

*Gender Dynamics in Muslim Families with Wives as the  
Main Breadwinner  
(A Study in Benda Village Sirampog Subdistrict Brebes  
Regency)*

**Dinamika Gender dalam Keluarga Muslim dengan Istri  
sebagai Pencari Nafkah Utama  
(Studi Di Desa Benda Kecamatan Sirampog Kabupaten  
Brebes)**

Akso Yanto

STAI Al-Hikmah II Brebes

[aksoyanto@gmail.com](mailto:aksoyanto@gmail.com)

Misbahul Huda, M.H.

Universitas PTIQ Jakarta

[misbahhhuda91@gmail.com](mailto:misbahhhuda91@gmail.com)

**Abstract**

This study analyses the role of wives as the main breadwinners in families in Benda Village, Sirampog Subdistrict, Brebes Regency, using a gender perspective. This phenomenon has emerged due to economic factors, whereby husbands' incomes are no longer sufficient to meet family needs. Using a qualitative approach and case studies in Benda Village, this study examines how this role is played and analyses it through gender theory, specifically Sara Longwe's analytical model. The results show that although the role of wives as primary breadwinners has significantly improved the family's welfare and access to resources, this does not necessarily go hand in hand with increased participation, awareness, and equal control. This new role is based more on internal family agreements to meet economic needs than on the full adoption of gender equality values. These findings confirm that changes in economic roles are not always followed by changes in power structures and decision-making within the household.

**Keywords:** *Gender Analysis, Wife, Breadwinner, Sara Longwe, Double Burden.*

### Abstrak

Penelitian ini menganalisis peran istri sebagai pencari nafkah utama dalam keluarga di Desa Benda, Kecamatan Sirampog, Kabupaten Brebes, dengan menggunakan perspektif gender. Fenomena ini muncul karena faktor ekonomi, di mana penghasilan suami tidak lagi cukup untuk memenuhi kebutuhan keluarga. Menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif dan studi kasus di Desa Benda, penelitian ini mengkaji bagaimana peran tersebut dimainkan dan menganalisisnya melalui teori gender, khususnya model analisis Longwe. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa meskipun peran istri sebagai pencari nafkah utama telah memberikan peningkatan signifikan pada tingkat kesejahteraan dan akses keluarga terhadap sumber daya, hal ini tidak serta-merta sejalan dengan peningkatan partisipasi, kesadaran, dan kontrol yang setara. Peran baru ini lebih didasarkan pada kesepakatan internal keluarga untuk memenuhi kebutuhan ekonomi daripada adopsi penuh atas nilai kesetaraan gender. Temuan ini menegaskan bahwa perubahan peran ekonomi tidak selalu diikuti oleh perubahan pada struktur kekuasaan dan pengambilan keputusan di dalam rumah tangga.

**Kata Kunci:** *Analisis Gender, Istri, Pencari Nafkah, Sara Longwe, Beban Ganda.*

### Introduction

The primary responsibility of a husband is to provide for his wife's daily needs. However, the husband's limitations in meeting household needs encourage wives to seek income, often becoming the main breadwinner of the family.<sup>1</sup> In addition to increasing economic demands and needs, many women or wives are actively involved in providing for the family due to various factors, including evolving gender issues. Gender equality has become a crucial aspect of modern

---

<sup>1</sup> Risbiyantoro, et al., "Peran Istri Sebagai Pencari Nafkah Utama Dalam Perspektif *Maqashid Al-Syari'ah* (Studi Kasus Di Cinere Depok)," *Journal Shariah And Humanities*, Vol. 2 No. 2, (2023), p. 201.

family dynamics, where the roles of husbands and wives in supporting the family have become more flexible and balanced.<sup>2</sup>

Public opinion regarding the role of wives as breadwinners varies between traditional and modern societies. Traditional societies tend to adhere to the view that husbands should be the primary breadwinners. Meanwhile, modern societies are more accepting of the concept of gender equality, whereby husbands and wives can share responsibility for earning a living and managing the household.<sup>3</sup>

In reality, there are several families where the wife is the breadwinner. This is the case in Benda Village, located in Sirampog Subdistrict, Brebes Regency, Central Java. The involvement of wives as breadwinners in helping to meet economic needs is evident in this village. For example, Nuhedoh (45 years old) and Arif (42 years old) are a married couple whose economy is predominantly generated by the wife. Nuhedoh works as a temporary teacher, whose income is sufficient for her family. Her husband, who works as a factory labourer in Jakarta, does not earn enough.

Relationship patterns become very important in these circumstances. There must be an understanding between husband and wife that the family is built together. The family is also a shared responsibility, not the responsibility of one party alone. For example, in a situation where the wife works and the husband does not, the husband can provide a shuttle service for his wife and do domestic work. This is not wrong, because a couple must complement each other.<sup>4</sup>

---

<sup>2</sup> Muhammad Adib, et al., "Tukar Peran Suami dan Istri dalam Rumah Tangga Perspektif Hukum Keluarga dan Gender", *Journal of Islamic and Law Studies*, Vol. 8 No. 1, (2024), p. 96.

<sup>3</sup> Asyraf Kamil Pasha, "Diskursus Istri Sebagai Penanggungjawab Nafkah Utama Menurut Hukum Islam Di Kota Langsa", *Tesis UIN Ar Raniry*, 2024, p. 9-10.

<sup>4</sup> Asyraf Kamil Pasha, "Diskursus Istri Sebagai Penanggungjawab Nafkah Utama Menurut Hukum Islam Di Kota Langsa" ..., p. 10.

Although there are no specific prohibitions against wives being breadwinners in Islam, there are still limits that must be observed in order to comply with Sharia law. Husbands are still obliged to provide for their wives even if the wife dominates the household income, in order to maintain peace within the family in accordance with Islamic teachings. Although economic roles may change, religious principles continue to guide the maintenance of family harmony. Wives who are breadwinners still have an obligation to obey their husbands.<sup>5</sup>

From a gender perspective, wives as breadwinners can be a step towards gender equality in the family. When wives also actively participate in earning a living, this can break down stereotypes that limit gender roles. In addition, it can open up space for both parties to contribute equally to family life. However, it is important to remember that the role of the wife as breadwinner must be based on a strong agreement and understanding between husband and wife. It must also not conflict with established religious principles.<sup>6</sup>

The literature on gender within Muslim families underscores gender as a sociocultural construct shaping roles and responsibilities between men and women. With Sara Longwe's empowerment framework, comprising five progressive levels of equality (welfare, access, conscientisation, participation, and control). Serving as a robust analytical tool for assessing women's status in domestic spheres.<sup>7</sup> In Islamic family law and household economics, the husband's obligation

---

<sup>5</sup> Dafitri Akbar, "Analisis Gender Terhadap Tukar Peran Suami Istri Dalam Pemenuhan Nafkah Rumah Tangga", *Tesis*, UIN Sultan Syarif Kasim Riau, 2024), p. 19.

<sup>6</sup> Muhammad Adib, et al., "Tukar Peran Suami dan Istri dalam Rumah Tangga Perspektif Hukum Keluarga dan Gender" ..., p. 109.

<sup>7</sup> Ismi Dwi Astuti, *Buku Modul dan Bahan Ajar Analisis Gender* (Jakarta: Dirjen Penegakan Hukum Lingkungan Hidup dan Kehutanan, 2022); Fransiska N. E. et al., *GENDER: Pemahaman Menuju Kesenjangan Gender* (Malang: Madza Media, 2021).

to provide nafkah remains normative (QS. At-Talaq: 7; KHI Pasal 80). Yet contemporary interpretations permit wives to become primary breadwinners without violating sharia. Provided mutual agreement and family harmony are preserved and the wife's income is framed as complementary support rather than replacement of the husband's duty.<sup>8</sup>

Previous studies have revealed that wives assuming the role of primary breadwinner are predominantly driven by economic insufficiency of husbands. Resulting in improved family welfare and children's education but often accompanied by double burden and persistent patriarchal decision-making patterns. However, works such as Chairina (2021), Misbahul Munir (2018), Yuliati (2023), and Risbiyantoro et al. (2023) either remain descriptive, lack a structured gender equality framework, or focus on urban/suburban settings, leaving rural Muslim communities and the application of Longwe's hierarchical model largely unexplored.<sup>9</sup>

The present study distinctively fills this gap by explicitly employing Longwe's five-level framework to examine gender dynamics among Muslim families in the rural context of Benda Village, Sirampog Subdistrict, Brebes Regency. Thereby offering a novel contribution that illuminates why economic role reversal enhances welfare and access yet rarely translates into higher conscientisation,

---

<sup>8</sup> Ibnu Rozali, "Konsep Memberi Nafkah Bagi Keluarga Dalam Islam," *Jurnal Intelektualita* 6, no. 2 (2017): 145–160; Samsul Bahri, "Kewajiban Nafkah Dalam Keluarga," *Jurnal Hukum & Hukum Islam* 11, no. 1 (2024): 63–78; Kemenag, *Al-Qur'an dan Terjemahannya* (Jakarta: Lajnah Pentashihan Mushaf Al-Qur'an, 2019).

<sup>9</sup> Nina Chairina, "Istri Pencari Nafkah Utama dalam Keluarga," *Jurnal Studi Gender dan Anak* 8, no. 1 (2021); Misbahul Munir, "Analisis Gender Terhadap Peran Istri Sebagai Pencari Nafkah Keluarga," *Skripsi* (IAIN Ponorogo, 2018); Dwi Yuliati, "Istri Pencari Nafkah Keluarga Perspektif Gender," *Master's Thesis* (Universitas Sebelas Maret, 2023); Risbiyantoro et al., "Peran Istri Sebagai Pencari Nafkah Utama Dalam Perspektif Maqashid Al-Syari'ah," *Journal Shariah and Humanities* 2, no. 2 (2023).

equal participation, or balanced control, and providing a contextualised Islamic gender analysis aligned with both *maqāṣid al-sharī'ah* and Indonesia's lived socio-economic realities.<sup>10</sup>

From the background description above, the author can conclude the topic of the problem that will be used as a reference in writing this article, namely the role of wives as the main breadwinners in Benda Village, Sirampog Subdistrict, Brebes Regency, and how gender theory analyses the role of wives as the main breadwinners in that area. Based on the research questions in this study, the main objective is to describe the role of wives as primary breadwinners in Benda Village, Sirampog Subdistrict, Brebes Regency, and to analyse gender theory perspectives on this role in the context of the local community.

This study makes a significant contribution to contextual Islamic gender studies by integrating Sara Longwe's Western gender equality framework (welfare, access, conscientisation, participation, and control) with Indonesian Islamic family law and local rural realities in Benda Village, Brebes Regency. Using empirical evidence, it demonstrates that while wives' roles as primary breadwinners markedly improve family welfare and resource access due to economic necessity, these shifts do not automatically translate into higher levels of gender awareness, equal participation in decision-making, or balanced control revealing the persistence of patriarchal structures despite economic role reversal. By reconciling Islamic obligations of *nafkah* (maintenance) with contemporary gender theory and national law, the research enriches contextual Islamic gender scholarship, highlights the gap between economic empowerment and substantive equality in Muslim households, and provides a grounded model for

---

<sup>10</sup> Muhammad Adib et al., "Tukar Peran Suami dan Istri dalam Rumah Tangga," *Journal of Islamic and Law Studies* 8, no. 1 (2024); Pratiwi et al., "Dinamika Pembagian Peran Gender dan Kewajiban Nafkah dalam Keluarga Muslim Modern," paper presented at National Seminar on Islamic Family Law, Imam Syafi'i Islamic College, Jember, 26 July 2025.

future studies advocating gender justice that remains compatible with maqāṣid al-sharī'ah and Indonesia's socio-cultural context.

This study is expected to provide various benefits, both theoretically and practically. Theoretically, the results of this study can contribute to the development of knowledge and studies on gender analysis related to the role of wives as the main breadwinners in the region. From a practical perspective, this study will increase the insight and understanding of the community and relevant agencies regarding gender dynamics in the role of wives as the main breadwinners in Benda Village, Sirampog Subdistrict, Brebes Regency. Additionally, academically, the research findings are expected to make a valuable contribution to Islamic Family Law Studies, while also serving as a useful academic document for the academic community or as a reference for further research.

### **Research Method**

This research is a *field research study* using a qualitative approach. This research uses two data sources, namely for primary data and for secondary data. Primary data is sourced from interviews with:

1. Mrs Nuhedoh, S.Pd (40 years old). A temporary teacher at Al Hikmah 1 Benda. Her husband is a factory worker and they have two children. Address: Karang Tengah 02/03, Benda Village, Sirampog Subdistrict.
2. Mrs Mas'udah, S.Pd.I (47 years old). A private teacher at MTs Al-Hikmah 1 Benda with a husband who is a construction worker, has 3 children. Address: Benda II 03/02, Benda Village, Sirampog District.
3. Mrs Salamah, S.Pd.I (53 years old). A private teacher at MI Al-Hikmah 2, married to a farm labourer, has 2 children. Address: Kr. Mulya 03/04, Benda Village, Sirampog District.
4. Mrs. Rohayati (48 years old). A street vendor selling vegetable salad and fried snacks. Her husband works as a construction

labourer, and they have no children. Address: Kratagan 04/05, Benda Village, Sirampog District.

5. Mrs Dorrotun Nasikha, Amd.Keb (34 years old). A midwife whose husband runs a grocery stall, she has two children. Address: Karang Tengah 01/03, Benda Village, Sirampog Subdistrict.

Sampling or informant selection in this study involved the researcher selecting informants involved in the study using *purposive sampling* techniques. Meanwhile, secondary data was obtained from literature sources by reviewing books, articles, research journals and other relevant research results in line with the research title. Data collection techniques used observation, interviews and documentation. The data analysis method in this study used descriptive analysis. The stages of data analysis used included data reduction and verification, data presentation, and conclusion drawing.

### **Theoretical Framework**

Gender is defined as a concept used to identify differences between men and women in terms of sociocultural influences. Gender analysis is the process of systematically analysing data and information to identify differences in the position, function, role, and responsibilities of women and men in the development process.<sup>11</sup> One of the gender analyses introduced by Sara Hlupekile Longwe in 1995 can be used to assess the level of gender equality.<sup>12</sup>

Longwe's theory can be used not only in the context of development but also as an effective tool for analysing and promoting gender equality within the smallest unit of society, namely the family. In the context of the family, Longwe's gender theory is an empowerment framework that measures the level of women's equality

---

<sup>11</sup> Ismi Dwi Astuti, *Buku Modul Dan Bahan Ajar Analisis Gender* (Jakarta: Dirjen Penegakan Hukum Lingkungan Hidup dan Kehutanan, 2022), p. II-2.

<sup>12</sup> Ismi Dwi Astuti, *Buku Modul Dan Bahan Ajar Analisis Gender, ...*, p. VIII-1.



in five levels, namely welfare, access, awareness, participation, and control. This framework is used to help identify existing gaps and encourage women to have equal control in their lives.

The following is an explanation of the five levels of equality in Longwe's theory:<sup>13</sup>

- a. **Welfare:** The level of welfare of women (wives) relative to men (husbands). This level of welfare is seen from women's access to basic needs, increased income, and access to health care.
- b. **Access:** The achievement of this aspect of access can be seen in the availability of access to marketing facilities, credit or capital loans, and access to public services such as education and health. Longwe points out that access equality is achieved by applying the principle of equal opportunity, which usually requires legal and administrative reforms to eliminate all forms of discrimination.
- c. **Conscientisation:** That gender roles are cultural and can be changed. Conscientisation also involves the belief that the division of labour (in this context, financial support) based on gender must be fair and agreed upon by both parties (husband and wife). It also does not involve economic or political domination of one gender over the other.
- d. **Participation:** Participation is a very important aspect of family life. Participation means involvement in assessing needs, formulating needs, implementation, and evaluation. Equal participation means involving women (wives) in making decisions that affect the family.
- e. **Control:** The wife's control in the decision-making process through awareness and mobilisation to achieve equal control over production factors and distribution of benefits. Equal control means a balance of control between men (husbands)

---

<sup>13</sup> Ismi Dwi Astuti, *Buku Modul Dan Bahan Ajar Analisis Gender...*, p. VIII-2-3.

and women (wives), so that no one party dominates.

By understanding the five levels of equality, families can strive to build equal partnerships, where husbands and wives play equal roles in all family functions. With the strengthening of women's position and equality in the family, the overall welfare of the family is also expected to improve. These five dimensions are dynamic, mutually reinforcing and complementary.<sup>14</sup>

## **The Concept Of Maintenance**

### **Definition of Nafkah**

The plural form of the word nafkah is nafaqah, which literally means something that is spent or a person's expenses for their family. According to Islamic law, nafkah is any provision in the form of clothing, property, and shelter for family members who are under one's care, including wives, children, and servants.<sup>15</sup>

In the context of family maintenance, scholars have set certain limits. Maintenance refers to everything that a husband spends on his family in the form of food, clothing, shelter, and other necessities. Maintenance also covers the wife's needs during childbirth, the costs of midwives or doctors who assist with the delivery, and the costs of medicine and hospitalisation. Included in this is the fulfilment of the wife's biological needs.<sup>16</sup>

## **The Obligation of Maintenance in the Family**

---

<sup>14</sup> Ismi Dwi Astuti, *Buku Modul Dan Bahan Ajar Analisis Gender...*, p. VIII-4.

<sup>15</sup> Ibnu Rozali, "Konsep Memberi Nafkah Bagi Keluarga Dalam Islam," *Jurnal Intelektualita: Keislaman, Sosial Dan Sains*, (2017).

<sup>16</sup> Samsul Zakaria, "Nafkah dan Ketimpangan Gender (Analisis Nafkah dalam Kompilasi Hukum Islam)," *Ijtihad*, Volume 36, No. 2 (Tahun 2020), p. 51.

The fulfilment of financial obligations within a family is part of the effort to maintain family unity and harmony.<sup>17</sup> The obligation to provide financial support is influenced by a valid marriage bond. As a consequence, the husband is responsible for providing financial support to his wife. Then, when they become parents, the responsibility for providing for the family also extends to their children. This is stated in Article 80 paragraph 4 letter a of the Compilation of Islamic Law that the husband's obligations to his wife include providing for her, clothing and a place of residence for his wife, household expenses, and medical and healthcare expenses for his wife and children.<sup>18</sup>

Furthermore, the obligation to provide for the family is also stipulated in Law No. 1 of 1974, which is included in the applicable law in the Religious Court, which only regulates the general rights and obligations of husbands and wives.<sup>19</sup> This provision is contained in Article 34 paragraphs 1 and 2 concerning the general duties of husbands and wives in domestic life.

- a. Paragraph (1) explains that "A husband is obliged to protect his wife and provide everything necessary for household life in accordance with his ability".
- b. Paragraph (2) explains that "A wife is obliged to manage household affairs as well as possible."

In the Qur'an, the meaning of nafkah is not limited to financial support in marriage. The verses of the Qur'an that include this word refer to both obligatory and recommended expenditures. The verse of

---

<sup>17</sup> Samsul Bahri, "Kewajiban Nafkah Dalam Keluarga (Studi Komparatif Hukum Islam Dan Undang – Undang Di Indonesia Terhadap Istri Yang Mencari Nafkah)," *Jurnal Hukum & Hukum Islam*, Vol. 11 No. 1 (Februari 2024), p. 65.

<sup>18</sup> Risbiyantoro et al., "Peran Istri Sebagai Pencari Nafkah Utama Dalam Perspektif *Maqashid Al-Syari'ah* (Studi Kasus Di Cinere Depok)" ..., p. 200-202.

<sup>19</sup> Samsul Bahri, "Kewajiban Nafkah Dalam Keluarga (Studi Komparatif Hukum Islam Dan Undang – Undang Di Indonesia Terhadap Istri Yang Mencari Nafkah)" ..., p. 71-72.

the Qur'an that specifically addresses nafkah in the context of a husband's obligation to his wife under family law is QS an-Nisa': 34.

The position of the husband as the leader of a family (*qawwam*) and not in leadership in general. As a leader, the husband has the obligation to educate his wife. The leadership of a husband also implies his obligation to provide for his wife and children. The responsibility to provide for the family carries the consequence that the husband must strive with all his might to be able to provide for the family in a manner that is lawful and pleasing to Allah SWT.<sup>20</sup>

The Qur'an and hadith do not specify in detail the amount of maintenance to be provided to his family, but only explain in general terms, namely according to one's ability and capacity. This is based on the Word of Allah in Surah At-Talaq verse 7.

Regarding the obligation of maintenance, the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) said:

From Hakim bin Muawiyah, from his father, he said, "I asked, 'O Messenger of Allah, *what is our obligation towards our wives?*' He replied, '*You should feed her if you eat, clothe her if you wear clothes, do not strike her face, do not insult her, and do not separate from her (in bed), except within the house.*' (Reported by Abu Dawud).<sup>21</sup>

### **The Wife as the Primary Breadwinner of the Family**

In general, the majority of women appear as domestic beings (household managers), meaning that women's domestic roles are more prominent than men's, both as wives and as housewives. Indeed, there are many factors that influence women's domestic roles. In addition to living in the domestic sphere, we cannot deny that women are members of society. It is precisely because of their position as members of society

---

<sup>20</sup> Nina Chairina, "Istri Pencari Nafkah Utama dalam Keluarga," *Jurnal Studi Gender dan Anak*, Vol. 8 No. 01, (Januari-Juni 2021), p. 103.

<sup>21</sup> Ibnu Rozali, "Konsep Memberi Nafkah Bagi Keluarga Dalam Islam." *Jurnal Intelektualita: Keislaman, Sosial Dan Sains*, (2017).

that their involvement in public life is also necessary for the advancement of society. In this context, women's primary duties as wives and homemakers (domestic roles) do not mean that women are limited to these primary roles alone.<sup>22</sup>

In this day and age, the role of working wives is no longer unfamiliar. There are several reasons why wives work, one of which is economic, with the aim of meeting their daily needs. Normally, it is the husband who should work to meet the family's needs, while the wife is only responsible for taking care of the household (domestic duties). However, in reality, wives are now also actively seeking employment due to their husbands' low income and the increasing number of daily needs.<sup>23</sup>

Although working to earn a living is the husband's obligation, this does not mean that the wife is not allowed to work to help provide for her family. According to an-Nahbani, Sharia law allows women to engage in buying and selling, *ijarah* (labour), *wakalah* (representation), agriculture, industry, trade, and various other activities related to the development of wealth which, according to Sharia law, are permissible (*mubah*). However, a wife's duties as a homemaker and educator of her children must not be neglected, as these are her primary responsibilities. A wife must not prioritise what is permissible over what is obligatory. Furthermore, a wife may only work with her husband's permission.<sup>24</sup>

---

<sup>22</sup> Elvida Sapitri, *"Pembagian Peran Antara Suami Isteri Dan Implikasinya Terhadap Keharmonisan Keluarga (Studi Kasus di Gampong Lawe Cimanok Kecamatan Kluet Timur Kabupaten Aceh Selatan)"*, Skripsi Sarjana, Fakultas Dakwah dan Komunikasi UIN Ar-Raniry Banda Aceh, 2017, p. 30.

<sup>23</sup> Dwi Yulianti, *"Istri Pencari Nafkah Keluarga Perspektif Gender (Studi Kasus Di Dukuh Kuwungsari, Kelurahan Sragen Kulon Kec. Sragen)"*, ..., p. 5-6.

<sup>24</sup> Muttaqin H, *"Membangun Ekonomi Rumah Tangga Islami"*, <https://taqin.id/membangun-ekonomi-rumah-tangga-islami/> (accessed 15 Desember 2024).

Islam has established that the head of the family (*qawwam*) is the primary duty and responsibility of the husband, so that the wife is not obliged to earn a living. However, this does not mean that wives are not allowed to work. Some female companions during the time of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) also worked, including the Prophet's wife, Siti Khadijah, who was a businesswoman engaged in religious, economic, and social activities. This demonstrates that Islam supports women and wives who work for positive purposes.

Although it is permissible for wives to work, Islam imposes certain conditions on wives who wish to work, namely:<sup>25</sup>

- a. The job does not cause problems for the family, does not give rise to slander, and is not harmful to her honour.
- b. Her work does not interfere with her primary duty of managing household affairs, as managing the household is her primary duty, and other work is not her responsibility.
- c. Obtaining her husband's permission to work outside the home, as the wife is obliged to obey her husband. If the husband does not give permission, the wife must not disobey him and do it.
- d. Applying Islamic manners, such as guarding one's gaze, wearing clothing that covers the body, not wearing excessive perfume, and not softening one's voice to men who are not mahram.
- e. Such work should not involve frequent interaction with men who are not mahram.
- f. Avoiding the display of jewellery and beauty that may have a negative impact.

### **Description Of Wives As The Main Breadwinner For Their Families In Benda Village, Sirampog District, Brebes Regency**

#### **General Description of Benda Village**

---

<sup>25</sup> Dwi Yuliati, "Istri Pencari Nafkah Keluarga Perspektif Gender (Studi Kasus Di Dukuh Kuwungsari, Kelurahan Sragen Kulon Kec. Sragen", ..., p. 25.

Benda Village is administratively one of the villages in Sirampog Subdistrict, Brebes Regency, Central Java Province. This village is located 5 kilometres from the capital of Sirampog Subdistrict and 70 kilometres from the capital of the regency. The village covers an area of 359.43 hectares, consisting of lowlands with an altitude of 400 metres above sea level, rainfall of 3,100 mm, humidity of 0.31, and an average daily temperature of 26 degrees Celsius. Benda Village is divided into eight hamlets: Benda I, Benda II, Karang Tengah, Karang Mulya, Kratagan, Bulakwungu, Jetak, and Kalisalak.<sup>26</sup>

The administrative boundaries of Benda Village are clearly defined on all sides. To the north, the village borders Kaliloka Village in Sirampog Subdistrict and Linggapura Village in Tonjong Subdistrict. Meanwhile, to the south, its territory is bordered by Adisana Village and Penggarutan Village in Bumiayu Subdistrict. To the west, Benda Village is adjacent to Kaligadung Village, which is also located in the Bumiayu District ( ). To the east, its boundaries include Plompong Village in the Sirampog District and Adisana Village in the Bumiayu District, thus forming an integrated administrative unit with the surrounding areas.

The population of Benda Village consists of 6,148 men and 5,487 women, for a total of 11,635 people. There are 4,219 households, with a fairly high population density of 3,183.96 people per square kilometre.<sup>27</sup> The majority of the population of Benda Village is Muslim, while followers of other religions are only non-native migrants.<sup>28</sup> The population of Benda Village with an elementary school or equivalent education background consists of 766 men and 1,050 women. At the junior high school/MTs level, there are 930 men and 871 women. There are 1,005 men and 820 women who have graduated from senior high

---

<sup>26</sup> Benda Village, Village Archives, 6 May 2025.

<sup>27</sup> Benda Village, Village Archives, 6 May 2025.

<sup>28</sup> Benda Village, Village Archives, 6 May 2025.

school/MA. Meanwhile, there are 290 male and 251 female college graduates. Overall, there are 2,991 males and 2,992 females who have completed their education, with a total of 5,983 people.<sup>29</sup> The active workforce of Benda Village consists of 4,412 people spread across various occupations. Employees, including civil servants, teachers, and private sector workers, number 1,057, followed by agricultural workers, construction workers, factory workers, and others, numbering 1,188. There are 678 traders, 567 entrepreneurs, 478 farmers, and 444 retirees.<sup>30</sup>

### **The Role of Wives as Primary Breadwinners in Benda Village, Sirampog Subdistrict, Brebes Regency**

The author found that in Benda Village, wives generally have jobs. However, in this study, the researcher limited the study to five wives who work as the main breadwinners of their families. The following is an explanation from Mrs Nuhedoh (40 years old), one of the wives who works as the main breadwinner of her family.

*"I was a temporary teacher before I got married. Every month, I received a salary of 4.5 million rupiah. My husband works as a factory labourer in Jakarta with a monthly income of 2 million rupiah. I have two children, the first is 10 years old and the second is 7 years old."*<sup>31</sup>

Next is Mrs. Mas'udah (47 years old), who also plays the role of the family's breadwinner, as she explains below.

*"I teach at MTs Al Hikmah 1 Benda, and my current salary is 3.5 million rupiah per month. I now have two children. My first child is 20 years old, and my second child is 10 years old. My husband works as a day labourer ( ) and his income is uncertain. When there is construction work available, he can earn 550 thousand rupiah per week."*<sup>32</sup>

---

<sup>29</sup> Benda Village, Village Archives, 6 May 2025.

<sup>30</sup> Benda Village, Village Archives, 6 May 2025.

<sup>31</sup> Nuhedoh, interview with the author, 11 July 2025.

<sup>32</sup> Mas'udah, interview with the author, 18 July 2025.



Similarly, Mrs. Salamah (53 years old), who also serves as the primary breadwinner for her family, stated:

*"I teach at MIT Al Hikmah 2 Benda, and have been a teacher for 24 years. I receive a monthly salary of 4 million rupiah. My husband works as a farm labourer with an uncertain income. When there is work, he earns 95 thousand rupiah per day. We have been blessed with three children, all of whom are in school."*<sup>33</sup>

This also applies to Mrs. Rohayati (48 years old), who is the breadwinner of the family. Here is her explanation:

*"I just sell vegetable pecel and fried snacks around the village. My income is uncertain, usually between 50,000 and 100,000 rupiah per day, but when it's busy, I can earn up to 300,000 rupiah. That money is also used for shopping. My husband cannot work because he has been ill for almost two years. My husband and I have not been blessed with children."*<sup>34</sup>

Another breadwinner, Mrs Durroh (34 years old), said:

*"I have been working as a midwife since before I got married until now. I have two children, the first is 8 years old and the second is only 4 years old. I work at a maternity clinic and also run my own midwifery practice at home. Thank God, my income is sufficient to meet my family's needs. My husband runs a grocery shop at home, but the income from the shop is not very stable."*<sup>35</sup>

Field findings show that wives have better positions and incomes than their husbands. Factors that drive wives to seek livelihoods include insufficient or uncertain husbands' incomes, as well as husbands' lack of skills or job opportunities. In addition, the ever-increasing family needs—such as children's education costs, clothing, food, and household needs—also force wives to take on the role of breadwinner. This is a strong reason for a wife to seek employment in order to meet these needs. As stated by Mrs Nuhedoh, as follows:

---

<sup>33</sup> Salamah, interview with the author, 27 July 2025.

<sup>34</sup> Rohayati, interview with the author, 1 August 2025.

<sup>35</sup> Durroh, interview with the author, 8 August 2025.

*"Having a job and sufficient income is important because it not only fulfils current needs, but also prepares for the future, such as children's education costs and emergency funds for unexpected events such as illness or death. I use my salary to cover my daily needs and my children's pocket money."*<sup>36</sup>

A similar sentiment was expressed by Mrs. Mas'udah, as follows:

*"I teach not only to provide for my family, but also to develop my potential and abilities, as well as to apply the knowledge I have. I know and understand that the responsibility for providing for the family lies with the husband ( ), but for me, the responsibility for running the household must be shared fairly between husband and wife."*<sup>37</sup>

Mr. Mahmudin, the husband of Mrs. Mas'udah, stated:

*"Actually, I feel inferior because I cannot provide more for my wife. This is because my job opportunities are limited and I have minimal skills, as I am only a technical school graduate. I am grateful to have a good wife who accepts my circumstances. Alhamdulillah, I am happy that my wife has a higher income, so that our children can go to school, and now some of them are even in college, and our family's needs are met."*<sup>38</sup>

Similarly, Mrs Salamah stated:

*"Daily needs are increasing, and the cost of children's education is also rising. I teach to apply the knowledge I gained at school, and I earn a salary to support my family, to buy daily necessities, pay for my children's schooling, and so on. My husband is only a farm labourer, and his income is uncertain."*<sup>39</sup>

Explanation from Mr Tobiin, husband of Mrs Salamah, he said:

*"I am just a farm labourer, so my income is uncertain. My work depends on receiving calls for work from the rice field owners. I am uneducated, having only completed junior high school, and have no skills other than being a farm labourer. I am very grateful that my*

---

<sup>36</sup> Nuhedoh, interview with the author, 11 July 2025.

<sup>37</sup> Mas'udah, interview with the author, 18 July 2025.

<sup>38</sup> Mahmudin, interview with the author, 18 July 2025.

<sup>39</sup> Salamah, interview with the author, 27 July 2025.

*wife has her own income, which is higher than mine. I support my wife's teaching career and am able to contribute to our household expenses."*<sup>40</sup>

A similar statement was also expressed by Mrs. Rohayati. She explained:

*"Working to earn a living is not because of coercion, but because of the economic demands of the family. Yes, for food and other needs. My husband is sick and cannot do anything, so there is no additional income. I live alone with my husband. I continue to earn a living for worship, and remain grateful for whatever sustenance I am given."*<sup>41</sup>

Similarly, Mrs Durroh stated the following:

*"My husband's income is uncertain, sometimes I have to cover our daily needs, which is not enough, let alone the cost of sending our children to school. I work according to the shift schedule determined by the clinic, sometimes leaving in the morning and returning in the afternoon, leaving in the afternoon and returning in the evening, and leaving in the evening and returning in the morning. With this work arrangement, my husband understands and is willing to share household chores such as accompanying the children, taking them to school, and other tasks."*<sup>42</sup>

Mr. Arif, the husband of Mrs. Durroh, stated:

*"Yes, the income from the stall is not much now, it's up and down, to be precise. It's not enough to cover the cost of groceries, let alone daily necessities. At the moment, I am unable to provide for my wife, but I am grateful that she understands. I really appreciate my wife's hard work and am grateful that she has a job and an income to support our family. I always try my best to provide for her, even if it's not much."*<sup>43</sup>

From the data presented above, it can be concluded that the factors that encourage wives to take on the role of primary breadwinner

---

<sup>40</sup> Tobiin, interview with the author, 27 July 2025.

<sup>41</sup> Rohayati, interview with the author, 1 August 2025.

<sup>42</sup> Durroh, interview with the author, 8 August 2025.

<sup>43</sup> Arif, interview with the author, 8 August 2025.

for the family are economic hardship, the husband's income being insufficient to meet the family's needs, the husband's income being uncertain, the husband being ill and unable to work, increasing needs, and the desire to actualise the knowledge they have acquired.

Despite having shifted roles to become breadwinners for their families or in the public sector, wives still bear most of the responsibility for the household or domestic sector. As expressed by Mrs Nuhedoh below:

*"Regarding household chores before leaving for work, I clean the house, cook for the family, bathe my children, and so on. After that, my children and I leave for school together. Actually, household chores are not a burden for me... I do them automatically. I take care of all my household responsibilities, even though some of them are not done on a daily basis."*<sup>44</sup>

This is also felt by Mrs. Mas'udah, here is her opinion:

*"I do the housework and share the work with my children. I always encourage my children to be independent and responsible by involving them in household chores. My husband also helps with the housework when he is aware of it. Actually, each member of our family has their own role in the housework, such as me cooking, my children cleaning the house, and my husband repairing the house"*.<sup>45</sup>

Similarly, Mrs Salamah said:

*"We share household responsibilities. Our older children wash their own clothes and clean the house, while I cook breakfast for the family. I come home from teaching and prepare food for my husband. After that, if there are no outside activities, I rest. My husband does not help much with household chores, except for minor repairs to the house."*<sup>46</sup>

Regarding household duties and responsibilities, Mrs. Rohayati explained:

*"I do all the housework myself, from cleaning the house, washing*

---

<sup>44</sup> Nuhedoh, interview with the author, 11 July 2025

<sup>45</sup> Mas'udah, interview with the author, 18 July 2025.

<sup>46</sup> Tobiin, interview with the author, 27 July 2025.

*clothes, and cooking. I do this routinely every day. Perhaps because I don't have children, I don't have too much housework to do, just accompanying and serving my husband."*<sup>47</sup>

Regarding the role of a wife in work or managing the household, Mrs Durroh explained:

*"I work shifts, so sometimes my husband has to take care of the housework. For example, in the morning he has to get the children ready for school, which includes bathing and breakfast. Sometimes I also take a short break to bring them breakfast. The rest of the housework, such as mopping, cooking, washing, shopping for household needs, and other household chores, is done by me, with some help from my husband."*<sup>48</sup>

It can be seen that in this study, wives' activities as breadwinners did not diminish their roles as wives and housewives. They were able to manage their time between work and their responsibilities as housewives, ensuring that both roles were carried out well. Although this demonstrates the capabilities of wives, it also contributes to what is known as *the double burden*.

Furthermore, a balanced division of labour has been partially implemented by the community in Benda village within families, including in family decision-making. In general, family decisions are made by the husband as the head of the family, involving the wife and other family members in discussions to find solutions to problems.

Regarding family decision-making, Mrs Nuhedoh said:

*"When making decisions, it should be the husband... but we decide together... we discuss it first... I think we should deliberate... then when we are sure... confident... only then should we decide."*<sup>49</sup>

The same thing was expressed by Mrs. Mas'udah:

*"We both decide together, but we discuss it first... depending on the issue... sometimes I make the decision because my husband is*

---

<sup>47</sup> Rohayati, interview with the author, 1 August 2025.

<sup>48</sup> Durroh, interview with the author, 8 August 2025.

<sup>49</sup> Nuhedoh, interview with the author, 11 July 2025.

*resigned to it.*"<sup>50</sup>

Mrs Salamah also stated:

*"Decision-making... yes, the husband... but we discuss the issue first... but the most important thing is that the husband makes the decision."*<sup>51</sup>

Mrs. Rohayati also responded:

*"Mother and father... if father agrees, mother agrees... so they mutually agree."*<sup>52</sup>

Similarly, Mrs Durroh said:

*"We usually discuss things together first... whatever needs to be discussed... for example, if we want something, we have to talk about it together first... then decide."*

To achieve a balance in the role of the wife as the primary breadwinner, equality must be applied through a balanced division of household tasks between husband and wife. In addition, open communication to build mutual understanding and support, as well as mutual appreciation of each other's contributions to the family for the sake of harmony and well-being, is very important. Although in Islamic law, providing for the family is the obligation of the husband towards his wife and children, this does not mean that the wife cannot help her husband in earning a living.

Thus, in Benda Village, there has been a shift from traditional gender roles (e.g., husband as breadwinner, wife as caregiver) to a more flexible model, where both husband and wife contribute to household chores and earning a living. This shift is also a response to social and economic changes, aimed at creating harmony and happiness in the household.

---

<sup>50</sup> Mas'udah, interview with the author, 18 July 2025.

<sup>51</sup> Salamah, interview with the author, 27 July 2025.

<sup>52</sup> Rohayati, interview with the author, 1 August 2025.

## **Gender Analysis Of Wives As The Main Breadwinner Of The Family In Benda Village, Sirampog District, Brebes Regency**

### **Analysis of the Role of Wives as Primary Breadwinner of the Family from the Perspective of Islamic Family Law**

The term "role" is defined as a set of behaviours expected of a person or institution in society in accordance with their position. An individual is said to be fulfilling a role when they exercise the rights and obligations that are an integral part of their status.<sup>53</sup> Within the family, the fulfilment of essential financial support is crucial for maintaining the integrity and harmony of the household. This obligation arises from the bond of a valid marriage, thereby making the husband responsible for providing financial support to his wife.<sup>54</sup>

The verse of the Quran that specifically addresses maintenance in the sense of a husband's obligation to his wife in the context of family law is QS an-Nisa': 34. Meanwhile, in the Compilation of Islamic Law ("KHI") and Law Number 1 of 1974 concerning Marriage ("Marriage Law"), the husband has the primary obligation to provide for his wife. This obligation arises from the moment the marriage contract is concluded and remains valid regardless of whether the wife has her own property ( ). In the Marriage Law, this obligation to provide maintenance is stipulated in Article 34 paragraph (1), which states that the husband is obliged to protect his wife and provide everything necessary for household life in accordance with his ability.<sup>55</sup>

---

<sup>53</sup> Bimo Walgito, *Psikologi Sosial, Edisi Revisi*, (Yogyakarta: Andi Offset, 2017), p. 7.

<sup>54</sup> Samsul Bahri, "Kewajiban Nafkah Dalam Keluarga (Studi Komparatif Hukum Islam Dan Undang – Undang Di Indonesia Terhadap Istri Yang Mencari Nafkah)," *Jurnal Hukum & Hukum Islam*, Vol. 11 No. 1 (Februari 2024), p. 65.

<sup>55</sup> Muslihah, "Kewajiban Nafkah dalam Hukum Keluarga: Hak, Tanggung Jawab, dan Aturan Hukumnya," <https://perqara.com/blog/kewajiban-nafkah-dalam-hukum-keluarga/> (akses, 15 September 2025).

In the research conducted in Benda Village, researchers found that on average, wives in this village have jobs and that this is a routine activity. The jobs held by wives in this study included Mrs Nuhedoh as an honorary teacher, Mrs Mas'udah as a private teacher at MTs Al-Hikmah 1 Benda, Mrs Salamah as a private teacher at MI Al-Hikmah 2, Mrs Rohayati as a street vendor selling pecel sayur and fried foods, and Mrs Durroh as a midwife working at a maternity clinic.

Work has become part of their daily routine, as is the case with Mrs Rohayati, for whom working to earn a living is a routine necessity in order to meet her family's needs. Given that her husband is unable to work due to illness, wives who work in this category are those who provide for their families in order to maintain their households.

The role of the wife as the family breadwinner is a position in which the wife contributes financially to meeting the family's economic needs, either by supplementing her husband's income or by becoming the main economic backbone of the family, such as Mrs Nuhedoh, a temporary teacher, who said she wanted to devote the knowledge she had acquired during her studies. Her husband permits her to continue teaching, as he understands that she has been pursuing this profession since before their marriage. Additionally, this work brings numerous benefits not only to the family but also to others.

Although traditionally husbands are the main breadwinners, in Benda Village the role of wives as economic supporters has grown as a solution due to factors such as low husband income, income uncertainty, husband illness, increased family needs, and women's self-actualisation. All of this encourages adaptation and equal division of roles between husbands and wives. Islam does not restrict women in the social, political, and economic spheres as long as it is in accordance with Sharia law, as exemplified by Khadijah as a successful businesswoman and Queen Bilqis who ruled wisely in the Qur'an.



Balance in the rights and obligations of husband and wife is the key to building a healthy household. The Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) set a real example in his household with Aisha (may Allah be pleased with her), where he often helped with household chores, showing that Islam does not limit women to domestic roles. On the contrary, men also have an obligation to play an active role in supporting their families, both financially and emotionally.<sup>56</sup>

In the modern era, the economic role of wives has undergone a significant shift, with many women actively working or becoming the primary breadwinners, although the husband's obligation to provide for the family remains essential for a fair household structure. Couples are expected to be united while upholding Sharia principles that balance rights and obligations. Cooperation and effective communication between husband and wife are key to building a harmonious, balanced, and civilised household.<sup>57</sup>

The above review of Islamic family law is in line with the role of wives as the main breadwinners in Benda Village, where husbands remain responsible for providing financial support (albeit not primarily). Meanwhile, wives have the right to seek employment and contribute to the family income. In addition, wives who are breadwinners have obtained permission from their husbands, do not abandon their duties as housewives, and ensure that the methods they use are in accordance with Islamic law.

### **Gender Theory Analysis of the Role of Wives as Primary Breadwinners in the Family in Benda Village**

---

<sup>56</sup> Adliah & M Ilham Muchtar, "Analisis Gender Dalam Perspektif Islam Gender Analysis In Islamic Perspective", ..., p. 3067-3068.

<sup>57</sup> Pratiwi et al. "Dinamika Pembagian Peran Gender dan Kewajiban Nafkah dalam Keluarga Muslim Modern," (Zoom, presented at the National Seminar on Islamic Family Law, Sekolah Tinggi Dirasat Islamiyah Imam Syafi'i, Jember, 26 July 2025).

In this study, the author analyses the role of wives as the main breadwinners of the family, referring to Longwe's gender theory or Longwe's framework. Using Longwe's framework, gender analysis can be conducted at the family level by looking at the extent to which wives are equal as the main breadwinners of the family and whether they have achieved women's empowerment.<sup>58</sup> The level of equality referred to in Longwe's gender theory consists of five levels of equality, namely welfare, access, awareness, participation, and control. These levels of equality can be used to assess the possibility of women's intervention in development. If the level of equality has reached the level of control, then women have been empowered.<sup>59</sup>

Thus, the five levels of equality for women as the main breadwinners for their families in Benda Village, Sirampog District, Brebes Regency, are examined in more detail as follows:

#### 1. Welfare

Sara H. Longwe defines this level of welfare in terms of women's access to basic needs, increased income, and access to health care.<sup>60</sup> The findings of the study show that basic needs are being met. Families have easy access to food, clothing, and their own housing (although some live with their parents), supported by shared income. Mas'udah's mother is grateful to have a simple but comfortable home. Income has increased through additional government capital, such as Mrs. Rohayati, who received £20 from PKH. Healthcare is good, with easy access to doctors/midwives, clinics, community health centres, and

---

<sup>58</sup> Women's empowerment is the process of providing women with the power and opportunities to participate fully in various aspects of life, such as education, politics, economics, and decision-making, in order to achieve gender equality. This empowerment includes increasing women's awareness, capacity, participation, and independence, which ultimately contributes to economic progress and national development.

<sup>59</sup> Ismi Dwi Astuti, *Buku Modul Dan Bahan Ajar Analisis Gender* (Jakarta: Dirjen Penegakan Hukum Lingkungan Hidup dan Kehutanan, 2022), p. VIII-2.

<sup>60</sup> Ismi Dwi Astuti, *Buku Modul Dan Bahan Ajar Analisis Gender*,..., p. VIII-2.

hospitals ( $\pm 15$  minutes), as well as BPJS-KIS membership for most families. Mrs. Salamah said she could seek immediate treatment when she was sick thanks to affordable facilities in Benda Village.

Thus, based on the three aspects above, wives as the main breadwinners in Benda Village have achieved a level of prosperity. This prosperity is realised when the family's basic needs, such as food, clothing, and shelter, can be met through the wife's income. This indicates that the family has achieved a reasonably decent economic condition.

## 2. Access

The achievement of this aspect of access can be seen from the availability of access to marketing facilities, credit and capital loans, and access to public services such as education and health.<sup>61</sup> The findings show that the wives of the main breadwinners in Benda Village have access to public services. Such as Mrs Nuhedoh (honorary teacher), Mrs Mas'udah (private teacher at MTs Al-Hikmah 1), Mrs Salamah (private teacher at MI Al-Hikmah 2), Mrs Rohayati (street vendor selling pecel and fried foods), and Mrs Durroh (midwife at a clinic). This is supported by women's empowerment programmes, although there is no specific information about the village. Access to credit through KUR-BRI is available, but the wives do not borrow because they are afraid of the risk of default; Mrs Rohayati is reluctant to borrow from the bank, while Mrs Salamah only opened an account for her child's college education. Access to education is good, supported by the PIP programme, as mentioned by Mrs. Mas'udah, whose child is able to attend university. Access to healthcare is provided through JKN-KIS, BPJS PBI, and BPJS Ketenagakerjaan, as in the case of Mrs. Durroh, who is covered by BPJS Ketenagakerjaan.

Thus, from the above description, it can be seen that wives in Benda village have gained good access to the role of primary

---

<sup>61</sup> Ismi Dwi Astuti, *Buku Modul Dan Bahan Ajar Analisis Gender*,..., p. VIII-2.

breadwinner for their families. This is because wives not only have the opportunity to earn a living, but also have the support, resources, and environment that facilitate them in performing this role.

### 3. Conscientisation

Sara H. Longwe revealed that this level of awareness can be seen from the understanding of gender and the role of women in the family.<sup>62</sup> Based on the findings of the study, wives who are the main breadwinners in Benda Village do not yet fully understand gender and the role of women in the family. They are only aware of their independence and mental resilience, even though their husbands' incomes are insufficient or uncertain. Even though they have to play multiple roles as wives, mothers, and breadwinners—which take up their thoughts, energy, and time.

Wives do not yet understand their contribution to development in a broader sense. As Mrs Salamah said, she understands gender equality only in terms of the equal roles of men and women. She also considers teaching not merely a means of earning a living, but also a dream and a way of applying knowledge. However, she does not yet realise that her potential, talents and resources can have an impact on social, economic, cultural and environmental development. This awareness should encourage active action and motivation to participate in development activities, rather than just passively waiting or observing. Thus, there is still no awareness among wives as the main breadwinners in Benda Village of the importance of empowering individuals (wives) so that they are not only objects of development, but also subjects or active agents in creating positive change.

### 4. Participation

Equal participation between women and men in decision-making, policy-making, planning, and administration.<sup>63</sup> Based on research

---

<sup>62</sup> Ismi Dwi Astuti, *"Buku Modul Dan Bahan Ajar Analisis Gender"*, ..., p. VIII-2.

<sup>63</sup> Ismi Dwi Astuti, *"Buku Modul Dan Bahan Ajar Analisis Gender"*, ..., p. VIII-2.

findings, female breadwinners in Benda Village have participated in the economy, family decision-making, children's education, and other household needs. Decisions are not made unilaterally, but through consultation with the husband; some husbands even leave the decision to their wives, although the final decision often rests with the husband. Mr Mahmudin's statement reflects a resigned attitude that decisions are made "together", reflecting indecisiveness.

This indicates that wives' participation is not yet optimal. Women's empowerment must include increasing power, autonomy, and control over their own lives, not just economic participation. Without an increase in status, voice, or other opportunities, the role of primary breadwinner is not true empowerment. Thus, this level of participation has not been fully achieved because the involvement of wives in the role of primary breadwinner in Benda Village only shows that the economic aspect is the main focus, not the development of women's capacity and independence as expected in the concept of empowerment.

### 5. Control

Sara H. Longwe defines the level of control as the highest level at which women have control over the decision-making process through awareness and participation. This is intended to achieve equality of control over the factors of production and distribution of benefits. Equality of control means a balance of control between men and women, so that no one party dominates.<sup>64</sup>

Based on the findings of this study, wives as breadwinners in Benda Village are directly involved in controlling or supervising financial management and appear to be more dominant. As Mrs Nuhedoh said, she is in charge of all household and children's needs, and if there are any problems with financial expenditure, she is the one

---

<sup>64</sup> Ismi Dwi Astuti, "*Buku Modul Dan Bahan Ajar Analisis Gender*", ..., p. VIII-2.

who manages them. Even so, husbands still have control and are also responsible for meeting the family's needs in terms of financial support.

Thus, wives as the main breadwinners in Benda Village have not yet reached a level of control. They are not yet able to exercise control over certain aspects of women's empowerment. Although wives play an important role as breadwinners, they do not yet have full control over certain aspects of life related to women's empowerment, such as important decision-making or the resources that support their position in the family.

The results of the gender theory analysis presented above provide an overview of gender dynamics among wives who are the primary breadwinners for their families in Benda Village. The research data shows that several factors drive the gender roles of wives as the primary breadwinners for their families in Benda Village. Among these, economic needs are the main driver, as husbands' incomes are often insufficient or uncertain, while family needs continue to grow. Improved access to education for women opens up better job opportunities, enabling them to become the backbone of the economy. In addition, the economic independence achieved through this role improves family welfare and reduces dependence on a single source of income. Good access to jobs or other resources is also a significant form of economic empowerment for them.

Meanwhile, there are several factors that hinder the role of wives in Benda Village as the main breadwinners of their families. Despite working hard and being economically responsible, they often experience participation without autonomy, with unequal positions and minimal control in the household and community. Awareness and understanding of gender and women's roles in development are still low. Therefore, more efforts are needed for comprehensive empowerment. Traditional norms and cultures that perpetuate conventional gender roles also hinder them. In addition, the double

burden of economic work and household responsibilities and childcare is prone to causing fatigue and stress.

### **Conclusion**

The role of wives as primary breadwinners in Benda Village, Sirampog Subdistrict, Brebes Regency, arises from socio-economic factors. This is mainly because husbands' incomes are insufficient to meet daily needs and improve welfare. This role has become the main pillar of the family economy, providing clothing, food and shelter, while also supporting children's access to education and health care. This practice is a flexible adaptation of traditional gender roles in the modern era. Based on Longwe's gender analysis model, wives as the main breadwinners in Benda Village have achieved a level of *welfare* and access. This is evident from the fulfilment of basic needs and access to income, education, and health, which improve the quality of family life. However, they have not yet achieved optimal levels of *conscientisation*, *participation*, and *control*. This is because important decisions are still largely dominated by husbands. In addition, there is a lack of full control over the results of work and family resources, so that gender equality is not yet fully realised despite changing economic roles.

### **References**

- Adib, M., dkk. (2024). Tukar peran suami dan istri dalam rumah tangga: Perspektif hukum keluarga dan gender. *Journal of Islamic and Law Studies*, 8(1), 93–112.
- Adliah, & Muchtar, M. I. (2024). Analisis gender dalam perspektif Islam. *Proceedings of the National Seminar on Islamic Family Law*, 3065–3072. Jember: STDI Imam Syafi'i.
- Akbar, D. (2024). *Analisis gender terhadap tukar peran suami-istri dalam pemenuhan nafkah rumah tangga* (Master's Thesis, Postgraduate Programme, Sultan Syarif Kasim Riau State Islamic University).
- Astuti, I. D. (2022). *Buku modul dan bahan ajar analisis gender*. Jakarta: Direktorat Jenderal Penegakan Hukum Lingkungan Hidup dan Kehutanan, Kementerian Lingkungan Hidup dan Kehutanan.
- Bahri, S. (2024). Kewajiban nafkah dalam keluarga: Studi komparatif hukum Islam dan UU di Indonesia terhadap istri yang mencari nafkah. *Jurnal Hukum & Hukum Islam*, 11(1), 63–78.
- Benda Village Office. (2025, 6 May). *Demographic and economic data of households in Benda Village, Sirampog Subdistrict, Brebes District* [Village Archives].
- Chairina, N. (2021). Istri pencari nafkah utama dalam keluarga. *Jurnal Studi Gender dan Anak*, 8(1), 99–110.
- H, Muttaqin. (2024, 10 November). Membangun ekonomi rumah tangga Islami. *Taqin.id*. Retrieved from <https://taqin.id/membangun-ekonomi-rumah-tangga-islami/>
- Muslihah. (2025, 15 September). Kewajiban nafkah dalam hukum keluarga: Hak, tanggung jawab, dan aturan hukumnya. *Perqara.com*. Retrieved from <https://perqara.com/blog/kewajiban-nafkah-dalam-hukum-keluarga/>



- Pasha, A. K. (2024). Diskursus istri sebagai penanggungjawab nafkah utama menurut hukum Islam di Kota Langsa. *Jurnal Hukum Islam Aceh*, 5(2), 1–18.
- Pratiwi, et al. (2025, 26 July). Dinamika pembagian peran gender dan kewajiban nafkah dalam keluarga Muslim modern [Paper]. National Seminar on Islamic Family Law, Imam Syafi'i Islamic College, Jember.
- Risbiyantoro, dkk. (2023). Peran istri sebagai pencari nafkah utama dalam perspektif maqāsid al-syarī'ah: Studi kasus Cinere Depok. *Journal Shariah and Humanities*, 2(2), 195–212.
- Rozali, I. (2017). Konsep memberi nafkah bagi keluarga dalam Islam. *Jurnal Intelektualita: Keislaman, Sosial dan Sains*, 6(2), 145–160.
- Sapitri, E. (2017). *Pembagian peran antara suami-istri dan implikasinya terhadap keharmonisan keluarga: Studi kasus Gampong Lawe Cimanok* (Bachelor's Thesis, Faculty of Da'wah and Communication, UIN Ar-Raniry Banda Aceh).
- Walgito, B. (2017). *Psikologi sosial* (Edisi Revisi). Yogyakarta: Andi Offset.
- Yuliati, D. (2023). *Istri pencari nafkah keluarga perspektif gender: Studi kasus Dukuh Kuwungsari, Sragen* (Master's Thesis, Gender and Development Study Programme, Sebelas Maret University).
- Zakaria, S. (2020). Nafkah dan ketimpangan gender: Analisis nafkah dalam Kompilasi Hukum Islam. *Ijtihad*, 36(2), 45–62.

### **Primary Data (Interview)**

- Arif. (2025, 8 August). Personal interview.
- Durroh. (2025, 8 August). Personal interview.
- Mahmudin. (2025, 18 July). Personal interview.
- Mas'udah. (2025, 18 July). Personal interview.
- Nuhedoh. (2025, 11 July). Personal interview.
- Rohayati. (1 August 2025). Personal interview.

Salamah. (27 July 2025). Personal interview.

Tobiin. (27 July 2025). Personal interview.