The Irony of Foreign Exchange Heroes: How Patriarchy Disavows the Ante of Women Migrant Workers

Abstract

The decision of being a migrant worker influence the relation of gender-based in the household, especially the domestic, productive, and public roles. This article is based on field research in Ciheurang Village, one of the origins of a large group of Indonesian women migrant workers who work in the Middle East. The data analysis and presentations are focusing on the story of three former women migrant workers from the village. We argue that working as migrant workers doesn’t mean it will lighten the domestication of women's roles. Even though women migrant workers contribute to the family welfare improvement through the remittances as their outcomes, but this condition won’t sustain forever. When women migrant workers are working, they run their productive function as well as their self-actualization. However, when the working period is over, they will continue their domestic roles at home. As a result, the social – public roles of women migrant workers are not significant at the community level. Women migrant workers experienced a double burden of working and keep marginalized from public roles. The patriarchal culture which internalized in a rural community still becomes the barrier of women migrant workers to achieve a more equal gender relation.

1. Introduction

The division of gender roles between men as the breadwinner and women as the household caregiver is culturally justified in society (Rogers, 1980; Wegren, et al, 2017). The feminist study concludes that most of the women in a rural area are experience a domestication symptom which hamper them to have self-actualization in productive roles. However, women who work abroad have a chance to get out of it by sending remittances to their families. Women migrant worker’s significant contribution through remittances has influenced gender relations in the household (Parida, Mohanty, and Raman, 2015). Women are no longer work subsistence, and their family admittedly relies on remittances. Within this condition, women have a more powerful position to get involved when making important decisions in their family, especially about the remittances expenditures. Even though women’s roles have improved, but the contribution does not affect their bargaining position of gender relation both in a household and community level. Women’s self-actualization to work abroad does not uplift their roles as a caregiver since the gender division has internalized in the family. For example, women will negotiate their decision to work abroad with their husbands, parents, and children before departed (Paul, 2015; Zid, 2012). By sending the remittances, they try to replace their absent to help and fulfilling their family’s
needs. Therefore, allowing women to work is a rational decision for their family’s economic condition, even if the breadwinner is the men’s role.

Migrant worker’s families use the remittances from their family members as the alternative income besides the agriculture sector (Wong and Brockhaus, 2015). Most of the remittances expenditure were used to their basic need and improved their family status to get out of poverty (Sulistiyo and Wahyuni, 2012; Pratomo, and Jayanthakumaran, 2018). The remittance expenditure developed to productive matters when the economic condition of a migrant worker family has improved (Cole, Wong, and Brockhaus, 2015; Randazzo, and Piracha, 2018; Azizi, 2018).

The study of remittances expenditures from a feminist perspective has reported various models of utilization besides the basic needs in several developing countries. In Vietnam, remittances expenditures for a long term period spent on the education of children (Kumar, and Vu, 2014). The shifting of remittances utilization is done to give a chance for their children to get another job (Luong, 2018). In the Philippines, remittances also used by the women migrant workers to get invested in education (Paul, 2015). However, the investment purpose of children’s education addresses them to continue their parents’ job as a migrant worker but in a better field of work. In Thailand, remittances utilization are related to family prosperity, whereas at that one-third of the poorest family use the remittances for household needs. On the contrary, migrant workers' families with higher social status use remittances for asset accumulation. (Garip, 2014). Similar cases also apply to Indonesian women migrant workers' families, the priority expenditure of remittance is to ensure the wellbeing of the family (Zid, 2012).

Women’s decisions to be migrant workers influenced by cultural elements and customs in society. It is the result of negotiation processes between women’s individual aspirations to work and other family members. The result of this negotiation makes women can’t get free from their roles in the household, which later, it will be replaced by sending the remittances as breadwinner responsibility. Women will return to their house as their working period is over and take over the previous domestic roles (Dumitru, 2014; Kou and Bailey, 2017). However, women’s migrant worker's contribution to their family does not always empower their gender position in the household. When the migrant worker's family has relied on remittances, women will involve or even influence any important decision-maker in their family. However, this privilege will cease when they stop working. The condition that
happened at a household level will continue in the broader sphere, which is the community level.

Remittances expenditures by migrant workers in the rural area bring their impact to the community level. This impact happens in a rural community which sends a significant number of their women as a migrant worker. The remittances accumulation from the migrant worker’s families improve the economic growth of the rural community (Pradhan, Upadhyay, & Upadhyaya, 2008; Feeny, Iamsirarjo, & Mcgillivray, 2013; Annas, 2017), which then helps to alleviate poverty in the village (Pratomo, and Jayanthakumaran, 2018; Parida, Mohanty, and Raman, 2015), improve the quality of human capital (Cole, Wong, and Brockhaus, 2015; Jaquet, Shrestha, Kohler, and Schwilch, 2016), and helps the migrant workers family to have better engagement in their community (Holst, Schäfer, & Schrooten, 2012). However, the remittance doesn’t improve women migrant workers to gain better access to the community’s strategic position, such as being the village’s leader (Purwanti, et al, 2018).

Most of the women migrant workers from Indonesia come from rural areas. Working in the domestic sector in Arabic countries is more appealing for them because it offers better financial conditions than the same work in Indonesia. Several studies conclude that being a migrant worker is quite appreciated as the formalization of migrant workers dispatch is done by the government (Lindquist, 2012; Yazid, 2018). As a result, many women migrant workers choose a formal departure, which using a real passport from the legal institution of migrant workers agencies (Mary, 2017). The formal way makes the migrant workers feel more secure to send the remittances as the responsibility to their family. However, gender studies tend to be skeptical about the continuation of women’s emancipation that experienced by women migrant workers.

Women migrant workers will return to their domestic roles after their working period is over. The chance of working as a migrant worker won’t make the domestication of women disappear permanently. This article discusses the gender relation that women migrant workers have experienced in the family and the community levels. The presentation in this article will be divided into three sections. The first section will describe the gender relation that experienced by women migrant workers. Section two will try to review the previous studies that relevant to this issue. The last part will try to examine the reflexion of reproductive, productive, and social – public roles. This section also examines aspects to be negotiated by
women migrant workers to improve their bargaining position. The last section is the reflexion from the discussion about women migrant workers' emancipation from the rural areas.

2. Literature Review

a. the domestication of woman

Gender roles become one of the most determining factors of work division in society. As explained by Barbara Rogers, “the division of labor by gender is a factor in most, if not all, societies. It plays a role in the production process—although the lines of demarcation show almost infinite variation, and some societies will have more strictly defined areas of ‘female’ and ‘male’ activity than others. Gender is, together with age, a widely used means by which societies make some form of division of labor a process of specialization which is an essential tool of efficiency in any production system” (Rogers, 1980). The dichotomy of the social relation which oriented on the inequality of sexual characteristics, where masculinity is more dominant both in public and domestic roles. On the other hand, women experienced domestication as they have the irreplaceable motherhood responsibility. As a result, working abroad is a problematic aspiration for themselves and their families.

For women, being a migrant worker is a form of expression of individual freedom. However, they can’t get free from their double burden roles, as the breadwinner and caregiver (Dumitru, 2014; Kou and Bailey, 2017; Tuccio and Wahba, 2018). As a result, when women have an aspiration to work, they need to negotiate the decision together with their family members (Paul, 2015; Luong, 2018). This process leads to the two consequences there are; having a career for a woman is a collective decision, and her absence in the household won’t make them irresponsible.

Several aspects determine the chance of working abroad for Indonesian women in rural areas. First, women’s contribution to the household economy is needed as an additional income, parallel to their husband (Zid, 2012). Second, the profession as women migrant workers is quite appreciated as an honorable status. Women migrant workers who depart through formal way receive protection from the government (Austin, 2017), (Yazid, 2018). Third, the departure process of becoming a migrant worker as a domestic helper to Arabic countries also more affordable, because they can pay the departure cost after they started working there (Lindquist, 2012). Fourth, women migrant workers' families would be more prosperous
compared to any other families in rural areas. The remittances sent by them also more prominent than the income from the agricultural sector in the village (Pratomo, and Jayanthakumaran, 2018).

b. Remittance to fill the absence of women

When women migrant workers leave their families, their absences will be replaced by their contribution to their family’s economic capacity by sending the remittances. The remittances can improve their family welfare (Cole, Wong, and Brockhaus, 2015; Parida, Mohanty, and Raman, 2015; Mondar, and Khanam, 2018), and aggregately lessening the poverty in the community level (Adams and Page, 2005; Kumar and Vu, 2014; Annas, 2017; Pratomo and Jayanthakumaran, 2018; Sobiech, 2019).

The remittances expenditures negotiated by women migrant workers with their families, especially their husbands and parents. Its expenditures also determined by their family’s status. The more prosperous a family is, their expenditures also shifted from consumptive into more productive (Garip, 2014; Jaquet, Shrestha, and Schwilch, 2016; Azizi, 2018; Holmelin, 2019). The expenditures priority are to fulfill the family’s basic need and children’s education. The secondary expense is to start a business after the family has reached basic prosperity.

The remittances functioned as the alternative source of capital. The informal character of rural areas becomes a barrier for investors to invest their capital. This condition leads to the deficiency of capital for developing new business aside from the agricultural sector (Martinez, and Cummings, 2015). In the end, the remittances have become the alternative of capital development in rural areas. However, the remittances can also hamper the community’s sustainability if its utilization shifts to the outside village. An example from Nepal, when the family's basic needs are secured, the remittances used for leaving their village to a better-developed community (Jaquet, Shrestha, Kohler, and Schwilch, 2016).

c. Gender role in the patriarchal community

The prosperity enjoyed by migrant workers' families is temporary since women migrant workers would stop working and return to their village (Pratomo dan Jayanthakumaran, 2018). Several years after they stop working, their prosperity happens to decline as their
saving has run out. Women are perpetually returning to their previous roles as a caregiver (Tuccio, and Wahba, 2018; Parvin, Rahman, and Jia, 2012). It comes to an end that, no matter how significant women migrant’s contributions, it will not make their domestic roles disappear.

The patriarchal culture divides gender roles based on the physical characteristics of men and women. This type of culture could be rooted in the local's belief and internalized across generations through socialization in the family (Rogers, 1980; Supriyadi, et al, 2019). This culture has created a biased point of view, where men are associated with the outside world, and women are associated with the domestic sphere (Wegren, et al, 2017). As a result, there is a strong value that normalizes men to evade domestic responsibility in the absence of women. Yet, women are bounded with the domestic roles, even though they have had spent a huge amount of time to work in the ‘outside world’ (Gimenez, and Mangiavacchi, 2019; Holmelin, 2019).

3. Method

The data collected through a series of interviews. The research location was determined based on the government statistics data of the women migrant workers’ origin. Based on the Purwakarta Central Bureau of Statistics data, The Pasawahan sub-districts is the most contributor of women migrant workers origin in Purwakarta, West Java. We chose Ciherang Village, the village of most women migrant workers in the region.

The Informants are purposively selected from one key-informant to another. They are the prominent ex-woman migrant workers from three generations in the village. In the first step, we visited Pasawahan sub-district office, then the leader of Ciherang village introduced us to Mr. Oman, one of the migrant worker's sponsors who facilitates the candidate to the labor distribution agencies in the capital city. Mr. Oman later introduced Mrs. Maryah as one of the women migrant workers’ first generation in the village. Then, she added us to Mrs. Neneng as the second informant. Finally, Mrs. Neneng introduced us to Mrs. Aisyah, ex-migrant workers from the first generation, who have three daughters have been working as migrant workers in Saudi Arabia.

4. Finding and Discussion

4.1 The Departure of Women Migrant Workers in Ciherang Village

a. the pioneer
Mariyah is now 56 years old. She is one of the women migrant workers first generation from Ciherang Village. They are called the *ngalabadah*, which means the pioneer in their local language. They depart between 1980 – 1990s leaving their village to work in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia as domestic help. Their decision to work overseas required a huge amount of bravery since it was full of uncertainty that no other women from their village who were ever working overseas. Besides that, the pioneer of women migrant workers also perceived as infamy for resisting the custom and tradition by their neighbors. The consequence of their brave decision is living separately from their children for years. Maryah, one of the first generation, confessed about the psychological push factors in Ciherang village.

“The first time I departed to Arab in 1986 persuaded by Ceu Epn, who just returned from Arab [Refers to The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia]. Even though my family's economic condition was poor, and I’m a widow and having four children. I didn’t merely accept the offering from Ceu Epn, but also has considered it several times. Moreover, I often heard about the issue that Arabian people are rude, and doing such negative behavior, I felt worried. Finally, I had the final decision to work overseas. I consulted that plan with my parents. After all the family members agreed, I came to Ceu Epn and registered my self to H.Ukn”. (interview, 15/12/2010).

Maryah’s decision to work abroad was negotiated with her parents. Even though it was her own will to work, but she couldn’t leave her house without permission from her parents, especially her father. Remittances were sent to fulfill their parents’ and children’s basic needs. Thus, remittance was functioned as a form of responsibility to fill her absence in the family, as a daughter and mother at the same time, (Azizi, 2018; Randazzo dan Piracha, 2018; Luong, 2018). In an earlier period of working, remittances expenditures only spent on basic needs, but after five years her family affords to purchase land in the nearest village. By the time her period of working was over, she had owned several assets including as 400 meters of land. She has been a successful example of migrant workers in the village, who brought new knowledge for the women in Ciherang village.

b. the follower

The second generation of women migrant workers called *nuturkeun* or the follower. They are women migrant workers from Ciherang Village who went to Saudi Arabia between the years 1990 to the year 2000. The successful stories of the pioneer encouraged them to try the same occupation. The pioneer generation was merely required courage as the key since almost all
the funding came from the Indonesian Labor Providers Organization (PJTKI). On the other hand, the *nurkeun* generation needs to finance their departure by themselves. The amount of payment is between 100USD to 300 USD, which consider as expensive for them. This cost existed as a consequence of the formalization process for labor dispatch overseas by the Indonesian government (Austin, 2017; Lindquist, 2012). At the earlier time, some of the migrant worker candidates had to sell their land to overcome the cost. At the later time, the sponsors were willing to cover the funding by women migrant workers, and the migrants could pay after they started working.

Women’s interest in to be a domestic helper overseas had been increasing from time to time. They are inspired by the success of the previous-generation, which indicated by their's asset accumulation such as jewelry, furniture, house, or land purchase. Even though working overseas could improve women’s migrant workers' family economic condition, but it wasn’t achieved easily. For example, Neneng, migrant workers from the second generation. She needed her husband’s permission to go to the Arabian country. The purpose is to fix her family's economic condition. As mentioned below,

“I departed to Saudi Arabia four times. The first time was in 1993, at that time, my child was still an eight months baby. Even though it was hard for me to leave my baby, but I had no choice and forced by a bunch of necessities, and my husband is just a freelancer. When I was working abroad, my mom was taken care of the baby. After eight years of working I could purchase a 200 meters land and build a house. The rest of the money used for daily needs and started a small business. The result from that is quiet enough to fulfill our daily needs.” (Interview, 26/11/2011).

As long as she works as migrant workers, she always sent remittances to fulfill the families’ daily needs. After eight years of working, Neneng could purchase 200 meters of land and renovate their houses. Unfortunately, she unexpectedly had to divorce with her husband while she’s been in her working period. Her absence as a wife and a mother became her ex-husband's excuse to get married again with another woman. Neneng’s experience reflected how strong the influence of patriarchal culture in Ciherang village, which makes men unwilling to cover the domestic roles which always become the women’s responsibility. Even though Neneng has contributed to their families’ economic improvement by sending the remittances.
c. the successor

The third generation of migrant workers called neruskeun or the successor. For women, working as a domestic helper in Saudi Arabia is the primary source of the family's income. However, even if women have significant contributions to their family prosperity, women do not have any status improvement in the household. Women are still given a bunch of domestic responsibilities.

At the time of this research was conducted the neruskeun generation was working abroad. We manage to study this generation of women migrant workers from their family relative. One of the stories from this generation is Aisyah’s experienced. She was lucky enough to work for a generous family when she was working as a domestic helper. Later, Aisyah facilitates her two-daughters to work in the same family. However, Aisyah’s grandchildren must stay with her, and become her responsibility to take care of because of the refusal of her son in law. As mentioned by Aisyah below,

“...My boss treated me and other housekeepers kindly. He also often gave us complement such as “Bani Enung, khaiiir, khaiiiir” which means that everyone is good, and that makes us prefer to stay for any longer. My two daughters are working as domestic helpers in Saudi Arabia now, and my son is working as a building contractor in Malaysia. Today, I live with my sister (her name is Is), who had worked in Saudi Arabia for the same boss as mine. Now, both My sister and I need to take care of the four grandchildren who left by their mother to work.”

The three migrant workers from Ciherang village have their prominent contributions to their families. Women’s decision to work as migrant workers have improved their families' economic condition to escape the poverty line. However, the three migrants still experience the domestication inside the household, whether during their working period or later when they have stopped working. Their husbands don’t want to cover the domestic tasks which have always identified with women’s responsibility, including taking care of their children (De Bruin, and Liu, 2019; Kou, and Bailey, 2017).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>First Generation (Ngabaladah)</th>
<th>Second Generation (Nuturkeun)</th>
<th>Third Generation (Neruskeun)</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rational reason to</td>
<td>To fix their family</td>
<td>Imitate the succesful</td>
<td>Follow their parents’</td>
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Each generation of migrant workers has their own experience, as depicted in Table 1. The pioneer generation had a rough negotiation process to get permission from their families. They had to leave their children and challenge the cultural values that discourage women to leave their families behind. The pioneer generation perceived as rebels because they did not follow the norms and traditions, which suggest women stay at home (Paul, 2015). The second and third generation was quite easier to get permission because society has recognized the tangible success of the first generation of women migrant workers. The third generation of migrant workers even pushed by their families, who became migrant workers (Tuccio and Wahba, 2018). However, there is some indication that the departure of women migrant workers are not pure from the women’s aspiration, especially migrants from the third generation who are younger. Some of them have prepared by their families to be migrant workers since they were young, the others were recruited or persuaded by sponsors or the agency.

### 4.2 Variance of Remittance Expense

Remittance expenditure generally classified based on the working tenure of a migrant worker. The first type is during the first five years of work tenure. The initial purpose of working abroad is to escape from the poverty line, whereas the remittance is used to fulfill basic needs and children’s education fees. The second type is from the 5th to 10th years of working tenure. The allocation of remittance on these steps is to accumulate women migrant workers’ wealth. The expenditure could be divided into two categories, namely consumption and investment. Consumption expenditures are remittance expense to gain social statuses, such as house renovations, or purchase jewelry or automobile, etcetera. more advanced such as land purchase, vehicle purchase, and also house renovation. Using remittance for investment in the village is implemented through land purchase or starting a business. The third type started after the tenth years of working tenure. At this step, the remittance is used as preparation for
retirement. At this step, migrant workers have felt so comfortable with their job. The allocation is neither to raise their families’ prosperity or status, but for savings to prepare for retirement.

The remittances use by migrant workers are following those steps. Remittances are always spent to ensure the survival of the migrant workers' families. Only after their basic needs are secured, the remittances then used for capital accumulation (Piteli, Buckley, and Kafourus, 2019; Martinez, and Cummings, 2015; Kumar and Vu, 2014). Also, in Ciherang Village the success of migrant workers often measured by their wealth, such as land ownership. Even though they have worked for years, each migrant families won’t be recognized as successful until they bought more land. The three informants are considered successful migrants since they could afford to purchase land.

The land ownership acquired by remittances also demonstrates how gender norms in the village are challenged by social practice (Holmelin, 2019). The women migrant workers decided to purchase the land, but the control toward the land still depends on men. These facts support Roger’s argumentation, who said the control toward the land is dominated by men (Rogers, 1980). At the Ciherang Village, the transaction of land ownership done in informal manners. Most of the land at the time of transactions did not have any legal document of ownership, such as a certificate of ownership. The only proof of ownership was a sheet of receipt signed by the old and new owner of the land. Women migrant workers are allowed to sign the receipt, as proof that she owned the land. However, she won’t be the one who controls the land. Every single decision regarding the use of land was discussed in the family, which mostly dominated by the head of the family.

4.3 The Remittances Impact on Women Roles and Status

Working abroad as a domestic helper gives women migrant workers the capacity to remit their income to help their families at home. Most migrant workers' family are depending on remittance, thus influenced women’s roles in the household (domestic). As the breadwinner, women migrant workers rise their bargaining position in the household. The following section discusses the influence of women’s contribution to their family well being over gender relations, especially on the bargaining position of women in family decision making.
a. Women migrant workers role in their household

The roles of women are inseparable from the three main activities; domestic, productive, and public roles. Previous studies describe women’s domestic roles in activities that have to do with motherhood such as nurturing, caregiving, educating, and preparing family food (Rogers, 1980). Domestic role expresses the subordination of women after men, where women’s roles only limited in the household, and hinder them from other roles outside the house.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pre-working abroad</th>
<th>Post-working abroad</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>(1) Domestic Roles</strong></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Domestic roles are done by wife, meanwhile husband unwilling to help</td>
<td>- Domestic roles still become the wife’s responsibility, meanwhile the husband’s contribution only at narrow scope such as cleaning the house</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Nurturing is the entire wife’s responsibility</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Nurturing is wife’s whole responsibility</td>
<td>- Husband shares role in nurturing children</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>(2) Productive Roles</strong></td>
<td><strong>(2) Productive Roles</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Working has become the husband’s major responsibility. If wife working perceive as additional income.</td>
<td>- Women are acknowledged as the bread winner in family.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Decision is made and dominated by husband</td>
<td>- Wife is involved as well in household’s decision making</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>(3) Social – Public Roles</strong></td>
<td><strong>(3) Social – Public Roles</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Community meeting is done by husband</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Arisan (womens’ social club), Posyandu (Integrated Service Post), PKK (Family Welfare Programme) are done by wife</td>
<td>- In general are the same, but wife can involve in various activities such as taking healthcare aid, and basic needs (Raskin, BLT, Jamkes)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2. The Classification of Gender Roles in Women Migrant Workers Household

The three ex-women migrant workers’ managed to be the breadwinner in their households. However, that contribution doesn’t mean that they could replace men’s roles. One of the indications is in the land ownership, which becomes the primary indicator of a successful migrant worker. Even though the three of them afford to purchase several measures of land, but they do not have complete control over those assets. Women migrant workers have the land under their name, but they could not control the use of land according to their own will. They should negotiate with other family members, especially their husband or their father.

b. The decision making in the household
Women’s roles are inseparable from their status, whether in a household or public areas. However, being able to contribute to the family wellbeing does improve women's bargaining position in the household. Thus, family decision making would not only be determined by the husband. The dynamic of household decision making is depicted in Table 3, which explains the shifting on decision making between pre-migrate and post migrate.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pre-migrate</th>
<th>Post-migrate</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Reproductive – Domestic Roles</strong></td>
<td><strong>Productive Roles</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Domestic roles are done by wife, meanwhile husband unwilling to help</td>
<td>Domestic roles still become the wife’s responsibility, meanwhile the husband's contribution only stays narrow scope such as cleaning the house</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nurturing is the entire wife’s responsibility</td>
<td>Husband shares role in nurturing children</td>
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<tr>
<td>In general are the same, but wife can involve in various if activities such as taking healthcare aid, and basic needs (Raskin, BLT, Jankes)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Productive Roles</strong></td>
<td><strong>Social – Public Roles</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mencari Nafkah menjadi tanggung jawab suami, istri mencari nafkah dianggap sebagai pencari nafkah tambahan</td>
<td>Women as the bread winner in family. Wife migrant acknowledge always involve male in maintaining daily needs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Decision is made and dominated by husband</td>
<td>Wife is involed as well in household’s decision making</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community meeting is done by husband</td>
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Table 3. The decision making in migrant workers household between Pre and Post Migrate.

The reflexion of women’s role in the village shows that women migrant workers have significant roles in improving their families' welfare and replacing men’s tasks to fulfill the family’s needs (Mondar and Khannam, 2018). However, that contribution only has a small influence on their bargaining position in the family decision-making process, whether pre or post migrate (Gimenez, and Mangiavacchi, 2019). The stereotype toward women’s role, whereas women only work at the domestic type of activities justify men’s domination in the household. This condition confirms that there is an illusion of gender equality between women and men in the migrant worker families. It doesn’t matter how much women’s contribution to the household, women are still marginalized.
The illusion of women’s role in this study shows a sexual antagonism which still experienced by women. When they have a significant contribution to fulfilling the household needs, she got perceived as equal to men. However, the patriarchal culture makes the considerable contribution of women are not influence their status improvement, both in the household and in the public. In a household, post-migrate women’s migrants experience a double burden. In public roles, women are marginalized from some essential roles, especially for taking any decision on the village level. This phenomenon shows women still experienced unfair treatment in the social system. Because it doesn’t matter how much sacrifice to participate, patriarchal culture makes it uneasy for women to get a better status (Wegren, et al, 2017; Purwanti, et al, 2018). In social activities, women’s roles are limited to work in the area of social service which closely related to women’s characteristics such as Posyandu (caring for the children), PKK and Arisan (women social club).

The remittances' impact on women’s status and roles in a household strengthen the domestication theory. In this study, women’s involvement in productive roles only take place when they are working as a migrant worker, but the domestic tasks will stick back to women’s responsibility every time they returned home. Post-migrate women still involved in decision making, but in the process men (husband) has more privileges than women. Even their decision of becoming a migrant worker in the current generation is no longer pure from women's aspirations. There is a push factor from their family, also the persuasion from the agencies and sponsors. Thus creates a mindset of young women in Ciherang village, that they will be successful only by working as migrants in Saudi Arabia.

5. Conclusion

This study sees the women’s role as an individual whose a part of capital production. Women have roles and access to a profession that produces income for the household. Women also have control toward remittances that they provide from working as domestic helpers in a foreign country. This result shows that it doesn’t matter how significant the women’s contribution to improving the household economic condition, women’s status doesn’t improve, both in the household or public sector. In the household sector, men are still in domination, such as getting permission to work until managing the remittances expenditure. In the public sector, the domination of men shown by the lack of women’s participation in various important meetings. The patriarchal culture contributes the most as it has internalized in society. This ideology creates a perception that the domestic roles are the women’s tasks only, meanwhile public roles are men’s responsibility. The illusion of women’s roles
emancipation appears as the impact of the patriarchal culture that exists in society. Women’s major contribution to improving their family welfare doesn’t relate to their position in taking any critical decision which equals with men, especially in the household, and generally in public roles (Holst, Schäfer, & Schrooten, 2012; Purwanti et al, 2018).

6. References


