

Research Article

Gender Complementarity in the Process of Anchovies Production in North Sumatran Coast Communities

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Abstract.

This study investigated the nuanced dynamics of gender complementarity within the context of anchovy production, focusing on the coastal communities of North Sumatra. In recent years, increased awareness of gender dynamics has underscored their crucial role in socio-economic spheres, particularly within fisheries. Anchovies, both an integral economic driver and a significant nutritional resource, serve as a focal point for examining the complex interplay between gender roles, responsibilities, and contributions in the production process. This exploratory study was conducted using an ethnographic approach, this research deeply immersed itself in the daily lives of North Sumatra's coastal communities. Through extended engagement, participant observation, and a multifaceted methodology involving firsthand experiences, systematic observations, and in-depth interviews, the study aimed to capture a comprehensive understanding of the sociocultural dynamics shaping gender complementarity in anchovies production. Findings revealed that the anchovy production process has established a productive work cycle, significantly contributing to the local economy, particularly for women, and positively influencing the overall economic conditions of the community.

Keywords: Gender Complementarity , Sustainable Fisheries, Domestic Economy, Anchovies Production, Tanjungbalai

1. Introduction

The discourse surrounding gender as an evolving paradigm in the social sciences has captured considerable attention from researchers, reflecting the intricate and continually evolving nature of gender-related phenomena. Scholars and activists emphasize the importance of challenging and transforming restrictive gender norms to achieve gender equity. Efforts to change social norms involve interventions at various levels, from policy changes to grassroots activism (1). Anthropologists are employing intersectionality to understand how gender intersects with other social categories (race, class, ethnicity) within specific cultural contexts. This approach allows for a more understanding of power dynamics and inequalities (2). In navigating the landscape of gender, researchers explore the intricacies of constructed status roles and responsibilities within society,

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unraveling the ways in which these constructs contribute to the formation of social norms and values. This multifaceted examination delves into the socio-cultural fabric, acknowledging that gender is not merely a static concept but a dynamic force that shapes and is shaped by societal dynamics.

In the current context, discussions on gender issues have predominantly revolved around narratives of resistance and oppression. While these narratives are crucial for highlighting inequalities and advocating for change, it is equally important to recognize the often-overlooked dimension of the interplay between masculine and feminine elements in various societal domains, particularly within the realm of work. Gender research focuses not only on the participation of women or men in the management of marine resources, but also on the complementarity roles of both genders in the ecosystem (3). Due to the fact that women and men often use marine spaces differently (4)(5), acknowledging and understanding the diverse expressions of gender within occupational settings can offer valuable insights into how these elements contribute to the establishment of social harmony and order. The exploration of these dynamics goes beyond the dichotomy of resistance and oppression, emphasizing the symbiotic relationships and synergies that emerge from the collaboration of diverse gender identities and expressions. In essence, broadening the discourse to encompass the positive aspects of gender dynamics fosters a more holistic understanding. Recognizing the nuanced contributions of both masculine and feminine elements in work environments not only enriches our comprehension of social structures but also opens avenues for fostering inclusivity, diversity, and ultimately, a more harmonious societal order.

Over the past few decades, heightened awareness of gender issues has underscored the importance of understanding the intricate interrelationships between men and women in diverse socio-economic contexts. This heightened awareness is particularly relevant within the framework of fisheries and coastal communities, where traditional gender roles often intersect with evolving economic landscapes. From this perspective, the reasons why the level of women's involvement in the fisheries sector varies from one society to another, makes sense. In South Korea, a community of women dives directly into the ocean to collect fish and shellfish, known as Haenyeo or women divers (6). In Coastal Areas of Lagos, Nigeria, Most (75%) of the respondents were females, while 25% were males; this goes to show the dominance of the female fishers in post-harvesting activities (7), where in Ghana, the women involved in the entire fisheries value chain were over three and a half times more than the men (8).

This study seeks to delve into the multifaceted dimensions of gender dynamics, placing a specific focus on the concept of gender complementarity within the complex

tapestry of anchovies production in Tanjungbalai District. This anchovy is very famous in various regions in Indonesia, generally Indonesian people call this fish as ikan teri medan . These fish are generally small to medium in size. Anchovy has a habitat in coastal areas, so it is not surprising if the Tanjung Balai area has a fairly abundant availability of anchovy fish. Anchovies as part of the fisheries subsector have bright business prospects such as fishermen, fleets, fishing equipment, fish resources, and marketing system. Reporting from the news Info.Mu.com on January 17, 2021, one of the residents of Tanjung Balai said that anchovies processed in Tanjung Balai have their own characteristics, so they are very sold in the market. Even this anchovies have been marketed to Malaysia.

The investigation centers on the distinct socio-cultural and economic fabric of the coastal communities nestled along the shores of North Sumatra. The choice to study anchovies production is motivated by the dual significance of this industry as both an economic driver and a crucial nutritional resource. Anchovies not only contribute substantially to local economies but also play a pivotal role in meeting the nutritional needs of communities reliant on fisheries. By directing our attention to this specific sector, we aim to unravel the intricate relationships, collaborations, and challenges that shape gender roles in the production process. Through a nuanced exploration, we intend to uncover the ways in which men and women complement each other's efforts, examining the division of labor, decision-making processes, and the overall impact on the sustainable development of anchovies production.

Furthermore, there is a noticeable gap in connecting the exploration of gender complementarity to broader discussions on sustainable fisheries. Understanding how gender dynamics influence the sustainability of anchovy production is crucial for developing holistic approaches aligned with contemporary efforts for gender equity and environmental conservation. Closing these research gaps is not just a scholarly pursuit; it is imperative for advancing our knowledge of gender dynamics in anchovy production, informing policy decisions, and promoting more inclusive and sustainable practices in the unique coastal communities of North Sumatra. This comprehensive understanding is crucial for fostering resilience, gender equity, and environmental sustainability in the anchovy production sector.

As we navigate the complexities of gender roles within North Sumatra's coastal communities, our study contributes to a broader understanding of the socio-economic factors influencing these dynamics. Beyond the local context, the insights gained from this research have the potential to inform strategies for fostering gender inclusivity, promoting equitable economic development, and enhancing the resilience of coastal

communities in the face of evolving challenges. In essence, our exploration of gender complementarity in anchovies production serves not only as a localized investigation but also as a valuable contribution to the global discourse on gender, fisheries, and sustainable development.

The applicability of research findings to resource management emerges as another critical gap. The scant literature on gender complementarity in anchovy production implies a lack of understanding regarding how these gender dynamics contribute to effective resource management and creating harmony. The absence of comprehensive studies hinders the development of management plans that are tailored and inclusive, accounting for the diverse roles played by both men and women in this industry. A consequential concern is the underrepresentation of women as users and managers of natural resources in the anchovy production process. Recognizing and comprehending the specific roles and contributions of women is essential for creating inclusive and equitable policies and practices that acknowledge their significant participation.

2. Research Method

This research uses a qualitative research approach with an ethnographic research design. This research was conducted in Kapias Pulau Buaya Village, Teluk Nibung District. This research uses a qualitative research approach with an ethnographic research design. This location was chosen because it is considered the most representative and is the center for anchovy processing. In collecting data, the researcher stays and stays in the field for Ten days, mingling with society, doing involved observation and uninvolved observation, hold informal discussions together community and community leaders, and in-depth interviews with informants is considered to be the main source of information, especially for those directly involved in the anchovy production process.

The data validation process starts from the data obtained from library and internet studies some of the data that appears is compared with sources of information and similarities or differences. The most commonly found data is from various data source with rank for the last three years. This data was chosen to be the source preliminary data. Data analysis was carried out during the process study. Data analysis does not follow what is already exists, but this analysis was developed, revised, and choreographed Analysis The data in this study begins with preparing and organizing data, such as text and image for analysis, then the data is reduced to a theme.

3. Discussion and Analysis

3.1. Woman Anchovies Sorting

The construction formed from the social system of anchovy fishermen leads women to occupy certain positions with special roles and functions. Two elements can be drawn out -for our wider understandings of gender relations within fishing- how bodies are used and where bodies are used (9). In Tanjungbalai, the profession of fishing or similar professions in fish farms is a profession carried out by men. It would be very taboo to see women going to sea and taking over this profession. here are many logical reasons which then become the basis for fishermen not to employ women. One of them is related to sanitation. In Tanjungbalai, it is considered easier for men to defecate anywhere, in contrast to women who have to urinate in a closed and protected place. Meanwhile, sondong (anchovy fishing gear) fishermen are usually at sea for around 3-5 days. So it is not possible for women to defecate in boats or boats when fishing at sea. The fishermen think that it would be more appropriate for women to stay at home and take care of domestic affairs, and even if they want to work, it is better if the work is not too hard and can be a side job. Therefore, sorting becomes a job for women in Tanjung Balai.

3.2. Roles and Duties of Women Anchovies Sorter

We often heard one idiom in dock, that the female “sorters” here are tasked with sorting the anchovies caught by fishermen. This position is quite vital in the anchovy production process, considering that fishermen catch them using trawls, so that not only anchovies, but also other fish and marine biota can be caught by the trawl. To avoid losses and get good anchovy production results, the fish sorting process must be carried out. It was women who then carried out this task in many places, one of which was PT. Timur Jaya’s dock, Tanjung Balai. When fish are abundant, the dock will be busy with women sorting anchovies, but on the other hand, if it’s famine season or there isn’t much fish, there will only be one to two women sorting anchovies in the dock. As the name suggests, the role of women here is to sort or sort the fishermen’s catch. Especially for sondong boat fishermen, female sorters have to sort out what is anchovies and what is not, which catches can be sold and which cannot. That’s the extent of the job of the woman sorting anchovies.

The descriptions of processing procedures, mostly recounted by women, indicate that processing fish demands a significant number of hours and care, especially if fish

are larger and thus spoil easier, or take longer to process (10). Most of the women who sort anchovies are wives of fishermen, one of their husbands is a crew member (ABK), tekong, or ship owner. While at this location, we met 16 anchovy sorters that I met over a period of three days, only four of whom were not fishermen's wives, but instead wage earners (people who do not have a special relationship with fishermen, but are called upon to sort anchovies). Wages usually work, because the fishermen's wives cannot sort the anchovies in Tangkahan.

Despite this, the woman who sorts anchovies, who is the wife of a fisherman, actually has a professional working relationship like a boss and employee. There are clear characteristics of work specialization here. Where now in the dock, the status is no longer a wife serving her husband, but an employee who works to earn a salary. This relationship can also be seen from the strict distribution of wages carried out, and the difference in the allocation of wages obtained from sorting anchovies and the spending money given by the husband.

On the one hand, the ship owner's wife even had more duties than just a sorter. The ship owner's wife will be the person in charge of managing the allocation of the money earned. Even though the work system really separates the roles of husband and wife, in fact this bond does not really fade for wage earners. During the observation, their husbands were found helping with the anchovy sorting process. Mrs. Dermawan's husband, who is a Chinese boat guard across dock, helps his wife painstakingly, as does Mr. Ebol, who also works as a boat guard, deftly helping his wife while joking around.

3.3. Classification of Women Anchovy Sorters

According to Ms. Sarah, it has only been around three years since the fishermen's wives work to sort the anchovies. This is because the catch is getting smaller, making them think that it would be better for the money to be circulated within the family. Therefore, currently, most of the sorters are fishermen's wives. However, there are still sorters who are not from the fisherman's family environment. The following is a classification of women sorting fish in the dock:

☒ The ship owner's wife. The ship owner's wife is a female anchovy sorter who usually has the additional task of managing the allocation of production funds and the income received. The wives of ship owners dominate in number compared to the classification of other women anchovy sorters in Tangkahan.

☒ Tekong's or captain's wife or crew member, during the observation, there were only two women sorting anchovies who were the wives of the tekong and crew members, one of whom was also sorting along with his mother who was the wife of the ship owner.

☒ Children and relatives of fishermen, although dominated by mothers, there are also sorters who are children of fishermen, old junior high school student who sorts just to help her father work.

In this case, the work specialization relationship as mentioned previously is not realized, the dominant relationship is only the relationship between child and father. Nayla, one of fisher's daughter was helped by her mother's sister when sorting, because Nayla's mother worked in the warehouse. So the relationship between fishermen and women sorting anchovies is established between the mother and her father, who owns a boat.

3.4. The Anchovies Sorting System

The sorting system for each individual anchovy is generally the same. However, there will still be differences based on the woman's classification and position. The sorting process starts with the anchovy catch that comes when the boat returns to dock, the women sorters will mark the baskets with their own specific codes. For those who are wives of ship owners and captain, the news that the fish are in the dock is communicated via telephone, this is different from hired sorters who usually always check the condition of the dock to see if the fish has arrived, sometimes hired sorters are also called by the ship owner to sort. When the sondong boats arrive at the tangkahan carrying the catch or deposits from other fishermen, the female sorters have already filled the dock

Anchovies that come to dock automatically will be brought to dry directly on a tarpaulin. If sun shine so bright, the drying process only lasts about an hour before it is sorted. The anchovies are distributed at several points according to the sorter's request where they will sit. There are various styles used by the sorters, some use plastic bags to sit stretched out, some use benches and fold their knees, and there are also those who are comfortable using sandals.

The way women sort anchovies has many similarities, generally they take two bowls, one for cepo fish (mixed with kotib fish) and the other for betang fish. The anchovy sorting woman will take the pile of anchovies bit by bit and sort the cepo, kotib and betang fish into containers, while the sekpo anchovies are left on the floor, and so on until all parts of the pile have been sorted. If there are small sized prawns, they are usually put in the cepo fish basin which contains mixed contents, but if there are medium

sized cuttlefish and prawns that can be used for shipping, they will be separated next to the sorter. The hands of the woman who sorts the anchovies are very skilled at separating the piled fish, her two hands work in sync. Occasionally someone eats the fish.

It only takes one to two hours to sort a full basket, see whether the catch is clean enough or not when sorted. The more there is to sort, the more time it takes and vice versa. On average, a female anchovy sorter can sort 3-4 baskets of anchovies a day. The anchovies that have been sorted are then filtered using sieve number 3 by the drying worker, then weighed and recorded and then delivered to the toke.

The woman who sorts the anchovies is not involved in the process after the anchovies are sorted. Usually after sorting they continue the conversation or just sit around finishing the food they brought earlier, but more people choose to go straight home. Because it was already evening, and there were no lights in Tangkahan.

During the sorting process, we often come across mothers who don't actually come to sort the anchovies their husbands catch, but just want to hang out with their colleagues. It is a common sight to see Tangkahan busy with banter and information transfer between women sorting anchovies. they sort anchovies to help each other while chatting and planning agendas or discussing social gatherings.

3.5. Several Species Of Anchovies In Tanjungbalai

Basically, fishermen really hope that the fish that enter their nets will be anchovies. However, because this net was not designed and intended specifically for anchovies, in the end many other fish also came in. In fact, often what is caught or enters the net is trash and worthless fish. The following are several types and forms of fish that enter fishermen's nets.

☒ Seppo Anchovies

Seppo anchovies are the main catch of Tanjung Balai Asahan fishermen, especially in the Tangkahan PT area. Timur Jaya. The Seppo anchovy itself is the best quality fish and the price of this anchovy is also higher than the price of other anchovies. And the majority of the people of Tanjung Balai work as catching seppo anchovies to turn back the wheels of the economy in the Tanjung Balai area. The price of the Seppo anchovy itself is valued at IDR. 65,000/kg.

☒ Kase Anchovies

The anchovy kase itself is a caught fish which is also the main commodity of the trawl fishing community in the Tangkahan PT area. Timur Jaya. Kase anchovies are

also a favorite anchovy among the people. And also this anchovy is not too expensive compared to the price of Seppo anchovies. The price of this kase anchovy itself is IDR. 45,000/kg. These kase anchovies are larger in size than seppo anchovies and usually these anchovies are not the main catch target of sondong trawl fishermen.

☒ Kotip fish

Meanwhile, this kotip fish is a fish that is sorted from the main catch of trawl fishermen. This kotip fish consists of several sorted fish, usually this kotip fish is cheaper than the price of other anchovies. The price of this kotip fish is estimated at Rp. 20,000/kg. Kotip fish or sorted fish consists of pekto, papang, cekong, ceppo, gulama and tamban/maning fish.

For all types of anchovies caught by fishermen, even if the trawl catch does not match the target catch, all of them will still have a price from the middlemen/toke. However, the price and quality of anchovies will vary for each anchovy. And every catch definitely has a price, even if the fish is not the favorite catch of trawl fishermen.

3.6. Wages And Financial Management Of Women Sorting Anchovies

Women anchovies sorter usually work depending on their husband goes to sea and sends the catch. they usually get a wage of Rp 30.000 from the boat owner, even though the sorter is the boat owner's wife its self, they still get a sorting wage of Rp30,000/day. For payment, they will be paid directly by the ship owner after they return from the sea. Usually the women who sort the anchovies don't just select one boat or boat, but sometimes they can sort 2-3 boats or boats. And the wage is IDR 30,000/bot, but usually the women who sell anchovies are not alone in selling if there are too many anchovies. So the wages they receive for a day will be shared both, their pay is Rp. 30,000/bot will be divided by 2 and they will get a salary of Rp. 15,000/bot.

Monthly, the women anchovies sorter get paid around Rp500.000 and this amount of wages is obtained when the fishermen catch a lot, and if the fishermen catch little they say that in a month they only get Rp. 200,000 – Rp. 300,000/month. The wages received by sorter vary from person to person. But for the most part, sorter use their wages to help the family's economy, such as kitchen needs, snacks for the children, and if their husbands don't have money, the mothers will also give their husbands money. And if their husband's fishing wages and catches are not sufficient for household needs and capital for going to sea, they will borrow money from shops or middlemen, which

they will then pay with their catches from the sea, and that is why now many fishermen are in debt because of the money circulation system. that's always the cycle.

However, not all fish collectors use their wages for household needs. Some of the anchovy sorter use their wages to buy clothes, for social gatherings, and also for their own snacks. They think that the money they earn themselves is for their personal needs, while it is the husband's obligation to fulfill the needs of the house and children's snacks. Most of the people who say things like this are people whose husbands are ship owners or people whose husbands' salaries are higher than those of others.

3.7. Domestic Affairs and Sorting Barriers

In their daily lives, women who sort anchovies are dominated by married women who are wives to their husbands, mothers to their children, or grandmothers to their grandchildren. Therefore, domestic matters such as taking care of the house, cooking, taking care of children and others are very closely involved in the daily lives of women who sort anchovies.

However, sorting anchovies is not an easy job, it requires precision, patience and time to do it. In dealing with this, the women who sort anchovies will make adaptations to match domestic matters and the side jobs they have to carry out. This social reality demands that women who sort anchovies must prioritize one of their tasks.

The instability of fish coming to the dock brought by boats is a challenge for women anchovy sorters to be able to position themselves as sorters and housewives. However, when a woman sorting anchovies is carrying out her duties, she will leave her domestic affairs behind and prioritize her work. Likewise, when it comes to taking care of children, the mother's position at home will be replaced by the eldest child or sibling at home.

However, there is some sorter who chose to bring her children to dock, so that they had a dual role, as sorters and as mothers; grandmother who has to watch over her children and grandchildren. When asked why he didn't leave his grandson at home, one of the informant answered that his grandson preferred him, and didn't want to be left with his mother, so he took him to Tangkahan.

However, the domestic role is not always put aside by sorter. For example, when it's time to go home from school, the sorting mothers pick up their children, on the other hand, wife serves food in a basket for her husband and eats together. The women who sort anchovies don't seem to want to mix work affairs with domestic affairs, but there is always a gap where these things cannot be separated. Another example is when there are obstacles in sorting.

Often women who sort anchovies are faced with external obstacles such as weather and time. If it rains, the anchovies cannot be sorted, they have to wait until a hot day to dry the fish in the refrigerator. It's different if when it has been dried in the sun, but it rains halfway through, and the fish is still half wet, the alternative that the woman sorting the anchovies usually does is to take the sekpo anchovies home to fan them so they dry and continue sorting at home. Likewise, if the amount of sorting is abundant but cannot be finished until the afternoon, then the anchovies will also be brought home.

3.8. Sipping

Sipping is a local term that is often heard during the interview process in the dock. Shipping is a side income in the form of shrimp, squid, cuttlefish and fish that are not sold. This shipment will be sorted separately from the anchovies and then resold by the sorter if the produce is large or taken home to be cooked. Women who sort anchovies consider shipping to be an important thing in sorting, because it can cover the needs for one meal, or if there is a lot, it can provide additional income. Anchovies that have been sorted are also often bagged by sorters to take home and cook.

4. Conclusion

Abundant biodiversity provides opportunities for productive work sectors among the community because the fleet of ships and fishing gear of one fish is different from other fish. One of the abundant marine products in the city of Tanjungbalai is anchovies, anchovies Tanjungbalai city then known widely as "ikan teri medan". The production process of anchovy fishing covers various activities from upstream to downstream, from sea to land. In this city, fishing activities, or work as a fisherman is a masculine job, there are no women who work as fishermen. But there are interesting things in the production process of anchovies, where there is one of the anchovy production process that is only done by women, sorting fish. This research aims to describe how the activities carried out by women anchovy sorters have an impact on socio-economic aspects and become the driving force of the economy of the Teluk Nibung Subdistrict, Tanjungbalai City, North Sumatra.

Anchovy production process has formed a productive work cycle that is able to have a positive impact on the economic conditions of the community, especially women. Most of the anchovy sorter women are the wives of the fishermen themselves. This is based on the working system of anchovy production where the wife or woman gets

a different part of the results of the fish itself. In this case, basically, the fisherman's wife does business directly with her husband. The money earned by the wife from the process of sorting fish is the result of the wife's hard work and cannot be sued by family affairs. In general, women fish sorters use the money for personal or domestic family affairs. On the other hand, there are also those who then form social gatherings from the salary of sorting anchovies so that the money earned is multiplied. In the process, the anchovy sorter women almost every day spend time together and communicate with each other while working, where to sort the fish and then turn into a place to share information, because usually fishermen will send their catch every morning to fishermen who will return to the mainland. This results in all anchovy sorter women will be connected and form a strong relationship among themselves. In the end, it is important to re-translate gender relations from work that is masculine but does not deny the existence of privilege for women from the anchovy production process in Tanjungbalai city.

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Declaration of Conflict Interest/Deklarasi Kepentingan yang Bertentangan

The Authors declares that there is no conflict of interest regarding the publication of this article

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