

## **Violence Against Women in Muna, Southeast Sulawesi, Indonesia (A Perspective of Gender Sociology)**

Muhammad Obie  
State Islamic University of Sultan Amai, Gorontalo, Indonesia

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**Abstract:** This research analyzed the violence against women in Muna that was focused on the root causes of violence, forms of violence and its protection and resolution. It used gender perspective, constructivist paradigm and qualitative approach. The collected data was qualitative data that was obtained through depth interview, observation of passive participative as well as library research. Gender relations in Muna were unequal in which domination, subordination, marginalization, discrimination, violence, double burden and stereotype by men to women. It was found that root causes of violence were patriarchal culture, drinking alcohol, economic factors, infidelity and the seizure of child custody for a divorced spouse. The forms of violence that occur were physical, sexual, economic, psychic, exploitation and trafficking which occur in the domestic, public and state spheres. The unique thing in Muna was the resolution of violence against women through indigenous institution that could be accepted by all parties to the conflict.

**Key words:** Violence, women, Muna, indigenous institution, gender sociology, conflict

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### **INTRODUCTION**

Violence against women is still a very important issue both locally and globally. This is because it is a continuous threat to women everywhere in the world. The position of women in some parts of the world that is unequal to men makes this issue a scourge for women. Inequality is at the heart of factors associated with an increased risk of violence against women. UN resolution 48/104 of December 20, 1993 Article 1 defines violence against women as “any act of gender-based violence that results in or threatens to acts, coercion or arbitrary, deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or in private life”.

Violence against women may occur in the realm of domestic and personal relationships, public as well as state. Violence in the domestic realm and personal relationships are the forms of act of violence that occur in the household and done by people who are known and men nearby such as a husband, ex-husband, boyfriend, ex-boyfriend and others. While violence in the public sphere is the violence occurred outside the home at work or in the search for work, trafficking of women and children and violence caused by media and religious interpretations. The violence in the state sphere is an act of violence that occurs due to the existence of legal instruments, law enforcement and culture of law enforcement that is not gender perspective and violence against women in conflict area. Based on annual data of the national commission on

violence against women, the number of violence against women in Indonesia continues to increase from year to year. During the years 2014 violence against women amounted to 295.186 cases and increased 9% during 2015 reached 321.752 cases. This figure was much increased compared to the years 2011 which amounted to 119.107 cases. Still according to the annual record of the national commission on violence against women, the most prominent type of violence during 2016 as in the previous year was domestic violence which reached 10.205 cases (75%). The second position in the public sphere is 3.092 cases (22%) and the last was in the state sphere of 305 cases (3%). In the realm of domestic violence, the most prominent was physical violence 4.281 cases (42%) occupied the first position, followed by sexual violence 3.495 cases (34%), psychic 1.451 cases (14%) and economy 978 cases (10%). The most prominent domestic violence was violence against wife 5.784 cases (56%), followed by violence in courtship 2.171 cases (21%), violence against girls 1.799 cases (17%) and the rest violence of ex-husbands, violence ex-boyfriends and violence against domestic workers. The annual record of the national commission on violence against women also displayed rape data in marriage of 135 cases.

In the meantime, there are many factors behind the occurrence of violence against women. Johny's research results (2010) states that the first factor behind the occurrence of violence against women is an economic factor, usually within the scope of households, approximately 70%; second, the cultural factor which

places women as being subject to men, about 15%; third, infidelity, approximately 10% and lack of communication between families 5%.

The data described above was aggregate data on violence against women nationally which of course had not reached cases in remote areas. National commission on violence against women data even came from reports of complaints of victims at religious affairs offices, police agencies, prosecutors and partner NGOs. Whereas in fact, there were many victims of violence, especially in remote areas, never report their cases to these institutions. This research explored violence against women in remote area, especially in Muna by using qualitative data. This was very important because the visible violence against women seems to color the life in Muna but very little of the existing violence entering the realm of law. This research answered the questions about the root causes of violence against women, the forms of violence that occur and the protection and resolution of issues of violence against women in Muna.

#### **MATERIALS AND METHODS**

This research focused on the cases of violence against women in Muna, Southeast Sulawesi. This research specifically aimed to analyze the root causes of violence forms of violence and the efforts of protection and resolution of violence against women in Muna. To achieve these aims, this research used constructivist paradigm (Denzin and Lincoln, 2000). The constructivist paradigm was relativism in which reality was a social construct. The truth of a reality was relative, applicable in the specific context assessed relative by the social actors. In addition, the constructivist paradigm was transactional or subjective, the understanding of a reality or the findings of a research was a product of interaction between researchers and those researched. This paradigm emphasized empathy and dialectical interaction between researchers and respondents to reconstruct the reality under study.

This research used the qualitative approach, so that the data collected was the qualitative data. The data collected was the primary data obtained through depth interview and observation of passive participative (Sugiyono, 2009; Moleong, 2007). Research informants were women victims of violence who were selected through snowball technique. By using the snowball technique, the number of informants grew more, like a snowball rolling into ever larger ones (Sugiyono, 2009). To complement the primary data, data collection was also done through library research.

#### **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

**Gender sociology as a perspective:** Gender sociology as a perspective in analyzing cases of violence against women focuses on the relationships between men and women in their status as social beings. As social beings, men and women can not be separated from social roles. These social roles are then constructed by the culture of society which leads to various kinds of role inequality between men and women. It is different from the biological point of view that by nature as God's creatures, men and women have different sex. Gender is created through a long socio-cultural process within a certain society so it can differ from place to place. Gender also changes from time to time so it can be different from one generation to the next. Gender roles are formed through a variety of value systems including customary, educational, religious, political, economic and so on.

We can see clearly in the traditional patriarchal society the existence of a sharp separation not only on the role of gender but also the nature of gender. For example, men are required to be courageous and brave while women must be gentle and submissive. Whereas, men and women are ordinary people who have certain properties that he or she was born with. The nature of gentle, feeling, brave, timid, firm, shy and so on, may exist in anyone, regardless of whether men or women. Unfortunately, social construction in society changes the 'neutral' view on the gender traits. The subjective concept gradually evolved in the various social life paths of society which resulted in an imbalance between the role and position of women with men. Such gender inequalities limit the creativity, opportunities and space of both parties both men and women (Vries, 2006).

Universally gender roles for women and men are classified in three key roles (Hubeis, 2010). First, reproductive role is a role performed by a person to carry out activities related to the maintenance of human resources and housekeeping tasks such as cooking, washing clothes, cleaning the house, caring for children and others; second, the productive role is a role performed by a person regarding employment that produce goods and services for consumption and trade such as farmers, fishermen, merchants and others and third, the social role is the role what a person undertakes to participate in social activities related to service activities and political participation.

In conditions of patriarchal society, increasingly justifies the inequality that benefits men more than women. In such a culture, it reinforces the position of the men in the higher stratum of the women. According to

Yuliana and Dewy (2012) patriarchal ideology consists of: first, the authority or rule that prioritizes or based on the father's view (a social system in which men control family members, possessions and other economic resources and as key decision makers); second, the premise that men are superior to women, so women who are part of men's possessions must be controlled and regulated and third, the basis of women's control, oppression and exploitation in the public and private spheres.

Gender inequalities that often occur in women are domination, subordination, marginalization, discrimination, violence, double burden and stereotype. Domination is done by individuals or groups to subdue, control and weaken other individuals or groups so that the individual or other group becomes subordinated and then marginalized. Discrimination is a distinction and restriction made on the basis of sex which reduces and eliminates the recognition, enjoyment or exercise of human rights and fundamental freedoms in the political, economic, social, cultural, civil or any other field by women, regardless of their marital status, on the basis of equality between men and women. Violence is the most effective way to make women helpless so in turn it is easy to be exploited and oppressed. The double burden is borne by many women who move or work in the public domain but still have to work in the domestic area. Meanwhile, the stereotype is a perspective which attaches a certain identity or title with the aim of weakening or ignoring the position and existence of the person or group in question.

**Gender relations:** Muna is the name of one of the oldest regencies in Southeast Sulawesi Province, Indonesia. Until now the people of Muna still uphold the customs passed down from generation to generation from their ancestors. A strongly institutionalized patriarchal culture in Muna spawns gender inequality. The gender inequalities experienced by women in Muna are domination, subordination, marginalization, discrimination, violence, double burden and stereotype.

Gender relations in Muna are unequal in which men dominate women. This inequality gained legitimacy and institutionalization in Muna culture. In domestic life, the husband dominates the wife. All household decisions are in the hands of the husband while the wife is only limited to giving advise. On the other hand, the wife should not act without her husband's permission. Men dominance can also be seen for example when sending children to school, parents prefer the boys to their daughters. This dominance then answers the question why in Muna men are more educated than women. Men have the freedom to

continue education wherever they want as long as parents are able to finance while women help parents gardening or at least caring for parents in old age. Men dominance in Muna causes women to be subordinated and marginalized. Women are in a subordinate position while men are superordinate. In such a position, women are always under the shadow of men's leadership. That is why it is very rare to find women to be leaders in Muna, both in informal organizations and formal organizations in governmental institutions. Even when a woman who is a wife offered a position in society for example, she usually has to ask for her husband's blessing first. If her husband approves, she can accept the offer but if not, she should reject it. If she forced herself to accept the offer without the blessing of her husband, it would be a source of prolonged conflict. Subordination like this has been being experienced by women even since childhood. In Muna, if it is not carried out by the mother, a girl is obliged to cook which will be served for her brother's sake. Similarly for washing clothes, it is usually completed by sisters. While boys may not be busy, or just spend time playing with friends outside the home.

Discrimination also colored gender relations in Muna. Cultural constructed discrimination is such as the distribution of inheritance. In the Muna culture, the distribution of inheritance is monopolized by men. Women only get inheritance limited to kitchen appliances and other home furniture while men get all the property. As for when women want inheritance in the form of property such as land, it must ask the blessing of her brother. Many brothers were oppressive and arbitrary, so his sister did not get the property inheritance. When a woman insisted on her part, she experienced violence by her brother.

Women in Muna also experience a double burden. In Muna, domestic affairs such as cooking, washing, cleaning the house, caring for children, etc., are the responsibility of the wife. On the other hand, the husband does the affairs outside the home. A double burden occurs when the wife also has to work outdoors to provide for the family's living (Fig. 1). This is because the involvement of the wife in the affairs outside the home, for the work of earning a living, does not eliminate its obligations in domestic affairs.

Stereotype is also a form gender relation in Muna. The most powerful stereotype is experienced by widowed women. Widowed women are seen as seductive women who threaten the existence of other people's households. As a result they have limited space to socialize even in the work of earning a living. Stereotype as intruder women were actually attached by another married women.



Fig. 1: A number of women were working in the brick factory of sumiranta trading business, matarawa village, Watopute District, Muna, Southeast Sulawesi

**The root causes of violence:** Violence against women in Muna has chronic roots. As a society that embraces patriarchal culture, men have a higher position than women. Men are superior and have power over women. In Muna's patriarchal culture like this, men are more in control of women. Women should always respect and glorify men, like a respectful servant to their master. Consequently a wife has a high dependence on the man who becomes her husband.

Muna people who some of the old and young men have a habit of drinking alcohol is also a problem for women. Men who are drunk because of the influence of alcohol are often violent against women, especially wives. The habit of drinking alcohol in Muna is conducted in groups of more than two people. For some men who are already addicted to alcohol, drinking alcohol no longer knows the time, either in the morning, afternoon or evening. As a result, the whole day they seem to keep getting drunk. Women who have alcohol-addicted husbands are often subjected to violence.

Economic factors are also at the root of the cause of violence against women in Muna. In the midst of closed employment, economic difficulties can not be denied. In addition to cultivating agricultural land as subsistence farmers who only fulfill family food, men also work odd jobs. The absence of a steady job that can sustain the economy while the need for family is not negotiable is often the source of contention that leads to violence against women. In the midst of economic difficulties, the financial condition of the family is getting worse due to bad habits committed by men, namely playing gambling. Gambling games have been taking root in Muna for a long time, both using dominoes and cockfights. When playing gambling, the husbands are not half hearted to even spend all the family savings. In the emotional condition of losing in gambling, husbands often wreak their anger at their

wives. Violence can also be triggered by an affair committed by a husband. In Muna, having more than one wife is not a problem, although national law is not allowed. Before the second marriage is done, a husband usually infidelity by way of relationships with other woman. When the affair is in progress especially if the wife is known, often times the wife experienced violence. The husband rarely returns home, even if coming home always shows disgrace to the wife, even physical violence is usually done. After a long time in a relationship in adultery, then marriage is held before the imam who is witnessed by local custom figures. Usually this kind of marriage is done simply. Under conditions of this kind of relationship, mutual harm between wives is common. Violence against the first wife can be done by both husband and second wife while the second wife experiencing violence may be by the first wife. In short, in an unhealthy relationship, both women are victims of violence. Violence can also be experienced by women who have been officially divorced. This kind of violence is usually caused by the seizure of child custody with a former husband. In accordance with Indonesian national law, underage child custody belongs to the mother of the child. However, due to the strong patriarchal culture within the community, the former husband strives to seize the custody. As a result violence is often experienced by ex-wives.

**The forms of violence:** It was found as the field facts in the research sites there were some forms of violence against women in Muna, namely physical, sexual, economic, psychic, exploitation and trafficking. It was easy to find the women victims of physical violence in Muna because it often happened even in public. The types of physical violence that found in Muna were slapping, punching, spitting, pulling hair, kicking, burning with cigarettes, hitting and wounding with sharp weapons. Almost every wife experienced physical

violence for a variety of reasons, both because of economic factors, the influence of alcohol and infidelity or other causes that end in physical violence against wives. When there was a dispute that triggers the argument, the husband did not hesitate to do physical violence.

Sexual violence was also experienced by women in Muna. This type of violence was in the form forcing sexual intercourse, the husband forced his own sexual appetite or not paying attention to the satisfaction of the wife. Forcing sexual intercourse was the case where the husband forced his wife to have sex when she did not want it. This could be caused by the wife who is annoyed over the attitude of her husband or other factors in the health condition of the wife who is less fit. Another type of husband was a selfish attitude in sexual intercourse, in which the husband only thought of his own inner satisfaction without considering his wife inner satisfaction. Consequently, his wife was suffered the inner pain of dissatisfaction in sex.

The form of violence that also found was an economic violence in which the husband abandoned his wife by not providing spending money. Consequently, the wife was difficult to buy food needs at home. Many cases of husbands prefer to squander money outside to buy alcohol to get drunk with their friends, rather than being given to the needs of the family at home. In other cases, husbands also spent more money gambling. Even when some money had been given to his wife to spend on family needs at home, he retrieved when he lost in gambling. Even more sadly again, a sum of money the work of wife was forcibly taken husband to play gambling. When a wife refused to give her money to her husband, then another form of violence occurs both physical and psychological violence. The psychological violence what was found that the husbands threatened wives, humiliated, painful comments or degraded self-esteem, isolated wives from the outside world and frightened them as a means of imposing will.

Other forms of violence were exploitation and trafficking. The exploitation was to force the wife to work outside the home but the salary from the job was forcibly taken by the husband to gamble or to buy alcohol. The wives who regard husbands as household leaders did not dare to stop the actions of their husbands. The other fact was that the wife struggles to carry a double burden, in addition to working oddly outside, also performing domestic obligations. The wife was forced to do so only to meet the family economy while the husband did not work, or is unemployed at home. Meanwhile, violence in the form of trafficking in Muna was occurred in the public sphere. Young women worked in the neighboring country through local recruitment but turn out to be victims of

brokering. These young women in neighboring countries even had to work in bars serving men, even though they had never guessed before. In addition to the household and public sphere as described above, violence against women in Muna was also known to occur in the state sphere. It was happened to women market traders where their merchandise were dismantled and expelled by market officers simply for selling in the market yard. Violence by the state sphere was also carried out by the police officers against women of alcoholic vendors who went from village to city. Their merchandise was shed and the women got intimidation from the police.

**The protection and resolution:** As a part of the Indonesian society, the protection of women in Muna refers to the national law. Some of these rules are contained in: the Indonesian criminal code; law number 7 of years 1984 regarding ratification of Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) and law number 23 of years 2004 on the elimination of domestic violence. The government also establishes a national commission on violence against women, an independent state institution established through presidential decree number 181 of years 1998, then reinforced by presidential regulation number 65 of years 2005 on the national commission on violence against women.

The instrument of national law becomes the reference for the solving of violence against women that is generally accepted in Indonesian society, even so in Muna. The barrier of solving of violence against women in Muna especially in rural areas that still hold firm customs are women who become victims of violence are reluctant to bring their cases to national legal domain. As a result, perpetrators of violence can not be prosecuted by the national law. There are several reasons why the women victims of violence in Muna are reluctant to report their cases. Firstly, felt ashamed that her case would be publicly known; secondly, still loving her husband; thirdly, the victim's affection for her children so reporting the perpetrators of violence that in fact her husband is the same as paving the way to divorce; fourth, lack of legal knowledge, women victims of violence especially those who do not have adequate education fear of dealing with the law.

The final way to the settlement of violence against women in Muna is through indigenous institution. At first the parties solve the cases in a familial way mediated by the immediate family. However, when the completion of the family is deadlocked, the indigenous institution is involved. Indigenous institution acts like judicial institution mediating disputes between

parties. Indigenous institution in performing this role does not necessarily discredit the wrong party and flatter the right party. This is because the main mission of indigenous institution in solving the cases is the creation of consensus and forgiving each other. With the strength of the character of indigenous leaders in facilitating the issues of violence against women, the indigenous institution always success to create the peace and harmony among the conflicting parties.

### **CONCLUSION**

Violence against women in Muna is linked to gender relations formed in the culture of the community. Muna community who embraces a patriarchal culture in which there is an inequality of gender relations that views men as superior while women as inferior contributes greatly to the occurrence of violence in Muna. The inequalities of gender relations are domination, subordination, marginalization, discrimination, violence, double burden and stereotypes by men to women. In addition to patriarchal culture, the other root causes of violence against women in Muna are the drinking alcohol, economic factors, infidelity and the seizure of child custody for a divorced spouse. Meanwhile, the form of violence that occurs can be physical, sexual, economic, psychic, exploitation and trafficking. The domain of violence can be in the domestic, public and state. In practice, the legal protection of women victims of violence in Muna refers to national law. However, since the indigenous institution is still strong and upheld by the Muna community, resolution of violence against women cases can always be resolved within the indigenous institution.

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