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Women's Position in Patriarchal Kinship System

Ikhwanuddin Harahap

State Institute of Islamic Studies Padangsidempuan, Indonesia

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WOMEN'S POSITION IN PATRIARCHAL KINSHIP SYSTEM

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Abstract

Spirit of gender equalities is currently stretching amid the strong patriarchal system in North Padang Lawas District North Sumatera. In terms of education, women get the same rights as men, even in some villages, more women go to school/college than men. There is a growing slogan that is "anak do boru, boru do anak" (boys and girls are the same). Women have the freedom to choose their own spouse and are not bound to the custom of "manyunduti". However, in the economic field, wives work in the fields and tore rubber to support the family's economy besides they have to do all the household works. Based on the gender perspective, this is a form of gender injustice, namely double burden. Another form of inequality is in terms of inheritance, in which they get little part even in the form of giving (pangalehenan/olongate). This is a form of marginalization experienced by women in North Padang Lawas District North Sumatera.

Keywords: *Women, Patriarchal, Gender Analysis, Gender Equalities*



A. Introduction

Women are God's creatures who have a special role and position in human life. But sometimes the roles and positions are constructed by systems, perspectives, and human culture, especially by men until causing injustice towards them. In social science, studies on this subject are known as gender.

The discourse of gender does not recognize the complete word as long as there is an injustice between men and women. Women's Encyclopedia Study explains that gender is a concept of culture that seeks to make the distinction in terms of the role, behavior, mentality and emotional characteristics between men and women that develop in society. Gender as the cultural expectations of men and women, while in Indonesia gender is defined as mental interpretation and culture of sex differences, men and women. Gender is usually utilized to show the division of jobs that are considered appropriate for men and women. Furthermore, Elaine Showalter, as quoted by Nasaruddin Umar, said that gender is not just a distinction between men and women from socio-cultural construction, but gender is an analytic concept that can explain something (Nasarudin Umar: 1999: 33-35).

The gender focus study mainly discusses protests and claims related to injustice and discrimination of women. Injustice and discrimination occur in almost all fields, ranging from international, state, religious, social, cultural, economic, even to the household level. Gender is become a problem because creating differences in roles socially, responsibilities, rights, functions and activities of men and women in society. These differences ultimately make people tend to be discriminatory and picky about the treatment of access, participation, and control in the development outcomes of men and women. This condition occurs for long time.

In the Islam perspective, Islam carries on the ideas of equality and equation and the idea of reinstating women's rights. Fundamentalists, ignoring the social context of the Qur'anic verses, describe men as superior beings over women-a view which has subsequently caused so much suffering among Muslim women. Even ironically this superiority is then crystallized in the books of jurisprudence (Fiqh) which are the basis

for Muslims (Mai Yamani: 2000:37). The same thing was also expressed by Masdar F. Mas'udi (1996: 167) that the yellow books generally placed men over women.

Gender which is inherent in both men and women who are socially and culturally constructed like a man is strong and rational while women are known to be weak and irrational, whilst in fact, Gender does not question sex (Lvina, 2015: 1-18). Gender differences are not a problem as long as it does not create gender inequalities. But the matters are that gender differences have created injustices, both for men and especially for women (Mansour Faqih: 1994:12). Such conditions are easy to occur in societies that applied the patriarchal kinship system, a kinship that takes the line of men or fathers. In this kinship system, women are vulnerable to experiencing social injustice, including gender inequality.

One area that is strongly having traditions is the people of North Padang Lawas District. Traditions are enormously strong in the lives of people in this District when compared to other districts in the South Tapanuli region. The patriarchal kinship system underlies the lives of people in this area. The characteristics of the community with a patriarchal kinship system are 1) social unity whose organization is based on the unity of male transmits genealogy (fatherhood). 2) The genealogical members and successors are sons, 3) Daughters will leave their clans, 4) Life of the community is sustained by inheritance, 5) In the beginning there were no search property or joint property, only then did the search treasure become an embryo of joint property. 6) The assets are individually owned and separated from the inheritance, and finally, it can be inherited by girls (Koentjaraningrat: 1996:124). The kinship relationships found in society are very strong that they are not easily affected by the social change (Dwi Narwoko and Bagong Suyanto: 2010: 46)

The phenomenon in the area of North Padang Lawas District shows that their patriarchal system of kinship leads to injustice towards women. It is depicted from several facts, such as access to education that prioritizes boys. There is no opportunity for the woman to get an education until the college stage, while the boys have. Another example is



inheritance. There are people who do not divide inheritance according to the provisions of the applicable law, such as Islamic law. However, they share it according to custom or traditional law. If it is divided based on the provisions of customary law, the women's part is much smaller compared to the distribution of the Islamic inheritance.

This study tries to look at the phenomenon of women's position in the patriarchal kinship system, especially the people of North Padang Lawas District North Sumatera.

B. Method

This research is explorative research, which is a research that aims to develop new knowledge or conjectures that are still new, then it is useful to understand or identify alternative decisions (Mudrajad Kuncoro: 2003: 72). The primary data was obtained from the results of questionnaires and interviews with informants or respondents, those are traditional leaders, community leaders and women in North Padang Lawas District. While secondary data is obtained from books related to gender issues. The data collection technique of this research is observation. Direct observations identify what happens to the object of research (Burhan Bungin: 2005:133). Observations are made because this observation technique is based on direct observation, this observation allows researchers to be able to understand complicated situations (Lexi J. Moleong: 2000: 125). Furthermore, other data collection techniques carried out by interview.

C. Finding and Discussion

1. Finding

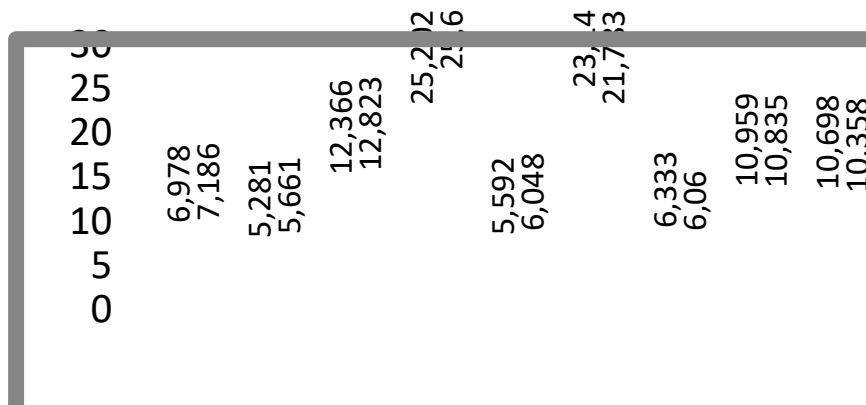
a. Overview of North Padang Lawas District

Since the Republic of Indonesia accepted sovereignty at the end of 1949, the division of the Government Administration Region underwent a change. In addition, the issuance of the Law of the Republic of Indonesia Number 12 of 1998 and ratified on November 23, 1998, the establishment of the District of Mandailing Natal, South Tapanuli Regency was divided into 2 Regencies, namely Mandailing Natal Regency (the capital Panyabungan)

with the number of Administrative District are 8 Districts and Regencies South Tapanuli (the capital city of Padangsidempuan) with a number of administrative districts of 16 Sub-districts.

Padang Lawas Utara District is new broadening Regency from South Tapanuli Regency in 2007. The legal basis for the establishment of North Padang Lawas Regency is the Law of the Republic of Indonesia Number 37 of 2007 and was ratified on August 10, 2007 about the establishment of North Padang Lawas Regency and Law Republic of Indonesia Number 38 of 2007 and was ratified on August 10, 2007 concerning the establishment of Padang Lawas Regency. Today the first leader of a district is governing by the Regent of Bachrum Harahap.

The population of North Padang Lawas District is as many as 262,895 people. This population spreads in twelve sub-districts. More details are showed in the table below:



The 2013-2018 North Padang Lawas District development mission is as follows: 1) Realizing a democratic, aspiration and accountable government system in order to achieve a prosperous society; 2) Continuing the acceleration of equitable development by taking into account environmental sustainability; 3) Continuing the development of rural infrastructure in order to improve people's living standards and fulfill basic needs; 4) Improving the management of education and health services by accelerating the development of supporting facilities that are more accessible in order to educate the community and facilitate health access; 5)



Improve the implementation of religious activities and the construction of religious facilities and infrastructure; 6) Continuing to foster young generation's interests and talents in order to have more competitive abilities; 7) Continuing to improve the quality of government apparatus through gradual and sustainable education and training to prepare efficient and competitive human resources; 8) Improve the quality and competence of the workforce by increasing the skills and skills of the workforce through intensive and continuous training; 9) Creating the use of information and communication technology to create synchronization, socialization and development effectiveness; 10) Continuing the spatial planning process of North Padang Lawas District; 11) Optimizing the implementation of coordination and synchronization in the process of planning, implementing and evaluating development; 12) Maintain a dynamic and conducive climate for the growth and development of small and medium enterprises and strengthen regional economic growth; 13) Applying the principle of populist economy based on natural resources; 14) Optimizing the use of idle lands into productive land through regulations and production stimulation policies; 15) Increasing the role and participation of the community and empowerment by paying attention to gender equality.

b. The Existence of Women in North Padang Lawas District

The women's position of the patriarchal kinship system in the North Padang Lawas District community is analyzed by gender perspective based on the gap in the economy, education, marriage and inheritance (gender issues) seen from the position, function, roles, and responsibilities.

In economic terms, the women of North Padang Lawas District are disequilibrium to men both in terms of position, function, roles, and responsibilities. The majority of women are not independent yet because of their dependence on men, because economic responsibility is on the shoulders of men. Men become household heads as well as the backbone of the family by working as farmers. Although economic responsibility is on the shoulders of men, some women are also lowering the burden and

responsibility of men. The majority of women in North Padang Lawas District, especially wives, work in the fields and torment.

The principle of work is carried out solely to help the family economy and not as a support for the family's economic burden. Thus women in North Padang Lawas District are tough and hardworking women. They do not remain silent at home as housewives, but they intervene in working to ease the economic burden of the family.

Analytically review based on a gender perspective, the phenomenon of women in North Padang Lawas District in the economic field is one form of gender inequality, especially the double burden as women. In contrast term, women, especially wives, work at home to complete all household chores such as washing clothes, drying, ironing, cooking, washing dishes, sweeping and cleaning houses and yards, etc., while on the other hand, the wives must also work in gardens or fields. Thus, it is taboo in North Padang Lawas District if a husband cooks rice in the household, or wash clothes in the river, or hang clothes in the yard and so on. This picture is found in the patriarchal kinship system. From a gender perspective, all domestic work is actually the result of cultural construction that imposes all domestic work to the wife.

In education, women of North Padang Lawas District are equal to men both in terms of position, function, roles, and responsibilities. This means that women of North Padang Lawas District have the freedom and independence to determine and obtain an education at all levels, from elementary school to college. Education is important for the people of North Padang Lawas District. A few decades ago, education was dominated by men where men were prioritized to get education compared to women. Women live with their parents in the village, while boys migrate to college. Girls help their parents every day in the fields or gardens.

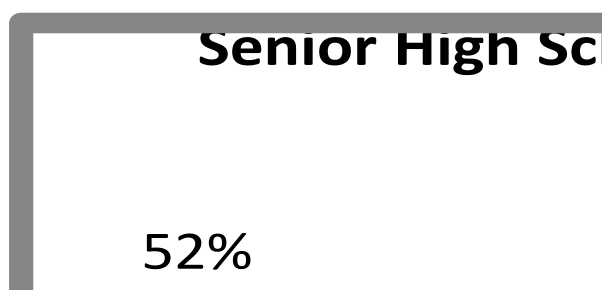
This phenomenon is no longer found in North Padang Lawas District because the equality between men and women has found in education. Parents view the position, functions, roles, and responsibilities of men and women as equal in education. They argue about women's right to be educated as it is not only the rights of men. There is a philosophy starting



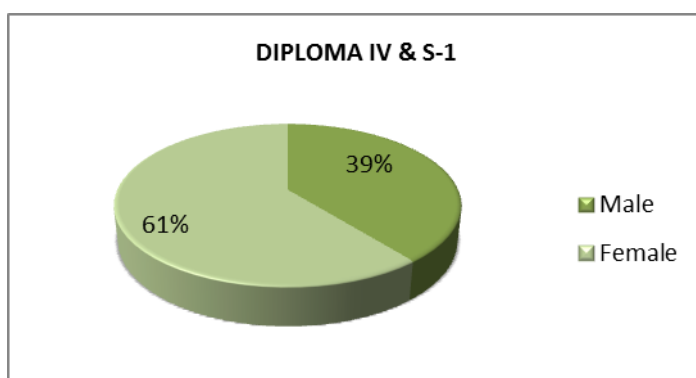
among the community, known as *anak do boru, boru do anak*. It means that boys are the same as girls, especially in terms of education.

Even current reality shows that the number of women attending school is higher than in men. It is because parents consider that girls have a higher learning spirit compared to men. In addition, girls who migrate to school or college are better able to live concerned, simple and responsive towards the economic conditions of their parents. Girls are more capable of "marhancit" (facing concerned life) than boys.

The above description is in accordance with the existing education data in North Padang Lawas District. Where the number of female high school students is upper than the number of male students; men as many as 1,658 students and women as many as 1,775 students.



Meanwhile, the amount for the Vocation/Undergraduate shows that the number of male students was 2.79 percent and women were 4.33 percent.



Based on the data above, it depicts that more women attend school than men at the high school level. Likewise for universities which show that

similar picture. This reality shows that women's awareness in terms of education is getting higher. Women in North Padang Lawas District find momentum and opportunities to improve their scientific capacity and competence in future life.

In the term of the marriage, women of North Padang Lawas District are equal to men both in terms of position, function, role, and responsibility. Women have the freedom to determine who they will marry. In other words, women have the rights of choosing a mate or prospective husband instead of arranged by their parents. Parents will not impose their will on their children's life partners. Even if there is a tradition known as an ideal marriage term called *manyunduti* (married to a daughter of mother's brother or cousins) as an ideal marriage, this is no longer seen as a necessity.

If viewed from a gender perspective, women in North Padang Lawas District have equality with men. Women have the authority and freedom to determine their future husbands. Generally, parents do not intervene in girls to choose their future spouse. Even if there are such things, the amount is not significant.

In terms of inheritance, the women of North Padang Lawas District are not equal to men both in terms of position, function, roles, and responsibilities. Women only receive a small portion of inheritance treasure, there is even a *pangalehenan/olong ate* (giving) division, outside the part of the division. In the community of North Padang Lawas District, the position of women in inheritance problems has various proportions and provisions. This depends on how the division is solved. There are at least three types of methods used to solve inheritance problems: based on the provisions of Islamic law, based on customary provisions and an agreement. The majority of the North Padang Lawas District is Muslim, as many as 98 percent while non-Muslims are 2 percent. If referring to this data, ideally the distribution of inheritance is carried out based on the provisions of Islamic law. But in reality, only a small part of the community uses Islamic law in the distribution of inheritance.

People who use the provisions of Islamic law in dividing inheritance will ask help from religious leaders and scholars. The second method of



distributing inheritance is according to customary provisions. In customs, women receive a share of inheritance which is much lower than men. For example, there are 4 male heirs and 6 female heirs. The inheritance which will be divided first is divided into 6, where each male heir of each person receives 1 part. The remaining 1 part is divided by the six female heirs. This method is more commonly applied in North Padang Lawas District.

The third method of distributing inheritance is an agreement. The intended agreement is the deliberation of all heirs to divide the inheritance. In this way, the respective sections are not determined according to Islamic law or customary law, but are deliberated and resolved in a peaceful manner. Besides the mentioned method, the other method of division is pangalehenan/olong ate. The core of this method is giving. In this way, women receive gifts from the distribution of inheritance carried out by their brothers. So, the division of inheritance is done by men and does not involve their sisters. After the division was made, men gave a portion of the inheritance they received to their sister.

If observed from a gender perspective, the phenomenon that occurs in the inheritance division in North Padang Lawas District is a form of marginalization (economic impoverishment) against women. Even though not every marginalization of women is caused by gender inequality, what is questioned in gender analysis is the marginalization is created by gender differences towards women.

2. Discussion

There are three factors that led to the women placement of the patriarchal kinship system in North Lawas community, namely customs, law, and education. The customs of North Padang Lawas District place women as second class. This is showed from various custom/traditions systems, including clans. The class used by their descent is a clan from father/male. Thus, clans from women/mothers are unused in families. For example, if his father has a Harahap clan and his mother has the Siregar clan, then all their children, both boys, and girls, are given the Harahap clan. In addition, other evidence that being under men is that

women are not included as a whole in "a family tree" (stambuk). In the stambuk, the male lineage is written completely until the last descendants while the women are not written fully until they are written and the descendants are not written. Stambuk is a family tree consisting of four or five descendants while all the descendants are coming from men. Meanwhile, if the family only has daughters, then it stops only there, and the descendants are not written.

In the tradition, the women have a position as *anak boru* which is the element part of the Dalihan Na Tolu (Three Tungku) which became the life philosophy of the people in North Padang Lawas District. This position as a *anak boru* has meanings and implications that place women in a "marginal" position.

Viewed from a legal and legislative perspective, women in the ideal North Padang Lawas District are equal to men. On a national scale, many rules and regulations carry the idea of equality between men and women but the implementation of these rules has not run optimally. Nevertheless, the spirit of gender equality has begun to "stretch" in North Padang Lawas District. This can mainly be seen from the aspects of education and marriage as previously explained. The North Padang Lawas District Government is serious about voicing PUG (Pengarutusan Gender). This was done as a manifestation of the implementation of Presidential Instruction No. 9 of 2000 concerning Gender Mainstreaming in National Development. This Presidential Instruction aims to improve the position, role, and quality of women, as well as efforts to realize gender equality and justice in family life, community, nation, and state, so all women are included in the entire national development process. In addition, the North Padang Lawas District government established PKDRT (Elimination of Domestic Violence) as an effort to minimize gender issues. PDKRT administrators were formed in each sub-district. Only in practice, this policy has not been supported by a maximum system and implementation.

Another policy that contributes to the women's position is the regulation of the women proportion in the management of organizations,



political parties, parliaments and so on. This includes the obligation to involve women in taking policies for of ADD (Village Fund Budget) currently using. Through this Village Fund, women are empowered by forming business groups. For example a women's business group in Padang Garugur Village that has produced various products such as Balakka Syrup, Banana Skin Chips, Betel Leaf Chips and so on. In addition, the Village Government will produce Ants Sugar based on palm water (nira). During this time the palm water was produced into vinegar, namely *tuak* drink.

Another factor that caused a better position of women in Padang Lawas Utara District was education. Women in this area have a high awareness of the importance of education. This awareness encourages them to study from elementary school until college. In fact, they not only study in schools in North Padang Lawas District, but they study in schools and colleges outside North Padang Lawas District. In some villages, more women are studying to go to college compared to men. Some boys work to help parents in their parents' rubber or oil palm plantations. The implication of women's awareness of the importance of education is the current reason for social change in women's lives. Women are increasingly educated; awareness of gender equality is immensely high. Many of the women work in the public sector. Thus, women's education contributes to their equality compared to men in North Padang Lawas District.

E. Conclusion

Women in North Padang Lawas District North Sumatera are struggling to get gender equality and break down the "solid wall" that confines them to the patriarchal frame. Their struggle seems to gain momentum even though it does not touch all aspects. Women have equal education and even will exceed men. They also have the freedom to choose and determine their spouse in marriage. But the results of the struggle in the field of inheritance and economics are not as good as education and marriage. This circumstance of women's positions in North Padang Lawas District North Sumatera is due to their customs, law, and

educational factors. This startling gender awareness should be welcomed by the government so that the gender mainstreaming program (PUG) carried out by the North Padang Lawas District government can be realized quickly. In addition, women activists must fight tougher fully to free themselves from the shackles of "patriarchy".

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