Abstract

"HELPING the HUSBAND, MAINTAINING HARMONY"
The share of Indonesian women in family decision making

Sri Moertiningsih Adioetomo
Demographic Institute Faculty of Economics
University of Indonesia
toening@indo.net.id

The perceived role of women in the family is to be a good wife, mother, housekeeper, manager of family resources and household activities. Men are to provide financial support. But in many occasions, especially under poverty condition, women are compelled to work outside the house for additional family income. Women see this as helping the husband, even though many women are the sole breadwinner of the family. However, work outside the house does not reduce the expected role of women. Women carry double burden of taking care of the family matters and family income. Further, due to culture and religious believe, women are also expected to maintain harmony, related to husband-wife relationship. In conflict situation, it is the women who should give in and follow husband's wishes and need.

This kind of belief/principle is a potential for domestic violence. This paper aims at presenting quantitative and qualitative findings on husband-wife's relationship, women's household autonomy, perception about domestic violence and refusal to have sex with husband. Data are derived from author's research finding in 1996 and the recent 2002/3 Indonesia Demographic and Health Survey. The paper also provide ways to protect women through the provision of NGO services, integrated medical centers, police women's desk, and the Law on Anti-Domestic Violence number 23 of 2004.
FAMILY SCHOLARS COLLOQUIUM

"PROTECTING AND STRENGTHENING THE FAMILY: CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES"

DAY TWO: PLENARY SESSION 3

PAPER 8

HELPING THE HUSBAND, MAINTAINING HARMONY: THE SHARE OF INDONESIAN WOMEN IN FAMILY DECISION MAKING

BY

PROF. DR. SRI MOERTININGSIH ADIOETOMO

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*Share of Indonesian women in family decision-making*

Sri Moerdiningrih Adiostomo
Demographic Institute, Faculty of Economics University of Indonesia, Jakarta

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The role of Indonesian Women

- The perceived role of women in the family
  - Wife
  - Mother
  - Housekeeper
  - Manager of family resources and activities
- Men provide financial support
- What is the relationship between husband and wife in terms of decision making in the family?
Work does not reduce the expected role of women

- Husbands and relatives may not oppose wife working outside the house, but do not want to accept the risk of such activity
- Wives are still responsible for looking after children, taking care of husband, housekeeping, managing the house etc.
- But wives are given high autonomy on decision making in the household
- Wives is in charge of family survival

Maintaining Harmony

- Subordination to men does not change
- Wife obliged to be obedient to husband
- Wife had to maintain good relationship with husband
- In conflict with husband, wife is the one to give in and to follow husbands’ needs and wishes.
- Potentials for domestic violence
Women have high control over the use of women's earnings

High % of women decide women's earnings used to meet ALL or portions of HH expenditures
Why 57% of low educated women and only 27% completed secondary school paid ALL HH expenditure with their earnings?

Contradictory findings

Tolerating domestic violence?
Summary of the 2002/3 IDHS findings

- Women have high control over their own earnings
- Women decide how much of their earnings are used to pay for household expenditure
- Higher percentage of no education and primary school women paid ALL of the HH expenditure
- An indication of family survival
Domestic Violence

Findings from literature study in Indonesia

A tip of an iceberg

- Domestic violence is difficult to quantify
- Victims are reluctant to report
- Reporting procedure are not widely known and in many places are not standardized
Current services available

- Women’s help desk in police office since May 2001
- Crisis centers in Hospitals in Jakarta and Yogyakarta and 30 cities in Indonesia
- Shelter for survivors by Rifka Anissa and Sikap (NGOs)
- Legal assistants provided by LBH APIK, a women NGO
- And more.....

Law on the Elimination of Domestic Violence, no 23 of 2004

- Purpose:
  - To prevent domestic violence
  - To protect the victims
  - To criminalize the doer (pelaku)
  - To maintain harmony and welfare in the family.
Need wider dissemination and advocacy

To women and men
To executive and legislatives
To community members
To religious and community leaders

To change the concept of helping husband, maintaining harmony, to:
Helping the partner,
(wife or husband)
Which is perceived and realized,
equal and just,
to maintain harmony in the family