanation of education, considering the poverty phenomena occurring widely in the people in Kelurahan Semanggi, Surakarta, people in Kelurahan Semanggi are those dwelling a population-dense and slum area. To surrounding people, the region is known to be poor village areas, because majority populations dwelling the region are those with low-economic class. The author summarizes that poverty the local people encounter is due to their low income and education. The low education they have in turn affects directly the job they undergo. On average, the family head in Kelurahan Semanggi work informally as casual worker (buruh serabutan). Casual worker profession is considered as having low and uncertain income that in turn leads the family to have economic problem. The low income their husbands get as the household and breadwinner makes most women

working to suffice their family need. The low education background makes some women in Kelurahan Semanggi difficultly seeking job appropriate to their ability.

Poverty problem is the one affecting broadly the improvement of women's quality of life and wellbeing. The role of women itself affects considerably the household life because it can help their family's economy. In household life, woman is expected to be a mother existing at home and taking care of child and husband. In the prosperous household, this value can be applied but for the family with the economy below average, this value is applied difficultly. Poverty problem leads the women to look for some ways to participate actively in their household economy. As suggested by Abdullah (2003), basically women have a variety of activities including: household activity, earn-living activity in home industry, earn-living activity in the existing opportunity, social activity in society scope, and other individual activities such as taking a rest.

The role of husband as breadwinner in a family required to suffice his family needs has been no longer reliable. Women's participation in the attempt of improving the family's economy has been inevitable. Many factors require a wife to assume burden in household by working to help earn living. In relation to public sector, many wives in Kelurahan Semanggi were found working as household assistants, laundresses, and cooks. The role of women in public sector undergone by wives can affect directly their household life. Many women feel burdened with double role they should undergo at one time. They should be able to be responsible for household as domestic sector and for their job constituting public sector.

In the presence of domestic and public environments concept, double role is also called cultural dualism concept. Suryadi (2004: 12) explains that double role is a condition in which an individual can play two or more parts (roles) all at once concomitantly. The intended roles are the ones in which a woman serves as wife for her husband, as mother for her children, and as the one having career or job out of home. In World Bank's Research Policy Report (2005: 66) stated that there are some problems arising later such as poverty that in turn makes a woman or wife forced to work out of home. It will eventually increase double workload she should assume in a family. Double burden means imbalanced workload assumed by one sex (Muwazah: 2015). Just like in a family, the wife assumes more workload than the husband does. Indeed there have been man women working in public sector today, but it is not followed with the reduction of their job in domestic sector. It is that in turn makes the women assuming multiple burdens.

This research is not the first one to do; a previous study has been conducted by Risnawati (2016) entitled *Peran Ganda Istri yang Bekerja dalam Membantu Ekonomi Keluarga Buruh Perkebunan Kelapa Sawit pada PT Bumi Mas Agro di Kecamatan Sandaran Kabupaten Kutai Timur* (Working Wives' Double Roles in Helping Family Economy among Sawit Plantation Laborers in PT Bumi Mas Agro in Sandaran Sub District of Kutai Timur Regency). This research aimed to describe the double role of wife and to find out how they manage their time in domestic and public sectors. This study employed a descriptive qualitative research type with observation, interview, and

documentation being the techniques of collecting data. Data analysis was conducted using an interactive model of analysis. This research found that in domestic environment, a wife serves as a housewife obligatorily taking care of her house, husband, and children. In reality, the role cannot be undertaken along with her role as a worker in public sector. It is because job distribution in sawit plantation takes really much time and the income they get during working has not been able to suffice their family's needs.

Another study conducted by Dian Maulina Wijayanti (2010) discussed the women's double role. This research entitled *Belenggu Kemiskinan Buruh Perempuan Pabrik Rokok (Poverty Fetter of Female Workers in Cigarette Plant)* aims to explain profile and background encouraging the women to work as cigarette plant's worker and to explain the female workers' double burden. Data collection was conducted through individual interview, observation, and documentation. From the result of research, it can be concluded that women work as worker in Janur Kuning cigarette plant because of firstly poverty factor in which the family's income is inadequate to suffice their life need; secondly, education factor, as the low-class women's education tends to be low so that they can work in the sector not requiring high education, expertise, and special skill with low wage such as plant workers. In addition, the women's double burden, that is, domestic chores are still socially imposed to women, although women still work at public sector as the workers in cigarette plant. Thus, poverty has fettered the cigarette plant's female workers in the duty of double burden much heavier than their husband's burden.

From those studies, it can be seen that there are many similar cases discussing women's double burden, but with different focus, background, and research method. In this case, the author intends to conduct a more in-depth research aiming to find out the double burden of wives in poor family and how they undergo two roles in domestic and public sectors. This research is conducted on poor people in Kelurahan Semanggi, Pasar Kliwon Sub District, Surakarta.

2. METHODS

This research took place in Kelurahan Semanggi, Pasar Kliwon Sub District, Surakarta, exactly on the poor people living in slump and population-dense area. The method employed in this study was qualitative one using case study approach. The technique of selecting informants used in this study was purposive sampling one with housewives working and living in Kelurahan Semanggi RT 02/RW 23 being the unit of analysis to be studied. Data collection was carried out through in-depth interview, observation, and documentation related to double burden of poor women in Kelurahan Semanggi. Validity test was conducted using data source triangulation with an interactive model of data analysis.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Kelurahan Semanggi, Pasar Kliwon, Surakarta area is indeed known as a slump and population-dense area dwelled by majority poor people. The fact has been recognized by surrounding people, because the image has been inherent to Kelurahan Semanggi people. However, Semanggi people

themselves are not objected with the image spreading among the community, as they understand the condition of environment they are dwell.

Family is a smallest unit in society, consisting of husband, wife, and some children. In a family, every member plays its own obligatory role. In a family, husband serves as breadwinner and wife serves to take care of children and house. However, in a difficult economic condition, those roles sometimes do not run dully. When in a family, a husband has been unable to suffice his family's need with income he gets from working, a wife is forced to work to help her husband. The decision is made collectively along with husband, when the husband's income can no longer suffice their daily needs. Thus, willy-nilly a wife should work as well to offset the inadequacy. In this case, a wife serves to help her husband suffice their need by working for her family's wellbeing. It is in line with Abdullah (2003: 226) suggesting that women's participation in home industry is affected by such factors as economic pressure, family environment highly supporting to work and no other job opportunity appropriate to their skill.

It can be seen from the life of people in Kelurahan Semanggi. Several married women were selected to be the informant of research. It was because the author wanted to know find out the double burden assumed by a wife who should play two roles all at once. Considering the result conducted on several married women in Kelurahan Semanggi, it can be seen that economic pressure compels a wife to work. Such the decision is made by some wives because they consider that their husband's income has been no longer able to suffice their daily needs. From the statement, it can be concluded that several wives in Kelurahan Semanggi should eventually play double role at one time. The double role intended includes domestic role as a wife for her husband and as a mother for her children. In addition, at the same time she also plays public role to work to get additional income for her family. In family environment, a woman should do so many chores. To be a good wife for her husband, she should perform her obligation such as preparing her husband's need before working, fulfilling his need physically and spiritually, preparing food for her husband and children, and doing other domestic chores. In addition, a wife should keep obeying her obligation to keep faithful to her husband and should be able to motivate all of her husband's activities. A wife in family environment also serves as a mother for her children. Whatever activity the woman does daily in a family cannot be a reason for her to forget her main role as a mother for her children who should prepare all of her children's need before going to school. Even, when the distance between house and school is far, a mother should deliver and pick up her children. A mother also serves to suffice all of children's needs including food, affection, education, and etc. In addition, as a mother, a woman should be able to create her children's character and behavior in order to obey and give service to their parents and to socialize well in society environment.

From the domestic role aforementioned, there is another role a woman should play, working. Working to help her husband earn living has been an obligation several wives should do in Kelurahan Semanggi. Most women in Kelurahan Semanggi prefer working as laborers (workers)

such as household assistant, laundress, cook, and casual workers such as wholesale tailor. The jobs taken by majority women are the flexible ones viewed from time aspect, including household assistant, laundress, cook, and wholesale tailor. Even, some women admit that they have more than one job, for example, she can work as household assistant and wholesale tailor all at once.

The low education the local populations have also affects the jobs taken by some wives. The profession as household assistant performed by some local women is considered as the appropriate one. Through this profession they automatically do not need education qualification and have had skill constituting daily activities at home. It is indeed unlike other household assistant requiring them to work full time. However, the job is performed only from morning to afternoon after they deliver their children to school. This job includes cooking, washing, and cleaning house. In addition, they look for the working location not far away from their home, so that they should unnecessarily stay at their employer's house according to their early agreement. However, in this kind of job, they find difficulty in the term of wage. Most of them receive their wage in a month, while in that period they should fulfill too many needs.

Meanwhile, the job of washing and cooking is performed by only some women in Kelurahan Semanggi. They do the job not everyday, depending on call. They usually do this job when local people needing the cook in a large event call them. Therefore, the job of laundress and cook cannot be the only income source for the wives. For these types of job, the wage is usually given directly after the job has been completed. For such jobs they do not specify the tariff the consumers should pay, so the wage is up to the consumers' willingness to pay.

Meanwhile, the wives prefer wholesaler tailor profession as their main job. This job has flexible time and can be performed at home. However, this job requires them to have sewing machine they should buy with their personal money. Later, they will take cloth from a house cooperating with cloth collector. Then, the collector will deliver cloth roll to produce garment, mukena (prayer robe for Muslimah), blanket, and etc that will be worked on by the tailor. The tailor will work on the cloth corresponding to the collector's instruction. The wage given is uncertain depending on the working time and the quantity of work they can perform. This job can be done everyday by local people because there is always collector who needs wholesale tailors like them. However, this will be crowded and they will get much wage during Ramadhan month. On Ramadhan month, collectors usually release new models of fashion and mukena. On that month, collectors also usually increase the quantity of cloth they should work on, so that the tailors will get more share than they usually get.

These jobs preferred by several wives in Kelurahan Semanggi are side jobs and cannot be their main livelihood. For that reason, several wives still take another job. Many of them prefer to be household assistant and warehouse tailor because these two jobs are considered as having more certain income than being cook and laundress. After taking care of their children in the morning, they usually work as household assistant until afternoon. Thereafter, they can pick up their children from school and

continue their sewing work at home. Working at home facilitates them to do other domestic chores like cooking and taking care of children. Thus, they can complete their obligations of completing domestic chores and earning additional income all at once.

Several wives admit that actually some jobs they do have not been able to help their husband suffice their family's need. They consider that more needs and more expensive price preclude them from sufficing their daily needs. In addition, they also say that their income in one day can suffice their only one-day need. Thus, they should be able to prioritize the more important need smartly. As such, they can save their money for other necessities such as house renovation or etc. For that reasons, they are still below poverty line until today, they add.

From the explanation above, the wives' double burden in Kelurahan Semanggi has an implication to the women's double role. Women's double role is a condition in which women on the one hand serve as an independent one and housewife who take care of children and husband as a wife in a family. On the other hand, they also serve as secondary breadwinner to help their husband suffice their family's need. Women are considered as playing double burden when they are responsible for both domestic and public chores just like what is done by wives in poor family in Kelurahan Semanggi. In fact, the problem of women's double role lies not on the role itself, but on the consequence or the effect it generates in a family. Imbalanced job distribution between husband and wife can automatically result in double burden in the most dominated party. This job distribution in a poor family in Kelurahan Semanggi is surely unjust to wives. Unequal job distribution will, in turn, result in multiple burdens coming from a variety of activities a wife should assume. Thus, essentially a wife's double burden in poor family in Kelurahan Semanggi is the workload that should be assumed from 2 roles all at once: domestic and public.

4. CONCLUSION

The explanation indicates that poverty life experienced by some families in Kelurahan Semanggi is due to, among others, husband's limited working income. It, in turn, compels the wives to work to help their husband suffice their family's need. Such decision requires a woman to play double role in a family. They should play two roles at one time: as housewife who should take care of house, husband, and children in domestic sector and working in public sector to work to help their husband suffice their family's need. The two roles a wife should play will result in unequal job description for the dominated party. Thus, the most dominated party is a wife that should assume double role from the activities she does in the two roles she plays at one time.

5. REFERENCES

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