

THE IDEAL POSITION OF CAREER WOMEN IN THE HOUSEHOLD: A QURANIC PERSPECTIVE

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Abstract

The involvement of women in careers outside the home to support family finances has created challenges for them, as they are often still expected to perform domestic duties akin to those of non-working women. In some instances, career women are even blamed for family conflicts, with their time spent on professional and personal development being perceived as a source of marital discord. Unlike wives who do not work, career women bear additional responsibilities; beyond their household duties, they also contribute to the family's financial well-being. This study seeks to define the ideal role of career women according to the Quran, with the aim of guiding husbands on how to appropriately treat their working wives. The research methodology involved an examination of Quranic verses pertinent to the status of working women. Interpretive texts and contemporary journals were consulted to analyze the substantive meanings of these verses. The findings indicate that the Quran does not prohibit women from pursuing careers. Furthermore, it posits a balanced perspective on career women's rights and obligations within the household, emphasizing an equitable and fair standing for women alongside men. Career women warrant greater recognition for the burdens they undertake. Husbands are encouraged to assist with household chores as a gesture of appreciation for their wives' financial contributions.

Keywords: *Career Women; Family Roles; Quranic Perspective; Gender Equality; Household Responsibilities*

Abstrak

Keterlibatan perempuan dalam berkarier di luar rumah untuk membantu keuangan keluarga telah menimbulkan berbagai tantangan bagi mereka. Hal ini disebabkan karena perempuan bekerja masih sering diharapkan untuk menjalankan tugas-tugas domestik sebagaimana perempuan yang tidak bekerja. Dalam beberapa kasus, perempuan karier bahkan kerap disalahkan atas munculnya konflik keluarga, karena waktu yang mereka habiskan untuk pekerjaan dan pengembangan diri dianggap sebagai sumber ketidakharmonisan rumah tangga. Berbeda dengan istri yang tidak bekerja, perempuan karier memikul tanggung jawab ganda: selain mengurus rumah tangga, mereka juga berkontribusi terhadap kesejahteraan ekonomi keluarga. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menjelaskan peran ideal perempuan karier menurut perspektif Al-Quran, sekaligus memberikan panduan bagi para suami dalam memperlakukan istri yang bekerja secara tepat. Metode penelitian dilakukan dengan menelaah ayat-ayat Al-Quran yang berkaitan dengan status perempuan bekerja. Teks tafsir dan jurnal kontemporer

digunakan untuk menganalisis makna substantif dari ayat-ayat tersebut. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa Al-Quran tidak melarang perempuan untuk berkarier. Bahkan, Al-Quran menekankan pandangan yang seimbang mengenai hak dan kewajiban perempuan karier dalam rumah tangga, serta menegaskan pentingnya kedudukan yang adil antara laki-laki dan perempuan. Perempuan karier layak memperoleh pengakuan lebih besar atas beban yang mereka tanggung, dan para suami dianjurkan untuk turut membantu pekerjaan rumah sebagai bentuk penghargaan atas kontribusi ekonomi yang diberikan oleh istri.

Kata kunci: *Perempuan Karier; Peran dalam Keluarga; Perspektif Al-Quran; Keadilan Gender; Tanggung Jawab Rumah Tangga*

INTRODUCTION

In Indonesia, career women frequently encounter inadequate treatment. Despite their significant contributions to household finances, they are still primarily responsible for domestic duties.¹ This dual burden of professional and household responsibilities often leads to physical and mental exhaustion. Career women simultaneously fulfill roles as wives, mothers, and professionals.² Consequently, it becomes challenging for them to perfectly cater to their husbands or provide childcare akin to non-working mothers. This often results in marital conflicts where they are unfairly blamed.³

This situation presents a paradox within Indonesia's predominantly Muslim society, which traditionally views men as protectors of women within the family. A protector is expected to safeguard and assume greater responsibility commensurate with their rights.⁴ It is concerning when men enjoy superior rights while the majority of household duties fall to their wives.⁵ Islam, in its essence, aims to elevate the status and dignity of women.⁶ The discrepancy between

¹ Asih Puji Hastuti, "The Role of Work-Life Balance on Career Women's Work Attachment," *Citra Ilmu* 4, no. 27 (2018): 27–40

² R Ramadhan, *Career Women's Efforts Carry Out a Dual Role in Realizing Sakinah Families Islamic Law Perspective (Case Study of Elementary School 04 An-Namiroh ...* (repository.uin-suska.ac.id, 2022), <https://repository.uin-suska.ac.id/59858/>.

³ Muhamad Hasan Sebyar, "The Role of Women in Improving Well-Being Family Perspective Maqashid Syariah," *Islamic Law* 21, no. 2 (2022): 186, <https://doi.org/10.24014/jhi.v21i2.10686>

⁴ Abdus Shomad, "Male and female authority: A study of Abdullah Saeed's contextual interpretation of Qs. an-Nisa 4:34," *Jurnal AlifLam: Journal of Islamic Studies and Humanities* 3, no. 1 (2022): 1–21, <https://doi.org/10.51700/aliflam.v3i1.432>; Syafe'i Imam, "Women's Subordination and Its Implications for the Household," *Raden Intan State Islamic Institute Lampung* 15, no. Islamic Studies (2015): 146

⁵ U R Nasution and S H Pohan, "The Position of a Wife as the Main Breadwinner in the Family: A Study in Aek Lancat Village, Lubuk Barumun, Padang Lawas, North Sumatra," *Journal of Interdisciplinary Islamic Studies*, 2021, <https://ejournal.uin-suka.ac.id/pasca/jkii/article/view/1128>; A A Saputra, *The Impact of Husband's Neglect of Maintenance on Career Wives According to Fiqh Views (Case Study in Kuta Makmur District, North Aceh Regency)* (repository.ar-raniry.ac.id, 2022), <https://repository.ar-raniry.ac.id/id/eprint/24620/>.

⁶ M Rasidin, N Natardi, and D Witro, "The Impact of Unequal Marriage on Household Harmony (Case Study in Sungai Penuh City, Jambi)," ... *Family and Islamic Law*, 2020, <https://jurnal.ar-raniry.ac.id/index.php/samarah/article/view/8083/0>.

Islamic teachings and the lived experiences of women in households poses a significant problem⁷, particularly for orientalist—non-Muslim scholars studying Islam—who might seek perceived weaknesses to promote their own faiths.

To address this issue, various studies have investigated career women from an Islamic perspective. Academic research has systematically explored this topic, broadly categorized into four aspects. The first category examines career women within an Islamic framework, concluding that their professional pursuits are permissible under specific conditions.⁸ The second explores the link between working women and family well-being, suggesting that increased family income through women's work can contribute to greater happiness.⁹ The third focuses on challenges faced by working women, noting that their careers can lead to family problems, neglected children's needs, and husbands feeling disregarded or disobedient, especially if wives earn more, potentially escalating to divorce.¹⁰ The fourth area investigates the financial support for working wives, generally affirming that it remains the husband's responsibility.¹¹

This current study integrates insights from these previous investigations. Its objective is to define the ideal position of working women according to the Quran, thereby minimizing domestic disputes. It aims to re-examine the fundamental status of women in Islam, ensuring that their professional contributions are not misconstrued as the sole financial support, which would impose an excessive double burden. Ultimately, this paper seeks to elucidate the ideal

⁷ Jumni Nelli et al., "The Immorality of a Husband as the Cause of a Working Wife to File for Divorce Lawsuit in Indonesia," *Juris: Sharia Scientific Journal* 22, no. 1 (2023): 119–32.

⁸ Rahma Pramudya Nawang Sari and Anton Anton, "Career Women from an Islamic Perspective," *SANGAJI: Journal of Sharia and Legal Thought* 4, no. 1 (2020): 82–115, <https://doi.org/10.52266/sangaji.v4i1.446>

⁹ D Tuwu, "The Role of Women Workers in Fulfilling the Family Economy: From Domestic Roles to the Public Sector," *Al-Izzah: Journal of Research Results*, 2018, <https://ejournal.iainkendari.ac.id/al-izzah/article/view/872>; F Andriana, "Salaried Wives: An Analysis of the Role of Working Women in Improving the Family Economy," *Al-Qadha: Journal of Islamic Law and...*, 2021, <https://journal.iainlangsa.ac.id/index.php/qadha/article/view/2800>; S Afrizal and P Lelah, "The Dual Role of Women in Improving the Family Economy: A Case Study on Working Women in Padarincang District, Serang Regency," *Indonesian Journal of Sociology, Education, and ...*, 2021, <https://ijsed.ap3si.org/index.php/journal/article/view/53>

¹⁰ F I Mujahidah, "The Problematics of Career Women in the Film Hanum and Rangga: Faith and the City Semiotic Analysis of Roland Barthes," *Kalijaga Journal of Communication*, 2022, <https://ejournal.uin-suka.ac.id/dakwah/kjc/article/view/2303>; Jumni Nelli and Sobhan Lubis, "Community Support for Divorced Women: A Study in Riau Province," *Squirt* 6, no. 1 (2022): 407–22, <https://doi.org/10.22373/SJHK.V6I1.12467>

¹¹ Jumni Nelli, "Working Wife ' S Nafkah a Family Law Perspective Indonesian Islam," *Execution: Journal Of Law* 5, no. 2 (2023): 220–34, <https://doi.org/10.24014/je.v5i2.25924>; A Rajafi, "Reinterpretation of the Meaning of Sustenance in the Islamic Framework of the Archipelago," *AL-IHKAM: Journal of Law & Social Institutions*, 2018, <http://ejournal.iainmadura.ac.id/index.php/alihkam/article/view/1548>

role of working women in the Quran, intending to guide husbands on appropriate treatment of their working wives within the household.

METHOD

This study examines Quranic verses concerning the status of women in Islam, specifically their rights and obligations within the household. Utilizing an interpretative research methodology, the analysis focuses on verses relevant to working women in the family, primarily Surah al-Baqarah verses 187 and 288. These verses form the foundation for discerning women's substantive position, encompassing both their rights and responsibilities within the familial context. Supporting verses are further clarified through interpretations from contemporary tafsir scholars and recent academic journals. The research also employs descriptive analysis. Following an examination of the primary verses' interpretations, scholarly opinions, and current research, a comprehensive understanding of the verses' meaning is derived. This understanding is then descriptively presented, culminating in a philosophical analysis of women's position within the Quran to address contemporary issues faced by career women in the household. This approach enables a nuanced exploration of how Islamic principles can inform and resolve contemporary challenges faced by working women, emphasizing their dual roles and responsibilities. The methodology further incorporates a sociological normative approach to analyze the legal framework governing working women from an Islamic perspective, ultimately concluding that female employment is permissible and even encouraged for family financial stability.¹²

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The Current Standing of Women in Professional Careers

In Kamus Besar Bahasa Indonesia, an adult female is defined as a woman¹³, while "career" denotes professional advancement and progress in various aspects of life, including work and social standing.¹⁴ Consequently, a career woman is an adult female actively engaged in professional endeavors to enhance her life trajectory. Abdul Fatakh posited that career women are individuals who demonstrate unwavering diligence in their work, often dedicating

¹² ¹² Language Center Dictionary Compilation Team, *Great Dictionary of Indonesian Language*, 15th ed. (Jakarta: Balai Pustaka, 2017). 873.

¹³ Language Center Dictionary Compilation Team. 493.

¹⁴ Siti Masitoh, Sofia Gussevi, and Imam Tabroni, "The Role of Career Women in Children's Education," *Paedagogie: Journal of Islamic Education and Studies* 2, no. 02 (2021): 109–23, <https://doi.org/10.52593/pdg.02.2.04>.

more time to their professional responsibilities than to their domestic lives.¹⁵ This commitment is driven by a desire to improve their achievements and work outcomes.

Research indicates that a woman's decision to pursue a career diligently can stem from both circumstantial pressures and personal choices. Economic hardship, particularly when a husband's income is insufficient to meet escalating household needs, frequently compels wives to embrace a dual role, managing both domestic and professional responsibilities.¹⁶ Additionally, personal aspirations play a significant role; women who have pursued higher education often feel that restricting their activities to household duties would undervalue their academic investment.¹⁷ A prestigious career, often a long-held aspiration, motivates many to continue working even after starting a family.

The pursuit of a career by women offers broad benefits, extending beyond the immediate family to contribute to the national economy. Certain professional roles are ideally suited for women, making their presence indispensable in the workforce.¹⁸ The professional sphere frequently recognizes and rewards the contributions of career women with substantial compensation. This income empowers women to fulfill a vital role within the family, not only by managing household affairs and raising children but also by financially contributing to the family's needs.¹⁹

However, the integration of a woman's career into the household structure often places her in an unfavorable position.²⁰ Despite working outside the home, domestic responsibilities typically remain hers, leading to an excessive burden, commonly referred to as a double burden. Career women also face challenges in fulfilling their husbands' expectations, with many husbands of working wives feeling neglected. Such issues can precipitate domestic

¹⁵ Salma Husniyati, "Systematic Literature Review on Dilemmas and Problems of Career Women: Do You Prioritize Career or Household First? Systematic Literature Review on Career Women's Dilemmas and Problems: Does Career or Household First?," *Journal of Contemporary Islamic Counselling* 1, no. 2 (2021): 115–26.

¹⁶ K Y Chandra and F Fatmariza, "Double Burden: Women's Vulnerability in Poor Families," *Journal of Civic Education*, 2020, <http://jce.ppj.unp.ac.id/index.php/jce/article/view/412>; Mujahidah, "The Problematics of Career Women in the Film Hanum and Rangga: Faith and the City: An Analysis of Roland Barthes' Semiotics."

¹⁷ Masitoh, Gussevi, and Tabroni, "The Role of Career Women in Child Education."

¹⁸ Husniyati, "Systematic Literature Review on the Dilemmas and Problems of Career Women: Do You Prioritize Career or Household? Systematic Literature Review on Career Women's Dilemmas and Problems: Does Career or Household First?"

¹⁹ E Setyawan, A Djumhur, and A N T Dewi, "The Impact of Career Women on the Family from an Islamic Law Perspective," *Court : Journal of Islamic Law Studies: Journal of Islamic Law Studies*, 2022, <https://www.syekhnurjati.ac.id/jurnal/index.php/mahkamah/article/view/10384>; Afiful Huda, "The Impact of Career Women on the Family," *Uratuna* 3, no. 1 (2019): 91–104

²⁰ Ahmad Syukron, "ISLAM AND FEMINISM (Islamic Law Reconstruction Perspective)," *Muwazah* 1, no. 2 (2013): 135–46, <https://doi.org/10.28918/muwazah.v1i2.288>.

conflicts. The ongoing expectation for women to manage all household duties, even while working, appears to exacerbate gender inequality.

The career or employment of a wife is frequently scapegoated for family problems.²¹ The division of a woman's time between family and work is perceived to diminish her capacity to serve her husband and children. This situation, in turn, is sometimes exploited by irresponsible men as a pretext for infidelity or divorce²², which is ironic given that a woman's professional contributions often enhance family well-being. If husbands adhered to equitable standards of family partnership, they would assume greater household responsibilities rather than blaming their wives for striving to assist and fulfill their roles.²³ Furthermore, betraying marital vows due to personal desires, while unfairly attributing blame to the wife's dual role, demonstrates a lack of appreciation and honor for her efforts.²⁴

The Quran, as a comprehensive and authoritative sacred text, provides guidance on all aspects of human life, including the challenges faced by career women in Indonesia. Several Quranic verses establish rules regarding the rights and obligations of spouses within a family, aiming to maintain harmony in Muslim households. Given these considerations, a pertinent question arises: should a woman who works diligently outside the home bear the same household responsibilities as a non-working woman? The Quran, a divine scripture replete with principles of grace and justice, undoubtedly offers answers to this query. This study aims to re-examine the Quranic guidance on justice and responsibility within the family, specifically concerning career women

The Quranic Perspective on Professional Women

²¹ Aulya Widyasari and Suyanto Suyanto, "The Division of Labor in the Household Between Husband and Wife Who Work," *Endogamy: A Scientific Journal of Anthropological Studies* 6, no. 2 (2023): 209–26, <https://doi.org/10.14710/endogami.6.2.209-226>

²² Faizatul Muniroh and Muhimmatul Hasanah, "Resilience of Women Who Experienced Infidelity in Household in Sarirejo Lamongan," *Busyro : Journal of Da'wah and Islamic Communication* 2, no. 1 (2022): 15–22, <https://doi.org/10.55352/kpi.v2i1.572>; Ni Made Wiasti and Ni Luh Arjani, "Career Women Under the Shadow of Domestic Violence in Badung Regency: A Gender Analysis," *Humanist* 25, no. 1 (2021): 8, <https://doi.org/10.24843/jh.2021.v25.i01.p02>.

²³ Gushairi Gushairi, "The Implementation of Post-Divorce Child Support Fulfillment in Riau Province," *Islamic Law* 22, no. 1 (2022): 23, <https://doi.org/10.24014/jhi.v22i1.17198>; Andriana, "Salaried Wives: An Analysis of the Role of Working Women in Improving the Family Economy."

²⁴ R Rasdiana, "Gender Bias and Equality, Dual Roles, and Domestic Violence," *Tana Mana Journal*, 2022, <http://ojs.staialfurqan.ac.id/jtm/article/view/230>; S Kartika and D Tanjung, "Career Women as Women's Emancipation from an Islamic Law Perspective," *Journal of Gender and Social Inclusion in ...*, 2022, <https://jurnal.uinsu.ac.id/index.php/psga/article/view/14563>; Lukman Budi Santoso, "THE EXISTENCE OF THE ROLE OF WOMEN AS THE HEAD OF LUARAGA (A Study of the Legal Counter-Compilation of Islam and Qira'ah Mubadalah)," *Marwah: Journal of Women, Religion and Gender* 18, no. 2 (2020): 107, <https://doi.org/10.24014/marwah.v18i2.8703>.

Islamic teachings provide a comprehensive framework of rules designed to benefit humanity, underpinned by principles of justice. This framework includes the equitable opportunity for both men and women to engage in work, a concept affirmed by the following verse: *And do not wish for that by which Allah has made some of you exceed others. For men is a share of what they have earned, and for women is a share of what they have earned. And ask Allah of his bounty. Indeed Allah is ever, of all things, Knowing* [an-Nisa 4:32]

"*Wa la tatamannau*" signifies Allah's prohibition against certain aspirations. Al-Qurtubi explains that "*tamanna*" refers to desires pertaining to the future, often termed wishful thinking.²⁵ Conversely, "*talahuf*" denotes desires related to the past.

Excessive fantasizing about the future can distract individuals from productive endeavors.²⁶ Such long-term aspirations can be a tool of Satan to mislead people [an-Nisa 4:119], causing them to neglect beneficial actions and work in their lives. This is particularly true when wishful thinking pertains to divine blessings. Beyond mere negligence, it can foster envy, which is strictly forbidden in Islam. This can lead individuals to rationalize unethical means and transgress religious boundaries.

To counteract such wishful thinking, the Quran emphasizes that the blessings bestowed by Allah SWT are a result of one's efforts. Therefore, if a Muslim desires divine favor, they must actively strive for it through diligent effort. The conjunction "*wa*" linking the efforts of men and women in the aforementioned verse serves as a grammatical indicator of balance.²⁷ Thus, the Quran does not endorse discrimination against women in employment; rather, it establishes a just principle that equates the efforts of both genders.

The equilibrium of male and female endeavors is further underscored in other verses. Allah SWT guarantees a fulfilling life for Muslims who exert themselves righteously, as articulated in "*Whoever does righteousness, whether male or female, while he is a believer - We will surely cause him to live a good life, and We will surely give them their reward [in the Hereafter] according to the best of what they used to do*" [an-Nahl 16:97].

This verse represents Allah SWT's assurance that every believer will be rewarded for good deeds, irrespective of gender. The sincere and purposeful efforts of every Muslim will

²⁵ Abu Abdillah Muhammad bin Ahmad Al-Qurthubi, *Jami' Li Ahkam Al-Qur'an*, 5th ed. (Beirut: Ar-Risalah Foundation, 2006). 6: 280

²⁶ Ibnu Katsir, *Tafsir Al Quran Al 'Azhim* (Beirut: Dar Ibn Hazm, 2000). 318.

²⁷ At-Tabari, *Jami' Al-Bayan 'an at-Ta'wil Ayat Al-Quran* (Beirut: Ar-Risalah Foundation, 2001). 2: 33

be recompensed with a quality life in this world and a superior reward in the hereafter. This divine promise applies equally to both men and women, thereby refuting any erroneous perception of discrimination²⁸ against women in the Quran, as clarified by an-Nisa:32 and an-Nahl:97.

The Husband's Responsibility to His Career Wife within the Household: A Quranic Perspective

The responsibilities of a husband and wife within a family are divinely ordained by Allah SWT to maintain equilibrium. A husband's rights are balanced by his obligations, just as a wife's responsibilities are balanced by her rights. However, as the head of the family, the husband is granted greater rights, which are correspondingly balanced by increased obligations. This is explicated *Divorced women remain in waiting for three periods, and it is not lawful for them to conceal what Allah has created in their wombs if they believe in Allah and the Last Day. And their husbands have more right to take them back in this [period] if they want reconciliation. And due to the wives is similar to what is expected of them, according to what is reasonable. But the men have a degree over them [in responsibility and authority]. And Allah is Exalted in Might and Wise [al-Baqarah: 228].*

The possessive particle *lam* in the word *lahunna* within this verse denotes ownership, indicating the rights that women possess.²⁹ The context of this verse specifically refers to rights within the family unit. The word *mitslu* in the verse signifies a balance between the rights a wife receives from her husband and the obligations she is bound to fulfill towards him.³⁰ According to At-Thabari, the phrase '*alaihinna darojah*' indicates the husband's superior rights, primarily in the form of the wife's obedience, provided she is not commanded to commit immorality.³¹ This right, however, is contingent upon the husband's obligation to pay the dowry after the marriage contract and to provide for his wife throughout the marriage. Beyond the obligation of obedience, '*alaihinna darojah*' also encompasses the husband's right to initiate talaq.³² Consequently, the dissolution of a marriage can only occur if the husband divorces his wife, through a judge's decision in court, or upon the death of either spouse.

²⁸ Ibid. 7: 347.

²⁹ M Suryadinata, "The Meaning of the Letter Jar Lam in the Qur'an," *Ushuluna: Journal of Ushuluddin Science*, 2020, <https://doi.org/10.15408/ushuluna.v1i1.15140>.

³⁰ Jalaluddin As-Suyuthi, Jalaluddin & Al-Mahalli, *Tafsir Jalalain* (Beirut: Lebanese Library, 2003). 265

³¹ Huda, "The Impact of Career Women on the Family."

³² Ibid.

Ibn Kathir relates this verse to Asma' bint Yazid, who was divorced during the Prophet's time.³³ At that point, no verse regulated the 'iddah for divorced women, and this verse was revealed in response to that question. This verse is part of a series of verses detailing the rules of talaq. The preceding verse addresses a husband's ability to divorce his wife as a constructive step, rather than leaving her fate uncertain through an *ila'*. Verse 228 then explains the 'iddah period for divorced women, which is three *quru'*. The subsequent verse outlines that *talaq* can be referred only twice and must be conducted with kindness.

However, the central focus of this paper is the reciprocal rights and obligations of husband and wife, as briefly discussed in QS. Al-Baqarah: 228. This verse establishes that imposed obligations are balanced by corresponding rights. A husband bears greater obligations than his wife due to his position as a leader, while a wife has fewer rights and obligations as she is under the husband's responsibility. The balance of rights and obligations between husband and wife is not achieved through numerical equality but rather through a proportional distribution of roles and functions. This is further elaborated in the following verse *"Men are the protectors and maintainers of women, because Allah has given some of them more than others, and because they spend from their wealth. Therefore, righteous women are devoutly obedient, guarding in absence what Allah would have them guard...."*

The term *qawwam* in the aforementioned verse literally denotes a person's support or backing to stand. This implies that the husband, as the family's leader, is expected to uphold the family's existence by protecting and safeguarding his wife and children. Thus, the leadership anticipated from the husband is one of protection, guardianship, and justice.³⁴ The word *anfaqu* in the verse refers to the financial support provided by the husband to his family. This maintenance is comprehensively detailed into three categories elsewhere: food, clothing, and shelter.³⁵ All forms of maintenance are the husband's responsibility as the head of the family and must be fulfilled in accordance with Shari'a guidance. The husband's responsibility to provide for his wife begins at the moment he pays her dowry. This responsibility remains with him throughout the marriage. Even if the marriage ends in divorce, the ex-husband is still obligated to provide for her during the 'iddah period and to provide mut'ah to the wife.

³³ Katsir, *Tafsir Al Quran Al 'Azhim*. 417.

³⁴ Alfian Qodri Azizi, "Sanctions for Abandonment of Child Maintenance Rights: Perspectives of Fiqh and Indonesian Legislation," *Iqtisad Reconstruction of Justice and Welfare for Indonesia* 7, no. 1 (2020): 1–22, <https://doi.org/10.31942/iq.v7i1.3455>

³⁵ Jumni Nelli, "Analysis of Family Maintenance Obligations in the Enforcement of Joint Property," *Al-Istinbath Journal of Islamic Law* 2, no. 1 (2017).

This verse was revealed in connection with Sa'ad bin Rabi' and his wife, Habibah bint Zaid bin Kharijah bin Abu Zuhair. When his wife disobeyed him, Sa'ad slapped her. His wife then complained to her father, who, in turn, reported the incident to the Prophet PBUH, intending to separate his daughter from her husband. The Prophet PBUH initially stated that the wife had the right to avenge her husband's slap. Shortly after leaving the Prophet, the couple was recalled, and the Prophet announced that Allah SWT had revealed this verse, stating, "*we want one thing and Allah SWT wants another.*".³⁶

The above verse clarifies that a man's role as the family's *qawwam* stems from the sustenance he provides.³⁷ This responsibility is predicated on men's physical capacity, which Allah SWT has favored over women's in matters of earning a livelihood.³⁸ Additionally, men have more relaxed boundaries regarding 'awrah, generally extending from the navel to the knees. In contrast, women are typically permitted to expose only their face and palms, with some schools of thought even prohibiting women from uncovering their faces in front of non-mahram men.

In addition to the husband's ideal role as a leader, the verse also outlines the ideal position of a wife, namely *qanitat* and *hafizhat*. *Qanitat* signifies a wife's obedience to her husband, provided she is not commanded to commit immorality. *Hafizhat*, meanwhile, refers to the wife's obligation to safeguard her own honor and that of her husband, as well as their property and children, both in her husband's presence and absence.³⁹ It is further explained that a wife must maintain her and her husband's honor in return for the husband providing for her maintenance. Such an attitude is incumbent upon women as a manifestation of Allah SWT's justice, which requires husbands to pay dowry, alimony, and to care for and educate their wives.

Al-Qurthubi elucidated that the husband's position as *qawwam* is based on two aspects. First, the inherent advantages Allah SWT has bestowed upon men. According to his interpretation, men are superior in terms of intellect, emotional stability, and physical resilience compared to women.⁴⁰ Second, it is due to the financial support men provide to their families,

³⁶ Yusuf Eko Nahuddin, "The Actions of Former Husbands Not Paying Maintenance Costs (Hadhanah) to Children in the Perspective of Child Protection," *Journal of Research and Development of Science and Humanities* 6, no. 3 (2022): 463–71.

³⁷ Jumni Nelli et al., "Qiwamah's Reconceptation of Muhammad Shahrur's Thoughts and Their Implications for the Feminist Movement in the World," *Al-Istinbath: Journal of Islamic Law* 9, no. 1 (2024): 309–34, <https://doi.org/10.29240/jhi.v9i1.9797>.

³⁸ Al-Qurthubi, *Jami' Li Ahkam Al-Qur'an*.

³⁹ Nelli et al., "Qiwamah's Reconceptation of Muhammad Shahrur's Thoughts and Their Implications for the Feminist Movement in the World."

⁴⁰ Al-Qurthubi, *Jami' Li Ahkam Al-Qur'an*. 4: 283.

encompassing dowry, walimah expenses, and all household necessities such as clothing, food, and accommodation. Therefore, it is appropriate for men to assume leadership responsibilities within the family

This division of roles underscores the justice inherent in Islamic teachings, aimed at protecting the family's integrity and permanence. However, in fulfilling his responsibilities as a *qawwam*, husbands often require their wives' assistance. This necessitates the wife undertaking a dual role: helping her husband in his capacity as *qawwam* by contributing to the family's livelihood. When a wife assists her husband in earning a living, the husband, in turn, should demonstrate appreciation through increased attention and affection towards her.

When a wife engages in employment outside the home to support her husband, the husband is obligated to reciprocate by assisting with domestic responsibilities. Despite the wife's external career, household duties are often still primarily considered her domain. Ironically, husbands who contribute to household chores are sometimes viewed negatively. However, if wives are afforded significant career opportunities, husbands should similarly participate in domestic tasks.⁴¹

Indeed, a husband, as the family's leader, is obligated to assist his wife with household chores, embodying the principle of partnership within the family, as articulated in the Quranic verse: *They are garments to you, and you are garments to them*. The term *libas* in this verse is metaphorical, comparing marital partners to garments that cover each other's flaws and weaknesses.⁴² Furthermore, marriage provides a legitimate channel for fulfilling biological needs, thereby preventing illicit relationships.

Allah SWT reiterates the word *libas* twice in this verse. The phrase *hunna libasun lakum* signifies the husband's reliance on his wife, while *antum libasun lahunna* underscores the wife's need for her husband.⁴³ Al-Qurthubi likens this mutual dependency to the relationship between a bed and its foundation: the wife is like a bed requiring protection, and the husband is the foundation offering stability. The purpose of a marital union is mutual support, covering each other's deficiencies, aiding during adversity, and concealing each other's shortcomings.⁴⁴

⁴¹ A Stefanie et al., "Gender Equality In The Household For Career Women," ... : *Journal of Legal Research* \& ..., 2022, https://www2.pcru.ac.th/pcru/assets/attach_slide/pcru_attach-20240605022958.pdf.

⁴² Zuhaili, *Tafsir Al Munir Fi Al-'Aqidah Wa As-Shari'ah Wa Almanhaj*. 514.

⁴³ Katsir, *Tafsir Al Quran Al 'Azhim*.

⁴⁴ Muhammad bin Ahmad bin Abi Bakr Al-Qurthubi, *Al-Jami' Al-Ahkam Al Qur'an* (Beirut: Al Resalah, 2006).

Consequently, a wife who has compensated for her husband's financial limitations deserves his assistance with household tasks. Husbands should adopt an empathetic stance, helping their wives without compromising their authority, as contributing to domestic work not only preserves their standing but also enhances their wives' affection and respect.

CONCLUSION

The prevailing societal view often subjects professional women to a dual burden and unjustly attributes household discord, and even divorce, to their careers. However, Surah an-Nahl, verse 97, of the Quran clarifies that all human endeavors, irrespective of gender, receive equitable recompense. Furthermore, Surah al-Baqarah, verses 228 and 187, emphasize the balanced and just distribution of rights and responsibilities within a household. Domestic duties are presented as a shared undertaking between spouses, who are metaphorically described in the Quran as garments that mutually require and complement each other. Consequently, a career woman, while fulfilling her role as a homemaker, warrants her husband's assistance. Given that her professional contributions significantly aid her husband in his financial obligations, it is incumbent upon him to help with household chores, devoid of conceit or ego.

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