



## Realizing Food Security from the Role of Women in the Family in Kolam Village Deli Serdang Regency

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### ABSTRACT

Food security can be defined as the availability of food in sufficient quantity and quality, distributed at affordable prices and safe for consumption for people to be able to carry out daily activities all the time. Food security cannot be separated from the role of women. Women are involved in production activities (on farm), processing and distribution of food. Women not only produce food but are also the main person responsible for the nutritional needs of all family members. By nature, women, whether they act as housewives or heads of families, are the first to have a strategic role in selecting food ingredients, managing them, even processing and serving them to their household members. Women not only process food, but also must participate in the agricultural production process to ensure economic access to food. The gender gap in women's roles in agriculture disadvantages them in several ways

**Keyword:** Food Security, Gender Concept, Women's Role

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## 1. Introduction

Every living thing needs food as a form of survival. Without food, humans will not be able to survive. Food fulfillment in terms of food security is a pillar of the formation of quality human resources needed to improve the competitiveness of the Indonesian nation at the global level. Food security is defined as the availability of food in quantity and quality. The availability of sufficient, safe, quality, nutritious, healthy and halal food is the main prerequisite that must be fulfilled by every family to realize worthy and dignified people and quality human resources. Given the importance of meeting food sufficiency, every country will prioritize the development of its food security as a support for the development of other sectors. Thus, food security is important and strategic.

In this case, Indonesia's commitment to realize food security development is affirmed in the Food Security Law No. 7 of 1996 on Food and Government Regulation No.68 of 2002 on Food Security (BBKP, 2003). Food security can be defined as the availability of food in sufficient quantity and quality, distributed at affordable prices and safe for consumption for the community to be able to carry out daily activities all the time. It should be noted that food security has the main elements, they

are food availability and food accessibility. According to Ariani (2003), explaining that to achieve food security for everyone, namely access at any time to the food needed for a healthier and more productive life, the conditions for food availability and accessibility of community members to food must be met. And if one of these conditions is not met, there will be fragility in food security. This is because although food is sufficiently available at the national and regional levels, it is not certain that everyone can fulfill their food needs properly if it is not evenly distributed between places, between times and fully consumed by the community.

According to data from the Central Bureau of Statistics in 2012, rice consumption in Indonesia reached 139 kilograms per capita per year, and this was the highest rice consumption in the world (Yuliati et al, 2015). Meanwhile, in the last 2 years the quality of Indonesia's food security has declined. Based on data from the Global Food Security Index (GFSI), Indonesia's food security ranking in 2014 and 2015 slipped to 76th position out of 113 countries. However, improvements have been seen in 2016 which showed an increase in rank to 71.

In this case, Yuliati et al (2015) explained that food security cannot be separated from the role of women. Women are involved in on-farm production, processing, and distribution of food. Women not only produce food, but also become the main person responsible for the nutritional intake needs of all family members. Several research results show that women are the determining factor of food security for their families, starting from the production process on the farm, marketing to providing food at the dinner table and being responsible for fulfilling family nutrition, until finally women have a very important contribution to family food security. In addition, the position of women in the household is instrumental in efforts to achieve food diversification and food security. By nature, women either as housewives or heads of households are the first to have a strategic role in the selection of food ingredients, management, to processing and serving for their household members.

## **2. Theoretical Basis**

### *2.1 Women's Role in Household Food Consumption*

Household food consumption is a household member's need for food that aims to maximize food security at the household level. Food security includes adequate food consumption in terms of quality and quantity. Food quality is more aimed at nutritional aspects based on food diversification because in essence there is no single type of food that has complete and sufficient nutritional content. The quantity of food is more seen from the aspect of the volume of food consumed and the consumption of nutrients contained by foodstuffs (Department of Agriculture, 1999).

According to the above, it can be said that the nutritional content in the food consumed by a household is a measure of the household's food security. Of course, this is clearly inseparable from the role of a woman in maintaining the food security of her household. According to FAO (1998),

explains that the role of a woman in the household occupies a very strategic position, one of which is regarding the fulfillment of household nutrition. It should be noted that a woman has an important role in choosing food ingredients to process them into food for her household.

## *2.2 Household Food Diversification*

It should be noted that food diversification is a process of selecting foodstuffs that do not depend on one type alone but rather on a variety of foodstuffs from the aspects of production, processing, distribution, to food consumption at the household level (Tampubolon, 1998). In essence, food diversification is aimed at diversifying food derived from staple foods and all other foodstuffs that can be consumed by households such as side dishes, vegetables, fruits, and snacks. In this case, it is expected that the more diverse and balanced the composition of food consumed, the better its nutritional quality.

## *2.3 Foodstuff Groups*

There are several food items for daily consumption that can be categorized into nine major groups. The type of food in each group can be different in each household according to the available food resources. Nationally, foodstuffs are categorized as follows:

1. Grains: rice, corn, sorghum, and wheat
2. Tubers: cassava, sweet potato, potato, taro, and sago
3. Animal foods: fish, meat, milk, and eggs
4. Oils and fats: coconut oil, palm oil
5. Oily fruits/seeds: ivory coconut
6. Nuts: soybeans, peanuts, green beans
7. Sugar: granulated sugar, brown sugar
8. Vegetables and fruits: all types of vegetables and fruits
9. Others: team coffee chocolate, syrup, spices, prepared fooda and beverages

## *2.4 Gender Concept*

The word "gender" refers to the differences in roles, functions, statuses and responsibilities between men and women that arise as a result of social and cultural influences passed down through generations. The term was introduced by social scientists to describe the natural differences between men and women as God's creation, even differences that are influenced by cultural factors that are learned and socialized since childhood. Understanding this difference has its own importance, given that there is often a misunderstanding between natural characteristics and characteristics that are the result of culture (Kartini and Maulana, 2019),

This difference in gender roles shows us to reconsider the division of tasks that have been considered inherent to men and women, thus causing the formation of a dynamic, accurate picture, and in accordance with existing social realities. Socially, differences in the concept of gender have provided differences in roles, responsibilities, functions, even in the spaces and places where individuals move in society.

This concept is in line with the statement about the role of women who are often ignored and only considered as an ordinary routine in the family. In fact, without the role of women, it would not be able to produce a great young generation in leading a nation. Therefore, there is a need for policies towards women and women's empowerment in terms of food security which aims to increase the active role of women in farmer groups, food product processing, family nutrition, and family health involving women.

### **3. Research Method**

The type of research used in this research is descriptive qualitative, namely the data collected in the form of words, pictures, not numbers. According to Bogdan and Taylor, cited by Lexy J. Moleong, qualitative research is a research procedure that produces descriptive data in the form of written or spoken words from people and observed behavior. Meanwhile, descriptive research is a form of research aimed at describing or describing existing phenomena, both natural and human-made phenomena.

The data collected in this study includes primary data and secondary data. Primary data collection used in this research is observation and interview data. Observation is the systematic observation and recording of the symptoms studied. An interview is a conversation with a specific purpose carried out by two parties related to the interviewer and the interviewee to the questions and answers carried out by the two parties. The secondary data in this study are in the form of stationery, cameras, audio/sound recorders, documents, literature books, and journals.

### **4. Results and Discussion**

#### *3.1. Site Overview*

Kolam Village is one of the villages in Percut Sei Tuan Sub-district, Deli Serdang Regency. The residents of Kampung Kolam consist of various ethnic groups. Batak, Javanese, Malay, and Karo tribes are residents who live in the Kampung Kolam area. The majority of Kampung Kolam residents are Javanese. In fact, most of them have livelihoods as farmers who work on the land of the Perusahaan Terbatas Perkebunan Nusantara IX (PTPN IX). In addition, there are also those who work as traders, laborers, private employees, civil servants, and so on.

### 3.2. *Realizing Food Security from the Role of Women in the Family in Kolam Village, Deli Serdang Regency*

The results of research conducted by researchers in Kolam Village, Percut Sei Tuan District, Deli Serdang Regency, North Sumatra Province with the research focus "Realizing Food Security from the Role of Women in the Family in Kolam Village, Deli Serdang Regency". In this case, researchers only focused on several sources who were female.

In general, women's fundamental roles include caring for children, preparing food, and making decisions about nutrition (Cohen, 2020). It should be noted that the role of women in maintaining family food security is identical to the three pillars of activity, namely food production, economic accessibility to food, and nutritional security (Agnes et al, 1995). In addition, women not only process food, but must also participate in the agricultural production process to ensure economic access to food. The gender gap in women's role in agriculture disadvantages them in several ways. One of them is the income earned. In fact, family income also affects access to food, as women farmers' income adds to their family income. According to Devasahayam (2020), explains that women's income has a greater influence on household food security and child nutrition than men's income.

Women also suffer disproportionately from social and household inequalities, with serious consequences for their right to food (Cohen, 2020). If these disparities continue, the nutritional security of the family is threatened. Women must be able to maintain the nutritional status of their families.

The above is in line with the results of research conducted by researchers on female resource persons. Mrs. Lili is a 40-year-old housewife and a native of Kolam Village. According to the informant, the role of women in food security in Kolam Village, Percut Sei Tuan Sub-district, Deli Serdang Regency should be improved. This is because, in addition to being a housewife with various activities and routines related to household life, of course matters of food security such as family health and nutrition are also important to consider. Besides that, the role of women in agriculture must also be considered both in the family environment, the community, and the local government.

In fact, according to explanations from female resource persons in Kolam Village, Percut Sei Tuan Sub-district, Deli Serdang Regency, gender equality between men and women should be carried out fairly and equally. This is because, when viewed in terms of agriculture, the role of men is far more than the role of women. There are only a few parts that can be done by women such as obtaining crops. In fact, the role of women in agriculture, especially regarding planting, caring for, maintaining, and obtaining crops such as rice, fruit, or vegetables, has its own sensitivity for them. In fact, the results are also better due to the careful attitude of women towards various types of plants.

On the other hand, according to women interviewees in Kolam Village, Percut Sei Tuan Sub-district, Deli Serdang Regency, there is no women's farmer group. There is only one group related to the role of women, namely the PKK (Family Welfare Empowerment) women's group. Specifically for agriculture, there is none.

According to female resource persons in the village, food security that can be carried out by women in the family is in addition to paying attention to the health and nutrition of food for the family, it also needs to pay attention to aspects of food processing, food distribution, nutrition obtained, and food intake that will be consumed by the family. This is because women's sensitivity in realizing food security in the family is certainly very important. This is the main reason that reveals how important the role and contribution of women in maintaining and realizing food security in the family.

## **5. Conclusion**

Women's role in realizing food security in the family can be said to be very important. Although the role of women in the agricultural sector is often marginalized due to the patriarchal culture that has developed in society, causing a gender division of labor. But on the other hand, women have an important role in choosing food ingredients and processing them into food for their households.

There needs to be an attitude of gender equality between men and women regarding roles and division of labor. In addition, the contribution between the two genders is also needed, especially in the aspect of food security. Judging from this, of course in matters of health and nutrition women have sensitivity to this. In addition, there is a need for policies that favor women and empower women in food security.

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