

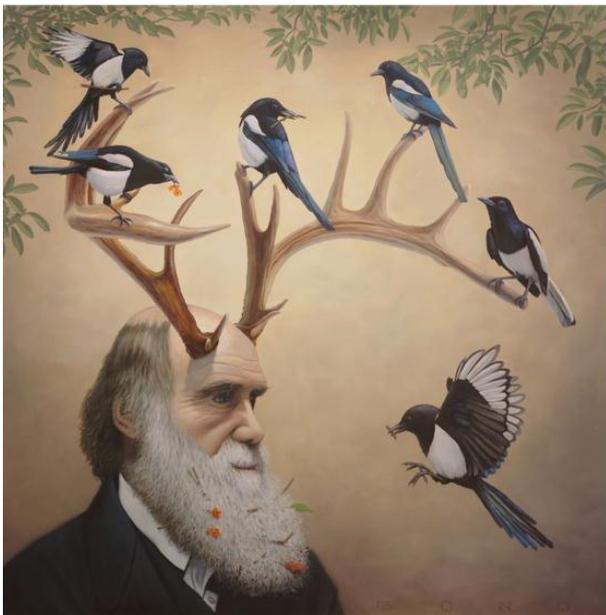
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Commuting Women Farm Labourers: Multiple Loads And The Marginalisation Of Minangkabau Women In Rural Areas

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Abstract

This article aims to describe the phenomenon of the Minang women's life as farm workers who work every day in a neighbouring village which is about 10 to 15 km away. This study used a case study qualitative approach. The data was collected through interviews, observations and documentation studies. The informants consisted of 10 female farm labourers, families, brokers, and community leaders. The results of the study show that female farm workers, both single and married, have a double burden as women. Workplaces that are far from their homes mean that the female farm labourers work early at home to prepare everything that their family members need for the day. In addition, their considerable distance from the workplace also demands that female farm labourers "willingly" jostle in "cheap" transportation to go between work and the home in a state of insecurity. Their wages are relatively cheap compared to the local village farm workers. Women are also increasingly encouraged to become commuter workers. For some groups, female workers are organised by brokers in their original villages. This phenomenon illustrates the complexity of the problems of rural Minang women today in that they are increasingly far from a high position and there is no guarantee of social protection in the matrilineal kinship system.

Keywords: Women, Rural, Farm worker, Minangkabau

Desplazamiento De Mujeres Trabajadoras Agrícolas: Múltiples Cargas Y La Marginación De Las Mujeres Minangkabau En Áreas Rurales

Resumen

Este artículo tiene como objetivo describir el fenómeno de la vida de las mujeres Minang como trabajadoras agrícolas que trabajan todos los días en una aldea vecina que se encuentra a unos 10 o 15 km de distancia. Este estudio utilizó un enfoque cualitativo de estudio de caso. Los datos fueron recolectados a través de entrevistas, observaciones y estudios de documentación. Los informantes consistieron en 10 trabajadoras agrícolas, familias, corredores y líderes comunitarios. Los resultados del estudio muestran que las trabajadoras agrícolas, tanto solteras como casadas, tienen una doble carga que las mujeres. Los lugares de trabajo que están lejos de sus hogares significan que las trabajadoras agrícolas trabajan temprano en casa para preparar todo lo que sus familiares necesitan para el día. Además, su considerable distancia del lugar de trabajo también exige que las trabajadoras agrícolas “voluntariamente” empujen en un transporte “barato” para ir entre el trabajo y el hogar en un estado de inseguridad. Sus salarios son relativamente baratos en comparación con los trabajadores agrícolas locales del pueblo. También se alienta cada vez más a las mujeres a convertirse en trabajadoras de cercanías. Para algunos grupos, las trabajadoras son organizadas por corredores en sus aldeas originales. Este fenómeno ilustra la complejidad de los problemas de las mujeres rurales Minang hoy en día, ya que están cada vez más lejos de una posición alta y no hay garantía de protección social en el sistema de parentesco matrilineal.

Palabras clave: mujeres, campesinas, campesinas, Minangkabau

1. INTRODUCTION

The majority of female workers in both urban and rural areas work in the informal sector. In cities, generally women with weak economic levels work in the informal sector as scavengers, factory workers, domestic helpers and so on. Poor women in rural areas generally work in the subsistence agriculture sector or as farm labourers. This is due to their low level of education, limited skills, limited access to productive resources, cultural

attitudes, patriarchal values, and various other limitations causing the rural women to work as farm labourers. Work that requires great strength is done by men even though the time is relatively short, while female workers do work that requires precision and perseverance (SUDRAJAT, et al. 2015). Working as a farm labourer is a solution for the village women. Weak family economic conditions, for entrepreneurship or trading businesses, collide with capital so then they only rely on energy or physical effort. This is because the road is very easy to reach without having to think about a lot about capital or costs.

Women can work without having to leave their jobs as housewives.

The involvement of women in the informal sector is generally aimed to help the family economy. Women in poor families work to help support the family's economic life. Their role is very much needed, especially when the husband is unable to meet the family's economic needs or when their husband is gone. It is not uncommon for women to do any work and they are willing to work under any conditions (SUMARJAN IN HAPSARI, 2013). Therefore, women workers often do not have a strong bargaining position in terms of their wages, workloads and working conditions that are not conducive for women. Even though she has worked to help the family economy, women still have to be responsible for the housework as well. FAKIH (1996) states that the women's conditions is inseparable from the various forms of gender injustice manifested in the form of marginalisation, subordination, double burden, stereotyping, and physical, psychological and sexual violence. Not infrequently, women bear a double workload because the culture in the community does not accept men involved in domestic work. Not only do they have a double burden, but the wages received by women are used to meet the economic needs of the family. Therefore they often ignore their own needs. In fact, for some of the cases found in this study, women are no longer just helping the family economy. Women are the backbone of the family economy. Husbands actually "use" women (wives) to be the main breadwinners.

The phenomenon of being a commuting farm worker for Minangkabau women, which has been going on for the past few years, is an irony. The cultural ideal of the economic position of Minangkabau women is relatively good because women are provided with an inheritance in the form of land consisting of "houses, fields, and fields" (FATMARIZA, 2013).

This means that economically, Minangkabau women, especially those in rural areas, have relatively secure lives. This phenomenon occurs due to the increasing population that is, however, not accompanied by the expansion of land ownership. As a result, the land is good as agricultural land. Plantations are no longer reliable for the rural Minangkabau women as a source of family economy. The problem will be even more severe for Minangkabau women in the countryside when they also do not have an adequate enough education and skills to find employment outside of the agricultural sector. In fact, the limitations of the agricultural land in one village causes the women to work as farm labourers in other villages which are quite far away. This condition causes them to become shuttle labourers from their homes to other villages.

2. RESEARCH METHOD

This study used a case study qualitative approach. This approach was chosen to be able to explore deeply the experience and the feeling of women as farm labourers who have to work back and forth from their village to other villages. In addition, this study also wants to explore the position of women farm workers as Minang women who ideally have a high cultural position and social protection from their matrilineal relatives. Economically, Minang women in rural areas have an inheritance in the form of land, namely rice fields and grazing fields that allow women to reap the results. However, due to various social changes, especially an increase in population, the land is no longer sufficient to meet the women's economic needs. The research was conducted in Singgalang Village, District X Koto, Tanah Datar, West Sumatra. The phenomenon of space shuttle workers comes from Singgalang Village.

In socioeconomic and educational terms, the condition of the community in Singgalang Village is relatively lower when compared to the other villages in the surrounding area. On the other hand, there are many people in neighbouring villages who are highly educated, so they are no longer in the village. Therefore, neighbouring villages desperately need agricultural labour from outside their villages. This has become a kind of symbiosis and it is also increasingly making the phenomenon of the female space farmer persist. The data was collected through interviews, focus group discussions, and observations. The research informants consisted of 10 women who were farm workers, families, brokers, community leaders and

employers. The interviews were conducted relating to the background, experience and feelings of the informants regarding the work carried out. The FGD was intended to get a general picture of the phenomenon of space shuttle workers in the village of Singgalang. Observations were conducted in order to see the dynamics of their work both at home and at work. The validity test of the data was conducted using triangulation, and the data analysis used the Miles Huberman qualitative data analysis model, namely involving data reduction, data display, verification and conclusion.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

As farm workers, women have an important role in maintaining the survival of their families and communities in the countryside. Quite a number of studies have shown that women have a large role in maintaining the economic viability of families in the countryside. The findings show that the economic role of women is not inferior to men, even though they also have to carry out domestic tasks (ASWIYATI, 2016; PRIMINING-TIAS, 2007; ECK, RAMÓN, 2014). Worldwide, women account for 40 percent of agricultural labour that plays an important role in the production process, as well as marketing agricultural products (EVANS, 2016; DAL-LAKYAN, 2017). Even though they have an important role, many women still experience discrimination when it comes to access to productive economic resources and better economic opportunities in agriculture. This can be seen from the relative number of women who are farm labourers with relatively low wages having to work in places far from their homes. In addition, female farm workers or communities are vulnerable to neglect. Their neglect is caused by many interrelated factors, such as a low level of education, a lack of skills, far from technology literacy, a lack of access, poverty, agricultural policies and village governments that are not yet gender responsive.

For Minang women in rural areas, social change has caused some of them to be marginalised. Their marginalisation can be seen from the women who can no longer take optimal benefits from the land, rice fields and grazed fields which are inherited as economic resources for the Minang women. In almost all of the villages in West Sumatra, part of the agricultural land has been converted into residential land, roads and other businesses such as shops etc. The same thing has happened in Singgalang village, which is the location of this study. This condition will be even worse for the rural

Minang women who do not have the opportunity to get a better education, as well as adequate skills. They will generally become subsistence farmers on an increasingly limited land or farm labourers on other people's land. Singgalang Village has a population of 8,906 inhabitants consisting of 4,598 male inhabitants and 4,308 female residents with a land area of 5,989ha. For more details, the conditions of the land in Singgalang Village can be seen in the following table.

Table 1
Area based on land use

No	Land allotment	Surface area (Ha)
1.	Housing / Settlement	729.7
2.	Rice Field	950.8
3.	Plantation	125.0
4.	Dryland Agriculture	240.0
5.	Protected Forest / State Forest	1108.5
6.	Sleep / Critical Land	2.435
7.	Others	495
	Total	5989.5

RPJMN Singgalang Village 2018

Based on the data above, it can be explained that the land area of the rice fields is approximately 15 percent. Dryland agriculture makes up 4 percent of the total land area in Singgalang Nagari. This means that the land can be an economic source for the people of Singgalang in general and for women in particular. This condition has made some women in Nagari Singgalang become shuttle labourers. This is, as stated by one of the informants, as quoted below:

... We are a big family and there are not many rice fields. The number has never increased. So it is not sufficient to fulfil the economic needs of the families who generally live in the village. We will get a turn once in 2 years working in the family fields. So inevitably I have to find another job, so then the children can go to school... so I become a labourer in people's villages...

Based on the quoted interview above, it can be understood that land such as rice fields can no longer be relied upon for the economic fulfilment of Minang women in the countryside. Limited land and an increasing population force women to seek alternative economic resources to meet their family needs. For uneducated women, the job of being a space farmer is a

logical choice. At the time of this study, there were 72 female farm labourers returning to the village in the study location. Space shuttle workers are not only made up of women who are married, but the number also includes girls and even older women. In general, they have a low level of education, such as that of elementary school and high school. The reason for being a farm worker for a married woman is to help the family economy. This is because the husband's income is not sufficient to meet the family's needs. Quite a lot of women working as farm labourers are the head of the family because they are divorced. For girls, working as farm labourers is part of the impact of family poverty, so that they cannot continue their education to a higher level.

They were forced to drop out of school at the junior high school level. Older women are forced to become farm labourers because of family poverty. Even though the social system in the Minang community means that they will live with their daughters, when the children are in poor condition, it is not possible for the parents to depend on their children and grandchildren. This phenomenon is interesting to analyse because the social system is matrilineal and so girls become the foundation for their parents in old age. In reality, women also depend on their husbands. Therefore, when they do not have a good economic status, their parents must continue to work to make ends meet. In fact, not infrequently, the parents become neglected.

The limited land in the village itself has caused the women to be forced to find work in other villages that need agricultural labour. Therefore the female farm labourers become shuttle labourers. The phenomenon of women becoming farm labourers in villages far from their homes is a new phenomenon in Singgalang Village. This phenomenon has happened for the last 5 years and now there are more and more doing so. Both young and working women take the economic responsibility of the family on by working as commuter farm labourers. This commuter system has made the burden of women increasingly heavy. This can be seen from the time that it takes for women to work in the fields and do domestic work. Women must prepare for the needs of their family members early because they have to go to a workplace that is relatively far from their village. This must be travelled using a vehicle.

This condition also becomes a new land for vehicle providers who also act as intermediaries between the workers and users of labour. This agent will

deliver the farm workers every morning to neighbouring villages that need labour for agricultural land. The female farm workers will be picked up again in the afternoon to be delivered back to their homes. Every morning, the women workers must be on standby waiting for transportation and likewise in the afternoon after they finish working. It becomes a common sight in the morning and evening, that of women labourers waiting for the shuttle bus. If there is a delay, they will be at risk of spending in order to rent a more expensive vehicle because you have to rent your own vehicle. The average wage of female farm labourers every day is Rp. 50,000. They work 5 to 6 days a week.

Based on an analysis of the research findings, there are several factors that encourage rural women to work outside of the village to become agricultural labourers. First, most women can no longer access agricultural land. As is known, Minang women in the village will get a family inheritance in the form of agricultural land such as rice fields and grazing fields. However, the inheritance of rice fields and grazing fields is getting less. Therefore, farming on the land itself cannot be expected to meet the economic needs of the family in isolation. Second, the level of education of women is relatively low, making it impossible for them to find alternative employment in addition to the agricultural sector.

Third, the family's economic burden cannot be handled by men alone. It is a tradition that Minang women will never remain silent when meeting the family's economic needs. This is thought to be the impact of the matrilineal system which places women as a household control centre including economic responsibility. Therefore when there is a divorce, women are generally able and successful alone. SUASTI AND FATMARIZA's (2001) research also shows that Minang women feel a great sense of responsibility towards meeting the economic needs of the household. Therefore they will do any work so then their children can meet their needs and education. They work as traders in traditional markets as "handymen", as well as working on embroidery, weaving etc.

Fourth, there are job opportunities for them to become farm labourers in neighbouring villages which are increasingly open for days. This opportunity is also a new job for agents to become workers. Based on the further analysis of this condition, it can be said that there has been a "commodification" of female workers by agents who have a network with farmers

who own land in the destination villages. This phenomenon shows that Minang women in rural areas can no longer expect economic guarantees from “pusako” land. Village women who do not have an education do not have many choices except to become farm labourers. The alternative to becoming a commuter farmer is available, which is a dilemma and a choice for women, causing the women’s burden to be more severe.

Women commuter farm workers bear a heavier workload. The work conditions require them to go back and forth from their villages to other villages which are quite far away. This requires far more energy and time than if they work in their own villages. They have to leave home early. Therefore, they also have to get up early and prepare for their family needs in advance. In the countryside, the division of labour in the domestic sphere still cannot be done because the values are still relatively strong. Therefore domestic work is still the full responsibility of women. The community still cannot accept men helping them with the homework. On the contrary, the community can accept women working to earn a living. Therefore, the socialisation of gender equality and justice in rural communities must continue to be pursued so then both men and women have good gender awareness. This, in turn, can ease the workload of the women. In addition to carrying out productive and reproductive work, women in rural areas also have a social responsibility.

In rural areas, social activities such as helping and attending weddings, births, deaths etc. demand women’s participation. In these social activities, women not only contribute energy but they also contribute in the form of material, both in the form of money and goods. It is not uncommon for women to be indebted to fulfil their social responsibilities as well as to maintain the good name of their core family and their extended family. FATMARIZA (2012) found that women as Bundokanduang in the big family of Minang bear the burden of a large family (tribe) on behalf of the male leader (tribal). It has become a tradition in rural Minang for social activities in the form of parties, as well as other community social activities, to be managed by women. Thus the workload of women in rural areas is increasingly heavy.

4. CONCLUSIONS

The involvement of women in meeting their economic needs in general

and the economic needs of their families in particular cannot be ignored. The facts show that the involvement of women in fulfilling the family economy is needed so then the family life can run smoothly. Structural and systemic changes often have a negative impact on women. This is caused by the still strong patriarchal values that cause gender injustice. The phenomenon of women commuter farm labourers is one of the effect of this change. Minang women in the village can no longer rely on “pusako” land and property to fulfil the economic needs of their family. The job opportunity of becoming a commuter worker economically provides benefits for the family but it also aggravates the double burden of women. This is further compounded by the lack of good gender awareness among the rural communities, in that there can be a sharing of roles between men and women. In addition, there is an impression of commodification of the women farm workers by the agents in the village. The implementation of a Village Law that is more gender responsive is expected to be able to bring changes to the economic life of women in rural areas.

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