

## **DIVISION OF LABOUR IN COASTAL COMMUNITY: The Equity of Role-Play Between Bugis Women and Men in Kupang**

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### **ABSTRACT**

The study aims to know the division of labor between women and men in the Bugis Families in the Kupang coastal community. Collecting the data through Focus Group Discussion (FGD) with 20 familial members and gathering in-deep information by conducting interviews and observations. The result of this study shows In Bugis families, wife and husband work representing social solidarity that wife and husband do same domestic activities for cooking, washing, and nursing. Gender division of labor approach to highlight the role, benefits, and risks of women and men in the coastal area. Men do fishing in the sea because it is dangerous for women, while fishery multi-products are easier for women Bugis. Women and men supply seaweed farming as a family business, and both of them work

with a division of labor. The wife used the extra money for daily expenses, whereas the husband used the extra money for bigger investments.

**Keywords:** Division of Labor; Coastal Communities; Bugis Women and Men.

## A. Introduction

East Nusa Tenggara is a large sea with many islands, a large archipelagic, and high marine fish-producing province in Indonesia, therefore the major income of the Kupang community obtain from the fisheries sector as the basis of developing and improving priority area on the government role such as preserving coastal area and women community (Kangkan et., 2017). It has been estimated that women comprise up to 42% or more of the people engaged in fisheries in East Nusa Tenggara Datuk *et al.*, (2020). In gendered occupations in Kupang, the men focused on increasing household income, and women were instead oriented on moving out of poverty, so their families had sufficient food (Stacey *et al.*, 2019). However, in this place, we found many poor families because most of them do not know how the importance of women in supporting family economic development, so they just stay at home to look after the children and to cook food. Stacey *et al.*, (2019) said that the consequence for women who lack comprehension of gender issues in coastal fisheries has resulted in limited knowledge and skills in the livelihoods of project beneficiaries.

As an ethnic minority in Kupang, Bugis women should live in the coastal area because several years ago their parents came from Bugis, South Sulawesi as a fisherman. Although ethnic Bugis are a minority in Kupang, they have a core role because they support economic development not only in Kupang City but also in the whole of the islands in East Nusa Tenggara Province. However, most of them are poor, particularly people

who live in a slum and coastal area because only the husband work to fulfill daily life, while the wife just stays at home to cook, clean, and care baby, whereas most Bugis families are rich and success in Kupang due to women entrepreneur in the trade sector (Djehalut, Kiko, Nurdin, & Syahrul, 2022; Pobas, 2022). According to the data, many and varied roles of women have likely led to an underestimation of the importance of women's contributions to the economic sector in Kupang (Stacey *et al.*, 2019).

One of the cases in the coastal community in Kupang is the existence of patriarchal structures that involve risks for women, such as losing both long-term support and protection from kin. It is a lack of attention given to coastal women's roles as daily resource users, as well as gender mainstreaming in policy, management, and governance (Fröcklin *et al.*, 2014). According to Kawarazuka *et al.*, (2019), women can bargain and negotiate with men to remove the patriarchy for better options to increase outcomes for themselves and their families in the longterm for everyday life. It supports the poor women in coastal Kupang as well as the main target of sustainable development programs of NGOs in East Nusa Tenggara. Minimol (2020) said that sustainable development of the coastal women's economy essentially increases coastal employment opportunities, reduces regional income imbalances, and reduces poverty at its root.

The programs from Non-Profit Organizations such as YBN-PLN and Damar Institute also contributed significantly to the empowerment and entrepreneurial competency development of coastal women in Kupang. They made significantly entrepreneurial competency development initiatives, create micro-entrepreneurial awareness among women in taking competitive advantage, and ensure sustainable business performance over coastal women in Kupang. Recently, their programs gave some attention to increasing women's skills to participate in markets (preserving/processing fish for sale in local markets) or providing equipment to support improved harvest (mangrove crab fattening cages) (Stacey

*et al.*, 2019). Moreover, YBN-PLN and Damar Institute taught the Bugis women into the productive sphere by creating small-scale income in fishery multi-products for familial beneficiaries, such foods as *Abon Ikan Tuna*, *Stik Tulang Ikan Tuna*, *Nugget Ikan Tuna*, and *Keripik Ikan Tuna*.

In other countries, this program was often not successful in reducing poverty due to the same occasion, this increased women's time burdens and exacerbated differences between men and women in households (Fröcklin *et al.*, 2014; García-Hernández *et al.*, 2018; Harper *et al.*, 2017; Mwakimako, 2018). Similarly, Kangkan *et al.*, (2017) found that several institutions and NGOs in Kupang carried out good coastal development, but this cannot be sustained to apply an integrated approach because they did not consider environmental, cultural, socioeconomic, and governmental impacts. However, the result of monitoring and evaluating gender outcomes of this program has improved gender integration including the development of systematic approaches and gender awareness, women communities, and beneficiaries, and clear articulation of gender strategies and objectives in East Nusa Tenggara (Awang, 2019; Stacey *et al.*, 2019).

According to Chowdhury *et al.*, (2014), the educational program was extremely important for coastal women because it impinged the development and empowerment of women from many different angles. Moreover, he said that fostering education for women was highly effective to mitigate the number of inequalities and abating gender inequalities, for example, mitigating discrimination related to education, skill development, employee, livelihood, and others. Stacey *et al.*, (2019) said that educating coastal women about fishery utilization can use one of three approaches: (1) supplementing or diversifying fishery utilization: adding new components to current livelihood strategies; (2) enhancing fishery utilization: improving current fishery utilization strategies to make them

more productive and sustainable; and (3) finding alternative fishery utilization: opportunities for adopting new strategies to support household fishery utilization diversification.

Based on the research, Fröcklin *et al.*, (2014) found that educational programs increased several incomes of coastal women, improved women's skills to handle everyday expenses as well as to think about the future, and presented the equality of division of labor in the family. Moreover, this succeeded to solve the low woman's incomes and inequality because many of the women groups in the coastal area did not have a job several years ago, as well as the relatively high percentile increase (Abidin *et al.*, 2020). Considering the number of research before, this study aimed to investigate the division of labor between women and men in Bugis families through the qualitative method. The research question is how to divide the division of labor between women and men from the Bugis Family in the Kupang coastal community. To understand the sections of this paper, we first described the method of program implementation, then we analyzed and concluded by discussing our findings. We assumed that the equality of division of labor between women and men can be a success to improve the economic incomes of coastal women.

## **B. Discussion**

### **1. Risk Women in the Coastal Area**

In coastal areas, women are supposed to be the most vulnerable for many causes such as early marriage, violent extremist organizations, mental attitudes, and other social issues (Badurdeen, 2018; Islam, 2012; Sudarso *et al.*, 2019). It is assumed not only by changes in daily life and financial systems but also by changes in roles played between women and men (Kronen & Vunisea, 2007). Relations between men and women in

coastal areas tend to have patriarchal values because men are a superior component compared to women (Sudarso *et al.*, 2019). Meanwhile, both men and women participated traditionally in providing shelter and food for the family. Women obey a significant role in economic preservation to combat adverse situations such as fisheries, homestead-based livelihoods, trees, livestock, animal fodder, and seeds. Moreover, women conducted important economic activities entirely such as livestock, rearing, sale of fish, and poultry. In coastal areas, women are part of microfinance memberships and organizations to access loans (Islam, 2012; Rohimi, 2020).

*First*, according to Sudarso *et al.*, (2019), early marriages in the coastal area occur among poor families. It is caused by the low income of the parents, a lack of expectations related to achieving a higher education for their children, and avoiding unpleasant family situations. Consequently, the daughters become a victim of the economic burden of parents such as dropping out of school and then entering into early marriage (Mawar, 2021; Stacey *et al.*, 2019). They have no power to refuse this tradition, so daughters ought to follow early marriage in their familial tradition. One of the informants said that

I was married to a fisherman on January 2017, so I was 16 years old. My parents argued that if I married him, he can fulfill my daily life because I have a low educational degree (interview, 25 August 2021).

This shows that early marriage in the Bugis Family can be found in Kupang City. However, while they are from low-education degrees and low-income families, the parents remind their children that they will be allowed marriage if they have a job or business.

*Second*, according to Badurdeen (2018), coastal women join violent extremist organizations particularly in conflict countries due to low finance, love for the son, love for the husband or partner, and a journey of adventure or curiosity. Meanwhile, most of the coastal women in Kupang are recruited to work as female workers in other countries. This process is reliant on the following two factors which happen before the recruitment of women: (1) process recruiters choose to engage in financial motivation and ideological benefits due to women and girls rationally calculating the benefits, salaries, and costs; and (2) women and girls are recruited by an organization through addressing, demanding, and selecting to fulfill the service needs, such as sex purposes, cooking, and cleaning.

*Third*, mental attitude and social pathology encountered women in several coastal areas. Kawarazuka *et al.*, (2019; 2017) said that it is caused by female injecting drug users and prostitution in the coastal area. Social pathology risks among women who inject drugs fell into two broad categories: injecting-related and sexual. Sex work is particularly determinant of mental attitude and social pathology. Both were produced at the intersection of inequitable gender norms, economic pressures, low-risk perception, and power (Mburu *et al.*, 2019). Moreover, gender research on mental attitude and social pathology has contributed to explaining gendered vulnerability in some marginalized coastal communities in Kupang. On the other hand, Gopal *et al.*, (2017) said that mental attitude risks for the female workers engaged in the coastal industry. It is an emergent issue for women workers due to several serious accidents. The researchers found damp conditions without protective equipment and good clothing, therefore female workers risked

diseases and health problems such as coughs, colds, asthma, musculoskeletal pains, and backache.

## 2. Gender Inequality in Coastal Area

Gender inequality is based on the gender gap and educational inequality in the coastal area. In East Nusa Tenggara, most of the coastal area has a low quality of education and learning process. Although Kupang has extraordinary marine wealth, this is not supported by a good education policy. It is an obstacle to developing education in the coastal areas. Fishermen have a low education level because they think that they can get rich when they can catch as many fish as they can. In general, low business opportunities in the fishery sector are caused by low levels of education and a lack of knowledge (Sudarso *et al.*, 2019). Moreover, it was proved by Nithin *et al.*, (2015) when they researched in Java coastal area. They found that gender preference was seen in 55.6% of subjects and was significantly high in participants with a lower level of education and low socioeconomic status.

Women in the Kupang coastal area are maintained in an inferior position through their role play in the family such as the processes of social reproduction and quite apart from their childbearing functions. According to the informant,

we just work in special responsibilities like managing household production (child care, cleaning, and cooking). We also work only fewer hours, are more frequently absent, and have less energy to invest. We only graduated from elementary school or had short educational attendance because we just prepared ourselves to work in the house. It is caused by our parents withdrawing us from school to work at home with my mother (interview, 10 July 2021).



Considering the parent role, there is no need to involve a high education for women because they are devoted to obeying their parent's decisions and traditional culture. This condition also happens when the parent forces their daughter into early marriages. Most of them marry when they were under 17 years old. According to Sudarso *et al.*, (2019), the women said that education is not important for them because they considered that there is no benefit of the certificate which is achieved from school. Finally, they just dedicate themselves to work at home. Therefore, women gain the knowledge only to do more with their future as a wife for husbands and mothers for their children. Meanwhile, formal education is considered not to be important because, in the afternoon, religious education is already sufficient for the provision of marriage (Sudarso *et al.*, 2019).

### **3. The Solidarity of Wife and Husband in Bugis Families**

Buginese occupies the Kupang coast because their parents came to Timor Island as a fisherman. They are different from other coastal communities because they live in a resilient community. Although they live on Timor Island, the role-play between wife and husband is different from Timorese families. According to Bugis families, they realized that they are immigrants in Kupang City, therefore solidarity in their family is a way to survive. Wives and husbands not only work together at home but also outside the house. In the house, there is no role play that the only wife should cook, clean, and wash, but they do it flexibly. While several husbands stay at home for cooking, washing, and caring because the wives work in the company, market, and government office, there are wives who also work at home because the husbands work outside the home.

In Bugis families, the role-play between wife and husband is based on social solidarity. Durkheim said that among the very primitive (both in the distant past and today) husband and wife are fairly similar in strength and intelligence (Brown, 1970). Moreover, Mead said that wives have the skills to continue monotonous work that husband does not share, while he has the powers to mobilize sudden spurts of energy, followed by a need for rest and reassemblage of resources (Brown, 1970). This solidarity changes for wives as main income providers in the Bugis community. Wife and husband have acquired an education equally, and sometimes the wives are a higher income than a husbands because they conduct household business. Meanwhile, the husbands only earn real incomes through fishing and controlling family finances.

Considering the Buginese solidarity, it will change the role-play of wives in the isolated coastal area where they may be the only reliable resource for earning the necessary cash to cover daily life expenditures and to secure the wellbeing of the household due to the lack of husband incomes. According to Gopal *et al.*, (2017), solidarity can increase awareness of re-investment, therefore it should be targeted both wife and husband to discuss budget allocations and equal roles in the family. Most of the Bugis families in Kupang City do it, while women from the Timor family actively work in every aspect like seaweed farming. They said that,

although we work as a farmer, we feel that we work like in an office due to solidarity. If we work hard is no problem because it can be solved by solidarity and togetherness with my couple (interview, 14 June 2021).

This solidarity increases the economy and culture, so Buginese in Kupang become an actor in economic development because they work in the early morning

and continue until sundown every day. Most of the business sectors are dominated by Buginese like mini-markets and traditional markets in Kupang city. It is managed by Bugis women, while the Bugis men work in other sectors. According to them, although the wife only manages a mini-market at home, their income is higher than the husband's.

However, there is some social problem that is resulted by work solidarity of wife and husband, like school children living at home without their parent's guidance. Increasing the income might require parents to stay in the office for a long time. Moreover, both women and men, as part of their domestic role of caring for children and family, find difficulties to go back home frequently because they have a responsibility in their office or other jobs.

#### **4. Division of Labor Between Women and Men in Bugis Families**

In Bugis families of gender division of labor, men tend to have a masculine advantage for tasks due to greater physical strength or brief bursts of excessive energy, and women's advantage for tasks does not require long absences in the household. It proposes that women tend to do tasks that are compatible with child care, do tasks that are not dangerous, and do not require distant travel. Division of labor is universal for all women and men. It is proved by the Bugis community in Kupang coastal area who have attempted to apply an ideology that views men and women as the partners in economic challenges, and they are successful to improve the economy in Kupang.

The occupations of men differ from the occupations of women, then sex is one basis of the division of labor.

This is not based entirely on immutable sociological facts of greater male endurance and strength. It is used as an analysis reform to understand the division of labor between women and men in coastal production and relations in the household. Their relationships are transferred to be short as the familial product which is brought to the familial consumers. They apply a sex division of labor approach to highlight the role, benefits, and risks of women and men in the coastal area. They utilize the gender division of labor approach to understand the constraints and to identify strategies to rise benefits and reduce the risks of men and women.

Women and men supply seaweed farming as a family business, and both of them work with a division of labor. The wife used the extra money for daily expenses, whereas the husband used their extra money for bigger investments, such as buying motorbikes and renovating houses. Seaweed farming is conducted together by family members, including the wife and husband. According to them, "our activities in seaweed farming included providing inputs (ropes and seedlings), cleaning the ropes, tying seedlings to ropes, attaching these to the main rope at sea, daily maintenance at sea, harvesting, collecting fallen seaweed, sun drying, untying seaweed, and selling it to traders" (interview, 12 July 2021).

During harvest and ropes times, ten people worked together attaching the seaweed including women and men collected fallen seaweed, untied the seaweed from the ropes, made them feel comfortable in dealing with the traders, contributed similar amounts of labor to most processes in seaweed production, worked in groups with their neighboring farmers, worked in groups during the tying and untying processes. Members of the groups were relatives and friends whose farm locations were close to

each other. It was considered family work, all members of a family, husband, wife, children, and other relatives. As a family-owned business, the man was considered as the head, and the woman was considered as supporting their husbands to conduct seaweed farming.

## 5. Gender Equity in the Bugis Families

Division of labor in Bugis families as the gender specialization and the ability in fishery multi-products such as *Abon Ikan Tuna*, *Stik Tulang Ikan Tuna*, *Nugget Ikan Tuna*, and *Keripik Ikan Tuna*. In these products, women are major participants, even leaders, but official statistics often fail to record them. Other data shows that men and women contribute similar amounts of labor to most processes such as the wife in production and the husband in fishing. In East Nusa Tenggara, the fishery has become one of the main commodities and many people in the coastal areas depend on it. The study shows that women and men are equitably involved due to wives in production and husbands in fishing.

This shows that there tends to be only one change in gender participation within a production sequence, with women's tasks near the beginning of sequences and men's tasks near the fishing of sequences. The sequence tasks for men are strong because they have to go fishing at night, while the sequence tasks for women are skillful because they produce multi-products. Both women and men work not only equally but also equity because fishing is dangerous for women, but men can do it, while fishery multi-products are not easy for Bugis men, but it is easy for Bugis women.

This follows the Bugis tradition that women's time on outside work, such as agriculture,

remains constant at about 4 1/2 hours per day, but their time spent on inside work increases from about 3 hours to about 6 hours per day. By contrast, men's inside work remains constant at about 1 hour per day, but their time spent on outside work, such as agriculture, increases from about 5 hours per day to almost 7 1/2 hours per day.

These work times are influenced by temperature. It has the opposite effect on the division of labor in coastal communities. According to the women in Kupang, they have low participation in fishing at night. It is also caused by the sexual division of labor because women tend to focus on physical strength. While men, with his superior physical strength, can better undertake strenuous tasks particularly fishing. Women are less able to do tasks requiring swimming in the sea at night, but nursing the children at home is easier than the demands of fishing at night. However, in other sectors, some women may be physically stronger than some men. It is unnecessary to invoke differences in physical strength, but according to the men in Kupang, we should save women from dangerous work.

This is supported by Burton who has a tendency for women not to work at great distances from home and a tendency for women to avoid doing dangerous tasks. Moreover, they gave five logical possibilities for gender equity in the division of labor across a production sequence: (1) all tasks in the sequence are done exclusively by men; (2) all tasks in the sequence are done exclusively by women; (3) all tasks in the sequence are shared equally by the two sexes; (4) the sequence is begun by men and completed by women, with an intermediate stage of equal participation by both sexes; (5) the sequence is begun by men and completed by women, without the intermediate stage of equal participation (Burton *et al.*, 1977).

### **C. Conclusion**

In Bugis families, wife and husband work representing social solidarity because there is no role play that the only wife should cook, clean, and wash, while several husbands stay at home for cooking, washing, and caring. This solidarity changes wives as the main income providers in the Bugis community. Wife and husband have acquired an education equally, and sometimes the wife is a higher income than the husband because she conducts household business. While the husbands only earn real incomes through fishing and controlling family finances. Gender division of labor approach to highlight the role, benefits, and risks of women and men in the coastal area. Women and men supply seaweed farming as a family business, and both of them work with a division of labor. The wife used the extra money for daily expenses, whereas the husband used the extra money for bigger investments. Both women and men work not only equally but also in equity because fishing is dangerous for women, but men can do it. While it is easy for women, fishery multi-products are difficult for Bugis men.

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