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## The Influence of Patriarchic Culture on Pregnancy: A Case on Farming Households in Rural

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### ABSTRACT

This study is intended to describe the influence of patriarchal culture during the pregnancy of the mother, especially in rural farming households. This study uses a qualitative descriptive method in the context of the "Phenomenology" paradigm. Determination of informants is done intentionally. Research informants consisted of mothers who have children, pregnant women and their husbands, and medical officers (midwives). Primary data sources were obtained directly through interviews with informants and the results of field observations. Data collection is done through (a) direct interviews and (b) observation. Data validation was carried out by triangulation to determine the accuracy of the method used and the accuracy of the data obtained. The results showed that in poor households in rural areas the influence of patriarchal culture during the mother's pregnancy can be seen in (1) Domestic activities in which men are still in important control of the household. In this activity, pregnant women are treated like non-pregnant mothers, as they continue to do household chores until it is close to the time to give birth. (2) Public activities, pregnant women are still directly involved in land or garden cleaning. (3) The husband's trust in taboo matters about eating, especially for pregnant women, so that pregnant women lack nutritional intake. (4) The attitude of the husband towards the mother's pregnancy, in which they consider that the mother's pregnancy is a natural thing and becomes the mother's own business. (5) Husband's support for pregnant women to carry out pregnancy care is still very lacking.

### INTRODUCTION

Discussion of the influence of patriarchal culture in people's lives is still a very urgent issue today because this cultural influence in practice has given rise to gender inequality, especially with increasing discriminatory behavior against women. The patriarchal culture still has a strong influence on most of our society, especially in rural areas where they believe in the sole control of men's overall activities of life in society, without exception in family life, so women often get unfair treatment in various forms in community life and family. This is in line with the view (Apriliandra and Krisnani, 2021), that patriarchal culture has made a significant contribution as one of the factors causing much discriminatory treatment of women to date. Patriarchal culture is a social system that has

become a source of problems, especially for women because women experience marginalization due to the dominance of men over women, and this culture still exists in society because of the lack of public attention and knowledge about patriarchy itself (Widananto, 2021).

Even in the social system, men have the main authority, so they become the center of supervision of the distribution of power in the family (Bressler, 2007; in Susanto, 2015), Defriyanti Puluwulawa (2021), argues that patriarchal culture has long been perpetuated by society and has become a system that placing men in a superior position while women as subordinate Mies (1986; in Omara, 2004) suggests that the patriarchal culture in the structure of society has placed men more dominant than women because men are placed in a value system

that is always above women so influential understand other aspects of society, such as the occurrence of inequality in women's access in various ways is a direct result of the influence of patriarchal culture because most of society's perceptions are still strongly influenced by social constructions that exist in a patriarchal culture (Apriandiandra & Krisnani, 2021).

According to Muhadjir (2005; in Susanto; 2015), the perception that men are superior to women is very visible in the distribution of resources. So that this culture is one of the sources of the many discriminatory treatments, restrictions on the role of women, exploitation, and violent behavior against women that is happening today. The existence of a patriarchal culture has caused some women to accept their fate that a subordinate position that places them under men is something that should be done (Rokhimah, 2014).

The inequalities between men and women born from the construction of patriarchal culture have led to gender differences and created gender inequality. This gender inequality has led to the subordination of women, such as women's reproductive health rights are not the main concern, and cultural views place women of low value compared to men because men are the successors of offspring. Likewise, in consuming daily food, families prioritize men over mothers and daughters, so the distribution and quality of food for mothers and daughters is very low and especially for pregnant women who really need additional nutrition during their pregnancy (Harahap, 2011).

In developing, societies in general women do not have autonomy regarding their reproductive rights, because they are only used as a means of reproduction (Kumar, 2022). Therefore, the government supports several principles related to reproductive health which read "Everyone has the right to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health. States should take all appropriate measures to ensure, based on the equality of men and women, universal healthcare services, which include family planning and sexual health. Reproductive healthcare programs should provide the widest range of services without any forms of coercion. All couples and individuals have the basic right to decide freely and responsibly the number and spacing of their children and to have the information, education, and

means to do so". This shows that one of the current reproductive health issues is the existence of a balance of relationships that are free from coercion, violence, and discrimination, especially for partners (wives) (Darmawati, 2014).

Husband's attention and support during the mother's pregnancy in the household. Attention and involvement of the husband from the beginning of pregnancy are very important to be able to facilitate and relieve the wife in undergoing and overcoming the various changes that occur in her body (Cikalkinanty, Oktavia & Fakhrudin, 2022). It is necessary to have the role of the husband during pregnancy so that the husband can feel and understand the psychological state of his wife, especially the conditions before childbirth because this stage is the most stressful and tiring time for a pregnant woman (Umami, 2019)

During pregnancy physiological changes in the mother's body, This is very significant because at this time there is a need for adequate nutritional needs so that micronutrient deficiencies do not occur because as a result, it can cause anemia for pregnant women and newborns (Sibagariang, et al, 2010; Linda, 2013). Anemia cases vary due to socioeconomic differences, health-seeking behavior, and the influence of patriarchal culture where husbands often do not have concern for their wife's pregnancies (Linda, 2013).

The prevailing gender ideology in society has given rise to the assumption that pregnancy is a woman's business alone and is a normal and natural thing for women, which has led to a lack of family attention, especially to husbands, resulting in low health status of pregnant women themselves. This problem is compounded by the dominance of men in decision-making due to the influence of patriarchal ideology, thus causing limitations for women to decide on their reproductive health services, including family treatment that demands women continue to work even though they are pregnant (Sibagariang et al, 2010; Linda, 2013 ).

The various explanations above show that the husband's role in the mother's pregnancy is very important, starting from the early stages of her pregnancy until she gives birth. This attention is not only in psychological form but also in physical form. Meanwhile, in our society, especially in rural areas, male domination is still very strong in household management and decision-making.

Pregnancy in women is still considered as part of "women's nature" which is their own business, without having to involve the husband, and the husband is only obliged to meet his needs during childbirth. In fact, it is not uncommon for women to still work, both in domestic activities and in public activities, with a fairly high workload and allocation of hours. So that this phenomenon shows the strong influence of patriarchal culture in the family. On this basis, the researcher is interested and intends to describe the influence of patriarchal culture during pregnancy and its impact on the reproductive health of pregnant women, especially in poor rural households.

#### **METHODS**

This study uses a qualitative descriptive method in the context of the phenomenology paradigm. The phenomenology paradigm is used as an effort to develop a reflective critical study of various phenomena, reality, and hyperreality. The research location was conducted in South Konawe. Determination of informants is done intentionally (purposive). Research informants consisted of mothers who have children, pregnant women and their husbands, and medical officers (midwives). Qualitative data were obtained from primary data. Primary data sources come from direct interviews with informants and the results of field observations. The data collection techniques were carried out through (a) direct interviews with informants conducted in a dyadic manner, especially between pregnant women and their husbands, to ensure that there was no data bias in the information, so that the data obtained were more accurate; (b) Observations to get a real picture of the activities of pregnant women and the involvement of their husbands during their pregnancy. Data validation was carried out by triangulation to determine the accuracy of the method used and the accuracy of the data obtained.

#### **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

The results of the study indicate that several field findings describe the influence of patriarchal culture during the mother's pregnancy, which has an impact on the emergence of various health problems in pregnant women, especially during the reproductive period until giving birth to their children.

#### **Mothers in Domestic Activities During Pregnancy**

In rural farming households, the influence of patriarchal culture can be seen in domestic activities where men still hold important control in the household. Husbands are not much involved in domestic affairs and are generally only carried out by housewives. The role of housewives is still quite high in this activity because almost all of these activities, such as household matters ranging from beds/rooms, kitchens, wells, and child care are the burden of women or mothers. In domestic activities, there is no clear distinction between pregnant and non-pregnant women, because as long as the mother is seen as still able to carry out domestic activities even though she is pregnant, she will continue to carry out these activities until she gives birth. The informants stated that in domestic activities in general, almost all housework is done by the mother and this activity is still carried out even though she is pregnant until it is time to give birth.

Generally, husbands do not want to know much about domestic matters, such as cooking, washing, sweeping, and taking care of children, all of which are delegated to the wife even though the wife is pregnant which should require a reduction in the workload. The large workload of pregnant women in domestic activities will certainly result in reproductive health problems, so it often results in the safety of pregnant women during childbirth because the physical and psychological burden of pregnant women greatly affects them during pregnancy. This is in line with the view (Saptandari, 2016), the dominance of patriarchal ideology affects the fulfillment of women's health, especially the fulfillment of reproductive health. Moreover, in the order of family life in society, men tend to be positioned very superior and dominate various sectors of life, both domestic and public. Men's control over women includes physical aspects, sexuality, work, roles, and status, both in the family and society and in all fields (Halid.E. Mohammad, et al., 2013).

#### **Mothers in Public Activities During Pregnancy**

Apart from domestic activities, the influence of patriarchal culture is also seen in public activities. especially in agriculture (farming and or gardening). Farming or gardening activities in rural communities are the main jobs of husbands and wives only acting as helpers. But not infrequently

we find wives allocating considerable work time to this activity. Because in reality every wife after they finish their work at home, they go to the garden and or the fields and follow their husband to help clean the fields or gardens. At 11 o'clock in the garden or field, they have to return home to prepare food for their husbands and after they finish eating, they go back to continue their work, so in this activity, the mothers play a dual role. In this public activity, there are no exceptions between pregnant and non-pregnant women, because pregnant women are still directly involved in clearing fields or gardens unless their gestational age is approaching the time to give birth.

Informants stated that when they help their husbands work in the fields or gardens they also have to prepare their husbands' meals before 12 o'clock and in this activity there is no difference between mothers who are pregnant and those who are not, they both continue to work unless the pregnancy has entered their period. want to give birth. Of course, this kind of condition is very worrying and burdensome for the wife, especially for pregnant women, because the conditions leading up to delivery are the most stressful and tiring stage for a pregnant woman (Umami, 2019). Attitudes and behaviors of family or husbands who tend to demand women to continue working even though they are pregnant greatly affect their reproductive health (Sibagariang et al., 2010; Linda, 2013)

#### **The taboo on Eating and Maternal Nutritional Intake during Pregnancy**

In rural communities that still adhere to a strong patriarchal understanding In general, there are still many who believe in taboo issues in their lives, including the taboo about eating which is more of an object aimed at girls than boys. Moreover, this eating taboo is often associated with an interest in various food resources. Some of the eating taboos that are believed by the community are mostly contrary to health teachings, especially for women, pregnant or lactating mothers, such as they are prohibited from consuming foods that contain high animal protein, for reasons of health of pregnant or lactating women. Whereas malnutrition in pregnant women can have an impact on their health because they experience a nutritional deficit (Intan, 2018). The incidence of low birth weight (LBW) is higher in pregnant women from weak socio-economic circles who usually have low

nutritional status. Anemia can increase the risk of maternal death when compared to mothers who are not anemic, with a ratio of 700 per 100,000 compared to 190 per 100,000. (Harahap, 2011).

In various studies on nutrition, food, and health issues, it is found that there are several views or beliefs regarding taboos, taboos, and myths that limit women, especially pregnant women, from using the food available to them (Saptandari, 2012). The results showed that some mothers, no longer believed too much about taboos in food, because adequate food with adequate nutritional content was needed during pregnancy if they were malnourished during pregnancy, their passion for work decreased and they were easily tired. However, because husbands still often believe in the existence of certain beliefs regarding taboos on eating, especially for pregnant women which are inherited from their parents, mothers during pregnancy must obey them because the decision about whether or not to consume these types of food is largely determined by the husband.

But on the other hand, there are still mothers who believe in the existence of a taboo on eating, not because they believe in taboo stories but especially of the meaning or moral message contained in the teachings, such as pregnant women should not use large plates at mealtime because it will be difficult to give birth, no it is permissible to eat freshwater fish such as catfish or cork because it is feared that it will bleed during childbirth, it is forbidden to eat fruit such as bananas because it is feared that the male sex will form in the female genitalia, and there are many other eating taboos related to pregnancy. This is in line with the view of Humaeni (2015), women are easier to believe in the sacredness of taboos, not in the content of the taboo, but in the wisdom contained in the words of parents, especially mothers. Because these myths have been accepted since childhood, especially taboo about pregnant women so that when they are pregnant, pregnant women will feel anxious if they eat the type of food that is taboo because it will affect the condition of the fetus in the womb. her body.

Though nutrition is needed for pregnant women during pregnancy because of lack of nutrition will be bad for the mother and fetus. The blood supply that delivers oxygen and food to the fetus will be hampered and the fetus will experience growth and development disorders if the mother

suffers from anemia or blood deficiency. But on the other hand, pregnant women should not be overweight because it will have an impact on the mother and fetus, where the fetus will grow larger than the normal weight which will make it difficult for the mother during childbirth (Syafina, Khasanah & Sulistyowati, 2019).

People's mindsets that prioritize belief in eating taboos are not easy to change, because this kind of thinking has been instilled since childhood. Even though many myths are no longer rational because they are not in accordance with the actual reality, but they can still be accepted by common sense (Kartikowati, 2014: 160).

#### **Husband's Attitude Towards Pregnancy**

Especially in rural communities that are still strongly towards patriarchal culture, generally, women do not have full freedom of their reproductive rights, they are only used as a means of male reproduction. Such as the results of research by Kumar (2022), which found that in Indian society women do not have autonomy over their reproductive rights, they are only used as a mere reproductive medium. The existence of surveillance on women's sexuality makes them not have independence over their bodies. The strong control of men over women's sexuality is the root of problems that threaten the existence of women and the occurrence of gender inequality. The influence of patriarchal culture on the control of women's sexuality makes women have no independence from everything that happens to their bodies if something goes wrong that has fatal consequences for their reproductive health. Ironically, the dominant dominance of men over the independence of women's bodies is considered natural by the community and even by the state (Fujiati, 2016). They assume that a mother's pregnancy is a natural thing and is the mother's own business, even though pregnancy is not the responsibility of women alone and there is no view that pregnancy is a "natural part" of being a woman.

Gender ideology which assumes that pregnancy is only a woman's business and is a common thing is an illustration that the dominance of patriarchal ideology in the eyes of men is very strong and influences their attitude towards pregnant women. The assumption that pregnancy in the mother is just a normal thing has resulted in the low health status of pregnant women. Coupled with

the husband's dominance in decision-making in pregnancy care, causing limitations for women in making decisions regarding their reproductive health (Sibagariang et al, 2010; Linda, 2013).

#### **Husband's Support During Pregnancy**

The influence of patriarchal culture can also be seen in the presence or absence of the husband's support during the gestation period. Pregnancy is a time when a mother really needs the support and full attention of the closest people, such as her husband and another close family. A husband's support during pregnancy is the best menu for a mother. This support can be physical or psychological. A husband can motivate pregnant women to carry out health checks related to their pregnancy regularly. because actually pregnancy is not the responsibility of women alone and there is no view that pregnancy is a "natural part" of being a woman. Thus, maternal health, especially reproductive health, can be maintained for the birth of the next generation of healthy and quality.

The husband's lack of attention to the care of pregnant women is one of the factors causing the high maternal mortality rate during childbirth. The informants stated that generally, the husband was not much involved when the mother did a health check, in the sense that the husband's support for the mother during pregnancy for health care was still very lacking, especially if the treatment required costs that the family could not afford. This is in line with the view (Linda, 2013), that economic factors and the influence of patriarchal culture are the cause why husbands often do not have concern for their wife's pregnancies.

The lack of the husband's attention when a pregnant wife asks for help to check the health of her womb and the condition of the baby inside is an attitude and behavior that is often accepted by pregnant women. In addition, the limitation of women or pregnant women to make decisions about who helps their wife give birth, which is dominantly still determined by the husband, is one illustration of the lack of husband support for his wife during pregnancy because women cannot make decisions for their own sake (Hasanah and Fitriyah, 2019).

#### **CONCLUSION**

In poor households in rural areas, the influence of patriarchal culture during the mother's pregnancy can be seen from: (1) In domestic activities where

men still hold important control in the household. Husbands are not much involved in domestic affairs and are generally only done by housewives. In domestic activities, there is no clear distinction between pregnant and non-pregnant women, because as long as the mother is deemed to be able to carry out domestic activities even though she is pregnant, she will continue to carry out these activities until she gives birth. (2) In public activities, the influence of patriarchal culture is still quite high where the allocation of women's working time is quite high, there are no exceptions for moderate mothers because pregnant women are still directly involved in cleaning fields or gardens unless their gestational age is approaching the time to give birth. (3) The husband's belief in the taboo on eating, where the husband still often believes the existence of several myths regarding the taboo on eating, especially for pregnant women inherited from their parents so that during pregnancy they must obey because the decision about whether or not to consume these types of food is very important. determined by the husband, so it has an impact on the lack of nutritional intake of pregnant women. (4) The husband's attitude towards the mother's pregnancy, where they assume that the mother's pregnancy is a natural thing and becomes the mother's own business, even though pregnancy is not the responsibility of the woman alone and there is no view that pregnancy is a "natural part" of being a woman. (5) Husband's support for pregnant women to carry out prenatal care is still very lacking, so it is seen as one of the factors causing the high maternal mortality rate during childbirth.

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