

## Islam, women labor and economic development

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### Abstract

The purpose of this paper is to find out the position of female workers in Islam, and the role of women in building prosperity for themselves, surrounding communities and participating in the nation's economic development. It is undeniable that women in Muslim countries lag behind their counterparts in non-Muslim countries in terms of participation in the workforce. However, a large number of studies show that religion is not the culprit in preventing women from being active in the labor market, but rather the cultural attitude that shapes labor force participation decisions. In the author's view, one way for women to achieve prosperity is to give them the opportunity to work. For women, the goal is to provide opportunities to work not only to increase income but also to manage various social vulnerabilities, especially poverty and domestic violence. Women's access to work also means the opportunity to engage in broader socio-political relations. This means that women can contribute to the development of their environment because they no longer live in the household environment, but have enough time to interact in the public space to transform social capital into economic capital in the form of opportunities to engage in economic activities. However, the effort to convert social capital into economic capital is not easy. There are still unfavourable views on the grounds that women's abilities are not commensurate with men which ultimately limits women from accessing livelihoods. Therefore, it is necessary to find a perspective that places men and women in an equal and fair position, especially in acquiring, utilizing, and developing assets and access to economic resources. It is time for the state to formulate public policies that place women as the main actors and not only as objects or complementary policies. In this paper we conclude that the importance of the role of the government through the integration of formal and Islamic education methods to the rearrangement of the labour market, so that women better understand the market and participatory communities become convinced to support women's labour force participation.

Keywords: Islam, Women Labor, government's role, and economic development.

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### Abstrak

Tujuan dari artikel ini adalah untuk mengetahui posisi pekerja perempuan dalam Islam, dan peran perempuan dalam membangun kesejahteraan bagi diri mereka sendiri serta masyarakat sekitar dan partisipasi mereka dalam pembangunan ekonomi bangsa. Tidak dapat dipungkiri bahwa perempuan di negara-negara Muslim tertinggal dari perempuan di negara-negara non-Muslim dalam hal partisipasi tenaga kerja. Namun, sejumlah penelitian menunjukkan bahwa agama tidak mencegah perempuan untuk aktif di pasar tenaga kerja, tetapi lebih pada sikap budaya yang membentuk keputusan untuk terlibat dalam pasar tenaga kerja. Dalam pandangan penulis, salah satu cara bagi wanita untuk mencapai kemakmuran adalah dengan memberi mereka kesempatan untuk bekerja. Bagi perempuan, tujuannya memberikan peluang mereka bekerja tidak hanya untuk meningkatkan pendapatan, tetapi juga untuk mengelola berbagai kerentanan sosial, terutama kemiskinan dan kekerasan dalam rumah tangga. Akses perempuan untuk bekerja juga berarti kesempatan untuk terlibat dalam hubungan sosial-politik yang lebih luas. Ini berarti perempuan dapat berkontribusi pada pengembangan lingkungan, karena mereka tidak lagi tinggal di lingkungan rumah tangga, tetapi memiliki cukup waktu untuk berinteraksi di ruang public, sehingga mereka memiliki kemampuan mengubah modal sosial menjadi modal ekonomi dalam bentuk peluang untuk terlibat dalam kegiatan ekonomi. Namun, upaya untuk mengubah modal sosial menjadi modal ekonomi tidak mudah. Masih ada pandangan yang tidak menguntungkan dengan alasan bahwa kemampuan

perempuan tidak sepadan dengan laki-laki yang pada akhirnya membatasi perempuan untuk mengakses mata pencaharian. Oleh karena itu, perlu untuk menemukan perspektif yang menempatkan laki-laki dan perempuan dalam posisi yang setara dan adil, terutama dalam memperoleh, memanfaatkan, dan mengembangkan aset serta akses kepada sumber daya ekonomi. Sudah saatnya bagi negara untuk merumuskan kebijakan publik yang menempatkan perempuan sebagai aktor utama dan tidak hanya sebagai objek atau kebijakan pelengkap. Dalam artikel ini kami menyimpulkan bahwa peran pemerintah melalui integrasi metode pendidikan formal dan Islam sangatlah penting untuk menata ulang pasar tenaga kerja, sehingga perempuan lebih memahami pasar dan masyarakat menjadi yakin untuk mendukung keterlibatan perempuan dalam pasar tenaga kerja.

Kata Kunci : Islam, pekerja perempuan, peran pemerintah, perkembangan ekonomi

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## **Introduction**

Increase in the proportion of women in the labor force has been one of the most remarkable developments operating in the labor market in recent years. There has never before been such a great number of economically active women. In almost every country, the labor force is dominated by male workers while the female labor force participation rate did not show an upward trend over the past two decades. According to World Bank data, globally the female labor force participation rate is increasing, although the increase is not too high. The worldwide number of female labor force (employed and unemployed women) in 2017 reached 39, 289% compared to 2007 which reached 39, 666%. (International Labor Office, 2017). In Indonesia, based on data on the Employment to population ratio-EPR, male labor force participation reaches 62.44% and women only 37.56%. While for Low Pay Rate-LPR, 48% of men and 52% of low pay positions are occupied by women (Central Statistics Agency, 2017). That is, there is a gap between women and men in terms of economic activity but it has been reduced but not significantly. (Korotayev, Issaev, & Shishkina, 2015).

Research conducted by the Australia Indonesia Partnership for Economic Governance reports that the Indonesian economy has undergone dramatic changes over the last few decades. Indonesia achieved middle income status in 2004 and high growth also rapidly reduced poverty from 23 percent of the population in 1999 to 11 percent in 2016. The share of manufacturing and services in the economy is growing, and agriculture is declining (although still a high level overall). Yet one area that has not changed much is participation of women in the labour market. This report presents new research on the labour market situation for women and gender wage gaps in Indonesia, based on the National Socio-Economic Survey (Susenas). At 51 percent, Indonesia's female labour force participation rate is well below that for males (around 80 percent) and low relative to countries at a comparable stage of development. The main drivers of low female labour force participation in Indonesia are marriage, children below two years of age in the household, low educational attainment (below upper-secondary and tertiary levels) and changing economic structure (decline in the female-friendly sector of agriculture due to transitions from rural to urban areas in particular) and the research also finds evidence of a significant gender wage gap in Indonesia. The gender wage gap is 34 percent in the formal sector and 50 percent in the informal sector.

From this thing the researchers analyzed that most of this gap is not due to differences in productive characteristics but reflects discriminatory practices. There is also strong evidence of 'sticky floors' in the formal sector—women at the lower end of the wage distribution facing a much bigger gender wage gap than women in higher wage jobs. In the informal sector (where most of the women participate), the wage gap is large and constant for all workers. In another area of economic participation, entrepreneurship, women tend to be under-represented. This is despite the concentration of women in the self-employed informal sector. Low entrepreneurship is often

attributed to women's difficulty accessing financial resources. (Australia Indonesia Partnership for Economic Governance, 2017).

In addition, it is not surprising if there is a gap in terms of wages, position in employment between female and male workers, because the interest in society so far when talking about female workers tends to invite excessive cynicism. Because, all this time women foreign labor or known as TKW got the connotation as a rude, low-educated workforce and usually related to household jobs and other domestic tasks. It is very possible that a negative impression of migrant workers is because all this time the TKW connotes domestic help, or baby siter. These rules in the world of labor in Indonesia are known as lower-level labor (Pranowo, 1993). Problems related to women's rights have emerged as a very important problem in various parts of the world and in all walks of life. In general, the issues surrounding women are always inseparable from the social system in which they are a part. The values inherent in women or femininity are social constructions involving various forces. The effort to understand women is therefore also an attempt to understand the community.

However, women who are an integral part of Indonesian society have begun to receive special attention since the *Pelita III*. Based on the 1978 GBHN, the role of women began to be discussed specifically in the 1983 GBHN the discussion about women became increasingly intense. This gives an indication that the participation of women who are actively involved in the life of nation-building, especially national development, is absolutely necessary, (Parawansa, 2003). Women who were originally claimed to only have the right to occupy domestic territory or households, for example, it turned out that at this time had begun to explore public areas which at first was considered to be an unusual thing. Various reasons were conveyed to get justification from the public about the presence of women in this public area, starting from the economic pressure of the family to the desired actualization in parallel with men. Thus, the role of women in development will be a reality and not just a dream. In macro terms, the involvement of women in the economic sector shows that there is an additional "supply" of labor in the labor market (Bank & Working, n.d). From this point of view, competition for employment opportunities is becoming increasingly fierce.

This condition of course gives the consequence of the double burden that must be accepted by the woman. On the one hand she must carry out her domestic role in taking care of her food, clothing, home needs and on the other hand she must make a living to meet family needs. This new phenomenon is of course a new trend that deserves attention. In line with the proliferation of controversies surrounding women with their dual roles as housewives and as workers (read: female workers), the dimensions of this paper will be expanded, not only female labor and involvement in national administration, but the dual role of women is analyzed from religious side, specifically how Islam views the existence of these female workers.

Because it becomes interesting to study, the nobility of human values in Islam is reflected in the existence of sincere recognition and high appreciation for human equality. Ideally, and as a logical consequence of this, then each individual (read: male and female) has obligations that must be fulfilled and has rights that must be accepted. But unfortunately, the essence of equality teachings often becomes biased when understanding Islamic teachings has been contaminated with a patriarchal frame of mind so that different views arise about the status and position of women who are judged to be inferior to men. This pattern of thinking will be able to raise opinions about the existence of gender-biased Islamic teachings and lead to the emergence of wrong perceptions about Islam which are considered to discredit women (Ambarwati, 2009).

### **The Position of Women In Islam**

Islam has bestowed dignity on all humanity on earth regardless of differences in sex, race and ethnicity. This means that, the dignity that Islam conferred on women is an integral part of the

dignity which is also bestowed on all humanity. Furthermore, Islam also strengthens that this dignity is built on the reality of mere humanity, which includes men and women equally. This equality of dignity will occur when framed by devotion and good deeds.

Allah further explained that the position of man consists of several levels. However, the differentiation of the gradation of dignity is not because of the difference in the "reality of dignity" itself, but because of their devotion - men and women - to God. From this differentiation of the gradation of devotion, there was also a differentiation of gradations in terms of good deeds for the benefit of humanity. Because the differentiation factor is only one gradation of human dignity, namely devotion to God, then the reward or reward for humans for all their deeds is also one, both in quantity and quality. There is no reason for men and women to obtain gradation differentiation in terms of retribution (Ambarwati, 2009).

The position of women in Islamic according to the research done by Sally Baden, discusses the position of women in Islamic societies (with particular focus on Egypt, Yemen, Mali, Bangladesh and Sudan) and women's strategies for change, as well as factors which circumscribe these strategies or create new opportunities for women. The intended emphasis is on the last five years (1987-92), Women in the Quran and the Sunna, and Islamic (Shariah) law, and their implications for women. To support this opinion, numerous passages can be found in the Quran which underline the spiritual equality of men and women, and the duty of both men and women to meet the religious obligations of Islam (see al-Faruqi, 1988, for examples). However, the Quran ascribes different social roles to men and women, as a consequence of their different natures. Within marriage, women's role in the domestic sphere is emphasised, and other activities are permissible only in as much as they do not conflict with family obligations.

Men are cast as providers for and protectors of the family, including children and wives but also female relatives: 'Men are the protectors and maintainers of women, because God has given the one more (strength) than the other and because they support them from their means. Moreover, questions of sexual morality, marriage and family life, divorce, custody, inheritance and so on have a prominent place in the main texts of Islam. Muslim feminists have played a significant role in these debates, often attempting to give an egalitarian interpretation of the texts, as well as showing the prominent role of women in early Islam, particularly figures such as Khadija, Aisha and Sukanya are an example of this approach (Baden, 1992).<sup>1</sup>

The status of women in society is neither a new issue nor is it a fully settled one. The position of Islam on this issue has been among the subjects presented to the Western reader with the least objectivity. The teachings of Islam are based essentially on the Qur'an (God's revelation) and Hadeeth (elaboration by Prophet Muhammad). The Qur'an and the Hadeeth, properly and unbiasedly understood, provide the basic source of authentication for any position or view which is attributed to Islam.

Family, society and ultimately the whole of mankind is treated by Islam on an ethical basis. Differentiation in sex is neither a credit nor a drawback for the sexes. Therefore, when we talk about status of woman in Islam it should not lead us to think that Islam has no specific guidelines, limitations, responsibilities and obligations for men. What makes one valuable and respectable in the eyes of Allah, the Creator of mankind and the universe, is neither one's prosperity, position, intelligence, physical strength nor beauty, but only one's consciousness and awareness (taqwa).

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<sup>1</sup> Khadija was Muhammad's first wife, fifteen years his senior and well known as a merchant. Aishawas also a wife of the Prophet (said to be his favourite) and played a prominent role politically andmilitarily in the struggles following his death. She is also thought to have challenged many of thehadith which diminish the role of women. Sukanya was one of the great-granddaughters of theProphet, through Fatima, and the wife of Ali (the ill-fated fourth orthodox caliph) who challenged manyof the assumptions about Muslim marriage - she never pledged ta'a or obedience to any of her five (orsix) husbands and refused to acknowledge their right to polygyny. She was also prominent in politicaland cultural life.

However, since in the Western culture and in cultures influenced by it, there exists a disparity between men and women and therefore there is more need for stating Islam's position on important issues in a clear way (Ahmad, 1980).

Men and women are of the same family, and as such have similar rights and duties, and their Lord promises them in the Glorious Qur'an:

*"Never will I waste the work of a worker among you, whether male or female, the one of you being from the other."*[*Al-Qur'an* 3:195].

Thus, in the Islamic tradition, a woman has an independent identity. She is a responsible being in her own right and carries the burden of her moral and spiritual obligations.

The status of women in Islam, is an issue that is pertinent in present times; both due to the divergence of cultural practices in the Muslim world from the Islamic perspective and the erroneous perception in the West, that Islam subjugates womenfolk. A dispassionate study of the primary sources of Islam, along with an analysis of the position of women in societies where Islam was implemented, actually proves that for women, Islam is a special blessing. "Prior to Islam," write the authors of *The Cultural Atlas of Islam*, "a woman was regarded by her parents as a threat to family honor and hence worthy of burial alive at infancy. As an adult, she was a sex object that could be bought, sold and inherited (Krause, Girth, 2002). From this position of inferiority and legal incapacity, Islam raised women to a position of influence and prestige in family and society." The rights and responsibilities of women are equal to those of men but they are not necessarily identical. This difference is understandable because men and women are different, in their physiological and psychological make-up. With this distinction in mind, there is no room for a Muslim to imagine that women are inferior to men (Azid, n.d, 2005).

### **Women And Independence Of Working In Islam**

Islam is the religion of nature and it shows the perfect way of life. Labour has got a lot of importance in Islam. In a tradition of Holy Prophet (Peace be upon him) said "The Labour is the friend of God" it shows that how much importance Islam is giving to the Labour. More than that, the economic cycle in Islam and in general consists of three aspects: production, distribution, and consumption. Every aspect have their own stakeholders that play their own important roles to make sure the economics are growing by the day. Production is the parts where goods are made, for the sake of the consumers and under the economic purpose. Islam is a religion that particularly pays attention to labors, as they are one of the important parts in the production process.

The concept above is an ideal concept if there is harmony between the views of society, culture and religion, but in fact religion in general and Islam in particular are women's enemy. Women's quality is the commandment, in Islam enshrined in immutable law by Mohammad and eventually recorded in scripture. In most countries under Islamic or under influence of Islam, newspaper directives are incorporated into contemporary law. Family countries generally follow the prescriptions of newspapers. Veiling (hijab), divorce laws, custody of children, polygamy, women's rights to marriage, traveling, choosing the place of residence, and all aspects of Islamic Shari'a based on the Newspaper and Islam's doctrine. Together with these, in countries under the Islamic states, sexual relations and voluntary sexual relations engage in basic human rights. Actually this view is a cultural product, the fact as many Western and Eastern apologists for Islam repeatedly tell us what is happening to women in the so-called Islamic countries not according to real Islam, and that real Islam is egalitarian.

Cultural products of his views on women have taken root in society, therefore causing women to be in an unfavorable position (read-less prioritized), one of which is in terms of freedom in working or doing economic activities outside the home. As said by Alison Stuart, Women are half of the human race and yet the issue of women's equality has still to be definitively addressed in relation to their right to religion and belief. It is ironic that while human rights instruments

proclaim that everyone is equal, the attainment of this fundamental truth is hampered by tradition and often limited, interpretations of human rights. The limitations placed on the attainment of women's equality, by the current judicial and political understanding of the right to freedom of working, is an apt example of this. It is recognised in international and regional level that 'women's rights are often curtailed or violated in the name of religion. States are continually reminded of their obligations to 'fully protect women against all violations of their rights based on or attributed to religion'. While it is true that 'religion is one of the chief perpetrators of women's subjugation, inequality, lower social status, lack of equal treatment and protection, and internalised notions of inferiority', it should not be forgotten that women also have a right to working. The right to freedom of working is invariably phrased as being in opposition to women's rights and equality; this is, however, an overly simplistic and counterproductive stance, (Stuart, 2010). In addition to the construction of thought built by Abdulaziz Othman Altwajiri, it emphasized the clear difference between the treatment of women in Islam and ancient religion and the culture prevailing at that time. Islam views women with healthy thinking and social behavior, respects individual rights differently from ancient religion and the culture of law that states over the succession of nations, women suffered many injustices that denied them even the most basic human rights and put them, in most times, in a lower position in terms of training and ranking. The Sumerian, Assyrian and Babylonian civilizations in Mesopotamia treated women with contempt and held their opinion to be simply irrelevant. The Hammurabi law would blame women for assumed wrongdoings they did not actually commit, and unlike in the case of killing a man, no one may lose his life if he takes a woman's (1). The Manu law in India considered women as inheritable properties who had no right to education; for women's task was to provide pleasure and lust for men (2). Even worse, a woman's life should end with the death of her husband, as habits had that a woman shall be burnt with her dead husband at the stake. As for the Chinese civilization, women were considered a bad omen and a byword for misery, which prevented them from going out of their home or looking to people in the face(4). In the Greek mythology, Women were portrayed as stained creatures (5), described by Hesiod as having "a dog's mind and a thievish disposition. The Greek orator Demosthenes once said: "*We keep prostitutes for pleasure, we keep mistresses for the day to day needs of the body, we keep wives for the begetting of children and for the faithful guardianship of our homes.* And The Romans considered the woman as an unclean animal that shall be banned from entering temples, and thus disqualified from entering paradise. They viewed her femininity as one reason for her legal incompetence.(8) The Torah holds Eve responsible for tempting Adam, as we read in the Genesis, Chapter 3, Adam saying: "The woman whom thou gavest to be with me, she gave me fruit of the tree, and I ate. In pre-Islamic times, the Arabs were ashamed of having female births, and burying girls alive was widespread, (Altwajiri, 2009).

From the above view, it proves that Islam has bestowed dignity on all humanity on this earth regardless of differences in sex, race, and ethnicity. This means that, the dignity that Islam conferred on women is an integral part of the dignity which is also bestowed on all humanity. One woman has the right to work, besides having obligations that must be fulfilled in her life in the midst of human society. In this case, women are the same as men, regardless of the level of similarities and differences. The source of women's obligation in Islamic law is the reality of women's servitude to Allah SWT. Substantively, Allah SWT gives the same burden between men and women. In other words, every male and female "together" has an obligation to obey Allah. However, the obligations of men and women are certainly contextual towards gender differentiation between the two, both physical and psychological.

That is, the obligation to work which is given to men is also obligatory on women. Work that is forbidden for men is also forbidden for women. It's just that, God has also set moral and social rules for men in work, so that in their work they must obey and submit to the moral and social rules and similar things are also imposed on women, so that in every job, women must obey

and submit to these moral and social rules. Thus, any work performed by men or women must not conflict with those rules.

Therefore, every woman should fulfill her duties as best she can. In this case, women may do any work - the origin of which is permissible, whether the work is in industrial, agricultural, education, trade and so on. It's just that, when carrying out the work a woman must be able to determine the priority scale for what she does or in other words, women are expected to determine the benefit of every activity they do hierarchically.

Departing from this reality so that women do not experience difficulties in determining priority scale, Islamic law stipulates that fulfilling economic needs for wives and children is imposed on men (read: husbands) as stated in the Qur'an *"Mothers should breastfeeding her child for two full years for those who want to improve breastfeeding. The father's obligation is to provide food and clothing to the mothers in a humorous manner. A person is not burdened but according to his abilities. Don't let a mother suffer because of her child, and a father because of her child, and the inheritance is also obliged ..."* Along with the explanation above, it should be remembered, that the dispensation given to women based on the dialectic of the priority scale does not mean that the women are prohibited from carrying out tasks and other work outside the home. In fact, the door to carrying out tasks and work is always wide open, as the opportunity for men is opened. It's just that the priority scale must still be a reference. (Equitas, 2009)

### **The Condition of Women Labor Today**

Reported female labor force participation rates in Muslim countries as a whole are lower than those in non-Muslim countries as a group. In 1975, women constituted 21.3 percent of the labor force in Muslim countries and 36.6 percent of the labor force in non-Muslim countries (Moghadam, 1990). For this reason, some have argued that 'Islam' is a factor holding back women participation rates, using simple statistical comparisons. However, there is a systematic evidence that 'Islam' as a factor in either demand or supply. Also, economic rates across different sectors are very variable between Muslims, and the importance of 'Islam' as an explanatory factor.

Low reported levels of female participation in economic activity may relate to a reluctance to admit the actual or desired participation of women in income earning activities, by both men and women, as noted in both Egypt and Bangladesh (Papps, 1992; World Bank, 1990). Small scale sample surveys, using more flexible methods, have produced much higher levels of activity than large scale official surveys. For example, in Egypt, a recent ILO/CAMPAS survey found that 37 percent of women are engaged in monetised labour force activity and that 80 percent of women are engaged in some form of labour force activity, according to acceptable international definitions. This compares with a rate of 13 percent recorded in the 1983 official labour force survey. The use of terms such as 'work' and 'job' was found not to suit the way that women's economic activities are viewed. Another study in Syria found that when men were asked if their wives worked for them, they said no, but when asked whether they would have to hire a replacement if their wife should die, they said yes.

There is a general trend towards increased labour force participation of women. However, increased labour force participation cannot be read as a straightforward progressive development for women where it is based on an increase in the supply of labour rather than an increase in demand. The large increases in female labour force participation in the 1970s (in part due to the oil boom and male labour migration) have slowed or stagnated in the 1980s. Nevertheless, female participation rates continue to rise in many countries, but these often coexist with high levels of female unemployment, and with rising male unemployment, emphasising poverty as a cause of women's entry into the labour force. Education may also be a factor in explaining increased female participation, since levels of economic activity tend to be age specific and higher activity rates are concentrated among younger women.

In the Indonesian context, women labor is a part of the population that is economically potential to enter the labor market and act as the workforce. Thus, it can no longer be distinguished on the basis of gender, when someone is already in the ranks of the labor market. On a macro basis, everyone who is within the labor market, both men and women, will compete fiercely for employment. Given that in the current level of education between men and women have equal rights and employment opportunities also become increasingly open to women, the participation of women migrant workers continues to increase from year to year.

In line with the increase in the number of the workforce, the Labor Force Participation Rate (LFPR) also increased. LFPR in February 2018 was recorded at 69.20 percent, an increase of 0.18 percentage points compared to a year ago. The increase in LFPR indicates an increase in economic potential in terms of labor supply. Based on gender, there are differences in LFPR between men and women. In February 2018, male LFPR was 83.01 percent while female LFPR was only 55.44 percent. However, compared to the conditions a year ago, female LFPR increased by 0.40 percentage points while male LFPRs decreased by 0.04 percentage points (Central Statistics Agency, 2018).

**Table 1.** Composition of the Indonesian workforce  
By gender (in%)

Gender	Last Year	Last Semester	Today	Change in 1 year (Feb 2017–Feb 2018)	Change in 1 semester (Aug 2017–Feb 2018)
	February 2017	August 2017	February 2018		
Male	83,05	82,51	83,01	-0,04	0,50
Female	55,04	50,89	55,44	0,40	4,55

On the basis of the increasing participation rate, it is estimated that the proportion of the workforce will also increase from 55.04% in 2017 to 55.44% in 2018. This figure shows that in the end the numbers will approach the proportional point of the comparison of women -men at 50.3, as it is today. This reinforces the conclusion that there is a tendency for women to play a greater role in economic development activities. In fact, this increase was more significant compared to TPAK in 2014-2015.

Composition of the Indonesian workforce  
by gender (in%)

Gender	February 2014	August 2014	February 2015	August 2015	February 2016	August 2016
Male	85,04	83,05	84,58	82,71	83,46	81,97
Female	53,37	50,22	54,48	48,87	52,71	50,77

In Indonesia, usually male LFPRs are far higher than female LFPRs. This picture is also seen in the condition of February 2016, where male LFPRs reached 83.46% while for women only 52.71%, in February 2015, where male LFPRs reached 84.58 percent while for women only 54.48 percent. This can be interpreted that out of 100 male population of working age, which includes the workforce of around 85 people, while in women out of 100 residents the working age is female, only about 54 people are included in the workforce. The same pattern also occurred in the period August 2014 and February 2014, where male LFPRs were around 30 percent higher than female LFPRs (BPS, 2016)

From the LFPR report, it is clear that economic development is the focus of long-term development. However, economic development is not the only obsession. Other fields, such as social, cultural, educational, and political matters, will also be worked on so that there is a balance. Moreover, Indonesian society is currently in a period of transformation of an agrarian economic

system to an industrial economic system that is fully guided by market mechanisms. This change will result in changes in the composition, structure and type of labor needed. This will later lead to a shift in the need for professional labor both men and women.

In connection with these structural changes, professional employment for women has increased. From here the role of women labor in the arena of Indonesia's economic development can now be seen. Women's labor participation can be seen when the orientation of Indonesian society still revolves around the agrarian world, so that the work that can be done is that women are more concerned with the activities of the agricultural sector. However, now economic activities have shifted to industry, so that many professional employment fields can be entered by women consultants, secretaries, public relations, doctors, technical experts, accountants, lawyers and so on. In the present period, there are many jobs filled by women because they require fluency in verbal communication, manual speed, the accuracy of workmanship, sharper memory, and warmth that is nurturing all of which are the advantages of women when compared with men.

### **The Participation of Women Labor In Economic Activities**

Women labor in the development process has a very important and potential role to develop. This is not only *de facto* when the population of women is greater than the population of men but because their presence is very helpful for efforts to improve the level of family welfare. The proof, almost every seminar on Indonesian women, one of the most discussed topics in the seminar is how to increase the role of Indonesian women in the development of the country. The topic of women's roles and development goes from a basic assumption that the role or contribution of Indonesian women in development is still inadequate. From this assumption, the conception of the dual role of Indonesian women emerged, namely as housewives and as community members who must be able and willing to contribute their energy and mind to develop the social and economic community and their respective selves but the knowledge about Indonesian women has not been serious about how development treats Indonesian women, especially poor women who have never been able to attend women's seminars in Indonesia and it is at the core of the development treatment for women, which is a problem that is currently being faced by Indonesian women. (Loekman Soetrisno, 1990).

The proof, in recent years shows that there has been a tendency that almost half of the population of women in the working age group is included in the labor market. It is not known exactly how much this female workforce contributes to economic activities because the available statistical data is very limited. This situation was caused partly by the large number of female workers who worked in the informal sector or as unpaid family workers. Many of them also work in part-time jobs or as seasonal workers. According to BPS data for 2014-2018 there was a decrease in female labor force participation aged 15-19 years. This situation was caused by an increase in the number of women outside the workforce because they attended school. This condition is usually indicated by a decrease in the workforce of women in urban areas. From this side it can be stated that there are opportunities for wider schooling for women, especially, in urban areas.

If it is then seen in the level of labor participation in rural areas, it is very likely that the decline is caused by the existence of population movements (urbanization) from village to city. This is caused by the decreasing employment opportunities in rural areas due to the narrowing of agricultural land. These urbanized people are expected to enter the informal sector (as household assistants, laborers, street vendors, retailers, etc.), or work in factories or perhaps as domestic helpers.

Based on BPS data Percentage of Formal Workers by Gender, 2015 - 2018, number of female workers (female population aged 10 years and over) of 100%, but in 2015 only 37.78%, in 2016 38.16%, 2017 38.63 % and in 2018 only 38.20% were declared active in economic activities in the sense that they were actively working to earn some income. From that figure, it was also

obtained information that from the remaining population of working-age women, 61.81% of the population (41%) were stated as housewives.

In this case, it should be noted that although taking care of housework does not make money, in reality the work provides support for other family members who are serving as breadwinners. The support of these housewives is indeed very necessary so that the head of the family and other family members of the breadwinner can be calm in their work and can concentrate fully on their work. Therefore, work as a housewife needs to be positioned in a reasonable place. That is, the work of managing this household must be seen as an economic activity. If this is accepted, there will be a fact that the female labor force participation rate is far greater than the 38.19% figure.

The increase in the number of female labor force participation rates clearly shows the participation of female workers in the process of developing national economists. Nevertheless, the decline in the number of female labor participation rates that occurred in certain years as mentioned earlier and occurs in certain age groups is seen as mere under estimation. Because, these women enter school or migrate to the city. If the number of female labor force participation rates is multiplied by the number of women in the age group concerned then there will be a number of working women who are economically active.

### **Critique and Future Challenge**

The participation of women in economic development does not mean without challenges. Many obstacles and challenges limit the movement and role of women in accessing the labor market. The challenges include:

First, in Islam The source of women's obligation in Islamic law is the reality of servitude to Allah, one of them through obedience to their husbands. Substantively, Allah SWT gives the same burden between men and women. In other words, every male and female "together" has an obligation to obey Allah. However, the obligations of men and women are certainly contextual towards gender differentiation between the two, both physical and psychological. That is, every woman should fulfill the tasks assigned to her as well as possible. In this case, women may do any work that is permissible, both in the industrial, agricultural, educational, commercial and so on jobs. It's just that, when carrying out the work a woman must be able to determine the priority scale for what she does or in other words, women are expected to determine the benefit of every activity they do hierarchically. This condition will also influence his participation in the labor market and hinder the supply of female labor in the labor market, especially the pattern of working to adjust working hours and their impact on wages. As is known in the formal sector, the wages of women are still far below that of men, which is 2, 21 million, while men reach 2, 91 million rupiah. (Central Statistics Agency, 2018).

Secondly, the structure of the community's views on women who work greatly influences women's working patterns, especially negative views, namely not allowing women to work after marriage or having children but because of economic pressure women choose to work more time. In a sense, family income is not enough to meet daily needs. In this latter category there will be a possibility that women working in marginal positions in the labor market structure means that these women work in traditional types of work, are concentrated in low employment structures, have low productivity, consequently their wages are also low.

Third, companies are more likely to recruit male employees than women, thus influencing the priority in recruitment of workers, the structure of wages and types of work. This is assumed because female employees are less responsible for their work, female employees have high absenteeism rates due to menstruation, childbirth, etc. and often apply for relocation for reasons of marriage. This view will reduce the interest of employers to employ women even though they are part of the human investment. After the reform era this assumption began to shift and was

fully guided by the market mechanism and it affects the composition, structure and type of labor needed by one of them. Professional employment for women also increases such as consultants, secretaries, public relations, doctors, technical experts, accountants, lawyers and so on. In the present period, there are many jobs filled by women because they require fluency in verbal communication, manual speed, the accuracy of workmanship, sharper memory, and warmth that is nurturing all of which are the advantages of women when compared with men.

Fourth, there is a growing view in the community that men are the main pillar of the family. Therefore, the assumption arises that women will only work "temporarily" time, ie if the husband's income is insufficient or reduced for one reason or another.

Compared to men, women's productivity is relatively low, especially if viewed from the side of education and working hours. Both of these factors have a profound effect on productivity; even on income. In 2018, all working women (73.12 million people / 55.4%) had elementary school education of 52.76% (between villages and cities), while men were 52.4% while the presentation of women who have not / never attended school reaches 12.49%. and male workers who do not go to school are only 5.88%. Meanwhile, in terms of working hours, the number of women working less than 35 hours per week is still quite high, which is 56.7%, while men are only 37.9%. These symptoms are quite interesting to observe because, however, at the bottom of this level there are different treatments between women and men, while for the middle level and for that the difference is getting thinner. (Central Statistics Agency, 2018). If you look at under employment, which shows that there are a number of workers who work under 40 hours per week, the number of female workers included in the under employed category is quite large. More than 50% of the workforce of women is under employment. These are the hidden unemployed groups.

The low working hours of these women are very likely they work part time or part time work. Thus, their productivity also becomes very low. This low productivity is thought to be caused by the social value of culture which does not encourage women to demand the highest education and demands for the dual role of women who limit working hours and women choose more flexible or shorter working hours.

In the end, the low productivity of female laborers has an effect on the wages or income they receive, the BPS data in 2018 shows that the average income of female laborers is always lower when compared to male workers; at the same level of education, the income of female laborers is lower than that of male workers. This applies especially to female workers who work in private companies. Meanwhile, those who work in the government sector, the difference in income between men and women is more due to the level of rank, family responsibilities, and working period. At the same level of education, level of rank, number of dependents and the same period of work, there is no income difference between men and women.

Average Labor Wages per Month according to Highest Education Completed and Gender (rupiah), February 2018

Highest education completed	Male	Female	Male + Female
Elementary school and below	1.825.338	1.092.918	1.571.481
Middle School	1.997.041	1.424.433	1.808.698
High School	2.792.207	1.858.346	2.503.664
Vocational School	2.809.891	2.109.633	2.595.390
Diploma I/II/III	4.319.892	2.794.861	3.454.620
University	5.219.178	3.568.841	4.417.217
National Labor wage average	2.910.301	2.213.282	2.654.070

Source: Processed from the February 2018 National Labor Force Survey (Sakernas) data

For those who don't go to school at all, their income turns out to be very low. However, female workers earn a salary of almost half compared to men's salaries. The higher the level of

education, the smaller the income difference. However, overall, it can be seen from the table above that the income of female laborers is lower than that of men.

Looking at the description of female labor productivity as above, the problem is not just the provision of employment opportunities to accommodate the increasing labor force participation. But also the problem of increasing participation in the productive labor market. There are several factors that affect female labor productivity, namely: Quality of labor that is not only measured through the level of education, expertise or skills of the workforce, but also mental attitude, discipline, work motivation, and nutrition and health.

Furthermore, the environment and working conditions include production facilities and technology, wages and social security and security. Participatory management is also very important because it is a supra system that greatly influences the development of labor quality as well as the environment and working conditions that support increased productivity because it provides broad opportunities for workers to play an active role in the production process.

### **Government's Role**

The implication of increasing female labor force participation in economic development is the provision of more employment opportunities for women. It can be seen from the female unemployment rate of only 2.84%, while the male unemployment rate is 2.29%. This can be interpreted that inequality of employment opportunities for women is not far adrift compared to men. However, the problem faced by the workforce both men and women is the limited employment opportunities mentioned above. Some of the roles of the government in overcoming this are such as:

First, the expansion of employment opportunities through public policy, namely the expansion of employment opportunities through other policies such as monetary, fiscal, export-import, investment, science and technology development, and so on. Second, the expansion of employment opportunities through sectoral policies, namely to place the aspect of expanding employment opportunities as one of the objectives of each sectoral development program. This is because the expansion of employment opportunities is an integral part of development in all sectors, especially sectors that are within the scope of the economic field, such as agriculture, industry, transportation, construction, trade, services.

Second, expansion of employment opportunities through regional development policies, meaning equitable development in the region to expand employment opportunities tailored to the potential capabilities and needs, and the expansion of employment opportunities through special policies means that there are policies and programs specifically aimed at expanding employment opportunities for groups, certain labor force groups, for example policies and programs taken to address the problem of half unemployed people in the village, weak economic groups, youth, women, workers with disabilities, poor farmers and fishermen, and so on.

Third, wisdom through the integration of education for women because of the aspiration to further improve the quality of life of women today has been able to increase the level of women's participation in the world of education. Even in some developed countries, the level of women's participation in the world of education is higher than that of men. However, the high participation of women in the world of education has not been accompanied by changes in culture that show a balance between the functions and potential of men and women. Therefore, one of the points of the Millennium Development Goals is to encourage the realization of gender equality and empower women, one of which is to provide access to education to the widest possible extent for women.

Fourth, integration between formal education with Islamic / religious education, alignment of values, social culture, because basically Islam has bestowed dignity on all human beings on this earth regardless of differences in sex, race, and ethnicity. This means that, the dignity that Islam conferred on women is an integral part of the dignity which is also bestowed on all humanity. That

is, Islam provides a clear picture of equality between men and women, while the placement of women in complementary objects is a mere cultural product. Such integration will be able to increase access to employment opportunities for women and increase the number of female labor force participation.

Through the policy of expanding employment opportunities and the integration of formal and Islamic education, if all parties are committed and there is synchronization in development, it is expected that the problem of limited employment opportunities, especially for women, can be overcome both qualitatively and quantitatively. Thus, efforts to increase women's labor force participation have a truly positive impact on achieving development goals. This means that these female workers will stand as subjects of development and not just as objects.

### **Concluding Remarks**

Problems related to women's rights have emerged as a very important problem in various parts of the world and in all walks of life. In general, the issues surrounding women are always inseparable from the social system in which they are a part. Women, who were originally claimed to only have the right to occupy domestic territory or households, for example, it turned out that at this time had begun to explore public areas which at first was considered to be an unusual thing. Moreover, in line with the advancement of the level of education of women and the increasing openness of wider employment opportunities for women, the participation of female labor force in economic development has increased over time.

The participation of female workers in development certainly has the consequence of the double burden that women must accept. On the one hand she must carry out her domestic role in taking care of his food, clothing, home needs and on the other hand she must make a living to meet family needs. This kind of phenomenon raises various kinds of responses, both positive and negative, so that this affects the low productivity of women, and influences the company's view of female employees, and more sees that women are not well-established and still developing in society, of course it also has a negative impact on the wages they receive. However, when viewed from religious teaching norms, especially Islam, there is actually no prohibition for women to work outside the home and increase productivity as well as men. It is not forbidden for women to do activities outside their house because Islam recognizes equal rights between men and women. But in fulfilling these rights, Islam encourages women not to neglect their duties and functions in the family to maintain and create a family that is *sakinah, mawadah, wa rahmah*. Therefore, in every decision she wants to take, she must be able to determine the right priority scale for the benefit of the activities she does.

But along with the times, the expansion of people's views, the integration of formal and Islamic education, and the flexibility of culture, in the long run; according to technological developments and knowledge of women's participation in economic development will certainly increase. Its contribution to GDP in the coming times will also increase and imilarly, the level of participation in various economic activities of the community will increase.

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