

58453

Working Paper Series No. 74

WOMEN'S WORK AND MARRIAGE

Ines Smyth
January 1990



Table of Contents

	Introduction	1
Part I	The Village of Rankulan	4
Part II	Women's Work	6
Part III	Women and Marriage in Rankulan	10
Part IV	Relations between Work and Marriage	15
	Bibliography	19

Women's Work and Marriage

And marriage among us - miserable is too feeble an expression for it. How could it be otherwise, where the laws have made everything for the man and nothing for the woman? when Law and convention both are for the man, when everything is allowed to him (Raden Adjeng Kartini 1921).

Introduction

In this paper I wish to explore the ways in which marriage affects women's work, in the context of West Java (Indonesia)¹. I recognise that the structure of the labour market in Java is determined by forces operating outside both the household and the village. Nonetheless, I believe marriage to be one of the main mechanisms which cause women to be concentrated in low paid, household based activities, and which also determine the benefits they derive from them.

I also wish to show that, in addition to the role it plays in differentiating women's work from that of men, marriage is an important dividing line among women themselves, as important as that represented by class and ethnic affiliation. This is because marriage for women is perceived as the initial step towards adulthood, and because it brings changes to their behaviour and social position.

My point of departure is Beneria's statement that women's role in production is conditioned by that in reproduction (1978). Her concept of reproduction includes both the bearing of and caring for children, and the perpetuation of all aspects of the social system. In her view, men's desire to control women's reproductive activities (in order to control the transmission of wealth to their heirs)

¹ Broader questions concerning the place marriage occupies in the overall gender system are touched on when appropriate, but not discussed in detail, since here the issue at stake is the influence marriage practices and beliefs have on women's work.

conditions the latter's participation in production by making the household the focal point of their work and restricting their mobility outside it. Thus for Beneria the constraints on women's productive activities are a direct consequence of the controls men exercise over their reproductive capacities, the latter understood, in this context, in the narrower of the two senses.

Beneria's views give important insights in the determinants of women's work, but also suffers from certain problems. Her main conclusion, that women's productive activities are conditioned by their tasks in physical reproduction comes too close to supporting a biological explanation of the processes under observation. Furthermore, the emphasis on men's attempts at controlling reproduction may easily appear to signify support for a "male conspiracy" theory position.

The present approach tries to overcome both problems since, by focusing on marriage as a social institution as well as a contractual relation between the two partners, it takes into consideration a much broader set of norms, relations and practices, than those pertaining to biological reproduction. Furthermore, it interprets the relevance of reproduction in a more 'positive' light, in the sense that in this particular context the activities embraced by the term (childbearing, childcaring and housekeeping) are highly valued, as well as being considered women's main responsibility and their highest aspiration. In the geographical area of this study, it is within marriage that women become fully responsible for such activities. Thus the views about marriage and the practices surrounding it are among the main factors which inform and limit women's capacity to generate earnings through direct production.

As the quote in the title and much of the contents of this papers shows, the recognition of the positive value attributed to women's reproductive activities goes hand in hand with the realisation that this can coexist with severe gender differences and inequalities.

It is necessary to state this explicitly because of the tendency, in some of the literature, to portray Indonesian women as enjoying considerable individual freedom and social respect as a direct consequence of their active participation in production. This enthusiasm is to be found in older (Subandrio 1952; Takdir Alisjabana 1966), as well as in very recent documents (Papanek and Schwede

1988). The latter work is of particular interest because it concerns specifically Indonesian women's economic roles and opportunities. The paper contains important statements on the relation between those and structural and demographic conditions. However, its exaggerated optimism of the economic strategies open to women result from the fact that, despite passing remarks about the diversity between various ethnic groups, findings concerning Javanese women are applied to all the women in the country. "Indonesian" women are treated as an identifiable, homogeneous category and the wide variations in legislation, religious beliefs and social norms, as well as in social and ecological, geographical and economic backgrounds, are underplayed.

In fact, the need to disaggregate the category of women is never as imperative as in the case of Indonesia, where the population is distributed in 992 islands, belongs to 300 ethnic groups, speaks 250 languages and practices several religions in addition to the dominant Islam (Milone 1978:2).

This does not mean that, compared to those living in some of the other Asian countries, certain categories of women in Indonesia do not enjoy access to a broader range of economic activities and a higher degree of decision making power in the household. To be compared favourably with women in other countries, however, does not eliminate the fact that in their country women do not enjoy the same opportunities as men, and that easier access to paid and unpaid work outside the home actually results in a considerable work burden, for which there is often little remuneration and poor social recognition.

By studying the relation between work and marriage among the women of a particular ethnic group (the Sundanese), it is hoped to emphasise the need for a much more specific approach to these issues.

The paper is organised in the following manner. In part I, I will give a description of the village which represents the site of the research. In part II, I will outline the main features of women's work, while in Part III, I will provide information on marriage practices. The final part contains a summary of the central ideas of this paper.

PART I - The Village of Rankulan

Rankulan is situated at about 10 km from Tasikmalaya, a medium size town in South-Western Java. It occupies a discrete position, nestling between hills, wet rice fields (sawah) and fish ponds. The population is 620 people, forming 150 households. The households are grouped in three Rukun Tetangga (Neighbours Associations) of roughly equal size: Rankulan West, Middle and East.

Houses are of a great variety of age and type. Brick and stone constructions stand side by side with houses with bamboo walls (bilik). As in most parts of Java, the population is Moslem, though with varying degrees of devotion and of observance. The Mosque and the religious school (Madrasah) are the largest religious buildings, with two smaller prayer houses, also serving the needs of the population.

In the village there are no facilities for secular education and children walk the short distance (1 km) to the Primary School (Sekolah Dasar) in nearby settlements, or travel further to attend higher educational institutions in Tasikmalaya. As in the case of education, health facilities are only available outside the village. The most accessible is the PUSKESMAS (Pusat Kesehatan Masyarakat=Community Health Centre) at about 4 km along the main road. Most people choose to be looked after by the local health practitioners: a masseur, a traditional midwife and a circumcision expert. A number of the more affluent people are able to pay regular visits to private doctors in Tasikmalaya, or to the two town hospitals.

Land in Rankulan is either bought or inherited, offspring receiving it from both parents in equal parts regardless of sex. However, some practices do result in daughters and sons having unequal access to their parents' land. Rice land (sawah) is considered the most important possession. Among the households included in a survey of a sample of the population, 33% had no rice land and of the rest, 10% owned 62% of the total rice land. Other types of land are more unequally distributed: 80% of the households own no garden land (kebon) and 57% own no forest (hutan). Despite the more even distribution, ownership of sawah is characterised by the very small size of holdings, the average being 0.15 ha. Land ownership and distribution are at the roots of the social stratification

dominant in the village; this stratification, as mentioned at the beginning of this paper, is responsible for a first level of differentiation in the employment accessible to village women, a second and third being respectively that of gender and marital status, on which this paper concentrates.

Because of the features of land ownership, only in a few cases land provides a noticeable contribution to subsistence. This means that most people have to seek paid work²; some earnings are available from agriculture, and men and women work on land owned by others. All agricultural work is gender specific: men are responsible for the preparation of the soil and women for planting, weeding and harvesting. It is important to note that in many parts of Java the introduction of HYV of rice combined with new harvesting practices, have led to a loss of agricultural employment, specially for women (Collier 1981; Stoler 1977, Murai 1980). This is true for Rankulan, but at the same time the majority of women here are still responsible for traditionally female jobs, including harvesting.

Given the uneven distribution of land, and the decline in agricultural employment, the majority of people in Rankulan has had to find sources of income additional to agriculture or entirely outside it. The same has happened in other parts of Java (Collier 1981; Husken 1979; White 1976). The participation of individuals in various activities is regulated by many factors: by the material resources they own (especially land); by the opportunities offered by the local economy; by their individual characteristics in terms of education and skills and, finally, by the social norms which allocate men and women to different and unequal productive areas. It is to this latter question that I turn in the next section of the paper.

2

Type of employment, both in agriculture and outside is influenced by the social position of the household to which the individual (woman or man) belongs, via mechanisms such as access to higher education and training, to useful contacts and to cash for investment or the kinds of payments often necessary to obtain jobs.

PART II - Women's Work

As in all parts of rural Java, men, women and children of both sexes contribute to the household economy through their work. Most jobs in Rankulan are sex specific: women carpenters are unheard of and a domestic worker (pembantu) is always female. This does not preclude completely the participation in a given activity of other members of the household, not necessarily of the same sex. But, despite a degree of flexibility, in paid work women and men are segregated in separate productive areas. The main occupations of women in the sample can be grouped in the way shown below.

Table 1 - Married Women's Occupations

Main Occupation	Number of Women
Housewife	29
Labourer	15
Farmer	12
Handicraft worker	12
Teacher	1
Midwife	1
Trader	1
Total	71

Source: Household Survey 1982.

Of the 71 adult women of the sample, only one is a waged worker, employed as a teacher in a nearby school. The 15 labourers are all agricultural workers, most of whom receive wages for planting and weeding and are paid in kind for harvesting. Among the others, the craft workers and the farmers receive no individual payment when they are engaged in work in (own) household-based activities. In such situations it is difficult to have a measure of their remuneration, since individual and collective needs are satisfied from the income the household as a unit draws from such an occupation, as it is common in similar situations in other countries (Whitehead 1981:91). Here it can be stated that very few married women in the village are engaged in waged work. Furthermore, average earnings from all the occupations listed above are very low.

For unmarried women the situation is different. Those who work are mainly

concentrated in basket making (anyaman), and waged work in nearby factories³. The latter deserve particular attention as employment of young females in industrial waged work is a prominent feature of the new international division of labour.

A good deal of research has been dedicated recently to the developments of the global economy and their effects on the gender division of labour worldwide. For South East Asia it is reported that 40% of the industrial work force is female (Eisold 1984). Research on the Indonesian case is still limited, but it confirms that young women are cheaper to employ than male workers (Mather 1983:8).

In the vicinity of Rankulan there are various small and medium-sized factories, the largest of which employs about 700 people. The physical proximity of the factories to the villages and the presence of friends and even relatives as workers in the former, makes this a form of employment which is socially acceptable for local young women. The number of female workers from Rankulan varies from 8 to 15 at any given time. According to the girls I interviewed, their pay varied from an initial Rp 1300/1500⁴ per week, to about Rp 3000 after a couple of years. Few of the girls remain long enough to see much increase in their initial pay or to gain more responsible jobs through seniority. The reasons given for the very high turnover are many. Many girls said that at some point they are needed at home. Others that they become tired of working long hours for such little money. Marriage is also a frequent reason for leaving factory jobs.

In general, when compared to those of men, women's jobs result to be much less diversified, as clear from the following table.

³ These young women are mostly from the poorer, often landless, households. For many of the others, the opportunities to attend higher educational institutions are increasing, though they still remain less than those open to their male counterparts.

⁴ It may be relevant to note that at the time the price of 1 kg of rice averaged around Rp 250.

Table 2 - Married Men's Main Occupations (a)

Main occupation	Number of Men
Farmer	14
Labourer	24
Trader	9
Handicrafts worker	10
Office Worker	3
Army	1
Taylor	1
Animal breeder	2
Builder	7
Driver	1
Pensioner	3
Total	73

Source: Household Survey 1982.

Note:(a) This includes migrant workers.

This reveals that women's work is less diversified than men's, with six paid occupations for the former and eleven for latter. In this, the situation seems different from that found by Stoler, who states that "...men...have a smaller set of viable alternatives to agricultural labour" (1977:88). This situation also reflects the geographical limitation of female occupations. Fewer women than men are employed in places other than their own village or its immediate vicinities. Men of all ages travel daily to their places of work or migrate for varying periods of time to other cities and even other islands. Women do not have this option and female migration from Rankulan is generally family migration.

Still compared to men, on average women earn less. Women's jobs are paid on average Rp 11.721 per month, men's Rp 38.603. Moreover, unlike those of men, many of the income earnings activities open to women are related to the tasks they perform in the home: the processing and sale of food, paid housework etc. Undoubtedly such tasks require abilities which have been learned in the course of many years. Nevertheless women's involvement in them easily precludes the possibility of acquiring additional skills, useful in obtaining employment in different sectors of the economy. Moreover, we know that such skills are often attributed to natural inclination and have little social recognition (Elson and Pearson 1981:150).

Among the activities carried out alongside or instead of agricultural ones, the

most common in Rankulan is the weaving and sale of bamboo goods such as baskets, decorative vases, trays and lampshades. At the time of this research 30% of the households in the sample were involved in this sector. For this reason, such activity deserves special attention.

Although the entire region is an important center for handicrafts, this type of bamboo weaving is to be found exclusively in this village. It is carried out in household based units, which employ only family labour. Within such production units there is no formal division of labour and, although informants talked about the initial stage of the work (collecting, cutting, cleaning and sawing the bamboo) as men's work, once the producers is in possession of the basic raw materials, there is no fixed gender division of labour. The artisans (pengrajin) rarely produce goods of their own initiative to sell directly on the market. Normally, they receive orders from a local producer who also functions as intermediary (tengkulak) or from an outside trader (bandar). Design and quantities are always specified by the buyer and payment is on delivery.

Earnings from bamboo weaving are low. The literature on the subject testifies that incomes from non-agricultural rural activities, and especially handicrafts⁵, are normally poor and generally below wage rates for casual agricultural labourers (Stoler 1978; White 1976).

Although it is true, as mentioned, that there is no rigid division of labour in bamboo work, considerable differences exist in the way men and women are involved in this activity and in the benefits they derive from it. Women work longer hours than men and on a more regular basis, since they have more limited earning opportunities outside it. At the same time, their productivity tends to be lower, as they have to interrupt their work frequently to attend to their children or to the needs of the household members.

Qualitatively too, their position is different. At the beginning of the production process women depend on male relatives or neighbours for access to the bamboo because of their real or perceived inferior physical strength. This can mean a delay in starting an order and, consequently, in earning. They also suffer restrictions at the other end of the production process, i.e. in

⁵ Though this is not always true for the case of batik (Wieringa 1990: personal communication).

marketing. As will be described below, unmarried women are limited in their movements by dominant norms of conduct which dictate that they should remain within the confines of the village for most of the time. Older, married women, have more freedom but they are tied to the home by their responsibilities as mothers and housewives. For these reasons, local women sell their goods mostly to village based intermediaries or to traders with whom they have long term contacts. Because of this, they have little chance of seeking higher prices for their goods by selling in outside markets or trading via different intermediaries, strategies often adopted by male producers to increase earnings. As a consequence, their bamboo derived earnings tend to be lower than those of men.

Part III - Women and Marriage in Rankulan

In Rankulan, being married is considered the proper state for all adults. The feeling is very strong that individuals on their own cannot provide for themselves, hence that it is necessary to join forces with another through marriage.

Marriage usually respect village exogamy: incoming spouses are from nearby hamlets and districts, more rarely from further afield. This is a feature also to be found in the rest of rural West Java (Rusli 1978:56). First marriages are commonly arranged by parents, sometimes with the intervention of a close friend or kin as intermediary. Informants found it was unquestionable that one should follow the parents's guidance in the choice of a spouse, but acceptable that boys should have a say in the matter. For a girl, refusal of a proposed party would be seen as a gesture of disobedience, and as such to shame her parents. At the same time some young women do devise ways of escaping an unwanted union, especially when they can enlist the support of a female relative, for example by leaving for a while the parental home. Forms of resistance can continue even after marriage, and it is not unknown for marriages not to be consummated for lengthy periods, because of the refusal of the bride to share the marital bed.

When a marriage is not arranged by the family, it is usually the man who takes the initiative. He finds ways to frequent the girl's neighbourhood and befriend

her until the families are alerted and take over the practical arrangements. This is of course, provided that they have no objection to the choice of girl. Although a woman has ways of showing whether she welcome or not such attentions, the situations is fraught with risks for her, since the boy's courtship can attract gossips and drive the parents to arrange a speedier marriage than desired.

Early age at first marriage for women is common in Rankulan⁶. Among the adults who head the 77 sample households, the age at first marriage is available for 42 women and 41 men. Among the women the average age at first marriage is 16, among the men 25. These are distributed as follows:

Table 2 - Women's Age at First Marriage

Age	No of women	% of women
12-16	30	71.4
17-21	10	23.8
22-26	2	4.8
27	-	-
Total	42	100.0

Table 2A - Men's Age at First Marriage

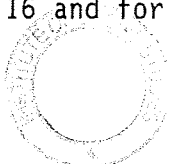
Age	No of men	% of men
12-16	3	7.3
17-21	19	46.3
22-26	14	34.2
27	5	12.2
Total	41	100.0

Source: Household Survey 1982

Thus most women (71.4%) have married between the ages of 12 and 16, most men (46.3%) between the ages of 17 and 21. Here I wish to look at the reasons why women in rural Java are encouraged to marry early, often below the minimum legal age⁷.

⁶ West Java has one of the highest percentages of women married under the age of 16 (the minimum legal age) in the country: 63.91%, compared to the national figure of 46.64% (BPS 1980).

⁷ The Marriage Law of 1974 (Ordinance n 1) sets the minimum age for women at 16 and for men at 19.



I do not believe that early age at marriage for women can be attributed to the fact that parents "...consider them an economic burden" (Zuidberg 1975:89). Girls are a considerable help from a very young age when they can share in the housework and release their mothers for other occupations. I believe the tendency to marry girls early is connected to the fact that for women marriage is perceived as starting the process which leads to adulthood⁸, hence it is desirable that it should accompany the early changes in her body, such as menarche or other visible signs (see also Koentjaraningrat 1967:67).

The process is completed with the birth of children, which often coincides with the time at which the woman, who at marriage tends to reside in the parental home, moves out with her family to set up a separate household. Marriage at an early age and under such conditions does not deprive parents entirely of the economic (in earnings or labour) contribution a daughter may make to the household, nor of all the responsibilities they have towards her, but at the same time it sets in motion the processes which will gradually lead to her social and economic emancipation from the family of origin.

Another characteristic of marriage here, as in most of West Java⁹, is the frequency of divorce and re-marriage. The survey showed that men and women divorce with similar frequency. While the first marriage is usually dissolved by mutual agreement, in general it is men who initiate divorces. In Rankulan there is no stigma attached to being a divorce woman (janda), but in Rankulan everybody views this as a temporary state, to be rectified by a prompt new marriage. It must also be remembered that although the law requires that an estranged husband provides for his children, this is rarely enforced. This means that divorced women are left to provide for themselves and their children. This, and other social pressures, make re-marriage a sensible option. In subsequent marriages, women have a freer choice of partner.

Polygamous marriages are not uncommon in Rankulan: six of the women in the sample are married to polygamous husbands. While the women in question declared themselves satisfied with the situation, many others did express considerable

⁸ For boys this starts at the time of circumcision.

⁹ In Indonesia as a whole, the Muslim population has a high divorce rate: 58% of all marriages.

fear of becoming a second wife (dimaduin), since a new, perhaps younger, wife could induce a man to distribute his wealth unfairly among the children from the different wives, both in his life time and in his inheritance.

I have said earlier that marriage in Rankulan is nearly universal. Despite this, it means different things for men and women. Firstly the practices described so far all encourage very early marriages for women, as already shown. The other difference refers to the specific tasks considered appropriate for husband and wife within marriage. All informants agree that husband and wife share the same obligation to provide the means to support each other and their dependents. The crucial difference lies in the fact that before and in addition to this duty, a married woman's responsibility is in the procreation of children, their care and the satisfaction of the immediate physical needs of all household members. The Panca Dharma Wanita (Five Duties of Women) is the Indonesian women's code of conduct (Wieringa 1989), it lays down women's responsibilities as: to be loyal and supportive partner to her husband; to manage the household; to procreate; to educate the future generation; and (lastly) to be a useful member of her community (Yamin 1988). Such a code is officially endorsed at different levels and it reflects, in contents and tone, the social importance attributed to women's reproductive activities.

Clearly, marriage for a woman is seen as both a crucial step in her personal development and the context in which her more fundamental social obligations are performed. Because of this, the period preceding marriage is considered one in which a girl must learn the skills she will need, and must act in a manner appropriate to her status. As Caplan (1985:37) remarks for another Muslim region, here too puberty is the period in which girls are most restricted, for the reasons just mentioned.

In Rankulan, young women seldom venture out after dark unless escorted, but in the daytime they move freely around. The manner of dress is simple but relaxed: only older and devout women cover their heads and liberties such as short sleeves and even shorts¹⁰ are permitted. Different rules apply outside the village, where girls movements are curtailed and controlled, the destination and

10

Shorts are only worn by (young) women for sports. Rankulan has two active volley-ball teams, one male and one female.

company they keep are vetted, dress must be decorous and behaviour guarded.

Two terms express the kind of behaviour young girls should display in public: being malu (shy, ashamed) and takut (afraid). Geertz (1961:111) sees these as states appropriate to all circumstances requiring respectful behaviour. I found however that the two terms varied when applied to men and women. Children of both sexes are taught to be ashamed of crying in public, for example. When older, however, the term is used almost exclusively for the behaviour expected of young women in the presence of strangers or superiors. For people in general, being takut can express a range of fears: fear of the volcano¹¹ or of being alone at night. In the case of women, however, it also seems to reflect their apprehension towards experiences outside their immediate sphere, from big cities to impending marriage.

I do not believe that the controls over girls' lives can be seen as being the tools of an Islamic patriarchy led by the local clergy (Mather 1983)¹². I believe such restrictions to be the consequence of the shared conviction of the importance of marriage to all women. Since a woman's skills and her good name are her greatest assets, the years just before marriage are dedicated to preparing her for her duties and to protect her reputation from gossips. This necessitates the imposition of controls to her behaviour and mobility, as described above.

If the ideas concerning marriage are important, so is the fact of marriage itself. Many changes take place after marriage. Women's public behaviour alters: quiet and demure girls are not transformed overnight, but with time married women's attitude in public becomes more expansive and relaxed. Furthermore, they

¹¹ Rankulan is situated at about Km 20 from an active volcano, Mt Galunggung, which erupted several times in 1982-83, with no loss of lives but with severe damages to crops and possessions.

¹² Nor to be aimed exclusively or explicitly at guarding her virginity. Pre-marital sexual relations are severely condemned, but girls are not secluded as is the case for other Muslim societies, and opportunities to interact privately with male friends within the village do exist. When illicit relations have had an outcome in pregnancy a hasty marriage usually follows. In some cases, this is followed by an even hastier divorce but, given the frequency of dissolved first marriages, this is not likely to cause much negative reaction.

are freer to move around both inside and outside the village.

After marriage residence is frequently uxorilocal. My survey revealed that among the 77 sample households, in 11 cases both partners were indigenous of Rankulan (asli), in two cases both were from outside, for the rest: 19 women and 34 men had come into the village to join their respective spouses. Residence patterns are one of the aspects of marriage which favour women and has direct relevance to the issues in question. While this pattern of residence means that women are still partially under the control of their parents, the support of the latter often compensate for this disadvantage. Such support may have many faces. Firstly the presence of kin and close friends offers the bride a degree of confidence during the first uncertain months after marriage and later it can continue to provide protection against possible neglect from the husband. In practical terms too, the woman can call on her family when in need, while shyness would prevent her from doing the same with her husband's kin.

PART IV - Relations between Work and Marriage

So far I have stated that it is clear from my research that people in Rankulan share the view that marriage is the moment at which women begin to grow into social adults. Furthermore, they believe that marriage should be women's highest goal and that within it they are destined to be above all housewives and mothers. The work of a housewife and mother is considered skilled and carrying serious social responsibilities. Because of this, women's early life should be largely in preparation for it. The way in which such views and practices affect female work opportunities is firstly through the impact which early marriage has on a woman's education and skills acquisition.

Though in Rankulan similar numbers of girls and boys enter primary school, later in the school career girls decrease in number very rapidly. The great majority of students attending institutions above the middle level are boys and the two students at University are also male.

Studies which examine fertility trends commonly state that "...marriage is delayed with higher education levels" (Smith 1979:18). Although it is statistically true that more years of school correspond to later marriages

(Hirscham n.d.:18), I believe that it is possible to reverse the terms of the question. It can be said that it is because women marry early that they have low qualification, rather than the other way around¹³. It is interesting to note that parents and daughters in Rankulan often express a dislike of having the latter "duduk di bangku sekolah" (sit at a school desk) with children, when obviously old enough to be married¹⁴.

Of course, there are other reasons, apart from early marriage, which cause girls to finish school very early despite the importance parents attribute to education. The most obvious reason is financial: school fees, the cost of uniforms and other equipment, transport fares to and from school and pocket money amount to expenditures which few households, especially among landless and land poor ones, can afford for several children. When a choice has to be made, daughters usually loose out, as it is assumed that their most valuable future skills can be learned within the home.

Another such reason is the scarce availability of schools in rural areas, combined with the parents' reluctance to allow daughters to leave the village unaccompanied. I believe that it is mainly because of these restrictions to their mobility and to their capacity to acquire adequate training that women's work opportunities are limited, and also that such restrictions can be attributed to marriage related practices, in the way outlined in this paper.

With marriage some of the restrictions suffered by women are gradually lifted, and they become freer to move around, to shop and visit friends and above all to find work. Statistics show that labour force participation rates of women increase with age, peaking for the 45-54 group (BPS 1982). In fact, Indonesia differs from other Asian countries for the high labour force participation of older women (Papanek and Schwede 1988:76).

As said earlier, after marriage women are permitted to work by the lessening of existing restrains. Moreover, they are also forced to work by circumstances which have arisen with marriage itself. In fact, although it is common for newly

¹³ For a discussion of this same point see Manderson (1974:89) and Sisworahardyo (1979:9).

¹⁴ See also Djuariah (1981:95).

married husbands to demand that their wives should give up work, this position is soon reversed to meet financial needs. Setting up a separate household, which in Rankulan takes place at the birth of the first or even second child, creates a powerful incentive for women to contribute to the family budget.

The frequency of divorces and the incidence of polygamy are also factors which contribute to encouraging women to be actively involved in paid work. It should be noted here that the instability of unions does not mean that the social and personal importance attributed to marriage is misplaced. Individual marriages may be short-lived, but the married state per se is still perceived as "natural" and advantageous, especially for women. Furthermore the role future marriage plays to limit girls' education and work opportunities, when viewed in the context of this instability, is not a sign of irrationality. It is rather the total outcome of different factors. One example has already been given, and concerns the difficulties families have in affording education for all their children in a situation of poverty and lack of rural infrastructures; this combines with the gender ideology which results in sons being given priority over daughters, since the latter are seen as destined to home responsibilities within marriage, which do not require formal qualifications.

As just said, marital status both encourages and facilitates women's entry into the labour market. At the same time it is the marital status itself which puts new obstacles in the path of women's productive activities. Rankulan informants unanimously declare that although husband and wife share the same responsibility to support the household through their labour, a woman's primary duty lies in the satisfaction of the physical and emotional care of its members.

While as a norm this applies to Rankulan women, the extent to which the presence of children and other dependents tie a specific individual to the home and prevents her from extending or improving her earning efforts, depends on a number of factors and varies from woman to woman. Firstly, household composition: women's ability to carry out activities outside the home is predicated on the presence of other household members to whom she is able to delegate her duties. In Rankulan, nuclear families are in the majority, and this may constitute a restriction to the type of work in which married women can engage.

Secondly, the number and age of children: even with help in the home, the presence of very young children may be an obstacle to protracted absences.

Lastly, the nature of the employment available. Work which is far away, and has fixed hours and formal organisation may be incompatible with women's perceived primary duties. However, when such work has a regular and relatively large salary, allowances are made and socially acceptable solutions are sought. In Rankulan there are several female teachers and office workers, all with children of different ages. The status and remuneration attached to their jobs, makes it acceptable to all that they should delegate to others their functions as housewives.

Despite their increased mobility, married women remain ill equipped for the labour market by their poor education and scarce work experience, in addition to their home ties. Thus their work opportunities are often limited to local, home-based activities which are mostly characterised by informal work organisation and flexible hours, but also by low remuneration. An example of this is bamboo weaving which, as described earlier, attracts many women on a more regular basis than men.

At the same time, although easier to combine with home duties, this work should not be seen as especially 'suited' to women or providing them with particularly high rewards. On the contrary, the combination of this activity and housework results in very long working days. Furthermore, as described in an earlier section, women's productivity and their earnings from bamboo work is lower than those of men, for reasons which are again linked to gender norms and gender relations.

To summarise, this paper has tried to show that many ideas and practices related to marriage have a direct and indirect influence on the way women participate in production. Marriage is the highest goal they are supposed to aspire to and for which they have to prepare themselves. This generally results in limitations to their education and to their mobility, both of which have consequences on the employment and earnings to which they have access. At the same time, marriage gives women a higher degree of personal freedom from which some advantages, as well as new problems, arise.

Bibliography

- Beneria L, 1978 'Reproduction, Production and the Sexual Division of Labour', ILO WEP, Geneva.
- Biro Pusat Statistik, 1982 Ulasan Singkat Hasil Sensus Penduduk 1980, Jakarta.
- Caplan P, 1985 Class and Gender in India: Women and their Organisation in a South Indian City Tavistock, London.
- Collier W L, 1981 'Agricultural Evolution in Java' in Hansen G Ed Agricultural and Rural Development in Java, Westview Special Studies in Social Political and Economic Development, Bolder.
- Djuaria M U, 1981 'Pengaruh Kerabat Terhadap Kawin Muda Masyarakat Sunda' Universitas Padjadjaran.
- Eisold E, 1984 'Young Women Workers in Export Industries: The Case of the Semiconductors Industry in South East Asia' ILO WEP, Geneva.
- Elson D and Pearson R, 1981 'The Subordination of Women and the Internationalisation of Capital' in Young K et al Eds.
- Geertz H, 1961 The Javanese Family The Free press of Glencoe.
- Hirschman C, n.d. Premarital Socio-economic Roles and the Timing of Family Formation: Comparative Study of Five Asian Societies Cornell University, Ithaca.
- Husken F, 1979 'Landlords, Sharecroppers and Agricultural Labourers: Changing Labour Relations in Rural Java' in Journal of Contemporary Asia vol 9 n 2.
- Kartini Raden Adjeng, 1921 Letters of a Javanese Princess Duckworth and Co, London.
- Koentjaraningrat, 1967 'A Village in South Central Java' in Koentjaraningrat Eds Villages in Java Cornell University Press, Ithaca.
- Manderson L (Eds), 1983 Women's Work and Women's Roles: Economics and Everyday Life in Indonesia, Malaysia and Singapore, ANU.
- Mather C, 1983 'Industrialisation in the Tanggerang Regency of West Java: Women Workers and the Islamic Patriarchy' in Bulletin of Concerned Asian Scholars vol 15 n 2.
- Murai Y, 1980 'The Bimas Programme and Agricultural Labour in Indonesia' in Developing Economies vol XVIII n 1.
- Papanek H and Schwede L, 1988 'Women are Good with Money: Earning and Managing in an Indonesian City' in Dwyer D and Bruce J Eds A Home Divided, Stanford University Press, Stanford California.

- Rusli S, 1978 Internal Rural Migration and Circulation in Indonesia: The Case of West Java MA Thesis, ANU.
- Sisworahardyo, 1979 'Social Welfare Strategies to Enhance Women's Roles in Socio-economic Development and Leadership in Rural Areas', mimeo.
- Smith P C, 1979 'Contrasting Marriage Patterns and Fertility in South East Asia: Indonesia and the Philippines Compared' East West Population Institute, Honolulu.
- Stoler A, 1977 'Rice Harvesting in Kali Loro: A Study of Class and Labour Relations in Rural Java' in American Ethnologist n 4.
- Stoler A, 1978 'Class Structure and Female Autonomy in Rural Java' in Signs vol 3 n 1.
- Subandrio H, 1952 'The Social Life of Women in Indonesia' in Islamic Review vol 40.
- Takdir Alisjahbana, 1966 'Indonesia: Social and Cultural Revolution' Oxford University Press, Kuala Lumpur.
- Whitehead A, 1981 'I am Hungry Mum: the Politics of Domestic Budgeting' in Young K et al Eds of Marriage and the Market CSE Books.
- Wieringa S, 1989 'Women as Mediators in Two Indonesian Mass Organisations' revised paper for the International Workshop on Indonesian Studies n 3 'Women as Mediators in Indonesia', September, Leiden.
- Yamin N, 1988 'Indonesian Women as Mediators' paper for the International Workshop on Indonesian Studies n 3 'Women as Mediators in Indonesia', September, Leiden.
- Zuidberg L C, 1975 'Marriage, Fertility and Family Planning: The Serpong Project' University of Indonesia and State University of Leiden.