# Role of Bajo Women in Wakatobi Island

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#### Role of Bajo Women in Wakatobi Island

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Abstract: This paper investigates the unique side of Bajo women at Pulau Pandai Besi in Wakatobi. Bajo women are able to take over their husband's role. Bajo fishermen's households present different conditions from the common fishermen community in which the man and woman can share roles in the family. Although naturally, men and women are created differently which leads to the role difference, the local wisdom of Bajo indicates that women are very dominant in their households. The husband only works in the sea to earn a fortune. Meanwhile, Bajo women, in addition to taking domestic roles such as cooking, taking care of children and cleaning the house, are also in control of the development and survival of their families when their husbands go sailing in the sea. This research is qualitative research. This research was conducted in Peka Besi region of Wakatobi in 2017. The data of this research were collected through observation and interview. The study reveals that women are the leaders and managers of their households. Regarding economic needs, Bajo women process and market the fish caught by their husbands, open a small shop of basic necessities, and sell a variety of traditional food.

#### 1. Introduction

In many ways, every culture has a different conception and outlook towards women. There is a culture that positions a woman with a very respectable. Women seat in a special position. However, there is also a culture that makes women meaningless, like slaves, and does not have any bargaining power in social life. Besides, in the division of labour, people still use gender as a criterion in determining the type of work that is considered appropriate for men and women.

Sanderson (2001) suggests that all humans use gender as a major criterion in the social division of labour [1]. Meanwhile, people usually have a suitable role for both genders, and they also describe the specific roles either only for men or women. The fact is supported because men are considered more powerful regarding a woman's physical appearance, which in reality is weaker than men.

Gender roles always exist in the community from the beginning until now, often called the concept of patriarchy. Therefore, the gender roles are biased and unbalanced. As a result, unbalance roles often lead to injustice and discriminatory according to women, as well as when taking part in workforce, women often get more work in the factory or the office, with low wages. After that, they have to do their household tasks like as cooking, washing, and caring for children [2].

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Patriarchal society is a society that has a referral system based on the agreement of men. In the patriarchal system, the conditions are very marginal. It makes the women do all the domestic works. The exclusion of women in a patriarchal society in terms of the pattern of the division of labour between men and women is manifested very clearly, where more men dominate the public sector, women are placed in the domestic sector.

In a patriarchal society, the labour division does not show a balance pattern. In work, men are more valued than women's work. Women's works tend to receive very little appreciation. This is due to the social construction based on body/physical of women and men. Thus, the women will be intimidated by the patriarchal system, while men control the work of the public sector even more. This condition leads to the patriarchal culture. This patriarchal culture will remain alive and well preserved in the lives of gender-based society. With these conditions, it will display a rule that insists women to be a nurse and guardian based on men' thoughts, so women are often called living creatures, who are in second phase of life. Under these circumstances, the position and status of women are increasingly cornered and marginalized in life.

In addition to the marginalized position, second-class status given by the patriarchal culture also affects the performance and the presence of women in a patriarchal society. Thus, the women's works are considered insufficient to be classified as high quality work. The emergence of the notion that the quality of women's work is not caused by the values in the patriarchal society that considers women cannot work. Women can only receive and enjoy the results of the work carried out by men. It is born of a patriarchal culture that positions men as the leader and breadwinner for women. Thus, the position of women is only considered as a nurse and guardian who merely serve the interests of workers.

There are several reasons why many people discredit the women's works. These are: (1) physical body of men and women in which the women are considered weak while men is physically strong; (2) the women's characters are sentimental, gentle, and like tidying up and managing things. Many people in this patriarchal system really believe these factors. As a result, the women will only do light work, such as serving and taking care of fewer works. Nonetheless, serve and care are the evidence of women's existence in domestic life.

In addition, serving and caring work in the domestic sector led to an idea that fits the women appropriate work that is in a mattress, a well, and a kitchen. With the existence of these images, born unequal division of labour in the concept of gender equality will only be a dream of a gender-sensitive society. Unequal division of labour between men and women in the domestic and public sector will bear a double workload for women. However, such expenses are considered as a supporting role in the man's work, not as a woman who can work in spite of all the myths and gender bias. Likewise, the domestic roles of men and women in Wakatobi Bajo are separated.

#### 2. Research Methods

This research is qualitative research. This research was conducted in Peka Besi region of Wakatobi in 2017. The data of this research are collected through observation and interview.

#### 3. Findings and Discussion

There are several theories on the division of labour are:

Naturalistic theory assumes that the role differences between men and women are natural. The difference of women and men anatomy is a major factor to determine their social roles. Men have a major role in society because they are considered more powerful, potential, and productive. Because women have reproductive organs, their movement is limited. These differences lead to the separation of functions and responsibilities between men and women, where men play a role in the public sphere, and women in the domestic field [3]; [4].

Nurture theory considers the differences in gender relations between men and women are not determined by biological factors but by the construction community. In other words, that the social role is considered raw and understood as a religious doctrine, in fact not the fate from God, and also as a product of biological determination but as a product of social construction. Therefore, understanding one of the gender values caused by natural factor is prevalent in the society [4].

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According to Budiman, the labour division based on gender (sex) is the work division based on the biological and socio-cultural differences, where women are gentle, dependent, emotional, and cannot work hard, while men are leader, independent, secure, and rational. Therefore, men and women have their respective roles [5]. It will be entrenched in the community and is considered as something natural. According to Skolnick (1974) the labour division based on gender leads to the psychological differences caused by biological and socio-cultural to assign the role of men and women [6]. Nevertheless, Budiman explains some things related to the labour division based on gender as follows [5]:

- The factors are based on the socio-economic needs of the community. This requirement is based on the real needs of the community system.
- 2) The factors which are based on a psycho-cultural system with social institutions that dissemination and breeding system of labour division. The system is based on the gender labour division which becomes patriarchal system. This system is not solely about abstract belief system, but is supported by social institutions.

According to Saptari, gender refers to the circumstances in which individuals are born biologically as men and women acquiring the social characterization as men and women through the attributes of masculinity and feminists which are often supported by values or symbol systems of society [7]. Fakih states that gender is an inherent nature of men and women who constitute the social category or characterization (femininity and masculinity) that is socially and culturally reflected in behaviour, personality, attitudes, beliefs, appearance, work, sexuality, family responsibilities, and others [8].

The dichotomy is not based on biological, but rather on socio-cultural relations of men and women who are affected by the values of society or system of symbols and structures of the community. The hallmark of the fungible nature can change over time, differ from place to place, and even vary from class to class based on the gender concept. For example, it is known that a woman is beautiful, emotional or motherhood while a man is considered reliable, rational, manly, and brave and others. Fakih presents five forms of injustice, as follows [8]:

#### 1) Stereotype

The stereotype refers to the labeling of one gender is negative which leads to inappropriate judgment. In a society, many stereotypes attached to women which affect the women negatively. For example, because women are considered friendly, gentle, neat, it is more appropriate to work as a secretary, a teacher of kindergarten and many other stereotypes in society.

#### 2) Subordinate

Subordination is the notion that one gender is considered inferior or subordinated position compared to the other sex. For example, a woman takes care of domestic work because she is considered as "home" or "friend to return".

#### 3) Exclusion (marginalization)

Marginalization is the condition or process of marginalization of one sex about the current/main job which resulted in poverty. For example, a technological development led to what was previously done manually by women taken over by the machine operated by men.

#### 4) Double load (Double burden)

Double Burden is the treatment of one gender where you were working far more than the other sex. As it happens in the society that women are managing households, many women bear the burden of domestic work more and longer.

#### 5) Violence

Violence often happens toward the specific genders. Generally, women are abused because of gender generally women because of gender differences. The violence includes rape, beatings, harassment and creating dependency.

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Finally, this study indicates that the women are the leaders and managers of their households. Regarding economic needs, Bajo women process and market fish catches of their husbands, open a small shop to sell basic necessities, and sell a variety of traditional food.

#### 4. Conclusion

Naturally, men and women are created differently. This difference leads to the role differences in many ethnicities, inlcluding Bajo ethnic in Wakatobi. A husband as the leader of the household, protector and educator families cannot contribute fully because they need to go for work to earn living. Therefore, Bajo's women in Wakatobi, in addition to doing household jobs like cooking, taking care of children and cleaning the house, are in charge of domestic role with regard to the development of family life after the death of her husband at sea. The role of women in Wakatobi Bajo appears to be very dominant in that women are leader and housekeeper. Regarding economic needs, women Bajo process and sell the fish caught by their husband, open a small shop, and sell a variety of traditional food.

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