

## The role of women in small-scale fisheries of Langsa City, Aceh, Indonesia

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**Abstract.** The objectives of this study are two folds, (1) to investigate the role level of women in fulfilling the family need on small scale fisheries sector in Langsa, Aceh, Indonesia; and (2) to analyze the role of fisherman's women in decision-making in the family related to the domestic, productive and social activities. The research was conducted by descriptive method using snowball sampling technique. The purposive sampling technique was used for sample input, while sample collections were performed by in-depth interview and observation technique. The results indicated that the fisherman's women have an important role in assisting family economic in term of domestic, productive and social activities. Furthermore, the women also taking part in family decision process where the main role is addressed on domestic and social activities.

**Key Words:** women role, family economy, decision making patterns, social activity, domestic.

**Introduction.** The study on the role of women to the contribution of Indonesian national development has attracted many researchers and is become an interesting topic. Most of the development planning ignored the involvement of women although the numbers are half of the total population. Nowadays, the role of women in a family has evolved whereas they not only involved in family related activities but also in the social community and economics. The engagement in the economic sector is due to several factors, including the own willingness to be self-dependent in economic and also to increase the income of their family. This was supported by the availability of job demand on women (Sumarsono 2009).

Women are part of two integral part, society and family. They are a potential resource for nation development. However, their full potential yet is to be utilized in the productive activities such as professional occupation in generating extra income. Furthermore, the women role are embedded as housewife, accompanying her husband as well as taking care of the children (Hutajulu 2015). The women might utilize and develop their skills and also assist the family need if they have their own income.

In previous Aceh culture, there is no discrimination between man and women except on religion rituals. There is a clear role between man and women based on their capabilities. At the same time, the social hierarchy still views women into their nature. They were not discriminated by men due to strong Islamic background and hence the man respect and honor the women accordingly. In Aceh, the role of women as a mother in taking care of children has been inherent with culture for generations and as well as a wife to continue her husband spirit if he was died at war as were shown in defending Aceh through Tjut Nyak Dhien, Tjut Meutia and others. However, on the other side of the Aceh culture, women are still positioned on the second layer on the domestic environment due to their physical weakness and mindset as compared to man (Puteh 2012).

Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO) (2012) highlighted that fishery contribute to 40% or USD 235 billion of total fisheries product trading. FAO (2014) also mentioned that about 91.3 billion ton of fishery product was produced. Indonesia is a

second largest country on fishery products of about 5.4 million ton after China of about 13.8 million ton. The KIARA Central Data and Information (KIARA 2015) indicated that the most trade fisheries were shrimp, grouper fish, salmon, tuna, cod, squid, octopus and crab.

In the coastal community, such as Kuala Langsa village, Langsa Barat district, the fishery activities were one of the major livelihood available in their environment. Since these activities were uncertain and fluctuate, the women (the wife) have significant contribution to fulfill their daily need. This was supported by Nugraheni (2012) that the limited income of fisherman community can be seen with significant involvement of their wife in supporting the household economics. Sakdiyah (2000) conducted research in Gunungkidul found that the wife of fisherman has low education background but their role on generating income for family was very productive. According to Kusnadi (2001), in the coastal community environment, the role of women has major contribution on land social-economic activities, while their husband staying in the sea for fishery activities. In simple form, land is for women and sea is for man.

In small-scale fisheries, the role of women is still under public eye. In Langsa city, the role of women is underestimated even though the population is fairly many. According to BPS Langsa data stated that the male population is about 80,632 and women is about 82,182 (BPS 2014). This women population was yet to optimally capitalized. This is clearly visible in the women participation on fishery activities as workers in fish processing subsector. It was occurred due to less access of job to women. As such, this research aims (1) to investigate the role level of women in fulfilling the family need on small scale fisheries sector in Langsa, Aceh; and (2) to analyze the role of fisherman's women in decision-making in the family related to the domestic, productive and social activities.

**Material and Method.** The study was conducted from February to May 2016 in the village of Kuala Langsa, Langsa City, Aceh as shown in Figure 1.

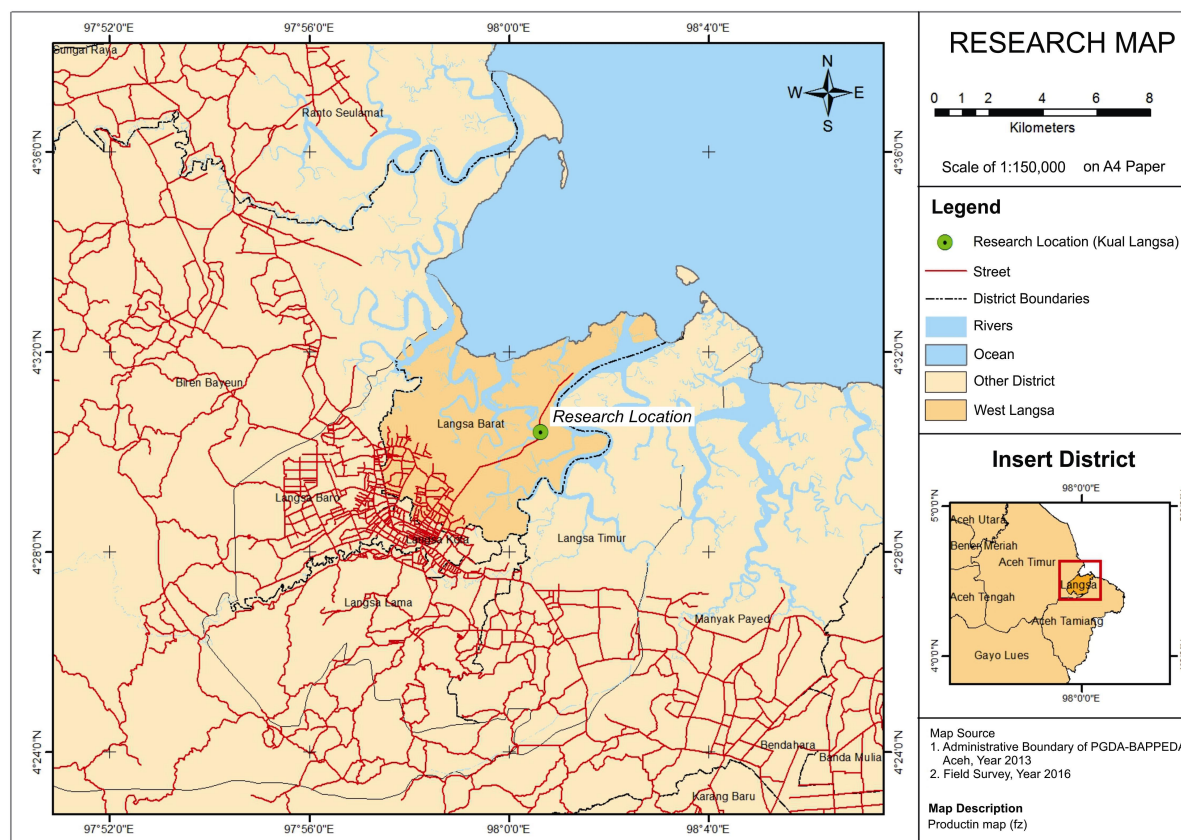


Figure 1. Research location.

The method used in this research is descriptive method using snowball sampling technique. This technique is a method for identifying, selecting and taking samples on a sustained network or chain of relationships (Neuman 2003). It is used to describe patterns of social or communication of particular community (Nurdiani 2014). The data consisted of the primary and secondary data. The primary data collection was done using purposive sampling by considering the representation of population and communication skill that capable in filling the questionnaire (Supranto 2003). The in-depth interview was conducted using questionnaire including focused unplanned interview and informal interview (Idrus 2009).

**Data analysis.** Descriptive analysis was used in this study to describe or illustrate the research object through data sample or undisturbed population without analyzing and making general conclusion (Suharyadi & Purwanto 2009).

**Results and Discussion.** It was found that women in the village of Kuala Langsa, Langsa Barat District, Aceh, Indonesia is not just having role as housewife, but also, they have productive and social activities. These activities make women to have a very important role in the family life.

**Role of women in the domestic activity.** In family, women can role as a mother, wife and child. All of these roles require specific responsibility according to their duty. The mother has major contribution on achieving family happiness and unity. The main role of mother is to educate children as she is the first and main teacher to develop and determine the children's character. It has three different important tasks of a mother in children education:

- (1) as satisfying the needs of children;
- (2) as a role model;
- (3) as a stimulation for children development (KemenPPPA 2012).

At the same time the women also has a role as a wife which involve in advising and supporting of husband activities. So, the women participation is up most important in balancing the weightage of father and mother in developing and raising the children.

The family relationships will be more comfortable when the mother's role has reached the value of equity. This also supported by the research conducted in the village of Kuala Langsa which is active women in domestic activities such as cooking, shopping, accompanying children learning, ironing, housekeeping, washing dishes, washing clothes, bringing children to school and curriculum activities, and taking care of children (Table 1).

Table 1

## Daily domestic activities by women in Kuala Langsa village

Type of occupation	Domestic activities (hours/day)											
	Cooking	Shopping	Accompanying children learning	Ironing	House-keeping	Dish washing	Clothes washing	Bringing children to school	Taking care of children	Bringing children to recite Quran	Resting	Personal activities
Oyster searcher	2.13	1.08	1.10	2.08	0.30	0.27	2.00	0.30	4.25	0.31	5.35	2.13
Fish processing	2.24	1.3	1.3	2.15	1.25	0.32	2.33	0.28	6	0.25	6.23	2.15
Worker at washing clothes	1.25	0.37	1.02	2.2	0.42	0.34	2.2	0.44	8.05	0.30	6	2.4
Tailor	1.25	1.06	1.25	2.2	0.25	0.33	2.34	0.25	4.42	0.25	7.4	2
Government staff	1	1	0.30	2	0.25	0.30	2	0.15	3.00	0.20	4.00	2
Trader	1.3	1.11	1.24	2.39	0.36	0.32	2.17	0.37	4.18	0.25	5.57	2.14
Fishery products seller	3.24	0.35	2	2	2	1.5	3.24	0.2	4	0.15	5	2.5

**Role of women in productive activities.** One way to optimize human resources in Indonesia is by providing opportunity for women to work according to their nature and capability. It is started by eliminating stereotype regarding the roles of men and women in home and workplace in order to unlock this current economic potential. This will improve nation economics when the women are empowered, as Indonesia is supported by the microeconomics of home-based industries, which are mostly established by women. Indonesian UNICEF (2016) counted of about 44 million of women worked as domestic workers in a pinch. In Kuala Langsa village, the majority of women participated in assisting family economic generation in form of searching of oyster, fish processing, selling fishery products, trader, tailor, washing clothes and government staff. Most of their time was spent for income generation as indicated in Table 2. These working activities are directly related to the women contribution in household economics. In other words, even how small the income earned, it will affect to the increase of household economic income (KemenPPPA 2012).

Table 2

Average productive activity of women

No.	Type of occupation	Productive activity (hours/day)	Percentage	Income per month (USD)
1	Searching of oyster	7.50	15	53
2	Fish processing	6.05	13	46
3	Washing clothes	6.80	14	38
4	Tailor	7.25	14	36
5	Government staff	9.00	18	113
6	Business-Trader	7.36	15	53
7	Selling fishery products	6.00	12	90

Table 2 showed that the average income of women was not within appropriate range at which the minimum Aceh province wage for 2016 is USD 159. This is a regulation written in Aceh Governor No. 60 Year 2015. The regulation was made based on Province Wage Board recommendation with the basic justification was by the Government Rule Number 78 Year 2015. This average monthly income was estimated to cover the household need.

**Role of women in social activities.** It is found that besides having domestic and productive activities, women also have a role in social activities. They are expected to socialize and play a role in community. Social activities are often carried out by women in the village of Kuala Langsa such as pray, gathering, recitals, celebration, marriage, funerals and others. Table 3 shows the time spend by women on social activities. It is indicated that the spent time was quit good considering the time given to the productive and domestic activities. The social activities are used to interact and improved social relationship among neighborhoods and villages so that the harmonic, mutual respect, helping each other will be sustainably maintained.

Table 3

Average social activities hours for occupations

No.	Type of occupation	Social activities (hours/day)
1	Searching of oyster	1.17
2	Fish processing	1.45
3	Washing clothes	1.20
4	Tailor	1.50
5	Government staff	2.00
6	Business-Trader	1.33
7	Selling fishery products	1.00

Economic family vulnerability is one of the factors causing women to work. Unstable and low income of the husband encourages women to work for additional family income. At least there are three factors contribute to this phenomenon. First, low education level of fisherman's family member in Kuala Langsa village. It is found that only 42% of wife and 36% of husband was graduated from Senior High School and only 1% of both graduated from University degree. This can be elaborated that the education is not a priority although it significantly contributes to determine what types of work they will involve. Job opportunities for low education level are not many where they only have chance as labor or physical-related works (Kusnadi 2000). Poor participation of women on education sector has contributed to low level of women involvement in economic activities. This can be indicated by very low opportunities of women to participate on livelihood sectors and at the same time they have difficult access on technology, information, market, and capital (KemenPPPA 2012). Second, the involvement of women in working is due to economic condition at which they contribute in fulfilling daily family need. At this stage, the women have a role as housewife, worker and also part of community. Third, their-self willingness to be financially self-dependent to fulfill their need without burdening the husband. Fourth, the women worked because of the availability of work-place in fishery sector in Langsa City.

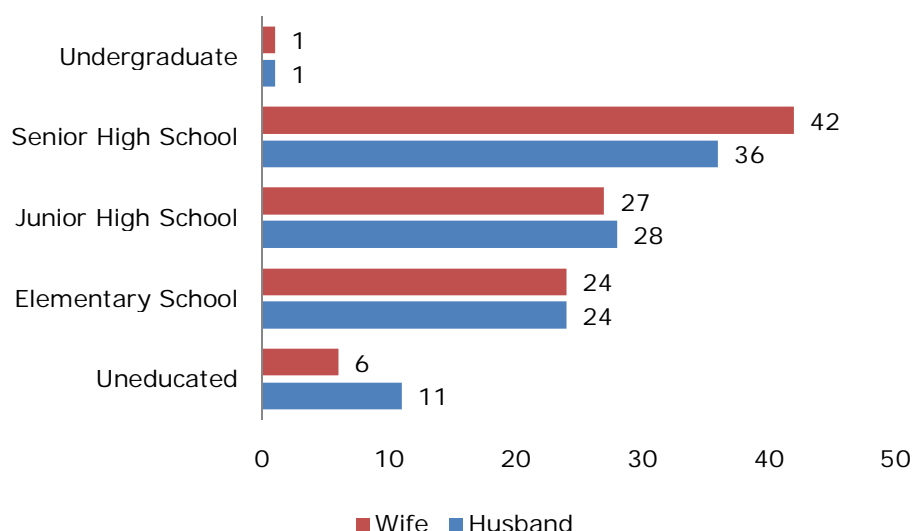


Figure 2. Percentage of husband and wife education level.

**Decision-making patterns.** There are there patterns on decision-making process of husband and wife relationship, i.e. (1) collective decision-making where the husband influence is dominant, (2) collective decision-making where the wife influence is dominant, (3) collective decision-making with both husband and wife have equal influence (complement each other) (Wawansyah et al 2012). Daulay (2001) suggested that a balanced relation between husband and wife is occurred if the women have specific role and responsibility on domestic, productive and social activities. It is become important as stated by Puspitawati (2009) that the family prosperity was influenced by women decision either in upper social level or lower social level.

Decision on domestic activities such as children's education, health, savings, household appliances and perpetuation are made by both husband and wife. The wife is dominated on decision-making related to family food supply in term of menu. It is due to "patriarchy" culture at which the husband focused on livelihood and wife focused on serving the food to family (Muhsin 2014). The involvement of both husband and wife is also occurred on productive activities decision, while the decision on social community is dominated by wife as compared to economic activities as indicated in Figure 3. The level of women influence on family decision is depend type of works that they are involved. According to Pahl (1991) in Tombokan (2001) stated that if the wife is working then she tends to dominated the decision-making. Deacon & Direbaugh (1998) in Tombokan

(2001) also suggested that for both working husband and wife, the possibility of women to participate in decision-making process is higher.

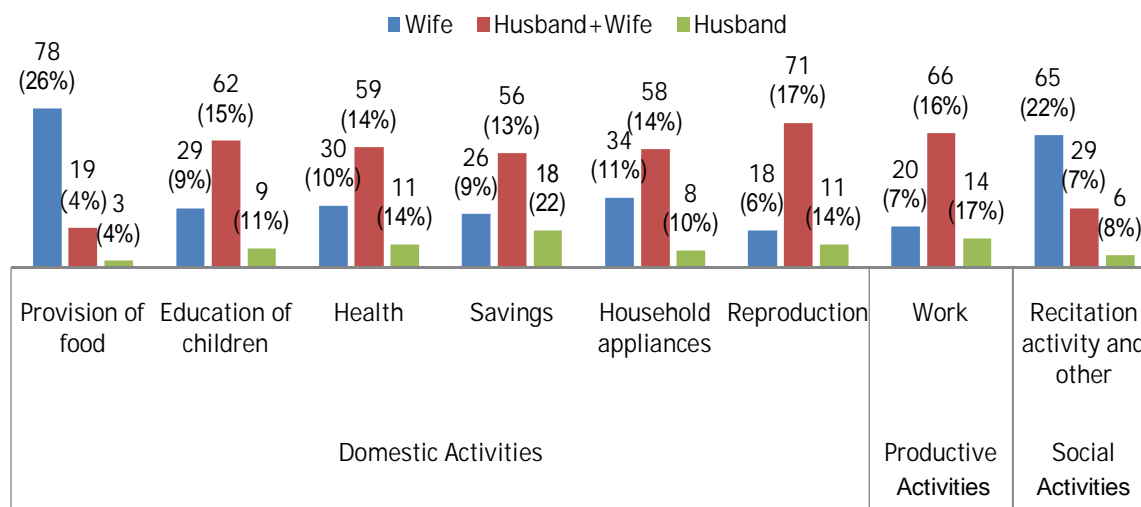


Figure 3. The decision-making patterns within fisherman family.

**Conclusions.** Women have role in domestic, productive and social activities. The role of women is aimed to assist the basic economic family need. Women tend to work due to several reasons, including less family education level resulting difficult access to good job; to fulfill daily family need; their-self willingness to be financially self-dependent to accommodate their need without burdening the husband; and the women worked because of the availability of work-place. In term of decision-making process within family, a woman has their own role in domestic, productive and social activities. The level of women influence on family decision is depending on type of works that they are involved. The women have major influence on decision-making related with domestic and social activities such as family food serving and household appliances.

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