

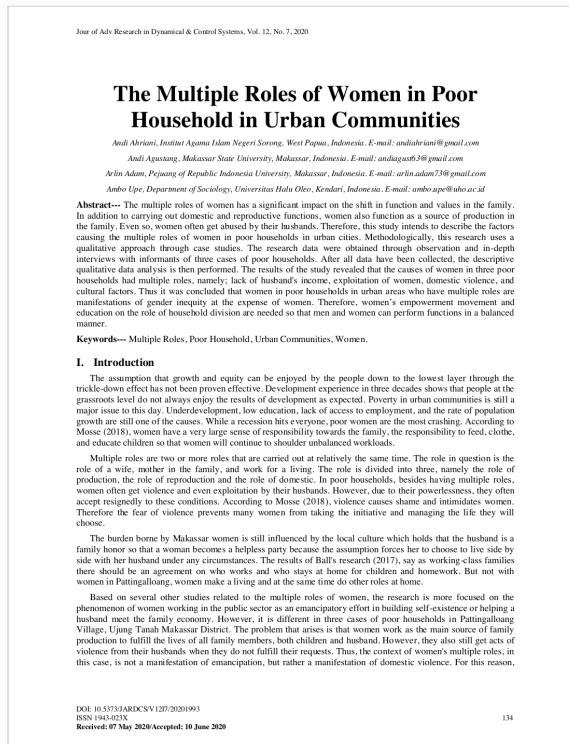


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# The Multiple Roles of Women in Poor Household in Urban Communities

*by Andi Agustang*

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## 2 The Multiple Roles of Women in Poor Household in Urban Communities

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**Abstract---** The multiple roles of women has a significant impact on the shift in function and values in the family. In addition to carrying out domestic and reproductive functions, women also function as a source of production in the family. Even so, women often get abused by their husbands. Therefore, this study intends to describe the factors causing the multiple roles of women in poor households in urban cities. Methodologically, this research uses a qualitative approach through case studies. The research data were obtained through observation and in-depth interviews with informants of three cases of poor households. After all data have been collected, the descriptive qualitative data analysis is then performed. The results of the study revealed that the causes of women in three poor households had multiple roles, namely; lack of husband's income, exploitation of women, domestic violence, and cultural factors. Thus it was concluded that women in poor households in urban areas who have multiple roles are manifestations of gender inequity at the expense of women. Therefore, women's empowerment movement and education on the role of household division are needed so that men and women can perform functions in a balanced manner.

**Keywords---** Multiple Roles, Poor Household, Urban Communities, Women.

### I. Introduction

The assumption that growth and equity can be enjoyed by the people down to the lowest layer through the trickle-down effect has not been proven effective. Development experience in three decades shows that people at the grassroots level do not always enjoy the results of development as expected. Poverty in urban communities is still a major issue to this day. Underdevelopment, low education, lack of access to employment, and the rate of population growth are still one of the causes. While a recession hits everyone, poor women are the most crashing. According to Mosse (2018), women have a very large sense of responsibility towards the family, the responsibility to feed, clothe, and educate children so that women will continue to shoulder unbalanced workloads.

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Multiple roles are two or more roles that are carried out at relatively the same time. The role in question is the role of a wife, mother in the family, and work for a living. The role is divided into three, namely the role of production, the role of reproduction and the role of domestic. In poor households, besides having multiple roles, women often get violence and even exploitation by their husbands. However, due to their powerlessness, they often accept resignedly to these conditions. According to Mosse (2018), violence causes shame and intimidates women. Therefore the fear of violence prevents many women from taking the initiative and managing the life they will choose.

The burden borne by Makassar women is still influenced by the local culture which holds that the husband is a family honor so that a woman becomes a helpless party because the assumption forces her to choose to live side by side with her husband under any circumstances. The results of Ball's research (2017), say as working-class families there should be an agreement on who works and who stays at home for children and homework. But not with women in Pattingalloang, women make a living and at the same time do other roles at home.

Based on several other studies related to the multiple roles of women, the research is more focused on the phenomenon of women working in the public sector as an emancipatory effort in building self-existence or helping a husband meet the family economy. However, it is different in three cases of poor households in Pattingalloang Village, Ujung Tanah Makassar District. The problem that arises is that women work as the main source of family production to fulfill the lives of all family members, both children and husband. However, they also still get acts of violence from their husbands when they do not fulfill their requests. Thus, the context of women's multiple roles, in this case, is not a manifestation of emancipation, but rather a manifestation of domestic violence. For this reason,

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this article will explain various factors causing the multiple roles of women in poor households in urban communities.

## II. Research Methods

The research method is a scientific method that consists of procedures or systematic steps in gathering knowledge to become a science (Agustang, 2011). This type of research is a qualitative descriptive (Creswell, 2009; Taylor et al., 2016) case study method. According to the operational procedure of this approach is starting from determining the research problem, collecting data, drafting, and analyzing the people or observed behavior. While the case study is one of the strategies and methods of qualitative data analysis that emphasizes specific cases (Yin, 2009). The research data were obtained through observation and in-depth interviews with key informants, namely women in poor households. After the data is collected then it is classified based on the concepts that have been determined and analyzed to see the involvement of these concepts and answer the factors that cause women in poor households to bear a double burden and often receive abuse from their husbands.

## III. Result and Discussion

The multiple roles of women is not always a manifestation of emancipation or equality, but on the other hand, it is also a form of violence and exploitation. The results of research on three cases of poor households in urban areas show that working in the public sector for women in Pattingalloang Sub-district, Ujung Tanah District, Makassar City is caused by violence. In more detail, some of the factors causing the multiple roles referred to are described as follows.

### 3.1 Lack of Husband's Income

Poverty conditions with various dimensions and their implications are a form of social problems that describe conditions of low welfare. Poor vulnerable groups, one of which is an urban society with very complex causes including low education, increasing population growth rates, high levels of competition in the world of work, and the existence of formal and informal sectors of work. Formal economic activities in urban areas are not able to absorb labor from an educational background, and low skills, resulting in workers who have low productivity can only work in the informal sector with very low wages. With low incomes, urban communities are increasingly slammed into life uncertainty, because in reality, their income is low but still must meet the needs of clothing, food, housing, and family education.

Poverty is not only understood as an economic inability but also a failure in fulfilling basic human rights and differences in treatment for a person or one party in living their life with dignity both in social life and household life. This is felt by some women who live in urban areas. The problem of poverty has worsened the situation of women, they are the most crashed due to this problem because they have a high sense of responsibility to meet the needs of families both food, clothing, and children's education.

Economic problems are the same reason for women who carry a double burden in the three cases in this study. They are forced to play a role to find money to support their families because their husbands do not work for long periods. So they are forced out of the house to find work. In the case of the first household working as a Cleaning Service at Losari Beach with a wage of IDR 2,200,000 per month. Shift work twice a day, morning and evening. This informant, using a narrow area in the yard to sell fried foods. From the sale of fried food, it was recognized that just to fulfill basic needs. Even her daughter who was still in school had to drop out of school and help her mother to sell around the towns.

The third informant also made money by selling daily necessities in the yard of a narrow alley, which added to the tightness of the slums. From his acknowledgment, the sales results are not much, because the condition of neighbors is almost the same economic level. Therefore, a little capital with little profit is only able to cover basic needs such as rice buyers and side dishes. For additional purposes such as the child's education and education, he often borrows moneylenders at high-interest rates. From the interview results, it is known that the lives of lower-class people are like a vicious circle that has no edge. When they have money, the money is used up only to pay interest on the debt to loan sharks.

Based on interviews with several informants, there were various reasons why their husbands did not meet household needs. Namely: First, the prestige factor. The second informant explained that initially her husband worked and was able to support the family even though it was not completed, but after interacting with her friends, she began to pick and choose. Second, low education and limited skills. One of the consequences of living in the

Metropolitan City is that company owners will look for workers with a competitive system because of the availability of a lot of workforce. Third, high laziness and fourth, comfort zone. They accept the conditions are mediocre and even tend to feel comfortable because there is a wife who helps and the creation of moral hazard and dependence where people are competing to claim to be poor when it comes help from the government.

Women today have taken an important role in meeting the economic needs of the household. Especially when men lose the opportunity to be involved in the world of work. The reason, according to is because in the competitive era such as the current labor market has been segmented based on education or expertise so that many urban workers are not accommodated. As is the case in this study site, many husbands become frustrated because they do not have a job or are eliminated from intense competition in the world of work so they are unable to fulfill their obligations in meeting the economic needs of the family.

### **3.2 Exploitation of Women**

The expansion of women's multiple roles from domestic roles, reproductive roles to public roles is an important sign of the development of women's social reality. However, the involvement of women in the public sector does not always make them more concerned or occupy a good position. Because women's involvement is often exploited by men and even victims of exploitation.

Exploitation means the exploitation of physical or sexual use, or the ability of a person by another party to gain material and non-material benefits. Exploitation comes from several sources, one of which is sourced from gender injustice. The exploitation of women is often accompanied by violence which is a form of male control over women who benefit. Mudgway (2017) explains that the exploitation of women often occurs to be used as a means of exchange to obtain money and food to survive. In line with this research, a husband only stays at home and uses his wife to make a living outside the home.

Interviews with informants in three cases revealed that their husbands forced to work to earn money. At first, they did not accept her husband's treatment like that, but there was no other choice because her husband only stayed at home and if they refused the husband's orders they were threatened with beating with children or even threatened with divorce. During the day their husbands sleep and at night get drunk. Therefore, with the makeshift skills possessed by the wives then forced to work to meet the needs of family life. In the occupational structure, women, in this case, cannot compete with men because they do not have sufficient skills, education, knowledge, and experience related to work in the public sector. Therefore, women as the main support of the household economy have no other choice but to be willing to work with a very low income for the survival of their family at home.

### **3.3 Domestic Violence**

Violence is a deviant behavior that can cause physical or psychological injury due to hurting others. Violence in the narrow sense implies an attack or act of physical abuse against someone or an attack to destroy feelings that are very hard, cruel, ferocious, and inhumane towards oneself or something that is potentially owned by someone. According to Fakhri (2008), the word violence is paired with the word violence is an attack or invasion of a person's physical and psychological mental integrity. From these two understandings, it is understood that the violence in question can occur in two forms, namely physical violence and psychological violence. Physical violence can result in victims becoming disabled or death and verbal violence resulting in prolonged trauma to the victim.

Generally in this study, it was found that women accept when they have to be a source of production in meeting family needs. Because they have a high sense of responsibility to see their children live a decent life especially being able to go to school. However, what is hard for them is when their husbands do not support them well. Their husbands do not help to use their energy to support their families, instead, they often resort to violence, in this case, the more frequent verbal abuse.

Correspondingly, the results of the study of Guedes (2016), imply that gender injustice is one of the factors causing the occurrence of acts of violence against women and children. While the form consists of physical, psychological, economic to sexual violence (Muhajarah, 2016). The results of this study found information that they always get threats to be divorced and beaten with children when they do not comply with the wishes of their husbands. Desires are like asking for money to be used to buy drugs and or used to buy alcoholic drinks. Their husbands also want to be free to do anything and do not want to hear the wife's judgment.

### **3.4 Cultural Factors**

Culture is the basis of human experience. Different cultural contexts and systems create different realities and experiences. According to Inman (2018), that culture is so binding a society. For example, women who are forced to play double roles become wives, housewives, and earn a living for the family as a result of the internalization of the

culture itself. This is in line with the opinion of Muhajarah (2016) that the development of culture is firmly rooted in customs which sometimes constrains a person's development. One of the causes of injustice against women is the concept of Makassar society which holds that a husband is a symbol of family honor. Makassar society considers that a wife left by her husband is a disgrace, even more so with the stereotype of status as a widow.

The cultural assumption mentioned above is a reason for Makassar women to become helpless and forced to be a source of the breadwinner in the family even though they still get violence from their husbands. This phenomenon is in line with the results of which says that the factors that trigger domestic violence occur are still influenced by patriarchal hegemony culture. From interviews with informants, information was obtained that they survived in such conditions to maintain their status as wives. According to them being a single parent or widow is a social burden that must be borne every day in social life and become a limitation in activities outside the home.

The results of the study show that women play multiple roles not always on the grounds of wanting to show their existence, not only as an effort to emancipate women to statistically increase the number of women working in the public sector. As in the study of Supartiningsih (2003), it is said that in reality statistical data throughout the world always show that women's participation rates in the labor market and politics are smaller than men, making women in a worse condition. The multiple roles here are also not to equalize with men, but the struggle of women to meet the needs of family life including their husbands so that they are forced to perform multiple roles. However, women often receive acts of violence from their husbands.

Research by Lomazzi et al (2018) says that multiple roles are a key indicator to support gender equality. Therefore, the multiple roles carried by women in this study is a concept of gender injustice, because the unequal distribution of roles has created heavier workloads for one party, namely women who work over ideal working hours. This excessive workload does not add to the welfare of his family, a low income keeps them in a poor situation and instead adversely affects health. This is in line with the results of Danilova & Kats (2019), that gender inequality harms the economy and health. Besides, the results of this study made it clear that the multiple roles also had an impact on creating a disharmony of the family, even children were also victims of violence that caused deep trauma, they also no longer continued school because of reasons of shame and have no money.

Poor households are an endless phenomenon in urban areas. In this case, women experience the mystery, namely as a member of the household being the target of suffering the most and bearing the heavy burden of poverty. According to Barnett & Baruch (1985), multiple roles raise three problems namely multi-burden, role conflict, and anxiety disorders. These three problems occur in the study site, where women have multiple burdens, such as being responsible for economic fulfillment, maintaining family health, and children's education. Role conflict arises due to the conflict between the roles of a mother who wants to care for children at home with the fulfillment of the welfare of her children. While anxiety arises because they have to leave their children at home who are still under five years old.

#### IV. Conclusion

The role is a logical consequence for a human being to behave and act in certain situations based on the social status and functions they carry. The results of this study found that women in poor households assume multiple roles influenced by several factors, namely, lack of husband's income, *exploitation of women*, domestic violence, and finally cultural factors. Therefore, to reduce cases of injustice against women in the household, empowerment activities are needed that provide gender education related to the division of roles in the household. So that both the wife and husband are aware of their respective roles, including meeting the economic needs of the family.

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