

NARRATIVE ANALYSIS: EXPLORING THE POWER DYNAMIC OF RURAL HOUSEWIVES WHOM ARE ALSO FARM WORKERS

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ABSTRACT

This study explores the power dynamics of rural housewives who also work as farm laborers. The main focus of the study is to understand their autonomy and decision-making position within the household context. Using a qualitative approach, this research involved in-depth interviews and participant observation of a number of housewives in rural areas. The key findings reveal that these housewives generally lack significant personal autonomy within their households. This is largely due to their limited understanding of gender equality concepts and their right to participate in household decision-making. As a result, they tend to choose passivity and submission to their husbands' authority. This study highlights the importance of education on gender equality and women's empowerment in rural areas. The implications of these findings indicate a need for programs that can increase awareness and understanding among housewives about their rights, as well as encourage more active participation in household decision-making.

Keywords: power dynamics, rural housewives, farm laborers, autonomy, decision-making, gender equality

INTRODUCTION

Gender is still an issue in people's lives in various countries. The emergence of various gender inequalities and injustices is one of the triggers for the emergence of the idea of equality in all aspects of life both in the domestic and public spheres. Since all system structures, responsibilities, and activities exist within the family, the family, as a subsystem of society, plays a strategic role in fostering the ideals of equality in every activity and pattern of connections between family members. Gender disparity gives rise to several issues on a daily basis, particularly inside households. Our society still heavily relies on the patriarchal culture. Although it is ideal for a husband and wife to play equal duties in the home, this isn't always the case. One typical illustration of this is that women are in charge of running the home, while men are in charge of the family's finances and economic expansion. Whether it is with words, tone of voice, emotional expression, or body language, the way in which males and females communicate have been explored in a variety of ways to distinguish the characteristics that make them so different (Disch, 2009).

The fact that men and women often communicate in distinct ways may seem apparent. It's a widely held belief that women communicate more subtly, elaborately, and emotionally, which

might convey hesitancy, doubt, and a lack of authority. On the other hand, men are thought to communicate in a straightforward, practical, and concise manner. Despite the perception that female communication is weaker than male communication, it can also be argued that women are better at building rapport because of their empathy and connection-building skills. Women's communication style shows their need for connection, whereas men's talking approach typically revolves on their own independence (von Hippel, Wiryakusuma, Bowden, & Shochet, 2011).

The relative position, power, and/or dominance of the participants in an interpersonal contact is reflected in their communicative style and in whether their expectations and behaviour are reciprocated. One important aspect of interpersonal communication is power dynamics (Power Relations, n.d.). The majority of researchers in this field have interchangeably used the phrases "influence," "decision-making," "family authority," and "power structure" to refer to family power or power structure. The relative perceived power of partners in a relationship is highlighted by Rollins and Bahr's Dyadic Power Theory (DPT) in married partnerships. It is assumed that people's perceptions of their own power relative to their partner increases when they feel they have the right to make decisions

and manage resources. As a result, there is a higher chance that dominance will be used to try to exert control over the encounter. The demand/withdrawal interaction pattern, in which one spouse expresses a concern and the other withdraws, has been explained using the extended definition of DPT, which now takes power in marriage partnerships into account.

The power relations experienced by women in rural households can vary widely based on cultural, social, economic, and political factors. It's important to recognize that experiences differ across regions and communities. However, there are some general challenges that women in rural areas often face (Peters & Wolper, 2018). In rural landscapes, where nature's tranquility often conceals the silent struggles of daily life, women find themselves entangled in a web of inequality that hampers progress on multiple fronts. In the vast expanses of rural territories, where the ebb and flow of life unfold against a backdrop of nature's simplicity, housewives are ensnared in a tapestry of inequality that pervades their daily existence (Peta Kekerasan, 2002). Struggling silently, these women grapple with economic disparities that restrict their roles to traditional, domestic spheres. Limited access to employment opportunities and financial resources becomes an enduring feature of their lives, reinforcing societal expectations that confine them to predefined roles within the confines of their homes (Leach, 2015).

The idea looks at what makes people feel strong in comparison to other people, how that sense of power affects communication, and how that affects the relationship and the people in it (Dunbar, 2004). Some investigators have defined one of these terms in the way that another term has been defined by another author. As a result, while some researchers only measure decision-making, others use terms like "decision making power" or "power structure," "decision authority," and "authority" interchangeably without drawing any distinctions. These researchers refer to decisionmaking as following the "marital authority pattern". In more clinical research employing an observational methodology, power was defined differently and additional measures of power were frequently utilized (Dunbar, Burgoon 2005a).

In this day and age, there are still many people who look down on women who only work at home or as housewives. All activities carried out by a housewife have not received maximum appreciation or recognition. The role of a housewife has always been never considered as a job that it should be. This is because people think that an activity can be said to be work if the activity generates income. This is the reason why housewives are always said to be unemployed even though all the activities carried out at home take up a lot of time and energy (Harris, 2022).

According to Holleman in (Axelson & Missionsforskning, 2005), the position of women (mothers) in the household is

considered as one part that determines the others as complements, to jointly create an organic and harmonious whole, namely the family. Women as mothers in the family have the same (high) value position, namely as "helpers" who have the position of citizens, "members". Women and men have the same meaning according to their respective functions. The differences that exist within the family are only regarding the special nature of female life. In this way, women in the family have a position, among others, as life partner, lover, mother, in the sense that there is no discrimination between family members. Women as mothers have the right to determine and have the right to participate in exercising power for the safety and happiness both in the immaterial and material fields of all members (Wijayanto et al., 2022).

Moreover, housewives face Domestic Violence done by their spouse that still has high cases. In Indonesia itself, according to the National Commission on Violence Against Women (Komnas Perempuan), domestic violence is a serious issue occurring in society. Data indicates that cases of violence against wives dominate the reports, with a rate reaching 75.4% in 2020. In 2021, National Commission on Violence Against Women received around 2 thousand reports of violence against women, in which violence against wives consistently occupied the first position among all cases of domestic violence ("Perpustakaan Komnas Perempuan," n.d.).

Domestic violence, also known as KDRT, is gender-based violence that takes place in intimate relationships and is frequently committed by people the victims know well. Domestic violence can take many different forms, such as neglect, physical, sexual, or psychological abuse. The goals of Law Number 23 of 2004 about the Elimination of Domestic Violence (UU PKDRT) are to stop domestic abuse in all its manifestations, safeguard victims, bring charges against those who commit it, and maintain the integrity of a peaceful home ("Instrumen Modul & Referensi Pemantauan," n.d.).

Despite various efforts to prevent and address domestic violence and achieve gender equality, data shows that gender inequality in Indonesia is still a significant issue, especially in rural areas. Rural area in the definition of Indonesian dictionary (KBBI), village is an old literary term which means place, land or area, village also means a group of houses outside the city which is a unit. When seen from a geographical perspective, a village is the result of a combination of the activities of a group of people and their environment (Setiawan, n.d.). The outcome of this combination is a shape or appearance on the surface of the planet that is produced by interactions between and among physiological, social, political, economic, and cultural factors as well as in connection to other places. There are significant differences between the level of inequality for women in rural and urban areas, especially in terms of education.

According to the results of the 2022 BPS National Socio-Economic Survey (SUSENAS), there are 7.35% of women aged 15 years and over in rural areas who are illiterate, while in urban areas only a third, namely 2.83% (Badan Pusat Statistik Kabupaten Rote Ndao, 2022).

The external factor behind the low level of women's education in rural areas is the very lack of availability of supporting infrastructure and facilities, while the internal factor is because there are still many people in villages who have the perception that higher education for women is not important and the costs spent on education are considered useless because in the end, women will only be housewives (Vries, 2006). Data shows differences in the inequality experienced by wives in urban and rural Indonesia.

Between urban and suburban areas there are different levels of subjective well being. In addition, Susenas data shows that urban and rural Indonesia have differences in population size and family structure. However, there are differences in access to health services and education between women in urban and rural areas. For example, women in rural areas experience disparities in access to reproductive health services. The average length of schooling for women in rural areas is also lower than in urban areas. In addition, the Gender Inequality Index (IKG) shows that Indonesia has an IKG score of 0.697, which shows that there is significant gender inequality, especially in the political field (BPS Indonesia, 2023).

Despite these differences, efforts to increase gender equality and reduce disparities in health, education and political services in all regions in Indonesia are priorities for the government and society as a whole.

Even with the improvements, based on the data above, women in rural areas are still much more oppressed than those in the Urban areas of Indonesia, especially housewives. This has contributing factors, such as low education rate for women, societal construct and religion. These factors are the strongest contribution to the limitation of housewives in a household. Women in rural areas are often downgraded because of the patriarchal culture that is still very dominant. They are only seen as objects to create living beings and do household chores (Rahmani et al., 2023). This is seen by the data of child marriage according to National Population and Family Planning Agency (BKKBN 2020) Child marriages in Indonesia mostly occur in rural areas with the number 27.11% compared to urban areas around 17.09%. Child marriage often occurs in women under the age of 18. The occurrence of child marriage in rural areas is due to economic problems which make children objects as a way out of family poverty.

Apart from that, the low level of parental education which excludes the development of children's self-capacity is the cause. The tradition of young marriages in the region and biased religious understanding regarding

young marriages being able to avoid adultery and being permissible after attaining puberty is another cause of child marriage in Indonesia (Albab & Pratiwirum, 2022). The worst cause is when child marriage in Indonesia occurs due to promiscuity which makes marriage a way out to protect family honor. With this, most women in rural areas are seen as capable for marital purposes to uphold family economical status (Ichrom et al., 2023). Meanwhile, according to the Ministry of Women's and Children's Empowerment (KPPA), Indonesia's population is 270 million people, of which 43% live in villages (BPS, 2020). Around 49.5% are women, and around 30.1% are children (under 18 years of age), with a total of 65% will be a large capital in achieving development policies, programs and activities, including the SDGs (Puspaningrum et al., 2023).

Educational opportunities, a conduit for empowerment, remain elusive for many rural housewives. Remote locations, meagre educational infrastructure, and deeply entrenched cultural biases combine to perpetuate low literacy rates. The lack of educational access not only stifles personal development but also constraints these women from participating in decision-making processes, perpetuating their vulnerability to multifaceted social and economic challenges. The inadequacy of healthcare infrastructure compounds the challenges faced by rural housewives. (Coombs et al., 2022). Limited access to education and resources, coupled with deeply ingrained patriarchal structures, results

in negligible representation in decision-making bodies. The absence of their voices in political spheres not only denies them agency but also diminishes the prospects for implementing policies that could alleviate the unique challenges faced by rural housewives (Chatterjee, 2023).

On the other hand, with the many inequalities women face, some housewives in the rural area also have to have the dual roles of being housewives who work as farm workers. This represents a unique category within the broader field of agricultural labour. These people often fit into one of three groups, according to research: conventional housewives, family workers, or farmer-workers. In addition to taking care of the family and cleaning the house, traditional housewives occasionally assist their husbands on the farm. Family workers make an economic contribution to the family but do not see it as their own since they are not aware of it. Farmer-workers oversee the farm with their wives and take part in farming activities directly (Tavener & Crane, 2019).

Due to the intersectionality of these professions, these women in the agriculture sector have unique possibilities and problems. For example, the mix of conventional housework and agricultural labour may result in more drudgery, but they may also gain from the flexibility and autonomy that come with managing the farm with their spouse. In addition, the feminization of agriculture brought

about by males leaving rural regions can result in greater labour for the women who stay, which, depending on the situation in the community, may lead to either empowerment or more obligations (Kawarazuka et al., 2022).

Although, the shadow of a mother is always depicted as a gentle figure. She is portrayed by how she prepares breakfast for the family, takes her children to school, or does light work. However, a mother is a strong figure, the backbone of the family, and does work that was never imagined to be carried by her. This second version of a mother is the description for women farmers. They willingly wake up early to go to the fields, work under the scorching sun, and sweat repeatedly. Despite seeming extreme, female farmers are actually quite numerous. In developing countries, women make up 43% of the total agricultural workforce. In South Asia, more than 2/3 of female workers are employed in the agricultural sector. Furthermore, in Africa, more than half of farmers are women. The role of women in the agricultural sector has now become commonplace (K, 2021).

A role is a culturally assigned pattern of conduct, including obligations, that people are expected to exhibit in particular social contexts; for example, a husband and wife's expected behaviour in a married couple. In this case, most power in a household has been held by men. This means that the decision-making and all aspects of the marriage is still controlled by the husband (Little, 2016). In Javanese

culture, for example: there is a phrase *koncowingking*. This terminology means “women are always at the back”. This term refers to women always being a supporter of her husband and that she's always in the back or kitchen, meanwhile some housewives also contribute equal in terms of economy in the household, but are still told to be “at the back” (Maulana, 2021).

In a specific case, a study conducted in Desa Majenang found that women farm laborers, who are also married, work to earn a living and contribute to their family's income. Factors driving women in rural areas to work as farm laborers include economic constraints and the need to support their families financially. The research conducted in Desa Atep Satu, Kecamatan Langowan Selatan, Kabupaten Minahasa, aimed to determine the role of women farm laborers in family economics based on income contribution and time allocation (Andayani 2022).

Housewives experience fewer opportunities to access agricultural resources compared to men, encountering constraints regarding land allocation, commodities, and technological advancements. Studies reveal that women typically only have access to pricing information of the goods they produce, while spending less time engaged in fieldwork compared to men. Initiatives aimed at boosting women's participation in agriculture have been launched, spearheaded by the Ministry of Empowerment and Child Protection (KPP-PA) of Indonesia. Measures have

been implemented to promote gender parity within the agricultural domain. Nonetheless, women working in agriculture confront barriers and hurdles, resulting in disparities between genders (A. 2023, November 29).

Despite these challenges, the role of female farmers remains profoundly significant, with women constituting approximately 43% of the agricultural workforce in developing nations. Additionally, women frequently encounter difficulties in obtaining land ownership, credit facilities, and advisory support. Their access to crucial information is often disregarded, despite its pivotal role in the dissemination process through advisory activities. It is imperative to intensify efforts aimed at empowering and amplifying the involvement of women in agricultural development to foster improved gender equality within the agricultural sector (Lamane, Siti A., et al. 2024)

Apart from that, patriarchal culture is also considered as one of the factors that influences gender inequality in Indonesia, which can hinder freedom and rights. In the rural area as well, women have a very important role in Agriculture. For harvesting activities, the contribution of women's time is 66.25%, which is the largest percentage of all types of agricultural business activities managed (Hutajulu 2015). The role of rural housewives as farm laborers is a significant aspect of family economics in many rural areas. Research has shown that the

contribution of rural housewives to family income in farming communities can be relatively small, with some studies indicating a contribution of only 29.35%. Motives for rural housewives to engage in farm labor include economic necessity and the need to supplement family income (Kumaat, 2015).

In conclusion, the inequality experienced by housewives in rural areas is a complex tapestry woven from economic, educational, healthcare, and cultural disparities. Breaking free from the shackles of inequality requires a comprehensive approach that spans policy interventions, community empowerment, and a transformation of societal attitudes. Only through such concerted efforts can rural housewives emerge from the shadows of inequality, reclaiming their voices, and contributing meaningfully to the broader narrative of rural life.

Housewives engaged in agricultural work encounter numerous disparities within the farming industry. They often encounter restricted access to essential resources like land, financial services, and advanced technologies. Moreover, they grapple with the burden of managing both farm duties and household responsibilities, leading to heightened levels of stress and exhaustion. Despite the increasing presence of women in agriculture, known as the feminization of the sector, gender disparities persist. Many women in agriculture serve as contributing family workers, foregoing direct compensation and facing greater

disadvantages compared to their male counterparts. In summary, housewives who participate in farm labor contend with a spectrum of inequalities, posing challenges to their success and well-being in the agricultural realm.

With this, the writer expects the outcome of this research is that women and housewives in rural areas are seen as more valuable than just koncowinking.

RESEARCH OBJECTIVE

This research objective aligns with the study's focus on exploring the power dynamics of decision making processes in the experiences of housewives in the rural areas whom are also farm workers.

RESEARCH FRAMEWORK

This research uses Narrative Analysis by William Labov. Narrative is a moment that has a connection between each of them. If there is no connection between a text, it cannot be called a narrative. This refers to Richardson's explanation (in Andreas, 2015, p. 46) that narrative is a representation of linked events that have a causal connection. Labov (in Cortazzi, 2010) said that there are two social functions in a person's personal experience related to storytelling, namely referential and evaluative. The referential function is the social

function of narrative for the audience through the recapitulation of the storyteller's experience as a form of reference for attitudes and behavior. However, this function still depends on another function, namely evaluative, namely the function that gives meaning to the narrative through personal involvement in the evaluation session. In other words, evaluation is a crucial part of narrative because it shows what kind of response the storyteller wants.

The method the writer aims to use Labov's theory in specific because it suits the research best. Labov's narrative theory proposes the transcription method. His structural categories are applied in the creation of the text: phrases are formed from sentences, lines are numbered, and the narrative's elements are separated according to their functions (e.g., to orient, carry the action, resolve it, etc.). William Labov's paradigm for narrative analysis is unique from some of the other approaches in that it prioritizes oral storytelling above written text. Most of Labov's narrative analysis approach is predicated on the idea that "one cannot understand the development of a language change apart from the social life of the community in which it occurs". He is adamant that understanding the process of change requires viewing it in the context of the community in which it is being formed, rather than just watching and documenting sound changes. Labov's paradigm comprises six primary components: abstract, orientation, complicated action, evaluation, resolution, and coda. Not

every story needs to include all six of these elements; for instance, not every story will have an abstract, and not every story will have a coda. Furthermore, these elements do not have to be present in a certain sequence or in any particular combination; the final analysis takes these considerations into account.

RESEARCH METHOD

This research is a qualitative research that aims to use Narrative method by William Labov.

This research analyses data using Labov narrative analysis. According to Labov's narrative analysis model (in Andreas, 2015), a fully formed narrative contains six elements that correspond to six different questions or functions in the narrative. These six elements are the macro structure of a narrative. Labov defines the components of the macro structure as follows:

1. Abstract: What is the main point of the narrative in a nutshell?
2. Orientation: Who/what is the narrative about and where does the action take place?
3. Complicating action: What happens?
4. Evaluation: And why is this interesting?
5. Resolution: What happened in the end?
6. Coda: A concluding comment that brings us back to the present

RESEARCH FINDINGS

THE POWER DYNAMICS ON THE DECISION MAKING PROCESSES BEFORE MARRIAGE (THE TALKING STAGE)

This story highlights the power dynamics and inequalities that shaped the lives of five housewives before marriage. In the social context of the "olden days", there was an unequal distribution of power, where patriarchal structures, social norms and cultural traditions had a huge impact on the personal choices and autonomy of women. The three informants did not have the right to choose their partners because their marriages were arranged by neighbours who had the power to make such decisions in an intimate rural community.

DECISION-MAKING PROCESS INFLUENCED BY PARENTS

This story explores the lived experiences of five informants who are rural housewives before marriage. Three out of five informants were strongly matched by their neighbors who played a role in planning their marriage when they were deciding on it. One out of the three informant, Ibu Partinah even mentioned a superstition on smelling flowers as she prayed. This made her mother say that it was a sign to accept her proposal from her husband at that time. This shows the lack of authority they had for themselves, with a contributing factor of age and the perspective on marriage at their time. This practice is common in rural communities with close social ties that still maintain traditional customs.

However, this agreement violated the wishes and autonomy of these women to decide on marriage.

Although the remaining two informant were not matched by anyone, they at first didn't want to get married but because of social construct, mentioning their age as a factor for them to get married and a certain societal expectations of women in that time marrying at a certain age. However, looking at their stories, we can see that even in these situations, the decision to marry was not entirely based on their desires. They were also advised and forced to marry by their parents, who stated that women should be married off. Although they had the pleasure of dating someone before, they still felt that they were not ready for marriage. This disconnect between their inner voices and the societal expectations they face suggests that their experiences and aspirations are being silenced.

This organizational process revealed the dominant power dynamic where women's agency was subordinated to others with greater social capital and influence. Even for the two informants who had the opportunity to choose their future spouses, the decision to marry was not entirely driven by their personal desires as stated above.

Despite the impact of these elections, the power dynamics of social expectations and cultural norms created significant pressures that overshadowed their individual readiness for marriage. The weight of

these external forces undermined their ability to exercise complete autonomy in making vital decisions for themselves. However, this process effectively muted the personal preferences and autonomy of these women in their marital decisions, because the influence and age-related social expectations of their parents took priority, exemplifying muted group theory (Kramarae, 2005).

WOMEN'S DECISION-MAKING CONSTRAINED BY SOCIETAL EXPECTATIONS AND RELIGIOUS BELIEFS

The common theme that united the five informants was the inequality they faced as daughters in a patriarchal society and the high social and cultural expectations for women regarding marriage. Being forced to follow these social structures, customs and religious practices completely negated their desire to marry. Their stories as women challenged the dominant narratives that dictated their work and ways of life, but these marginalized perspectives were often ignored.

Behind the experiences of all five informants was the fundamental inequality they faced as daughters in a society that placed enormous power in the hands of social structures, traditions and religious beliefs. All five informants mentioned that in their religious beliefs of being a Muslim women, marriage was servitude or they would say 'nikah itu ibadah'. They all mention that as a Muslim Women, marriage was obligatory. These

similarity that tied all the informant together is seen as a strong factor that at that time religion was one of the factors that made them commit to marry.

Another external factor that influenced their decision to marry was the society they were in and the era of marital expectations created by social construct. Four out of the five informants: Ibu Subi, Ibu Partinah, Ibu Poniem and Ibu Bariyem mentions that if they didn't get married at a certain age in that time, people would perceive them as 'doesn't sell' or 'ga laku'. This means that the societal construct at that time creates an expectation on women that they have to marry at a certain age. This means that they were influenced also to marry by societal norms created.

These patriarchal structures dictated expectations for women to marry regardless of their personal aspirations or opportunities. Power dynamics were misunderstood and women's individual agency was dominated by social contracts. The story illustrates how the conventions and expectations of the time bound these rural housewives together, even though their hearts may not have been fully prepared for marriage.

The power dynamics at play limited their ability to make choices based solely on their own desires and abilities as they navigated the inherent inequalities and pressures of the social structures that governed their lives. Through this story, a dynamic theory of power is exemplified, illuminating

power imbalances, the subjugation of individual will, and the influence of patriarchal structures that have shaped women's lives over the years, especially in rural areas during olden times. The story is a poignant reminder of the need to address and eliminate such inequality, allowing people to exercise true autonomy in their personal decisions and life paths.

Their voices, aspirations and life experiences have been weakened by the weight of customs and traditions that dominate their lives. The differences and pressures they faced as women in rural areas in the "old days" were exacerbated by the power of many of the group's statements calling for major global decisions such as marriage, and severely curtailed their rights and self-determination. Their voices, aspirations, and lived experiences were muted by the weight of cultural norms and traditions that governed their lives, including age-related expectations and the belief that women's primary role was to be married off, limiting their ability to make fully autonomous decisions, reflecting the Power Dyadic Theory's examination of power imbalances within interpersonal and societal dynamics (Dunbar, 2008).

THE THEORITICAL LENSES

Based on the reflections above, through the lens of Muted Group Theory (Kramarae, 2005) and Power Dyadic Theory (Dunbar, 2008), we understand how the decision-making processes of these informants were systematically

marginalized and silenced by dominant cultural narratives that supported patriarchal structures, traditional gender roles and rigid social expectations regarding age and marriage. Also religious factors that drives their willingness to agree upon marriage. Their stories are the challenges that marginalized groups face in having their voices heard and decision-making respected in mainstream discourse, and the power imbalances that shape interpersonal and social dynamics.

THE POWER DYNAMICS OF THE DECISION MAKING PROCESS AFTER MARRIAGE

After marriage, all of the five informants had multiple decisions created after marriage. For these five rural housewives, the transition from being single to being a housewife in their husband's home was an important change characterized by unequal power dynamics. Four out of five had to move in with their in-laws, a situation that immediately put them in an inferior position in the household hierarchy. Their new role as housewives came from submission to their husbands. This dynamic is based on patriarchal societal norms that deprived them of equal decision-making power in marriage.

DECISION-MAKING PROCESS: LEAVING THE CHILDHOOD HOME

For these five informants, moving from their childhood home to the residence of their husband's was a significant decision that meant a central point in

their lives. All of the five informant had to make a difficult choice to leave behind the familiar rural life and move in with their in-laws. The decision came with its own challenges and adjustments.

For all the five informants, they were forced to move to their husband's new home due to the Javanese culture called *boyongan*. This means that the women and all her family will accompany her to move to her husband's home. This has been a known tradition for a very long time in the Javanese culture.

The power imbalance was reinforced by cultural traditions and social structures that governed gender roles and expectations in rural areas. Adapting to conjugal homes and extended families meant navigating complex power structures and hierarchies. As new family members, these five informants had little power or influence over decisions, and their voices were often overshadowed by established family members, especially mothers-in-law. Two out of the five informants: Ibu Bariyem and Ibu Subi were obligated to take care of their sick in-laws, who often would treat them badly. In addition, the two remaining informants who lived with their in-laws: Ibu Poniem and Ibu Harsih experienced a better relationship living with their in-laws, although they still felt uncomfortable. The similarity that aligned all the five informants were the fact that they felt unfree to do certain things in their new home. Four out of the five informants lived with their in-laws, making them feeling like they

have to do everything the in-law asks, such as waking up early, doing all the household chores and even going to the rice field. The transition from independent individuals to housewives bound by obligations and expectations of their new roles was a stark contrast.

Their personal identity and autonomy were compromised because they were expected to conform to prescribed roles and responsibilities dictated by social norms and family traditions. For one informant, Ibu Bariyem the power dynamic took an even darker turn when she experienced physical violence from her husband. This extreme manifestation of the power imbalance not only deprived her of her freedom of choice and dignity, but also exposed the possibility of violence and oppression within the patriarchal structures governing these rural economies. The stories of these five informants shed light on the prevailing power dynamics and inequalities that women face as housewives.

DECISION MAKING PROCESS: ADAPTING TO NEW ROLES

The move caused a seismic shift in their roles and identities, thrusting them into unfamiliar territory where they had to navigate complex decision-making processes and adapt to their new reality. Once accustomed to the freedom and autonomy of solitude, they now found themselves faced with the daunting task of transitioning into the role of submissive housewives, a transition that required significant compromises and sacrifices. The decision-making

process of adapting to these new roles was full of challenges and power imbalances. This involved a profound renunciation of their independence and decision-making power in marital relations, because social and cultural norms dictated that they submit to their husband's authority. Three out of the five informant: ibu Harsih, Ibu Subi and Ibu Bariyem mentions that their role has changed as being someone's wife differs to when they were single. Ibu Bariyem mentions that before she got married, she was her father's responsibility as now her husband is responsible for her. She further stated that now her identity is as her husband's wife, so she has to follow all his instructions. Whereas Ibu Harsih and Ibu Subi just said that the role has changed because they no longer live in their parents home, meaning that they needed to behave as they are now living with their in-laws. The remaining two Informant, Ibu Poniye and Ibu Partinah felt that there were no changes as in their childhood home, they did all the activities they are doing currently, such as doing the domestic chores and submitting to the male figure in their lives. This activity went beyond symbolic gestures; this had a tangible impact on their ability to exercise agency and make decisions that affected their daily lives. The weight of these expectations and the power dynamics at play created a powerful psychological and emotional burden for these women.

They had to contend with the loss of their independence and diminished judgment that had previously been an

integral part of their identity. The transition from self-determined individuals to submissive women was a surprising change that forced them to navigate complex internal conflicts and reconcile their personal aspirations with the social norms that influenced their new roles. In addition, the decision-making process was further complicated by the need to adapt to new household dynamics and hierarchies, especially those living with in-laws. Ibu Subi and Ibu Bariyem were obligated to take care of their mother in-laws as it now became their responsibility as a wife and a daughter in-law to take care of their mother in-law. This created a burden for especially Ibu Bariyem as her mother in-law also contributed to the factor of her experiencing domestic violence in her home. Ibu Bariyem's husband would hit her if she did not listen to his mother. This shows the dominating power of her husband's reaction towards her behavior.

They found themselves having to navigate complex power structures and family dynamics where their voice and decision-making were often overshadowed by established members of the household. Adapting to their new roles as submissive housewives was a multifaceted and arduous journey that required constant negotiation of power dynamics, suppression of personal agency, and profound restructuring of their identities. It was a crucible of decision-making, where their every choice was weighed against the harsh reality of social expectations, cultural traditions, and the power imbalances

that dominated their marital relationships.

Through these stories, we bear witness to the immense strength and fortitude required to navigate this transformative decision-making process, and the inherent injustice and inequality that permeated their experiences. Their stories are a poignant reminder of the constant need to challenge oppressive social norms, advance gender equality and empower women to exercise agency and autonomy in all areas of their lives.

DECISION-MAKING PROCESS: MANAGING HOUSEHOLD FINANCES IN THE EARLY STAGE OF MARRIAGE

In the early stages of their marriage, the five informants faced a joint decision-making process about managing household finances. All the informants when they moved to their husband's home did not have any income. Therefore, their husband had to provide for them financially. Initially, all five informants took on the responsibility of managing daily expenses, such as primary needs of food, electricity bills, water, etc, while their husbands had the role of breadwinner. However, one informant's experiences were different when she could not effectively handle the financial decision-making process, so she relinquished that responsibility back to her husband, who only gave her money for daily needs like kitchen needs such as food, soap, etc.

All the five informant mentions that during this process, all their husbands were understanding about the position of financial they were in, as the informants were all in the new home. One informant, Ibu Harsih even mentioned her mother in-law contributing to their finances early stage of their marriage. For another informant, Ibu Partinah she was given money but it wasn't enough for her daily needs so she had to ask her parents for additional pocket money. Through the lens of the decision-making process, we gain insight into the multifaceted challenges these rural housewives faced during major life transitions, the power dynamics of their marriages, and the complexities of managing household finances. Their stories illuminate the decision-making processes they engaged in, often influenced by social expectations, family pressures. By examining their decision-making processes, we can better understand the intersections of agency, autonomy, and power imbalances that shaped their experiences.

THE THEORITICAL LENSES

The stories of five housewives provide a sharp look at the complex power dynamics and crucial challenges that shape relationships, especially in a context where social and cultural norms determine gender roles and expectations. Through the lens of power dynamic theory, we can gain a deeper understanding of the multiple ways in which power imbalances manifest and affect the lived experiences of these women. Power

Dyadic Theory, developed by sociologists Betty C. Rollins and Stephen J. Bahr provides a framework for examining power dynamics in intimate relationships such as marriage or family units. According to the theory, power imbalances arise from differences in resources such as education, income, social status or authority, which can result in one partner dominating the other (Dunbar, 2008).

In the context of these rural housewives, the transition from solitary individuals to submissive women was a process of change characterized by a profound loss of autonomy and decision-making power. Social and cultural norms dictated that they submit to their husband's authority, denying them the ability to exercise agency and make decisions that affected their daily lives (Dunbar, 2008). This activity went beyond symbolic gestures because it had a tangible impact on their well-being and self-determination. Additionally, the decision-making process was more complicated for those who moved with their in-laws due to the need to navigate complex household hierarchies and family power dynamics (Dunbar, 2008).

These women found themselves having to adapt to complex power structures where their voice and decision-making were often overshadowed by established members of the household. Through the lens of Power Dyadic Theory, we can observe how external factors such as social norms and cultural beliefs reinforced and

reinforced power imbalances in these marital relationships. The theory sheds light on the systemic oppression and inequality perpetuated by patriarchal structures that dictated the subordinate positions of these women in their marriages and households.

Ultimately, the experiences of these rural housewives are a stark reminder of the need to challenge oppressive social norms, promote gender equality, and empower women to exercise agency and autonomy in all areas of their lives. By applying Power Dyadic Theory, we can gain a deeper understanding of how power imbalances shape decision-making processes, undermine autonomy, and perpetuate inequality in intimate relationships and family dynamics.

THE POWER DYNAMIC OF THE DECISION MAKING PROCESS DURING PREGNANCY

This story highlights the complex power dynamics and inequalities experienced by the five informants during pregnancy and early motherhood. Although four husbands supported their wives by taking them to midwife appointments and satisfying their wishes, one informant faced the shocking reality of domestic violence, enduring physical violence despite her husband's participation in prenatal care.

DECISION-MAKING PROCESS: PRENATAL AND SPOUSAL SUPPORT

For four out of five informants, the pregnancy journey was characterized by the presence of their spouses, who actively influenced their care and well-being during childbirth. The husbands chose to accompany their wives to the midwife appointment, showing participation and shared responsibility to ensure the health and safety of both the expectant mother and the unborn child. In addition, their attentiveness extended to their wife's pregnancy desires, a seemingly small gesture that helped recognize the unique needs and desires that often accompany this stage of change.

One of the four informants that had their husband's attention during marriage, Ibu Poniem's husband was so excited that he paid attentive attention to the informant. This level of support may indicate a departure from traditional gender roles and greater shared decision-making in the marital dynamic at this crucial stage.

The juxtaposition of support and abuse in the same economy highlights the unpredictable and often contradictory nature of power in these rural areas. The mere presence of a husband during pregnancy does not necessarily guarantee a safe or fair environment for the expectant mother. In addition, one informant, Ibu Subi found herself in a precarious situation, as she had to return to her family home due to the absence of her husband at this critical time. Driven by need and self-preservation, this decision highlights the weakness of her position in the marriage and the potential power

struggles that arose when her needs were not met.

The pregnancy-related decision-making process was due to a profound lack of support and input from her husband. She faced the daunting prospect of going through this transformative journey alone while shouldering the burden of caring for her in-laws. He made the difficult but independent decision to return to his family home. This choice, which was born from the need and desire to put their well-being first, illustrates the resilience and ability of these women to act even in the face of difficulties. It also sheds light on her precarious position in a marriage where her needs and demands related to her pregnancy were not met, leading her to seek shelter and support from her relative.

DECISION-MAKING PROCESS: FAMILY PLANNING

Amid pregnancy challenges and different experiences, three of the five informants participated in a decision-making process that focused on family planning and contraceptive use. These women were aware of the financial constraints they faced and made the practical choice to limit the number of children they had by using contraceptive methods, especially birth control pills. This decision-making process demonstrated agency and pragmatism as they navigated the realities of their situation and attempted to make informed choices consistent with their financial capabilities and personal well-being. It also highlighted

their determination to control their reproductive choices, which are historically driven by social norms and gender inequality.

Although there were no explicit discussions or formal decision-making processes about family planning for the other two informants, there appeared to be an implicit understanding of the need to limit their family size. This unspoken decision-making process was likely shaped by a number of factors, including social norms, economic realities, and personal experiences. Despite the lack of open communication or educated consideration, these women made choices related to having fewer than three children, suggesting a tacit acknowledgment of the practicalities and limitations that governed their lives.

Amid these challenges, three informants: Ibu Subi, Ibu Harsih and Ibu Poniem engaged in a discussion of family planning and limiting the number of children, citing financial concerns. While that decision-making process was in some ways empowering, it was likely influenced by the broader socio-economic facts and power structures that shaped their lives. The use of birth control pills represented a measure of agency and control over their reproductive choices, but it also highlighted underlying inequalities and resource constraints. For the remaining two informants, the absence of such discussions did not necessarily mean a lack of awareness or willingness. Rather, it may have reflected dominant

cultural norms and expectations regarding family size and reproductive opportunities in their rural communities.

THEORITICAL LENSES

The stories of five rural housewives during pregnancy offer a window into the complex power dynamics and decision-making processes that shape marital and family relationships. Through the lens of Power Dyadic Theory, we can gain a deeper understanding of the complexities and inequalities these women navigate as they embark on the transformative journey of motherhood. Developed by sociologists Betty C. Rollins and Stephen J. Bahr, Power Dyadic Theory examines power imbalances in human relationships, particularly in marriages and family units.

According to the theory, power imbalances arise from differences in resources such as education, income, social status or authority, which can result in one partner dominating the other (Dunbar, 2008). According to the experiences of these rural housewives, the participation of some husbands in sending their wives to midwives and fulfilling their wishes can be interpreted as a joint decision-making process in the dynamics of marriage. This level of support and involvement in the prenatal period is consistent with Power Dyadic Theory, which recognizes opportunities for joint decision-making in intimate relationships.

However, the story of one informant who endured domestic violence despite

her husband attending prenatal care highlights the complex and often contradictory nature of power dynamics in marital relationships. Power Dyadic Theory recognizes that power imbalances can take many forms, including physical violence, even in the presence of supportive gestures (Dunbar, 2008). This harsh reality is a stark reminder that simply showing shared resolve does not necessarily mean a safe or just environment. According to another informant, Ibu Subi the decision to return to her family home because her husband did not receive support during her pregnancy reflects a possible power imbalance and lack of joint decision-making in her marital relationship.

THE POWER DYNAMIC OF DECISION MAKING PROCESS IN THE DIVISION OF HOUSEHOLD RESPONSIBILITIES

This story illuminates the complex power dynamics and gender roles that dominated the lives of these five housewives who juggled household chores with farm work. Despite their active participation in working life, the prevailing social norms and expectations related to gender roles affected the division of household chores in their marriage.

DOMESTIC RESPONSIBILITY

In the case of four informants: Ibu Subi, Ibu Harsih, Ibu Poniye and Ibu Bariyem, it appeared that the responsibility is shared and negotiated with the spouse for household chores

and One of the informants, Ibu Partinah has the burden of taking care of domestic responsibilities.

These women were able to transcend the boundaries of traditional gender roles by involving their husbands in cleaning and washing while performing cooking and kitchen tasks. This division of labor, although unusual in their rural communities, was evident in their domestic discussions. However, it is important to note that even in these negotiated agreements there remained a power dynamic based on societal structures and gender norms.

The expectation that women bear the primary responsibility for household chores continued to be a dominant influence that subtly shaped the dynamics of their marriages. In contrast, one informant's story stood out as a vivid example of the uneven power dynamics and gender inequality that can permeate these rural households. This woman bore the double burden of doing household chores alone while also being the main breadwinner for her family because her husband did not contribute. The combination of household tasks and financial responsibility placed enormous pressure on her, demonstrating the oppressive effects of patriarchal power structures and gender roles.

Despite differences in individual experiences, all five informants operated within a broader social framework that maintained the notion that housekeeping was primarily a

woman's responsibility. Although some couples engaged in discussions and negotiations to redistribute these responsibilities, prevailing social structures and gender norms remained a formidable force, limiting their ability to fully overcome entrenched power dynamics and inequalities.

THE DYNAMICS OF DOMESTIC ECONOMIC DECISION-MAKING

The economic decision making process would shed further light on the complex interplay of power and authority. Four of the informants: Ibu Harsih, Ibu Partinah, Ibu Subi, Ibu poniyem were responsible for managing household finances, making spending decisions on raising children, and even large investments such as buying their home or vehicles. They were given the opportunity on an open discussion about such matters. This level of financial autonomy contrasted with the experience of the fifth informant, Ibu Bariyem who received money only for household needs, while her husband remained in control of important financial decisions. She was never indulged in the participation of important decisions regarding their households, rather just accepting it for what it is. She mentions that as a woman, she is just supposed to be submissive and listen to her husband's needs and agreeing on it, despite her actual opinion.

Four informants in particular used autonomy to make decisions about their children's education, a significant departure from traditional patriarchal

norms that often left such decisions only to men. Even for this participant, however, broader social structures and gender inequality remained a pervasive force that subtly shaped power dynamics within their households.

THE DECISION-MAKING ON THE CHILDREN'S EDUCATION

The decision on the children's education is always an important decision in every households, including the five informants. Out of all the informants, they had individual unique stories on the decision made during the time they had to discuss about their children's education.

Out of the five informants, two of the informants: Ibu Poniem and Ibu Bariyem were illiterate and one out of the five informant, Ibu Partinah could read but couldn't write. Ironically Ibu Poniem who was illiterate still had the full authority of choosing which education their children needed to go. From kindergarden till graduating highschool, she had the power to choose even though her husband could read and write and she couldn't. On the other hand, Ibu Bariyem had no control in that aspect. She followed her husband's wishes on where to school their children. Meanwhile the other three informants had full power on the children's education, mentioning that their husband couldn't care less where their children would go to school.

The decision regarding education does not merely rely on which school their children ought to go to, but also how

they can get their best education and understand the materials given. For Ibu Partinah, she acknowledges that she is illiterate and ask help from her neighbor who is a teacher to give additional teaching after school and to help her children with their homework. This is also done by Ibu Bariyem and Ibu Partinah. Meanwhile for Ibu Subi and Ibu Harsih, they taught their children after their work in the rice field is done. They mention that they still understand some of the materials up until Junior Hughschool where they couldn't understand and eventually hired a lesson teacher for their children.

In the stories above, it is seen that these women, despite their incapacibilities and some of them being illiterate, they still made the major decisions about their children's education, mentioning that they did not want their children to end up like them. This shows that women in important family matters takes high responsibilities.

THEORITICAL LENSES

Based on the reflection above, it can be contextualized with the Communication Infrastructure theory provides a useful perspective for analyzing the power dynamics and decision-making processes described in this article on the division of household responsibilities among five rural women leaders. According to the theory, information structure refers to the environment, activities and resources that allow or hinder the establishment of communication links and the flow of information in a society or social group

(Ogan et al., 2012; Steinfield et al., 2015). In this case, the dominant social norms, gender roles and patriarchal structures of rural societies became the discursive structures that shaped power and decision-making processes in these households.

This article shows how the idea that housework was the responsibility of women was deeply embedded in the social fabric of these societies. These communication structures that perpetuate gender roles and inequalities make it difficult for women to overcome power and inequality within the family, even if some couples initiate negotiations to redistribute household responsibilities (Bittman et al., 2003; Greenstein, 2000). However, the document also demonstrates how some women were able to exercise agency and autonomy within the confines of this communication infrastructure.

Four out of the five informants were responsible for managing household finances, making spending decisions, and even large investments, indicating a degree of financial autonomy that challenged traditional patriarchal norms. Similarly, the decision-making process regarding children's education, a significant departure from traditional gender roles, showcased how these women were able to navigate and leverage the communication infrastructure to assert their influence and authority in important family matters.

The case of Ibu Bariyem, who had no control over important financial

decisions and had to follow her husband's wishes regarding their children's education, underscores the constraints imposed by the communication infrastructure and the uneven power dynamics that persisted in some households. In summary, the communication infrastructure theory provides a useful framework to understand how the prevailing social norms, gender roles, and patriarchal structures in these rural communities shaped the power dynamics and decision-making processes within these households, while also highlighting instances where women were able to exercise agency and autonomy within the constraints of this communication infrastructure. (Desai & Kulkarni, 2008; Seguino, 2007).

THE POWER DYNAMICS OF THE DUAL ROLE AS A HOUSEWIFE AND A FARM WORKER

This story illuminates the multifaceted inequalities and power dynamics of the five informants who juggled the dual roles of housewives and farm workers in the rice fields. Despite significant financial contributions to their households, women were expected to be submissive to their husbands due to dominant religious beliefs and social norms that maintained patriarchal structures. All five informants worked as agricultural laborers out of economic necessity, emphasizing financial constraints and lack of opportunities that forced them to work in addition to household chores. This double burden not only caused them enormous physical and emotional stress, but also

opened them up to gender pay discrimination.

Despite doing as much work as their male counterparts in the rice fields, these women suffered from the gender pay gap, earning five thousand rupiah less than their male counterparts. This stark inequality not only reduced their labor force, but also perpetuated the broader systemic oppression and labor marginalization of women, exacerbating the problems they already faced within their own households. At home, these informants were expected to submit to their husbands, a social expectation deeply rooted in religious beliefs and cultural norms that reinforced patriarchal power dynamics. This statement was not merely symbolic, but had a tangible impact on their agency, decision-making, and overall autonomy within the marriage.

The intersection of their roles as salaried agricultural workers and subservient housewives created a paradoxical reality for these women. On the other hand, their financial contribution was essential to the well-being of their households, enabling them to exert some influence and bargaining power. The deep-rooted social and religious expectations demanded their respect for their husbands, which undermined their freedom of choice and maintained their subjugation. This story highlights the complexity of power dynamics and intersecting inequalities that the five rural women often navigate.

The burden of dual responsibility, coupled with gender discrimination in the workforce and the persistence of patriarchal structures in their households, created a multifaceted web of oppression that these informants had to face on a daily basis. Their stories are a poignant reminder of the ongoing need to challenge and eliminate systemic inequality, promote economic empowerment, and change social norms that perpetuate the subjugation of women. Only by addressing these intersecting forms of oppression can we pave the way to a fairer and more just society where women's work, contributions and autonomy are truly valued and respected.

The above explanation can be contextualized using feminist intersectionality theory as suggested by Kimberlé Crenshaw. An intersectional framework is particularly important when understanding the multiple and intersecting forms of oppression and marginalization experienced by the five rural women in this case. Intersectionality recognizes that individuals may face multiple overlapping systems of discrimination and disadvantage based on their intersectional identities and social positions such as gender, race, class, and other factors. This theory questions the notion of single or independent forms of oppression and instead emphasizes the complex ways in which different forms of discrimination interact and exacerbate each other (Collins, 2015). For the rural women described, their experiences of oppression and marginalization

stemmed from their gender, socioeconomic status, and the patriarchal norms and structures that governed their communities. As Kabeer argues, gender inequality is often exacerbated by other forms of social and economic disadvantage, creating a multidimensional web of oppression. Women faced gender discrimination in the form of unequal pay and labor exploitation in the agricultural workforce, reflecting the systematic devaluation and marginalization of women's work (Seguino, 2007; Doss, 2013). At the same time, they were subjected to patriarchal norms and religious beliefs that forced them to submit to male authority in their households, limiting their decision-making autonomy and agency (Agarwal, 1997; Bittman et al., 2003).

Additionally, their experiences were shaped by their socioeconomic status and financial need, which forced them to work for wages while shouldering the burden of unpaid domestic work (Desai and Kulkarni, 2008). This double burden of productive and reproductive work increased their physical and emotional stress, showing the mutual oppression of gender, class and labor exploitation (Kabeer, 2005). Through the lens of intersectionality, the analysis highlights how the experiences of these rural women cannot be understood through a single axis of discrimination or oppression. Instead, their marginalization resulted from a complex interplay of gender, class, socioeconomic status, and patriarchal structures that intersected and

intermingled to form a multifaceted web of disadvantage and inequality (Collins, 2015).

An intersectional framework emphasizes the need for a holistic approach that addresses the relational forms of oppression faced by marginalized groups, challenges systemic barriers, and changes social norms and structures that perpetuate intersectional inequalities. Recognizing the complex intersections of identities and social positions, intersectionality provides a powerful theoretical lens for understanding and addressing the multidimensionality of oppression and marginalization experienced by these rural women.

CONCLUSION

POWER DYNAMICS OF DECISION-MAKING PROCESSES BEFORE MARRIAGE

Finally, the pre-marital decision-making processes of these five housewives were strongly influenced by their parents and external factors such as the patriarchal structures, social norms, and cultural traditions that undermined their autonomy and personal choices. Despite the fact that two of the informants had the opportunity to choose their partner, general social expectations and parental pressure played a dominant role in their marriage decisions, reflecting the silenced voice of women and lack of freedom of choice in that time and context, mentioning age and religion as an influence to agree on marriage.

POWER DYNAMICS OF POST-MARITAL DECISION-MAKING PROCESS

In conclusion, the transition from independent individuals to submissive housewives after marriage was a profound change characterized by a loss of autonomy and decision-making power. All of the informant was obliged to move to their husband's home, mentioning that the tradition of the Javanese culture was to follow their husband or as they call it Boyongan. They even had to navigate complex power structures, adapt to new roles dictated by patriarchal norms, and often had their voices overshadowed by established family members such as their in-laws. Two of the informant had to take care of her sick mother in-law and one out of the two informant experienced physical abuse due to her mother in-law provoking her husband of the things she did domestically. Their experiences illuminate the entrenched power imbalances and inequalities that permeated their marriages and households.

POWER DYNAMICS OF THE DECISION-MAKING PROCESS DURING PREGNANCY

In short, it can be said that the experiences of these rural women during pregnancy shed light on the multifaceted power dynamics and decision-making difficulties they face. While some spouses offered support, others were absent or even abusive, highlighting the unpredictability of

power dynamics. Decision-making processes related to family planning and contraceptive use showed agency, but were also influenced by socio-economic realities, highlighting the complexity of their lived experiences

POWER DYNAMICS OF THE DECISION-MAKING PROCESS IN THE DIVISION OF HOUSEHOLD RESPONSIBILITIES

In short, it can be said that despite efforts to negotiate and divide household responsibilities, the prevailing social norms and gender roles have maintained the underlying power dynamics. that maintained the perception of housekeeping mainly as the responsibility of a woman. Economic decision-making processes showed varying degrees of autonomy, with some women controlling the economy while others remained under the authority of their husbands. This complexity underscores the need to address systemic inequalities and strengthen women's influence in all areas of decision-making.

POWER DYNAMICS OF THE DUAL ROLE OF HOUSEWIFE AND FARM WORKER

In conclusion, the dual role of housewife and farm worker exposed these rural women to a multifaceted web of oppression, including gender discrimination, work, patriarchal structures of the home and the burden of dual responsibility. Their experiences are a poignant reminder of the intersectional forms of oppression

that must be addressed to achieve true gender equality, economic empowerment, and social change that values and respects women's contributions and autonomy.

IMPLICATIONS

ACADEMIC IMPLICATIONS

The study of power dynamics and gender inequality among working housewives in this country has several important academic implications. First, it brings academic implications to the fields of gender studies and rural development literature, deepening our understanding of gender relations and rural experiences. Second, findings can inform and refine academic implications about household power dynamics, gender roles, and decision-making processes, allowing for more nuanced conceptual models. Finally, this research informs the long-term effects of the intersection of gender, rural and other social identities, and power imbalances on the well-being and economic outcomes of rural women.

SOCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The findings of this study on power dynamics and gender inequality among rural housewives who are also agricultural workers have profound social implications. Essentially, it sheds light on general gender norms and social expectations that shape and maintain unequal power relations in households. The prevalence of powerlessness and exploitation

experienced by some of the women in the study reflects deeply entrenched patriarchal attitudes and the devaluation of women's roles and contributions, despite their importance in agricultural and domestic work. But cases of empowerment and equal power sharing also offer hope, showing that social change is possible when traditional gender roles and norms are challenged and changed.

Addressing these social impacts requires a multifaceted approach that addresses the root causes of gender inequality. This includes challenging harmful socio-cultural norms, promoting gender equality and fostering an environment that values and respects the diverse roles and contributions of women in rural communities. Ultimately, this research serves as a catalyst for societal reflection and action, reminding us of the urgent need to eliminate systemic gender bias and create more inclusive and just social structures that empower and elevate all people, regardless of their gender or social status.

PRACTICAL IMPLICATIONS

This research carries significant practical implications by informing policies, programs, and interventions aimed at promoting gender equality and empowering rural women, especially those who are housewives and farm workers. Policymakers can leverage these insights to develop targeted policies addressing the unique challenges faced by this population, such as ensuring fair wages, access to resources, and equal opportunities.

RECOMMENDATIONS

While this study provides valuable insights into the power dynamics and gender inequalities experienced by rural women who are also agricultural workers, further research is needed to deepen our understanding and develop more comprehensive solutions. Future research should examine the intersection of gender and other social identities such as caste, ethnicity, and economic status to explore how these intersecting factors shape power relations and experiences of inequality in rural households.

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