



## MATRIARCHY: DISTORTION OF THE CONCEPT OF EMANCIPATION IN THE HOUSEHOLD AND ITS IMPACT ON SOCIAL WELFARE

Rika Githamala Ginting<sup>1</sup>, Cici Indah Rizki<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1,2</sup>Politeknik Negeri Medan, Indonesia

\*Corresponding Author: [rikagithamala@polmed.ac.id](mailto:rikagithamala@polmed.ac.id)

### Article Info

#### Article history:

Received : 21 April 2025

Acceptance : 16 June 2025

Published : 08 July 2025

E-ISSN: 2541-5263

P-ISSN: 1411-4380



This is an open access article under the [CC BY-SA](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/4.0/) license

### ABSTRACT

*Emancipation is often associated with the feminist movement to fight for women's rights and rejection of discrimination. Enforcement of emancipation is marked by the movement of women to erode patriarchy. Over time, the concept of emancipation underwent a shift in meaning, giving birth to a radical new understanding. This understanding is matriarchy, namely the extreme domination of women and the desire of women's groups to dominate other people in terms of thoughts, ideas, and even the life processes of other groups so that they accept their ideas. What's worse is that this matriarchal understanding is absorbed and applied in households which is very contrary to Islamic provisions. The analytical method used is descriptive qualitative analysis with a conceptual approach and a case approach. The results of the study indicate that there is a distortion regarding the concept of emancipation in the household, which creates matriarchy. The concept of matriarchy itself is not in line with Islamic teachings. The condition of matriarchy affects social welfare if in a family this understanding continues in the long term. As a result, there will be disputes that end in divorce so that social welfare cannot be felt in the family. The solution to overcoming this matriarchy is to understand each other's nature, and carry out the rights and obligations that have been ordained by God as well as possible.*

**Keywords:** matriarchy, distortion, emancipation, social welfare.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

When discussing emancipation, this is inextricably linked to patriarchy and the history of feminism. It's no surprise that the history of world civilization demonstrates that the Western world once embraced a strong patriarchal system, where women faced discrimination by society. This can be seen in the views of ancient Greek and Roman philosophers, who explicitly stated the weakness of women. The renowned philosopher Aristotle stated, "For woman, she is a

deformed man, and her fluid is sperm, but not pure. Only one thing she lacks is the principle of the soul." Another philosopher, Francis Bacon, stated, "He who has a wife and children has made his fortune a hostage. A wife and children are obstacles to bold endeavors, whether virtuous or wicked. Certainly, the best work, and the best public service, comes from unmarried or childless men, who are truly affectionately and meaningfully married to the public."

This philosopher's statement was highly influential at the time. This doctrine permeated societal thinking, believing that women do not deserve a place alongside men. However, over time, this doctrine began to be challenged by those who began to advocate for justice for women. This gave birth to a movement called feminism, and this became a turning point for women worldwide. It began in 1789, during the French Revolution, and to this day, this movement continues to advocate for equality and emancipation.

Over time, no longer confined to the Western hemisphere, feminism has continued to develop and expand to various countries around the world. Radical feminism continues to guide its followers' thinking toward achieving equality and eliminating patriarchal culture. This is the root of the emergence of a matriarchal culture in society, where women dominate leadership within society. Domination refers to a situation where one person or group seeks to control others in terms of thoughts, ideas, and even the life processes of another group, so that they accept the dominant group's ideas. This means that women appear in the public arena as leaders within the community.

It is a positive thing if there is equal rights between men and women in leadership. In Islam, men and women also have equal status before Allah SWT. This is based on His words as stated in the Qur'an, which means the following: "Indeed, Muslim men and women, believer men and women, men and women who persist in their obedience, men and women who are righteous, men and women who are patient, men and women who are humble, men and women who give alms, men and women who fast, men and women who maintain their honor, men and women who are numerous mention (the name of) Allah, Allah has provided for them forgiveness and a great reward." (Q.S. Al-A'raf: 33/35).

Another verse explains the following: "And (remember) when your Lord said to the angels, 'I intend to appoint a caliph on earth.' They said, 'Will You place therein one who will cause corruption and shed blood, while we glorify Your praise and sanctify Your name?' He said, 'Indeed, I know what you do not know.'" (Quran 2:230). This verse states that humans, meaning both men and women, were created by Allah as caliphs or leaders on earth. There is no difference in the nature of human creation. Therefore, Islam upholds the value of equality in general. However, what has been highlighted is that this matriarchy has become a distortion of understanding within society. The push for gender equality and emancipation seems to provide space for matriarchal understanding to be implemented in society at large, even within the household.

Islamic teachings themselves regulate the procedures for building a household. As in the following verse: "Men (husbands) are protectors of women (wives), because Allah has preferred some of them (men) over others (women), and because they (men) have provided support from their wealth. So pious women are those who are obedient (to Allah) and take care of themselves when (their husbands) are not around, because Allah has taken care of (them). Those women whom you are worried about nusyuz, you should give advice to them, leave them in bed (separate beds), and (if necessary) beat them. But if they obey you, then do not look for reasons to trouble them. (Q.S. An-Nisa':4/34).

M. Quraish Shihab interprets the above verse as meaning that men are leaders of women in the context of family leadership. This means that, in the context of individual leadership, both men and women have equal rights. If matriarchy is implemented in the household, this is certainly contrary to Islamic law. This has an impact on household welfare and will impact social welfare. Therefore, to address this issue, the author conducted a study entitled

## **2. RESEARCH METHOD**

This research is a qualitative descriptive study with the aim of accurately describing the existing facts. The fact in this study is the concept of matriarchy that is absorbed and applied by society in all aspects. This is a normative legal research, namely an approach to problems by examining and reviewing regulations to be used as a basis for problem-solving. The regulations used as references for problem-solving are Islamic law sourced from the text. This research uses a conceptual approach that will be carried out by understanding the concepts of the problem being studied, namely the concepts of emancipation and matriarchy. Then the author uses a case approach, where in this study the author will examine cases of matriarchy that occur in society. The data collection technique in this study is through literature review. In this case, the author uses books on Islamic law studies, legislation, and other literature that supports data collection in this study.

## **3. RESULT AND ANALYSIS**

Matriarchy is a social classification system in which the mother holds the authority over the entire family. This means that the family structure is headed by the mother, and all aspects of power are in the hands of women. The value system of matriarchal culture aligns with the natural passive submission of mothers to their role, as well as their central role. Matriarchalism in the household can occur due to various factors, namely:

First, the wife's income is higher, because the husband does not have a permanent and decent job, making his income insufficient to meet daily household needs;

1. The wife's job is more worthy (has a higher rank/position), because the husband has minimal education, making it difficult to find work;
2. The wife's privilege is superior, such as a wife with more achievements or a wife from a prominent family;
3. The husband's indecisiveness and indiscretion in caring for his wife, such as a man being too soft or lazy, resulting in his wife taking over his responsibilities.

Matriarchal culture is a distortion of the concept of emancipation. Linguistically, distortion is a deviation or inversion. This means that society has erred in its understanding of the concept of emancipation. Emancipation itself is the equality or equal rights between men and women. This equality has been misinterpreted by radical feminist groups, who view matriarchy as a loophole to dominate and intimidate men under the guise of emancipation. Both matriarchy and patriarchy are doctrines of social domination that divide and classify society into social hierarchies, with one dominant party and the other subordinate.

Emancipation within the household is distinct from emancipation in general. While emancipation within society encompasses equal rights to justice and freedom of expression and opinion, emancipation within the household differentiates between the rights and obligations of husband and wife. When people are married, their rights and obligations differ and cannot be equated with human rights in general.

Social welfare is the condition where citizens' material, spiritual, and social needs are met so they can live decently and develop themselves, thus fulfilling their social functions. Currently, the practice of matriarchy is commonplace in society, yet society itself fails to distinguish between emancipation and matriarchy. Furthermore, this matriarchal doctrine has even infiltrated the realm of marriage. This undoubtedly impacts family harmony and integrity. This distortion impacts social welfare, as the husband and wife cannot fulfill their social functions properly. The family is the smallest unit of society consisting of the head of the family and several other people who gather and live somewhere under one roof in a state of interdependence. In other terms, a family is a group of people related by blood or marriage, and is formed through marriage. The beginning of the formation of a new family is marked by a man and a woman marrying and building a household. How the household runs determines the direction the family will become and its impact on human survival.

In building a household, both husband and wife have their respective rights and obligations. Rights and obligations are distinct but interrelated terms. A right is something that must be accepted, while an obligation is something that must be fulfilled and carried out properly. As stated in the following verse: "And they (women) have rights equal to their obligations in a suitable manner. But husbands have an advantage over them. Allah is All-Mighty, All-Wise." (Quran 2:228) If these

rights and obligations in the household are well understood and carried out appropriately, there will be no domination within the household.

Islam has detailed regulations regarding the equitable division of duties and roles between husband and wife. Although the husband is obligated to provide for his wife and children, Islamic family law does not prohibit a wife from assisting her husband in earning a living with his consent and without interfering with her duties as a housewife. Women who earn an income are considered to be economically independent and can even support the family's needs.

One form of domination in the household is matriarchy. In the realities of society, matriarchy exists due to issues of gender equality and emancipation. Emancipation, in essence, does not equate all aspects of men and women. Rather, the essence of emancipation in Islam is to restore women's dignity to their natural state: as children, wives, and mothers who must serve as followers of the family, and as members of society with equal rights as men. However, the term has been incorporated into society with different meanings, resulting in a distortion of the meaning of emancipation, leading to misconceptions.

Matriarchy implies female dominance in leadership, and this also occurs in the household. This dominance manifests in several forms, such as breadwinning, decision-making, and household leadership. This clearly contradicts Islamic law, which requires women to obey their husbands within the bounds of Islamic law. However, HAMKA emphasized that this does not mean women are expected to undertake tasks that only men can handle. Islam explains that although both have equal rights and responsibilities, work must still be divided.

In society, there are factors that contribute to women's dominance in household leadership. One example is the husband's low income, which makes women responsible for meeting their family's economic needs, even becoming the primary breadwinner. By becoming the primary breadwinner, women feel superior to their husbands. As a result, a dominant nature emerges in wives, as women are created to survive in various circumstances. This, coupled with a misconception of emancipation, ultimately leads wives to take over their husbands' breadwinning responsibilities because their husbands are unable to be responsible leaders of the family.

In essence, there are various forms of domination practiced by wives over their husbands. The following are the various forms of domination that occur in society:

1. When the wife is dominant, she purchases goods and equipment without her husband's permission. Conversely, if the husband wants to buy something, he must first ask his wife for permission;
2. When the family's finances exceed the wife's income, the wife assumes full financial management. She believes that family finances must be firmly controlled because the majority of the income comes from the wife;
3. For every family activity, such as going out on holidays or traveling out of town, the wife is the one who plans the activities and schedules them. Once the wife

has set the schedule, the husband usually just follows it and takes care of whatever she asks for.

4. When it comes to children's education, the wife also plays a full role in determining where the children will go to school. The husband usually agrees with his wife's suggestions regarding where their children will go to school.

In their daily lives, when the wife is working and the husband is not, the wife asks her husband to help with housework, such as sweeping, washing dishes, or driving her to and from school.

Based on the above description, it is clear that there are both positive and negative impacts of female dominance. On the positive side, women can help supplement the family income. On the negative side, wives exert more power and intimidate their husbands within the household. Clearly, more harm will result if this matriarchy persists in family life.

As is well known, female leadership in the household is contrary to Islamic law. There are certainly negative effects if matriarchy persists long-term in a household. First, if a wife disobeys her husband, she is considered disobedient and must be counseled for the good of the household. Second, matriarchy significantly impacts the husband's rights and obligations. A husband accustomed to being led by his wife can become irresponsible, a habit that is difficult to change. Third, it also harms the husband's dignity as head of the household, as he lacks the wisdom and firmness to educate his wife. And fourth, matriarchy can impact a family's social well-being. Many divorces occur because the wife dominates the household. This divorce results in many children being affected. Children lack parental affection, and many are also affected by social problems such as poverty, neglect, exploitation, and discrimination. This impacts social welfare in Indonesia.

In social welfare theory, there are seven characteristics of social welfare: 1) the need for economic stability; 2) the need for decent work; 3) the need for a stable family; 4) the need for health insurance; 5) the need for educational security; 6) the need for opportunities in society; and 7) the need for cultural or recreational opportunities. In households where one-sided domination exists, all family members will not be able to fully experience the characteristics of social welfare. Husbands, wives, and children will all experience the negative impacts of this dominant behavior.

It is important to understand that changing established social habits, including matriarchal behavior, is difficult. However, this does not mean there are no solutions to address the problem. To eradicate matriarchal beliefs, both men and women must understand their rights and obligations within the household and within society. Next, it's necessary to correct the distorted understanding of emancipation. Furthermore, men must have a greater sense of responsibility so that women can become the wives they deserve, obedient to their husbands.

Conversely, women must cultivate respect and be aware of their natural selves as children, wives, mothers, and members of society.

Thus, it's important to understand that the goal of humankind isn't any hierarchy, whether matriarchal or patriarchal. Humans must enter into a situation where both sexes relate to each other without attempts to dominate one another. Only in this way can men and women develop their true differences—their true polarity. Therefore, continuity between husband and wife is essential to fostering a household that supports social well-being, because human well-being begins with the family.

#### 4. CONCLUSION

Human society is a combination of male activity and female passivity. A safe and peaceful household is a combination of male strength and female refinement. Men seek and women govern. No household can exist if only male will or female refinement prevail. Naturally, both complement each other without the need for dominance of either matriarchy or patriarchy. If matriarchal beliefs are maintained within the family, it will lead to intra-family conflict. The family, as the smallest unit in society, should be the first place for humans to learn to understand social life. However, if a family is not harmonious, its social function will be hampered, and this will become a factor in the family's prosperity. Furthermore, if matriarchalism continues to flourish in society, more and more families will experience poverty. The solution to overcoming this matriarchal system is to understand the true nature of each individual and to fulfill the rights and obligations ordained by God to the best of our ability. A civil society can be realized starting with a family fulfilling its social function. On the other hand, if the social functions in the family are not carried out, this will have a negative impact on social welfare and as a result, a civil society will not be realized.

#### References

- Ali, Zainuddin. *Metode Penelitian Hukum*. Cet. ke-19. Jakarta: Sinar Grafika, 2019.
- Amiruddin. H. Zainal. *Pengantar Metode Penelitian Hukum*. Jakarta: Raja Grafindo Persada, 2004.
- Arivia, Gadis. *Filsafat Berperspektif Feminis*. Jakarta: Yayasan Jurnal Perempuan, 2003.
- Armia. *Fikih Munakahat*. Cet. ke-3. Medan: Manhaji, 2018.
- Artih, Resi Ebbi Dwi. Nora Susilawati. *Dominasi Perempuan Sebagai Pencari Nafkah Utama dalam Keluarga Buruh Tani (Studi Kasus di Desa Batu Hampar Kecamatan Kayu Aro Barat Kabupaten Kerinci)*. *Jurnal Perspektif: Jurnal Kajian Sosiologi dan Pendidikan*. Vol. 2 No. 4. 2019.
- Departemen Pendidikan Nasional. *Kamus Bahasa Indonesia*. Jakarta: Pusat Bahasa, 2008.

- Dubu, Rema Vara Indri. dkk. Orientasi Dominasi Sosial dengan Kekerasan dalam Pacaran pada Remaja. *Journal of Health and Behavioural Science*. Vol. 2 No. 2. Juni 2020.
- Fromm, Erich Cinta, Seksualitas, dan Matriarki: Kajian Komprehensif Tentang Gender. Yogyakarta: Jalasutra, 2007.
- HAMKA. Buya Hamka Berbicara Tentang Perempuan. Depok: Gema Insani, 2015.
- Kementerian Agama RI, Al-Qur'an dan Terjemahannya. Bandung: PT Sygma Examedia Arkanleema, 2019.
- Kharisma, Sechan Rafayan. Oki Achmad Ismail. Counter Hegemoni Matriarki dalam Keluarga Ras Kulit Hitam. *Medialog: Jurnal Ilmu Komunikasi*. Vol. V No. 1. Februari 2022.
- Muhaimin. Metode Penelitian Hukum. Mataram: Mataram University Press, 2020.
- Noviana, Lia. Salma Dewi Faradhila. Problematika Dominasi Istri Sebagai Pencari Nafkah (Studi Kasus di Desa Joresan Kec. Mlarak Kab. Ponorogo). *E-Journal Al-Syakhsiyyah : Journal of Law & Family Studies*. Vol. 2 No. 1. Juni 2020.
- Shihab, M. Quraish. Tafsir Al-Mishbah: Pesan Kesan dan Keserasian Al-Qur'an. Vol. 2. Jakarta: Lentera Hati, 2003.
- Simanjuntak, Bungaran Anton. Strategi Dominasi dan Keutuhan Negara Bangsa yang Pluralistik. *Jurnal Antropologi Sosial Budaya ETNOVISI*. Vol. 1 No. 2. Oktober 2005.
- Simanjuntak, P.N.H. Hukum Perdata Indonesia. Cet . ke-5. Jakarta: Prenadamedia Group, 2019.
- Suharso. Ana Retnoningsih. Kamus Besar Bahasa Indonesia Edisi Lux. Semarang: Widya Karya, 2020.
- Undang-undang No. 11 Tahun 2009 tentang Kesejahteraan Sosial.