

## Needs for Counselling in Communication of Family Planning Program in Decentralization Era in Purbalingga

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### Abstract

*This study examined the husbands' perspective about family planning counseling in Purbalingga District. Target of this study were 30 husbands who experienced gender role shifting. Data obtained through interview and focus group discussions. Results of this research were: first, they initially had experience of gender role conflict; second, they never involved in family planning counseling whereas they need information about family harmony, reproductive health, child development and other related issues.*

*Keywords: family planning counseling, gender role shift, gender role conflict*

### Introduction

Era of decentralization began at 2000s. The improvement of appropriateness and accuracy of the public services efficiency are the main goals. Other objective to achieve is fit the program and policies to the needs and problems of the citizen, both men and women. Interactive communication between local government and the residence is needed to reach those goals.

Since this era, the program of family planning is combined with the women empowerment, named Family Planning and Women Empowerment Board. Supporting this shaping of the family with quality is the main mission of this institution.

Recently, two dominant problems are domestic violence and divorce that commonly found in Purbalingga, Central Java, as showed by Puspita et al. (2012). It was related to some hair companies which produce artificial eyelashes and hair, build in this district which absorbed thousands of women (including those already married). This raises problem of limited employment opportunities for men and leads to a new pattern of family, i.e which the wives posite as the breadwinner. In general the wives work as the employees in the hair companies, while

their husbands even jobless. This situation, in fact, is very vulnerable to the disharmonious of the family.

It was interesting to study more about the husband's perspective of family planning program in the desentralization era. This is important because the number of male participated in family program is also a consideration. Understanding husbands's perspective on this will be helpful to find and meet their need regarding the program. To sum up, this study focuses on (1) how the husband experiences gender role shifting in family, and (2) understanding their need perspectives regarding family planning program.

### Methods

The target of this study were 30 husbands in Purbalingga District who experienced the gender role in family. They've selected by purposive sampling and the criteria used were: (1) the wife works in a hair-company; and (2) have at least one child. Data were collected by interview and focus group discussion. Data were analyzed by interactive model (Miles and Huberman, 1992) and supported by gender theory.

## Results

### Profile of Informans

The informant's marriage age range is 20-29 years old, while their wives are 16-25 years old. In average, the number and space of their children, as well as the contraception method, is the result of the discussion with their spouse. They have three children with age spacing range from 3 to 8 years old children. They were mostly planned it with partner so that their wives used modern contraception such injection and pill. Most of them didn't use a modern contraception because they think this is a female bussiness. None of the informant uses the contraceptive method because the contraceptive method is considered as woman's matter. Other reason is the limit of choices of contraceptive methods for man. It is then commonly done by the women to decide herself the choise of contraceptive method. They choose to have 3 children maximally because of the economic reason. They hope their wives will get the last pregnant when they are maximally in 35 years age.

### Husbands' Perspective about Shift in Gender Role

The husbands have been experience gender role shifting for more than five years, and some of them have it since they got married. In the beginning, they felt uncomfortable with this situation. Frustration, anger and feel inferior to the wife who financially stronger are frequently experience by the husband who are mostly work the odd job such as construction workers, farm laborers and chartered and pedicab drivers.

Due to the uncertain employment, the husband doesn't earn enough money. When they work, they will earn 30.000 to 50.000 rupiah per day, and will not earn any money when they do not have any job. While the wife who

works in the hair company for years earn 800.000 rupiah per month regularly. Some extra money will be added when the wife works overtime.

Dealing with income, the household share the role. The money husbands' earn is used to fulfill daily needs, while the wife's is used for monthly expenses. When they don't have any money, some of them sometimes ask for finance support from the parents they live with, or other relatives.

Since the husband have more spare time then the domestic chore often done by them, such as taking the child to school, do the laundry and cooking. Some of the wives sometimes prefer to buy cooked food from the food vendor considering being more practical. The parenting task are commonly done by the parent in law by the reason of inability or being not use to.

This gender role shifting are commonly experienced for at least five years. Some of them even have it since the beginning of the marriage. At first they felt awkward, embarrassed and frustrated with this situation. The difficulty of finding job leads them to feel that they cannot do the role as a father and husband. The limit of skill and capital is the main problem. In order to kill their time, they often meet other husbands who have similar problem and do activities such as fishing or soccer. Even though they seem as a harmonious family, the gender shifting role put them to a vulnerability of being disharmonious. The husband becomes more sensitive to some family situations. When the wife refuses to do sex because of feeling exhausted or an overtime job, the husband hardly try to understand it considering the role of the wife in family. The neighborhood were initially felt awkward with this role shifting.

However, time by time, this situation became more acceptable.

### **Husbands' Needs Related to Family Planning Program**

According to the informant, family planning program aimed to limit the number of children in family using modern methods. In general, the ideal numbers of children according to them were 2 or 3 children. They expected to their wives to have the last pregnancy when the age is at least 35 years old. Most of them say that they never received family planning counseling. In fact, there are actually have regular meeting for men per month held the evening. So far the forum only filled with information about government programs that will be implemented in their surrounding and command to success it. For example, the program of electronic ID-card, national program for community empowerment, taxes payment, and supporting the election.

The forum never been used to share the information of family empowerment, such as how to maintain the harmony in family, family planning for men, reproductive health and children development. There were still some informants who considered that the topic is not a matter of husbands, but "wife's matters". They also acknowledged that they actually need these topics, especially when they are considered of having more responsibilities in the household. Domestic violence issue is also needed to be understood by the husband considering the vulnerability and disharmony in their household so they can prevent the family not to experience this situation.

### **Discussion**

Based on the finding explained, this study purposes two important ideas to discuss. *First*, the gender role shifting

as a situation which is hardly accepted by the community. This is related to the expectancy of the community to the role of men and women in family. *Second*, even though there is region-autonomy, the process of development communication is not in the level of expectancy. The communication is still done in one way and put the husband as marginalized group.

According to Myers (1996), gender role is a set of behavior (norms) expected by man and women. It is related to masculine and feminine concept. Masculine is traits that believed and formed as ideal type for man, while feminine is ideal traits for women. Man will get gender role conflict when they get a different condition (Pleck, 1981), or having gap between their ideal concept and reality one based on gender role stereotype (Garnets & Pleck, 1979). According to O Neil et al, there are 3 situations that can make gender role conflict, that are: internal gender role conflict, gender role conflict based on other people and gender role conflict that expressed to others. That's why man which having shift of gender role sometimes vulnerable to the violence.

Because gender is constructed by society and it can be changed by intensive process through education and information, so that to decrease a negative impact of shift of gender role, it can be raised by society. Another important result from this study is that man is still marginalized from family issues. It is happen in a region whit many man have domestic task. It means that the family planning agent must revise their approach. They can optimize man's forum that held routine monthly.

The importance of man participation in family planning issues also proposed by some researchers. Imroni et al (2009) found that one of the

factors influenced wife to use Implant method was the support of their husband. Kishindo (1994) showed that the ignorance of man from the family planning counseling have impacted to the low of family planning participation and the high of risk of pregnancy. While Vural (1999) showed that the involvement of man in family planning in Turkey (especially in deciding the number of their children and choosing of methods of contraception) and man education have increased man participation in family planning program.

Actually, Indonesian National Board of Population and Family Planning has a concept about family planning counseling based on gender perspective called "Gender Responsive of Communication, Information Education". It is a process to send and receive a message in order to increase and optimize knowledge, attitude and behavior of society and support them to receive family planning program (Pusat Pelatihan Gender dan Peningkatan Kualitas Perempuan - BKKBN, 2007:39). It focuses on meeting the needs of men and women which are different regarding the differences of biological needs, experiences and community treats.

In fact, this method does not applied by counselor. Sometimes this is caused by law of gender sensitivity from their agent. It can be happen because most of the counselor is now get a limited training. In the decentralization era, their budget is limited because family planning program is not considered as an important issue.

### **Conclusion**

The husband experiences the gender shifting role is initially had a conflict of gender role. As the time changes and the increase of the husband having

similar problem, community leads to be easily accept this situation.

The husband never been involved in family planning program, while they are in fact highly need the information of family harmony, reproductive health, child development and other related issues.

The counselor of family planning and its agents are suggested to optimize the husbands' forum to strengthen the value of the family, including related issues such as gender role, domestic violence, reproductive health, child development and others.

To deal with the time management as the husband's forum held in the evening, it is also needed to gain the support from the community leader as the man-counselor.

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