



Provision in Muslim Families: Dogma, Role Shifts, and Realities in Bali and Banten

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Abstract: This study aims to analyse the dogmas received by wives in Bali and Banten regarding their obligation to provide for their families. It also explores the shifting roles in the fulfilment of these obligations. Employing a qualitative research method with an empirical juridical approach, also known as a sociological approach, data were collected through observations, interviews, document analysis, and literature reviews. The data collected were analysed using Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA). The findings reveal differences in the dogmas received by wives in Bali and Banten. Women in Bali perceive the responsibility of earning a living as a shared duty between husbands and wives. In contrast, women in Banten view it as an absolute obligation of the husband; if the wife works, her role is merely to support the husband in meeting the family's needs. The role shift in providing for the family occurs due to various factors, including economic needs, the wife's skills being more relevant, the husband's illness, prolonged absence without notice, death, and old age. Women in both Bali and Banten often assume the role of breadwinners for several reasons, such as the higher availability of job opportunities for women, economic challenges, higher educational attainment of wives, greater demand for women in the labor market, pre-marriage employment contracts, and inherited customs. This study offers insights into the interplay between traditional dogmas, economic realities, and shifting gender roles in Muslim families, contributing to discussions of gender dynamics and economic adaptation in Indonesia.

Keywords: *Bali, Banten; Dogma; Gender Roles; Muslim Families; Role Shifts*

Introduction

A family is the smallest unit in the social structure and serves as the first educational institution for children. As the oldest, informal, and inherent institution, the family plays a central role in shaping a child's character. Parents are responsible for nurturing, caring for, protecting, and educating their children to ensure proper growth and development (Adi, 2022). A family is formed through the bond of marriage between a man and a woman. In the conventional family concept, the husband assumes the role of the breadwinner, and the wife manages household affairs. However, as opportunities for married women to work have expanded, traditional family patterns have begun to shift, giving rise to dual-career families (Tanjung, 2024). Amid these changes, traditional societal values exert social pressure.

The relationship between husband and wife also entails mutual obligations and responsibilities. As the head of the family, the husband is responsible for providing the family's basic needs, including clothing, food and shelter. From a *fiqh* perspective, the husband's obligation to provide sustenance for his wife is based on the principle of property separation between the two (Nelli, 2017). The income earned by the husband entirely belongs to him but also forms the foundation of his responsibilities as a provider. Conversely, the wife, who is not obligated to earn a living, holds the right to fulfil her husband's needs (Kamal et al., 2019).

In general, sustenance (*nafkah*) is defined as expenditure, referring to what a person gives to his wife or relatives to meet their basic needs, such as food, clothing, and housing. Specifically, *nafkah* encompasses three primary aspects: food, clothing, and shelter (Chairina 2021). In Islam, *nafkah* is divided into two types: material and emotional support. Material sustenance refers to the husband's financial support of the household. Emotional sustenance involves non-material provisions from the husband to the wife, including fulfilling biological and sexual needs, affection, and other emotional aspects.

With technological advancements and shifting paradigms in social civilisation, modern society's perspective on women's rights and responsibilities in pursuing careers and earning an income has evolved. Modern life imposes no restrictions on women's participation in various sectors and aspects of life (Yanggo, 2010). This shift has led to a new reality in which more wives assume the role of breadwinners (Munib & Huda, 2023).

A wife earning an income is an adult woman engaging in specific work based on her skills and aiming to progress in her life, career, or position (Meisenbach, 2010). This role can be fulfilled both within and outside the home, driven by the motivation to advance their careers and social status (Chesley 2017). In Islam, a wife working to earn a living is not prohibited, provided that the work aligns with the principles of Sharia. Islam permits women to work, seek knowledge, and teach, provided they continue to fulfil their roles and responsibilities within the household.

Over time, the role of a wife is no longer confined to being a companion to her husband or caregiver to her children. Today, many wives actively participate in social and community life (Putri & Gutama, 2018). In the past, wives relied entirely on their husbands for sustenance, but now, many contribute to meeting their family's needs, and some even earn more than their husbands. This shift is attributed to the expanding work opportunities available to women, with certain professions being exclusively designated for them (Sofian 2014).

However, the phenomenon of wives becoming the primary breadwinners while their husbands remain at home and handle household duties contradicts the principles outlined in the Qur'an. As stated in Q.S. Al-Baqarah [2]: 233 and Q.S. An-Nisa' [4]: 34, the responsibility to provide sustenance is primarily a husband's obligation, whereas the wife's primary role is to manage the household and nurture the children (Raley et al., 2012). Islam grants dignity and honour to women through their natural roles, aiming to empower them to pursue growth wisely in various fields (Ahmed 2021).

In Indonesia, husbands' obligation to provide for their families is regulated by Law Number 1 of 1974, Article 34, Paragraph (1), and the Compilation of Islamic Law, Article 80, Paragraph (2). Husbands must meet household needs according to their capabilities, whereas wives are tasked with managing domestic affairs (Agi & Dwiprigitaningtias, 2020; Aulia 2009). However, many husbands neglect this obligation in practice, forcing wives to work to meet family needs, including children's education (Land, 2020).

In the modern era, it has become increasingly common for wives to work to support their families financially. Although the Marriage Law clearly states that providing financial support is the husband's responsibility, societal perspectives on women's roles and positions have shifted significantly over time (Revilya, 2018). Today, many women pursue careers or earn income in various sectors, including government institutions, private companies, factories, trade, agriculture, and even the military and police. This trend highlights the growing opportunities for women to contribute to their families' economies.

This social reality reflects a shift in the traditional roles of husbands and wives in the family. A study in Bali revealed that many women have become the primary breadwinners,

while their husbands stay at home to manage household needs. This phenomenon has become normalised in the local community and is now part of the cultural fabric, resulting in wives assuming more dominant roles in family life than their husbands. Oláh et al. (2018) observed a growing trend of role reversals, where wives increasingly dominate the provision of family needs.

A similar phenomenon was observed in Banten, particularly in the Pontang District and Serang Regency. Due to economic hardships, many women work abroad as migrant workers (TKW) in countries such as Taiwan, Japan, South Korea, Saudi Arabia, Singapore, Malaysia, Hong Kong, and Brunei Darussalam. They leave their families behind to fulfil their financial obligations. In addition to overseas employment, women in this region earn a living as agricultural labourers, harvest porters, and in other roles.

However, the role of women as primary breadwinners in Banten differs from that in Bali. This tradition is deeply ingrained in the local culture. Conversely, in Banten, this phenomenon is temporary. Women typically work as migrant labourers for 5–10 years before returning home to resume their traditional roles as wives and mothers. Despite its temporary nature, this situation affects household dynamics, mainly due to the separation of time and distance, which hinders the fulfilment of marital rights and responsibilities while working abroad.

Literature Review

This study examines gender roles within families, focusing on role shifts between husbands and wives in the context of Muslim families in Bali and Banten. One relevant theory is *gender partnership*, which emphasizes equality between men and women in various aspects of life (Kuzmenko, 2019). The concept of gender partnership encourages a fair distribution of responsibilities, both in domestic matters and family decision-making. In the context of Muslim families, Khaidir and Turnip (2023) highlight the importance of cooperation between husbands and wives in financial management, childrearing, and domestic responsibilities. Understanding gender roles within the family should go beyond traditional norms and evolve towards equality in family economic responsibilities.

The *social role theory* proposed by Eagly (1987) provides an essential perspective for explaining the division of gender roles that are still tightly bound to social norms in many societies, including Bali and Banten, where the husband's role as the primary breadwinner and the wife as the homemaker has shaped stereotypical views on how each gender "should" behave. This theory explains that the division of gender roles is not solely based on biology but also on social learning, which shapes the societal expectations of men and women. However, social and economic developments have driven role shifts, particularly with the increasing number of women working outside the home in the formal and informal sectors, such as domestic work or as migrant workers. This is also reflected in role changes in several regions in Indonesia, such as Bali and Banten, where many women have become the primary breadwinners in their families.

This role shift often conflicts with society's prevailing dogma. According to *gender schema theory* (Bem, 1981), individuals develop "schemas" about what it means to be "male" or "female" from a young age, which influences how they process information, make decisions, and behave throughout their lives. This relates to how gender partnerships, which call for equality, require a change in the understanding of existing gender schemas, where no gender is assumed to be more dominant or entitled than the other. Thus, achieving gender partnerships requires awareness and a shift in how people understand and categorise their gender roles.

In Islam, gender roles within the family are viewed as complementary relationships between men and women. Islam teaches that both men and women are equal partners with complementary roles in the family to create harmony and balance (Putra, 2014). In the Qur'an, as in QS. Al-Hujurat:13 and QS. An-Nisa':124 states that in terms of piety, both men and women have equal opportunities to achieve a high status before Allah. However, in many Muslim societies, the husband's role as the head of the family is often the dominant understanding, even though this does not undermine the critical role of the wife as an equal partner in the marriage.

Social and economic factors also influenced role shifts in Bali and Banten. In Bali, the phenomenon of women as primary breadwinners has become part of the local culture, while in Banten. However, many women work abroad as migrant workers (TKW), and this role is temporary. This phenomenon reflects how gender roles can change according to economic needs and social circumstances. It is also related to the *sex-related comparison theory* (Koerte et al., 2020), which emphasises the importance of situational context in influencing gender-based behaviours. In challenging economic situations, women in Banten, as in many other regions, assume the role of primary breadwinners to support their families.

Methods

This research was conducted with the belief that the research object would be analysed to identify the causes and effects of the phenomena under investigation (Saleh 2017). With an appropriate method, researchers can achieve the desired outcomes. Research methods serve as the foundation for the discovery process in the discipline being developed. Therefore, researchers must carefully select and determine the appropriate methods to achieve their research objectives.

This study employs field research, which involves collecting data directly from sources in the field. Kasiram (2010) explained that field research is necessary to obtain a more comprehensive understanding of local conditions and contexts. This study also falls under the category of social law research, focusing on social interactions within society. The approach used is an empirical juridical approach, commonly referred to as a sociological approach. This approach examines the legal aspects of social interactions and serves as a tool to identify and clarify non-legal findings needed for research or legal writing (Banakar & Travers, 2005).

This study focuses on the analysis of family livelihoods. Data were collected through several techniques, including field observations, interviews, and a literature review of relevant sources. The data collected were analysed using a descriptive qualitative analysis method based on the relevant literature. The data analysis process employed Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA), which consists of several stages (Smith et al. 2021). First, the researcher reads and re-read the data to gain a deeper understanding. This was followed by initial noting to record the significant findings. Subsequently, the researcher developed emergent themes and moved on to the next case. Finally, the process involved searching for connections across the emergent themes and looking for patterns across the cases. The validity of the data was tested using various measures, including credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability tests.

Results and Discussion

Diverse Perspectives on Family Provision Obligations

This study highlights the differing perspectives of women in Bali and Banten regarding the responsibility for family provision, revealing a fascinating interplay between cultural norms

and religious doctrine. In Bali, women perceive earning a living as a shared responsibility between husbands and wives, reflecting a societal emphasis on mutual contribution and partnership in meeting family needs. This perspective may be influenced by Bali's unique sociocultural context, where women often play prominent roles in the economic sphere.

Conversely, women in Banten primarily view it as the husband's obligation, aligning more closely with traditional interpretations of Islamic teachings on spousal responsibilities. In this view, the wife's role, if she engages in work outside the home, is often seen as supplementary, intended to assist the husband in fulfilling the family's needs rather than replacing his primary responsibility. This distinction underscores the diverse ways Muslim women interpret and navigate their roles within different cultural settings in Indonesia.

This disparity aligns with broader Islamic teachings, which place the primary responsibility for providing for the family on the husband. A husband is accountable and bears sin if he neglects his responsibilities, such as failing to provide for his wife. This responsibility (*nafkah*) includes providing for the family's basic needs, such as food, clothing, and shelter. It is considered reprehensible if a husband does not support his wife due to laziness and merely relies on her income, highlighting the ethical dimension of this obligation.

However, the tradition also acknowledges that families may face economic challenges, and if a husband faces difficulties that hinder his ability to provide, his wife has the option to remain patient and support him through those challenges or, as a last resort, pursue a divorce. Divorce can be pursued if there are valid reasons according to Islamic teachings, such as the husband's inability to provide for the family, a condition that must be evident and justified, ensuring that this option is exercised responsibly and carefully considered.

Islam mandates that the husband provide for his wife's basic needs, including not only material necessities such as food, clothing, and shelter, but also additional support such as household assistance and medication, depending on his financial capacity (Rahman, 2024). The level of support provided needs to be explicitly defined and adjusted according to the husband's ability (Khairuddin et al., 2020), recognizing that financial circumstances can vary, and that the husband's obligation is relative to his means

Factors and Dynamics of Shifting Breadwinner Roles

Several factors contribute to the shift in women's assumption of primary breadwinner roles. These include economic needs, the wife's skills being more in demand, the husband's inability to work due to various reasons (illness, absence, death, or old age), and other societal changes. In Bali and Banten, this shift often occurs when husbands are unwilling to work or reluctant to take on physically demanding jobs, such as farming or labour.

Wives who become the family's primary providers sometimes find themselves in situations where their husbands spend more time socialising, playing online games, or offering only occasional help with the household chores. Despite this, many wives willingly take on this role to maintain family harmony and ensure their children's future, often viewing their financial support as a form of charity for which they hope to be rewarded.

From an Islamic sociological perspective, this role shift stems from social changes in the community. Initially, wives working as primary earners were seen as taboo, but over time, this has become more normalised due to the increasing cost of living, education expenses, and other essential needs of families. From an Islamic legal perspective, it is permissible for wives to work to assist or replace their husbands in fulfilling the family's needs, a practice that does not contradict the Qur'an, Hadith, or Compilation of Islamic Law applicable in Indonesia. Islam also encourages the resolution of family disputes through consultation and consensus,

emphasising good intentions, fairness, and wisdom for amicable conflict resolution. Social reality indicates that women's roles as primary breadwinners are influenced by various factors, including local customs. These customs are acceptable if they do not contradict Islamic principles. However, if wives assume the breadwinner role due to their husbands' negligence, such customs are considered inconsistent with religious, national, and social norms.

Based on the study findings, Islam does not restrict women from working. However, Islamic teachings present an alternative in which women focus on household duties and childcare, with husbands as the primary breadwinners. Factors that lead wives to become the family's primary earners include higher education levels compared to their husbands, husbands' inability to work, husbands' unwillingness to seek employment, regional conditions favouring women's employment, traditions and cultural practices, and household agreements (Supriyadi, 2016; Ginting, 2018).

This role shift can be categorised into two primary scenarios: husbands continuing to work but earning insufficient income, with wives filling the financial gap (Evans, 2016), and husbands being unemployed, with a minority of them assuming household responsibilities (Wheelock, 2024). In Bali, this phenomenon is more pronounced in specific communities, whereas in Banten, it is more individualistic and localised.

Sociological and Legal Perspectives on Women as Breadwinners

From a sociological perspective, this transformation can be analysed using the social construction theory of Peter L. Berger and Thomas Luckmann (Dreher, 2016; Berger & Luckmann, 2023). This theory posits that social conditions are human constructs developed through a dialectical process involving externalisation, objectivation, and internalisation (Berger & Luckmann, 2023). Externalisation occurs when wives adapt to societal views that consider working wives' taboo (Berger & Luckmann, 2023). The subsequent objectivity stage is characterised by wives' perceptions of their roles as being an integral part of evolving cultural values rather than merely economic endeavours. Finally, the internalisation phase is marked by wives' self-identification as primary earners, often as a result of perceiving their husbands as irresponsible or incapable.

From a self-concept perspective, wives acting as primary earners interpret their roles through internal and external dimensions (Anggiarani et al., 2021). The internal dimension includes self-identity, behaviour, and self-assessment; the external dimension encompasses social activities, values, and environmental influences. These wives shape their self-conceptions based on their experiences within their families and communities, driving them to sustain their roles as primary breadwinners, even when it contradicts societal expectations. This phenomenon arises not only from economic demands but also from the shifting social paradigms in modern society. Historically, wives tended to adopt traditional roles as homemakers, but contemporary conditions compel them to take on dual roles as homemakers and breadwinners, a shift that, according to social construction theory, evolves due to economic needs and changing social constructs.

From the perspective of Islamic law, wives are permitted to work under specific conditions (Welchman 2004). The chosen job must align with Islamic teachings, not neglect primary household duties, be approved by the husband, and be performed while adhering to Islamic etiquette. If work benefits the family and society without violating religious principles, it is permissible and even meritorious to do so.

Ultimately, the realities in the field demonstrate that wives working as primary earners in the Muslim communities of Kepaon, Bali, and Pontang, Banten, reflect a complex social phenomenon. Islam allows women to work, if it does not conflict with religious obligations

and their roles as homemakers, a choice often driven by economic conditions and family responsibilities, illustrating the evolving social dynamics within society.

Conclusions

The perception of women in Bali is that the attainment of a livelihood is a shared responsibility between spouses, whereas in contrast, women in Banten hold a distinct perspective regarding this matter, perceiving it as the exclusive responsibility of the husband, with the wife's involvement limited to circumstances of necessity. The transition of women from primary to secondary breadwinners is influenced by various factors, including economic necessity, the wife's employment prospects, and the husband's health, absence, or advanced age. The analysis of these two regions reveals that women often become the primary breadwinners due to employment opportunities, higher education levels among wives, pre-marriage employment obligations, and the influence of cultural traditions passed down through generations.

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