



Women's Double Burden in the Family: An Analysis of Reciprocal Relations Based on *Mubādalāh* Theory in Central Lampung Regency

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Abstract: This study is situated within the growing prevalence of the double burden borne by married women in Rumbia District, Central Lampung, as they are required to manage domestic responsibilities while simultaneously engaging in family-based economic activities. The article seeks to elucidate the concrete forms of this double burden, the factors that generate it, and its implications for fairness within spousal relations. In addition, the study interprets empirical findings through the lens of the *mubadalāh* perspective. From a theoretical standpoint, the analysis integrates gender justice theory, the concept of the double burden, and the *mubadalāh* approach within Islamic family law. Methodologically, the research employed a qualitative case study design, involving women engaged in dual roles, their husbands, and local community figures as informants. Data were collected through in-depth interviews, participant observation, and document analysis. The findings indicate that the division of domestic labor remains markedly unequal, spousal and familial support tends to be limited, and women experience heightened physical and psychological strain, despite their efforts to develop various coping strategies. Viewed through the *mubadalāh* framework, these practices appear to be inconsistent with the principle of reciprocity. Consequently, the study recommends strengthening *mubadalāh*-based education within families, grassroots religious forums, and local policy initiatives that promote a more equitable and reciprocal division of labor.

Keywords: Central Lampung, Gender Justice, Islamic Family Law, Mubadalāh, Working Women, Women's Double Burden.

Abstrak: Penelitian ini dilatarbelakangi oleh maraknya beban ganda yang dipikul perempuan menikah di Kecamatan Rumbia, Lampung Tengah, ketika mereka harus mengelola pekerjaan domestik sekaligus terlibat dalam aktivitas ekonomi keluarga. Artikel ini bertujuan mengurai bentuk konkret beban ganda tersebut, faktor yang melahirkannya, serta dampaknya terhadap keadilan relasi suami istri, sekaligus menafsirkan temuan lapangan melalui perspektif mubadalāh. Secara teoretis, kajian ini memadukan gagasan keadilan gender, konsep double burden, dan pendekatan mubadalāh dalam hukum keluarga Islam. Metode yang digunakan ialah kualitatif dengan desain studi kasus, melibatkan perempuan pekerja berperan ganda, suami, dan tokoh lokal sebagai informan melalui wawancara mendalam, observasi, dan telaah dokumen. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan pembagian kerja domestik tetap timpang, dukungan suami dan keluarga relatif minim, serta beban fisik dan psikis perempuan meningkat, meskipun mereka mengupayakan berbagai strategi coping. Dalam kacamata mubadalāh, praktik tersebut tidak selaras dengan prinsip kesalingan. Karena itu, penelitian ini merekomendasikan penguatan pendidikan mubadalāh dalam keluarga, forum keagamaan akar rumput, dan kebijakan daerah yang mendorong pembagian kerja lebih adil dan resiprokal.

Kata Kunci: Beban Ganda Perempuan, Mubadalāh, Keadilan Gender, Hukum Keluarga Islam, Perempuan Pekerja, Lampung Tengah.

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Introduction

Women's participation in the labor market has continued to increase; however, the division of domestic labor and caregiving responsibilities within households remains profoundly unequal (Begum et al., 2024). A substantial body of both classical and contemporary scholarship demonstrates that women across diverse national contexts tend to combine paid employment with unpaid domestic work, resulting in total working hours that significantly exceed those of men, who are relatively insulated from reproductive and care-related burdens within the household (Barnett & Hyde, 2001; Becker, 1985; Bianchi et al., 2000; Chant, 2016).

This inequality not only produces the phenomenon commonly described as the *double burden* but also appears to constrain women's career mobility, economic autonomy, and mental health outcomes in both formal and informal employment sectors (Ervin, 2022; Samtleben & Müller, 2022). From a gender justice perspective, this condition indicates that prevailing social structures and cultural norms continue to frame the home as a "female domain," in which women's domestic labor is naturalized and rendered invisible, rather than being accompanied by an equitable redistribution of roles and responsibilities (Ali et al., 2022).

Within Islamic intellectual traditions, the ideal marital relationship is normatively grounded in principles of reciprocity (*mubadalah*), mutual assistance, and *mu'āsyarah bi al-ma'rūf* (Harnides et al., 2023). The *mubadalah* approach articulated by Faqihuddin Abdul Kodir underscores the importance of interpreting religious texts through a lens of reciprocity, such that rights and obligations within the family are not rigidly determined by biological sex but are instead negotiated fairly within the concrete realities of household life (Adib & Mujahidah, 2021; Imtihanah, 2020).

In a similar vein, Werdiningsih and Natsir (2020a) argue that the *mubadalah* framework opens space for reinterpreting spousal roles in education and caregiving (Hossain & Jamil, 2022). Normatively, these values encourage a flexible and participatory division of domestic and public labor: men are not understood solely as breadwinners, nor are women automatically confined to domestic roles (Ibrahim et al., 2022). Rather, both spouses are conceptualized as equal partners who share responsibility for family well-being (Ichwan & Amin, 2022).

In the Indonesian context, women's double burden has emerged as a central theme in a growing body of empirical research. Hidayati (2016) demonstrates that employed women continue to assume primary responsibility for domestic labor, such that their economic activities do not replace but instead accumulate upon an already substantial household workload. Studies conducted in agrarian communities, farming households, and informal-sector settings reinforce similar conclusions: while economic pressures compel women to enter the labor market, patriarchal gender constructions persist in defining domestic work as women's "natural" obligation (Aini, 2015; Aziz, 2023; Jalil & Tanjung, 2020; Putri & Anzari, 2021).

Moreover, research on unpaid care work in Indonesia indicates that women bear the largest share of caregiving and household labor, while policy support aimed at reducing and redistributing these burdens remains limited (Saputra & Busyro, 2018). National-level data further reveal structural vulnerability: in 2023, approximately 59.4% of female workers were classified as being in *vulnerable employment*, compared to around 45% of male workers, suggesting that women's economic bargaining power remains comparatively weaker (World Bank, 2023).

These broader patterns are clearly reflected in Central Lampung Regency, particularly in Rumbia District, where agrarian activities and informal employment predominate (Ichwan & Amin, 2022). Regional gender profiles indicate high levels of women's participation in

productive activities as agricultural laborers, small-scale traders, and service workers while simultaneously revealing that primary responsibility for household management, childrearing, and family care continues to be ascribed to women (Guhnia, 2022; Hermawan et al., 2020). Empirical observations show that many women in Rumbia leave for the fields or markets early in the morning and still complete domestic tasks late into the night, often with minimal support from their husbands (Davis, 2022). This condition signals a pronounced gap between *das Sollen* Islamic teachings that emphasize reciprocity and relational justice and *das Sein*, namely patriarchal social practices that persist in everyday life (Sodik & Sujibto, 2023). Consequently, the double burden experienced by women in Rumbia cannot be understood merely as a matter of individual choice; rather, it constitutes a reflection of unequal power relations embedded within family structures (Werdiningsih & Natsir, 2020).

Drawing on these conditions, the central research problem in Rumbia District, Central Lampung Regency, lies in the increasing normalization of women's double burden as a social reality that is largely accepted without structural resistance (Minault, 1990). Women's substantial participation in the agrarian sector and the informal economy has not been accompanied by a fair redistribution of domestic responsibilities (Ismail et al., 2020). Consequently, women tend to become the group most vulnerable to physical exhaustion, psychological stress, and limited access to rest, education, and opportunities for self-development (Azmi et al., 2022). Regional data indicate that the majority of women of productive age in Rumbia are actively engaged as agricultural laborers and small-scale traders, while continuing to shoulder almost the entirety of domestic responsibilities, with men's contributions to reproductive labor remaining relatively minimal (Aziz et al., 2020).

This social phenomenon demonstrates how power relations within the family operate asymmetrically and perpetuate patriarchal practices that contradict the principles of gender justice articulated in Islamic teachings (Anshori, 2013). Accordingly, women in Rumbia function not only as economic actors but also as victims of unequal social structures, in which their productive and reproductive labor is simultaneously exploited. This condition constitutes a critical issue that warrants in-depth scholarly investigation, as its implications extend beyond women's well-being to affect family resilience and the social sustainability of agrarian communities more broadly.

In light of this empirical reality, the *mubādalāh* approach offers an alternative conceptual framework that is both relevant and contextually grounded for addressing gendered relational inequalities experienced by women in Rumbia District. The core principles of *mubādalāh*, which emphasize reciprocity, partnership, and relational justice between men and women, open interpretive space for reexamining socio-religious practices that have long tended to legitimize unequal divisions of labor. Within the agrarian context of Rumbia, *mubādalāh* appears not merely as a normative discourse but as a potentially transformative instrument capable of bridging the gap between the ethical ideals of Islamic teachings and the everyday practices of farming households.

By conceptualizing both domestic and productive labor as shared responsibilities, this approach challenges the naturalization of women's double burden and encourages a restructuring of power relations within the household. Therefore, examining the lived experiences of women in Rumbia through the lens of *mubādalāh* is of substantial academic and social significance, as it not only enriches the field of Islamic gender studies but also advances value-based, locally grounded, and practically applicable solutions to persistent gender injustice in rural societies.

A growing body of prior research has examined women's double burden and gender relations from diverse analytical perspectives. Studies by Hidayati (2016), Al Firda et al. (2021), and Aziz (2023) foreground the socio-cultural dimensions and forms of gender discrimination that shape women's experiences of the double burden. Meanwhile, Putri and Anzari (2021),

Tenriawaru et al. (2023), and Jannah et al. (2024) focus on the consequences of the double burden for role conflict, family well-being, and the need for social and psychological support. In contrast, scholarship on *mubadalāh* has largely developed within conceptual and hermeneutical domains, particularly through the reinterpretation of *fiqh* and *tafsīr* texts concerning spousal relations, women's leadership, and gender-responsive Islamic education (Adib & Mujahidah, 2021; Alfi Aliyah & Safira Aulia, 2022; Imtiḥanah, 2020; Ramdhani & Alwi, 2016; Werdiningsih & Natsir, 2020b). At the global level, economic and family sociology literature has systematically mapped the relationship between the division of household labor, labor force participation, and women's mental health (Barnett & Hyde, 2001; Becker, 1985; Bianchi et al., 2000; Chant, 2016; Ervin, 2022; Samtleben & Müller, 2022). Nevertheless, studies that explicitly integrate empirical analyses of rural Indonesian women's double burden with the normative framework of *mubadalāh* remain relatively limited.

It is within this analytical gap that the present article offers its contribution. At the empirical level, the study qualitatively documents the lived experiences of married women in Rumbia District who shoulder a double burden, including the coping strategies and subtle forms of everyday resistance they develop to negotiate domestic and public roles. At the theoretical-normative level, the analysis employs the *mubadalāh* perspective to conceptualize the double burden as a manifestation of structural injustice that contradicts the principle of reciprocity within Islamic family law, while simultaneously proposing a more equitable framework for role distribution. By connecting field-based findings with *mubadalāh* discourse, this article seeks to enrich a body of literature that has thus far tended to separate social analyses of women's double burden from debates on the reform of Islamic family law.

Against this background, the study is designed to address three primary research questions. First, how do the patterns and dynamics of the double burden experienced by married women in Rumbia District, Central Lampung, unfold as they balance domestic and productive labor? Second, what social, economic, and cultural factors sustain and reproduce this double burden? Third, how can women's experiences of the double burden be reinterpreted through the *mubadalāh* perspective, and what implications may be drawn for the formulation of more gender-just spousal relations and local policy interventions? From a practical standpoint, the article aims to formulate recommendations for strengthening *mubadalāh*-based education at the family and community levels, as well as for supporting local governments in designing interventions that promote a more equitable division between domestic and public labor.

Method

This study adopts a qualitative research approach, as its primary objective is to develop an in-depth understanding of women's lived experiences of performing dual roles within the family, rather than merely capturing the phenomenon through numerical indicators or statistical measures. A case study design was employed, focusing on Rumbia District in Central Lampung Regency, a setting characterized by a distinctive configuration in which women are heavily involved in agrarian and informal-sector work while simultaneously being positioned as the primary managers of household affairs. Fieldwork was conducted over a period of approximately three months, beginning with preliminary engagement and rapport-building with local figures and progressing to intensive interviews and observation.

The main research subjects consisted of married women who work outside the home while continuing to shoulder domestic responsibilities, encompassing a range of occupations such as agricultural laborers, small-scale traders, and service workers. Informants were selected purposively based on these criteria, after which the network of participants was expanded using a snowball sampling technique through referrals from initial informants. In addition to the women themselves, several husbands, religious leaders, and community

figures were included as supporting informants in order to capture how the surrounding social environment understands and evaluates the phenomenon of women's double burden.

Primary data were derived from the informants' narratives, lived experiences, and perspectives through in-depth interviews and direct observation conducted both in their homes and workplaces. Interviews were carried out face-to-face in various settings including private residences, agricultural fields, and business locations and typically lasted between 45 minutes and approximately ninety minutes, depending on the informants' availability. In practice, not all planned procedures proceeded smoothly; some informants declined audio recording or were only willing to provide brief accounts. Consequently, it was necessary to identify substitute participants and to enrich the field notes accordingly. Observation was employed to capture firsthand the division of domestic labor, patterns of spousal interaction, and women's daily activity rhythms from morning until late evening.

Secondary data were collected from official local government documents such as the Gender and Child Data Profile of Central Lampung Regency reports issued by relevant institutions, and scholarly articles on women's double burden and *mubadalah* accessed through government portals, official websites, and online journal databases. Taken together, these documents contributed to mapping the structural context within which the informants' individual experiences were embedded.

Data analysis was conducted iteratively throughout the fieldwork process. Following each interview and observation session, audio recordings were transcribed, field notes were systematized, and data reduction was undertaken by clustering information into preliminary thematic categories, including forms of the double burden, physical and psychological impacts, coping strategies, family support, and informants' interpretations of religious teachings regarding spousal roles. The data were then organized into matrices and thematic narratives, which were subsequently analyzed in relation to the theoretical frameworks of the double burden, gender justice, and the *mubadalah* perspective outlined earlier.

The credibility of the findings was ensured through source triangulation by comparing accounts provided by wives, husbands, and local figures as well as methodological triangulation across interviews, observations, and document analysis. Limited member checking with selected key informants was also conducted to ensure that the researchers' interpretations did not diverge from the informants' intended meanings. Through this process, the analysis not only depicts empirical realities but also assesses the extent to which spousal relations in Rumbia District align with, or depart from, the principle of reciprocity central to *mubadalah*.

Results

The findings reveal that all female informants in Rumbia District experience a continuous daily work rhythm that combines productive activities outside the home with domestic labor that is rarely interrupted. Most informants begin their day early by cultivating agricultural land, trading in local markets, or managing small scale enterprises. Upon returning home, however, they continue to shoulder responsibilities such as cooking, cleaning, childcare, and caring for other family members. In practical terms, there appears to be little opportunity for these women to be entirely relieved of domestic obligations, even on days when their external work demands are particularly intense.

This pattern is consistent with the findings of Hidayati (2016) and Al Firda et al. (2021), which indicate that women's paid labor in Indonesia typically accumulates on top of rather than replaces existing domestic workloads. One informant employed as a daily laborer remarked, "The exhaustion from working outside is not the hardest part; what weighs most is having to handle everything alone once I get home" (Informant P₁, interview, 2024). This statement illustrates the double burden as an accumulation of extended working hours across multiple domains.

When synthesized, the most salient forms of the double burden are summarized in Table 1. Women bear physical burdens manifested in chronic fatigue and health complaints, psychological burdens such as stress, guilt, and anxiety, and social burdens in the form of stigma when they are perceived as “disobedient wives” for requesting their husbands’ involvement in domestic work. Informants’ accounts indicate that the center of domestic labor remains firmly located with women, while husbands are more commonly understood as primary breadwinners, even when women’s income substantively contributes to household finances.

This pattern aligns with the findings of Putri and Anzari (2021), Aziz (2023), and global scholarship on household labor divisions, which consistently document women’s dominance in *unpaid care work* (Bianchi et al., 2000; Chant, 2016). Nonetheless, there are limited instances in which husbands begin to assist with domestic tasks, for example when wives fall ill or during peak work periods such as the harvest season. These cases suggest the presence of modest spaces for change, although they remain insufficient to fundamentally alter the prevailing structure of role allocation.

Table 1. Summary of Women’s Double Burden in Rumbia District

Aspect	Key Findings	Data Sources
Physical burden	Prolonged working hours in agricultural fields/markets combined with continuous domestic labor with minimal rest	Interviews P1, P3, P5; observation
Psychological burden	Stress, exhaustion, feelings of guilt toward children, and anxiety related to household economic insecurity	Interviews P2, P4, P6
Social burden	Normative pressure to remain “obedient” to traditional wife roles and fear of being perceived as non-compliant	Interviews P1, P2; religious leaders
Economic contribution	Wives’ income is substantial, yet recognition of women’s economic labor remains limited	Interviews P3, P5; gender profile documents

In terms of consequences, nearly all informants reported chronic fatigue, disrupted sleep quality, and an increasingly constrained sense of personal time. Several also recounted emerging tensions within the household when husbands perceived their authority as being “undermined,” particularly in cases where wives became the primary or more dominant economic providers, while husbands remained reluctant to share domestic responsibilities. These findings are consistent with those of Tenriawaru et al. (2023) and Jannah et al. (2024), which link women’s double burden to role conflict and heightened needs for social and psychological support.

At the same time, the empirical evidence presented here contributes to the global literature that associates *unpaid labour*, unequal divisions of work, and women’s mental health outcomes (Barnett & Hyde, 2001; Ervin, 2022; Samtleben & Müller, 2022). Nevertheless, not all informants articulated these consequences in the form of overt marital conflict; some chose to “accept” the burden as part of their moral responsibility as wives and mothers, indicating a deep internalization of patriarchal norms within the local cultural context.

The coping strategies developed by women were similarly multi-layered. Some informants reported restructuring their daily work rhythms, redistributing limited domestic tasks to adolescent children, or cultivating informal support networks with neighbors and close relatives. Participation in *pengajian* or *majelis taklim* was also perceived by several informants as a form of “social respite” and a space for mutual emotional reinforcement among women. Notably, however, very few women explicitly identified the renegotiation of domestic labor with their husbands as a primary solution.

Instead, husbands' involvement in household tasks was more often interpreted as an act of goodwill rather than as a shared obligation. This pattern contrasts with the concept of reciprocal relations advanced in gender justice theory and household economics (Becker, 1985; Kabeer, 2016), yet it aligns with local findings suggesting that women are more likely to adapt to existing structures than to openly renegotiate gendered roles. Consequently, women's coping strategies in Rumbia tend to be adaptive rather than transformative, mitigating daily pressures without fundamentally altering entrenched gender relations.

When these findings are examined through the lens of *mubadalah*, the gap between normative ideals and everyday practice becomes particularly evident. At the normative level, *mubadalah* emphasizes that spousal rights and obligations should be reorganized around principles of reciprocity, cooperation, and respect for each partner's capacities (Adib & Mujahidah, 2021; Imtihanah, 2020; Werdiningsih & Natsir, 2020b).

Although several religious leaders acknowledged that Islam promotes *mu'āsyaarah bi al-ma'rūf* and discourages excessive burdens being placed on one party, their practical interpretations continued to frame domestic labor primarily as women's responsibility. As a result, grassroots religious practice appears to align more closely with patriarchal patterns critiqued by Ahmed (2019) and Čustović (2025) than with the reciprocal ideals articulated in *mubadalah*. This disjunction between *mubadalah* theory and everyday practice constitutes a central analytical focus of the article: while principles of reciprocity are well established within Islamic normative traditions, they have yet to be meaningfully realized in household labor arrangements, particularly in rural contexts such as Rumbia District.

Discussion

Forms and Dynamics of Women's Double Burden in Rumbia District

With respect to the first research question, the field data demonstrate that the double burden borne by women in Rumbia District manifests as a stable and recurrent pattern of everyday life. All female informants across different age groups and occupational backgrounds described their daily routines as a continuous sequence of overlapping demands between productive labor outside the home and domestic obligations within the household. In other words, they are not merely "performing two roles," but rather inhabiting an extended work rhythm that affords little opportunity for rest, stretching from early morning until late at night.

A closer examination indicates that most informants begin their mornings by working in agricultural fields, selling goods in local markets, or managing small-scale enterprises. Upon returning home, they immediately transition to domestic responsibilities, including meal preparation, laundry, house cleaning, childcare, and caring for elderly or ill family members. One informant articulated this experience as follows: "The exhaustion from working outside is not the hardest part; what weighs most is having to manage everything alone once I get home" (Informant P1, interview, 2024).

This account reflects not only physical strain but also the deeply embedded assumption that domestic labor constitutes an intrinsic obligation, even when women simultaneously function as key economic providers. In this context, paid employment does not reduce domestic responsibilities; rather, it extends women's total working hours across multiple domains.

This pattern reinforces Hidayati's (2016) finding that working women in Indonesia continue to serve as the primary actors in household management. Similar conclusions were reached by Al Firda et al. (2021) in rural settings. Studies conducted in farming households and other agrarian communities further demonstrate that women are actively involved in productive processes while remaining positioned as the principal bearers of domestic responsibility (Jalil & Tanjung, 2020; Putri & Anzari, 2021). The situation observed in Rumbia District, therefore, should not be interpreted as anomalous, but rather as part of a broader

structural pattern within rural Indonesian contexts that rely heavily on family labor as the backbone of household economies.

When situated within international discourse, the conditions in Rumbia align with analyses by Bianchi et al. (2000) and Chant (2016) regarding the *double burden* phenomenon. Across many countries, women's entry into labor markets has not been accompanied by a commensurate decline in domestic workloads, resulting in total working hours that substantially exceed those of men. The field findings reaffirm this pattern: even where women contribute significantly to household income, the structure of domestic labor allocation appears largely unchanged.

At the same time, variation exists within the informant group. Women with young children, for example, tend to experience a higher intensity of reproductive labor than those with adolescent children who can assist with household tasks. Similarly, female agricultural laborers working long hours in the fields face different forms of physical strain compared to small-scale traders who possess greater flexibility in managing their time. Nevertheless, these variations do not alter the central empirical reality: both productive and domestic spheres of work continue to rest predominantly on women's shoulders, while men remain relatively insulated from the cumulative demands of domestic labor.

Table 2. Empirical Findings on Women's Double Burden in Productive and Domestic Work

Aspect	Description of Findings	Data Sources
Daily work pattern	Women begin the day with productive labor (agricultural work, market trading, small-scale enterprises), followed by domestic tasks that continue into the evening	Interviews P1, P2, P3; observation
Types of productive work	The majority are engaged as agricultural laborers, small traders, and informal-sector service workers, all of which require sustained daily physical presence	Interviews P1, P3, P4
Domestic labor	Responsibilities for cooking, laundry, house cleaning, childcare, and care for dependent family members remain predominantly borne by wives	Interviews P2, P5, P6; observation
Total working hours	Productive and domestic working hours accumulate, leaving women with little opportunity for adequate rest	Interviews P1, P4; observation
Family life-cycle variation	Domestic burdens are most intense for women with young children and tend to lessen slightly as adolescent children begin to assist with household tasks	Interviews P3, P5
Perceptions of the burden	The double burden is generally accepted as part of women's "duties as wives and mothers," albeit accompanied by complaints of exhaustion and emotional pressure	Interviews P2, P4, P6
Husbands' involvement	Husbands provide only occasional assistance with household work typically when wives are ill or exceptionally busy and such assistance is perceived as an act of goodwill rather than a shared obligation	Interviews P1, P3; community leaders

Taken together, the discussion in this subsection demonstrates that the first research question is addressed through a relatively consistent empirical pattern: women in Rumbia District experience a structurally embedded, multi-layered, and continuous configuration of double work. Both productive and reproductive spheres place sustained demands on their

time and energy. Establishing this foundation is essential before proceeding to an examination of the factors that sustain and reinforce the double burden.

Social, Economic, and Cultural Factors Sustaining the Double Burden

With regard to the second research question, the analysis indicates that women's double burden in Rumbia District emerges from the intersection of multiple factors rather than from individual time-management capacities alone. Economic conditions constitute the most visible initial layer. Household income insecurity, reliance on agriculture and informal-sector employment, and limited access to formal labor opportunities collectively encourage women's entry into productive work as a survival strategy. When agricultural prices fluctuate and living costs rise, women's earnings become a crucial buffer for maintaining household economic continuity.

Nevertheless, women's participation in the labor market does not correspond with a reconfiguration of domestic labor arrangements. Household tasks ranging from cooking and laundry to childcare remain firmly attached to women, such that productive roles outside the home serve to intensify rather than replace domestic workloads. Many informants reported waking earlier than other household members to complete domestic tasks before leaving for the fields or markets, only to resume these responsibilities after a full day of external work. This pattern reinforces the findings of Tenriawaru et al. (2023) and Jannah et al. (2024), which suggest that economic necessity often functions as the entry point into dual roles, yet does not automatically transform entrenched and unequal gender relations.

The second dimension concerns socio-cultural constructions of men's and women's roles. Narratives provided by informants and community leaders indicate that domestic labor continues to be framed as women's "natural" responsibility. From an early age, women are socialized to acquire domestic skills, while men are more consistently oriented toward the roles of household heads and primary breadwinners. This pattern of gendered socialization is consistent with findings by Aini (2015), Al Firda et al. (2021), and Aziz (2023), which document the persistence of patriarchal values within Indonesian family settings. Women who attempt to invite their husbands to share domestic responsibilities often experience anxiety about being labeled "defiant" or non-compliant. As a result, many choose to absorb the burden themselves, framing it as part of their moral obligation as wives.

These cultural constructions intersect closely with prevailing forms of religious understanding at the grassroots level. While some religious leaders acknowledge the importance of *mu'āsyrāh bi al-ma'rūf* and cooperation within marriage, their practical explanations continue to position women as the primary managers of domestic affairs. Such religious readings tend to reinforce hierarchical divisions of labor, a tendency critically examined by Ahmed (2019), who demonstrates that religious discourse in practice is frequently mobilized to legitimize patriarchal family models, even though normative texts themselves provide space for more gender-equitable interpretations.

A third layer relates to institutional and policy dimensions. The Gender and Child Data Profile of Central Lampung Regency (Hermawan et al., 2020) indicates that women's productive labor in agrarian and informal sectors is not fully captured in official labor statistics or economic indicators. Much of women's work remains unrecorded, rendering their contributions less visible within policy planning processes. The absence of programs that explicitly recognize and support *unpaid care work* further constructs women's domestic labor as a private household matter rather than as a structural issue requiring policy intervention.

When situated within household economics theory, this condition can, on the one hand, be explained through Becker's (1985) notion of role specialization, which conceptualizes family labor division as a function of efficiency. On the other hand, Kabeer (2016) cautions that "efficiency" grounded in asymmetrical power relations ultimately serves to entrench women's subordinate positions. In Rumbia, role specialization does not appear to emerge

from egalitarian and rational negotiation. Instead, it is shaped by socio-cultural structures that place women at a weaker bargaining position in household decision-making.

Taken together, these analyses indicate that economic, cultural, and institutional factors operate simultaneously to sustain and reproduce women's double burden. Women's entry into productive labor is largely driven by economic necessity, yet socio-religious norms and weak institutional recognition ensure that domestic responsibilities remain disproportionately assigned to them. This combination helps explain why the double burden in Rumbia cannot be readily transformed through interventions targeting a single dimensions such as income enhancement without addressing underlying gender ideologies and policy designs that fail to acknowledge *unpaid care work*.

Consequences of the Double Burden for Women's Well-Being and Family Relations

In terms of impacts, the double burden experienced by women in Rumbia District demonstrably affects their physical well-being. Complaints of persistent fatigue, muscle pain, and disrupted sleep quality recurred across interviews. Several informants described bodily conditions characterized by a sense of "never being fully rested," as the completion of one task was immediately followed by another. This pattern suggests that women's total working hours routinely exceed reasonable thresholds, particularly given that much of this labor requires substantial physical exertion, both in agricultural activities and in domestic work.

Psychological effects appear equally pronounced. A number of informants reported increased emotional irritability, heightened anxiety, and recurring feelings of guilt stemming from their perceived inability to devote sufficient attention to children or spouses. Some expressed a sense of inadequacy when comparing themselves to the idealized image of a full-time homemaker who is assumed to be constantly present in the household, despite their intensive labor outside the home to meet family needs. This condition reflects what Barnett and Hyde (2001) conceptualize as *role strain*, in which competing social role demands exceed available time and energy resources, thereby generating sustained psychological pressure.

The consequences of the double burden also extend to the quality of spousal relationships. Several informants recounted the emergence of tension when wives' economic contributions became particularly significant. On the one hand, husbands tended to perceive their status as primary breadwinners as being displaced; on the other hand, they remained reluctant to assume responsibility for domestic tasks. Such dynamics appear to create fertile ground for conflict, manifesting either through verbal disputes or through patterns of emotional withdrawal. These findings are consistent with the work of Tenriawaru et al. (2023) and Jannah et al. (2024), which demonstrate a close association between women's double burden, role conflict, and heightened demand for social and psychological support within families.

Parent child relationships are likewise affected. Women who must combine paid work with extensive domestic responsibilities frequently reported a lack of adequate quality time with their children. Some attempted to address this constraint by involving children in household chores as a form of responsibility building, yet this strategy was often accompanied by feelings of guilt due to concerns that such expectations might impose excessive burdens on the child. Hsin and Felfe (2014) emphasize that how time is allocated with children carries significant implications for their development. Consequently, time scarcity experienced by mothers as a result of the double burden may generate long-term consequences if not offset by supportive caregiving strategies.

Nevertheless, not all impacts of the double burden are perceived negatively by women. Several informants expressed pride in their ability to finance their children's education, renovate their homes, or provide assistance to elderly parents through their own earnings. From this perspective, dual roles may foster a sense of achievement and autonomy. To a limited extent, this observation aligns with the expansionist theory proposed by Barnett and

Hyde (2001), which suggests that occupying multiple roles can yield positive outcomes when supported by equitable labor division and adequate institutional and familial support. In Rumbia, however, these potential psychological benefits are frequently overshadowed by the severity of physical demands and the paucity of structural support, rendering the positive dimensions of dual roles difficult to fully realize.

Overall, the consequences of the double burden in Rumbia District present a complex picture. On the one hand, dual roles enable women to contribute more substantially to household economies and to derive a sense of pride from their labor. On the other hand, they generate significant physical, psychological, and relational pressures. When situated within the broader literature on *unpaid labour* and women's mental health (Ervin, 2022; Samtleben & Müller, 2022), these findings reinforce the argument that the double burden is not merely a matter of "busyness," but a serious well-being concern. It is from this point that an examination of how women navigate these conditions through various coping strategies becomes particularly salient.

Coping Strategies and the Limits of Women's Agency within Patriarchal Structures

Despite facing substantial pressures associated with the double burden, women in Rumbia District cannot be characterized as entirely powerless actors. Field data reveal a range of coping strategies that they have developed to manage their everyday lives. One of the most visible strategies involves the reorganization of daily schedules. Many informants described deliberately waking well before dawn or going to bed late at night to ensure that both domestic responsibilities and external work obligations could be fulfilled. This temporal reconfiguration appears intended to maximize the use of limited time windows, although it often comes at the cost of severely constrained personal rest.

Another strategy involves the partial redistribution of household tasks to other family members, particularly adolescent children. Daughters are frequently assigned responsibilities such as cooking, laundry, or caring for younger siblings, while sons are occasionally encouraged to assist with agricultural work or other forms of paid labor. For some mothers, this practice is framed as part of character education; at the same time, many expressed concern that such expectations might impose excessive burdens on their children. This dynamic illustrates how women mobilize available household resources to marginally alleviate their workloads, even if only to a limited extent.

Informal social networks also function as important buffers in women's coping processes. Mutual assistance among neighbors or relatives such as taking turns supervising children, providing transportation during urgent situations, or simply sharing emotional grievances was frequently reported. *Pengajian* and *majelis taklim* were often mentioned as spaces in which women could "rest their minds," receive religious guidance, and encourage one another. Within these forums, emotional support fosters a sense of collective endurance in confronting the double burden. However, the content of religious sermons in these settings does not consistently promote structural critique; more commonly, it emphasizes patience and sincerity. While such messages may offer emotional comfort, they may simultaneously dampen impulses to challenge unequal role arrangements.

From an agency perspective, this constellation of strategies suggests that women retain a degree of negotiating capacity, albeit within narrow confines. Through small-scale maneuvers such as scheduling adjustments, limited task redistribution, and the cultivation of social networks they render heavy workloads somewhat more manageable. Yet, almost none of the informants explicitly identified the renegotiation of domestic labor division with husbands as a central strategy. When husbands do participate in household work, their involvement is more often interpreted as an act of goodwill or attentiveness rather than as an expression of shared responsibility. This pattern is consistent with Aziz's (2023) findings,

which indicate that women frequently opt for adaptation to prevailing cultural structures rather than advancing explicit demands for change.

These constraints on agency cannot be disentangled from the patriarchal structures that govern family life. Drawing on Ahmed's (2019) critique, cultural norms and religious practices often delineate what is perceived as a "reasonable choice" for women, rendering the acceptance of heavy workloads as part of wives' and mothers' devotion socially normalized, even though such acceptance reflects underlying inequalities. In the Rumbia context, women demonstrate considerable creativity in managing their burdens, yet this creativity operates within normative boundaries that continue to position domestic labor as their primary domain.

Accordingly, the coping strategies developed by women in Rumbia District can be characterized as predominantly adaptive rather than transformational. These strategies enable survival and mitigate daily pressures, but they remain insufficient to reconfigure gender relations that assign women primary responsibility for both productive and reproductive labor. This analysis underscores the need for normative frameworks and institutional support capable of facilitating structural change, rather than relying solely on women's resilience. It is at this juncture that the *mubadalah* perspective becomes particularly salient as an ethical and theoretical alternative.

A *Mubadalah* Reading of Spousal Relations in Rumbia District

Viewing Rumbia through the lens of *mubadalah* allows for a critical examination of spousal relations and their broader implications. At the conceptual level, *mubadalah* offers a perspective in which all texts and teachings concerning gender relations including marital relations are to be interpreted through the principle of reciprocity. Under this principle, rights and obligations are understood as mutually constituted between men and women rather than assigned unilaterally on the basis of sex (Adib & Mujahidah, 2021). From this standpoint, the division of domestic and public labor is no longer treated as a fixed, gender-based arrangement, but as a shared trust (*amanah*) that may be negotiated through mutual agreement and calibrated to each partner's capacities.

However, when this *mubadalah* ideal is juxtaposed with everyday practices in Rumbia, a substantial gap becomes apparent. Interviews with religious leaders suggest that although they acknowledge the importance of *mu'āsarah bi al-ma'rūf* and oppose the excessive imposition of burdens on one party, their concrete explanations of household roles continue to position women as the primary bearers of domestic labor. Religious texts addressing husbands' provision and wives' roles tend to be interpreted in literal and hierarchical ways rather than through a reciprocal *mubadalah* framework. This pattern echoes the critique advanced by Ramdhani and Alwi (2016), who argue that prevailing interpretive approaches often lack gender sensitivity and risk perpetuating patriarchal family structures.

Nevertheless, everyday practices are not entirely monolithic. Closer examination reveals small scale examples that may serve as entry points for implementing *mubadalah*. Some husbands, for instance, have begun to assist with domestic tasks when their wives fall ill or face peak workloads, even though such assistance is not yet framed as a shared obligation. Other couples have informally divided specific responsibilities for example, husbands routinely escorting children to school while wives manage breakfast preparation. These modest arrangements suggest that the seeds of reciprocal relations already exist, albeit not yet articulated within an explicit framework of equal rights and responsibilities.

Within this context, *mubadalah* may be positioned as a bridge between these emerging practices of sharing and the dominant religious discourse. Imtihanah (2020) emphasizes that the development of a gender-responsive Islamic family law requires a sustained elaboration of *mubadalah*, enabling reciprocity to shape the logic through which family roles and responsibilities are defined. Similarly, Werdiningsih and Natsir (2020a) demonstrate that this

concept can be operationalized within Islamic education, for example by teaching that participation in domestic labor constitutes *amal ṣāliḥ* for men rather than being construed merely as “helping one’s wife.”

At the same time, critiques advanced by Ahmed (2019) and Čustović (2025) regarding religious practices that marginalize women in textual interpretation remain highly relevant. As long as interpretive authority is predominantly male and women lived experiences are not recognized as legitimate sources of religious knowledge, resulting interpretations are likely to reinforce existing power structures. Mainstreaming *mubadalah*, therefore, also entails creating space for women to participate actively in processes of interpretation and articulation, allowing their experiences to inform and reshape religious understanding.

From a practical perspective, a *mubadalah* based reading of the findings in Rumbia yields several implications. First, *mubadalah* principles can be integrated into family education programs and premarital courses, providing couples with a normative framework that supports more equitable divisions of labor. Second, *pengajian* and *majelis taklim*, which already function as crucial spaces for women, can be oriented not only toward cultivating patience in the face of burdens but also toward affirming that domestic work and caregiving constitute shared responsibilities of husbands and wives. Third, at the level of local policy, recognition of *unpaid care work* can be advanced through initiatives that encourage men’s involvement in caregiving and through the provision of public facilities that facilitate the management of dual roles.

In sum, a *mubadalah* reading not only exposes the disjunction between the ideals of justice articulated in Islamic teachings and the lived reality of women’s double burden in Rumbia District, but also points toward pathways for change. On the one hand, the findings confirm that the double burden represents a form of structural injustice that contradicts the principle of reciprocity. On the other hand, *mubadalah* offers a robust ethical and theoretical foundation for reconfiguring spousal relations, enabling domestic and public labor to be organized in more equitable ways. Accordingly, this article moves beyond problem description to propose a normative framework for response, particularly within rural contexts such as Rumbia District.

Conclusion

Drawing on the findings and analysis, it can be asserted that the double burden experienced by women in Rumbia District cannot be understood merely as the outcome of individual choice. Rather, it constitutes a configuration of work that is deeply embedded in social structures. Women simultaneously shoulder productive labor in agrarian and informal sectors while also performing domestic work that unfolds with little interruption. Their participation in the labor market has not been accompanied by a renegotiation of household labor arrangements; instead, public roles accumulate on top of long-established domestic responsibilities. This configuration is produced and sustained by at least three interrelated layers: household economic pressures, socio-cultural constructions and patriarchal religious interpretations, and weak institutional recognition of *unpaid care work*. As a consequence, women face an accumulation of physical, psychological, social, and economic burdens that affect their health, the quality of spousal relationships, and childrearing practices. Although women demonstrate agency through various coping strategies such as reorganizing work rhythms, involving children in selected tasks, and building social support networks these strategies tend to be adaptive in nature and have not yet altered the underlying structures of unequal gender relations. When interpreted through the lens of *mubadalah*, these findings reveal a clear gap between the ideals of reciprocity and justice articulated in Islamic normative traditions and the lived practices of spousal relations at the grassroots level. At the same time, this study demonstrates that *mubadalah* holds substantial potential as an ethical and hermeneutical framework for rearticulating the division of domestic and public labor in more

equitable ways. In this regard, the article contributes to the development of gender-responsive Islamic family law scholarship and to socio-cultural studies of care work in rural contexts.

Recommendations: From an academic perspective, the concept of *mubadalah* warrants further theoretical development and empirical testing across diverse social settings. It should be more systematically integrated into Islamic family law studies, gender studies, and the social sciences, so that it does not remain merely a normative discourse but becomes meaningfully internalized within family practices. Future research may adopt comparative approaches across regions or expand its focus to include husbands' perspectives and those of younger generations, thereby capturing the potential for intergenerational shifts in gender relations. At the practical level, the findings support several recommendations: strengthening family education and premarital courses grounded in principles of reciprocity; developing *mubadalah*-based materials within *majelis taklim* and Islamic educational institutions; and formulating local policies that explicitly recognize and support *unpaid care work* as a shared responsibility of husbands and wives rather than as women's "natural" domain. Through such measures, women's double burden may be gradually reduced, while creating pathways toward more egalitarian family relations that are aligned with Islamic values of justice.

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