Reasons for Differences in Educational Attainment and Employment Participation of Bidayuh Men and Women

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ABSTRACT

This article reports on reasons for differences in educational attainment and employment participation of Bidayuh men and women in the State of Sarawak, Malaysia. Data were gathered through in-depth interviews with eight selected respondents who were knowledgeable about Bidayuh community. The purpose was to find explanation for the differences between Bidayuh men’s and women’s educational attainment and employment participation. Qualitative data analysis was used for this study. Analysis shows that there are two reasons for Bidayuh women lag behind men in educational attainment. The reasons are cultural influence and historical background that Bidayuh women is said to have been long neglected in many aspects of educational opportunities. Reasons for the differences in employment participation between Bidayuh men and women are traditional gender division of labor, employer’s bias on gender, and the lack of education, skills and training among women.

INTRODUCTION

Studies by Stivens (1992), Maimunah (1992; 1993), Walby (1996), Frable (1997), and Aminah (1998) have indicated that, gender inequalities have often been manifested by the visible forms of differentiation in terms of economic, political and social position relative to men; remuneration to various productive and reproductive activities; opportunities and access to resources; and the differential impact of various development programs on gender division of labor. Studies from various parts of the world have also shown that the correlation between women’s status and the level and quality of development at national and international level is found to be reciprocal in which men and women need each other (Raja Rohana, 1991; Braithwaite, 1996; Jahan & Alauddin, 1996). This also means that, the low status of women compared to men affects the overall quality of development and a correct and satisfying participation of women in development would enhance the status of women society. Limited definitions of development and inadequate measures of development may generate incorrect or deceptive conclusions about the level and quality of development and quality of women’s integration in development (Ahmed & Sampath, 1992; Hossain, 1993; Jahan & Alauddin, 1996). Thus, it is important to understand the process of development with some gender perspectives.

According to Todaro (1994), Jahan and Alauddin (1996), Inglehart, Baker and Wayne (2001), the process of development has three components: economic growth, development, and progress. Economic growth includes quantitative increase in wealth and per capita income whereas development requires improvement in quality of life of the entire nation. Progress on the other hand, implies discovery, creation, and incorporation of ideological values throughout a process in itself, which is unlimited in context. The processes of development produce pervasive social and cultural consequences, such as rising educational level, declining fertility rates, social mobilization, changing gender roles, and occupational differential
among individuals, regions, ethnic groups, and genders (Inglehart & Baker, 2001; Rashila, 2002; Johan & Francis, 2002).

In Malaysian case for example, the development process employed in the past 30 years successfully reduced the poverty levels from 16.5 percent in 1990 to 8.9 percent in 1995 (Malaysia, 1996) and furthermore to 5.0% in 2001 (Malaysia, 2001). However, the poverty level by gender still differed because women were still considered poorer than men. This scenario saw that the rapid pace of development in Malaysia has given different impacts between men and women in any position. Women have been left out of development far too long compared to men although they make up almost half of the population (Raja Rohana, 1991). The reasons why women tend to be left out of development are traditional gender division of labor, stereotypical views on women, religious attitude, having children, marital status, ethnic influences and/or perhaps prejudices, and pure discrimination (Jahan & Alauddin, 1996; Holter, 1997; Hutchings, 2000). Jahan and Aladdin (1996) specifically indicate that some cultures do discourage or even forbid women from working outside their homes. For example, women in Bangladesh and Africa had not been able to receive the same employment levels compared to men. It could also be the attitude of women themselves, because they feel that men should be the breadwinners and thus, command higher status than women. The presence of children too meant that the vast majority of women have to remain in their homes (Braithwaite, 1996). Against this background, it is imperative to look at deeper insights on the participation of women in educational and employment.

**LITERATURE REVIEW**

**The Participation of Women in Education**

Participation in education is one of the factors to uplift the social status of women in any societies. Education has, in many ways, brought some changes particularly in women’s life. Apart from preparing them for their roles as spouse and educators of their children, high education promises access to professions other than homemaking and perhaps most importantly economic independence (Aminah, 1998; Maimunah, 1993; 2001). In other words, women with higher level of education would have better work option. But everywhere, women as compared with men have to confront barriers hindering them from obtaining college or university education even though the national education policy does not discriminate women in extending their education (Raja Rohana, 1991). Social norms and traditional values have been part of barriers that hinder women to maximize the use of these opportunities especially those from the rural areas (Bwakili, 2001). Women also do not find it easy to get education for a number of reasons. First, providing education to girls is not considered economic by the guardians as they are supposed to live with their in-laws after marriage. Second, the widespread belief in the male dominated society that women are there to perform only household duties especially in the rural areas (Ismail, 1997; Aminah, 1998).

It is not surprising if most of the contemporary studies reveal that there is a disparity in education in terms of gender in any societies (Raja Rohana, 1991; Khalijah, 1994; Molyneux, 1998; Bwakali, 2001). It has also been noted that women compared with men are usually involved in courses that traditionally prepare women for stereotype roles such as Arts and Education (Aminah, 1998). Thus, these trends of choices influence the participation of women in labor force in which women are usually involved in doing the jobs, that are more tedious, menial, and lowly paid. Male students on the other hand are instructed to take industrial arts such as engineering, agriculture and architecture. Ismail (1997) also pointed out that in terms of education a large number of women prefer non-technical and non-vocational disciplines.
Therefore, this dictates that employment of women, as compared with men, are still largely employed in the service sectors and few in manufacturing because of their concentration in non-technical courses.

The Participation of Women in Employment

Generally, women’s participation in the labor market has increased with the rising level of education. In Malaysia, for example, the labor force participation rate of women increased from 44.6% in 1999 to 46.7% in 2000. However, these rates are still low compared to those of men. The labor force participation rate of men was 82.8% in 1999 and increased to 83.3% in 2000 (Malaysia, 2000). Over the same period, it is seen that the participation rate of women in tertiary education has increased rapidly compared with men. This may reflect the fact that women in Malaysia have benefited from equal access to education and their rising level of education plays a major role in drawing them into the labor market. Moreover, the number of women entering the labor force has definitely increased in Malaysia because of labor intensive industrialization policies (Aminah, 1998) and the proliferation of industrial zones (Malaysia, 2001). This is particularly so in the manufacturing sector, due to improvements in education, lower fertility rates, later age of marriage, and the decline in agricultural employment, thus, there is a need for new sources of income. In terms of white-collar jobs also, there is a disparity between men and women in which men are mostly represented in the administrative, managerial and sales categories whereas women are concentrated in clerical and service work with low pay. This statement is supported in Raja Rohana’s (1991) study where she noted that 2.0% of the employed men occupy administrative and managerial positions compared to only 0.2% of the women. Tan (1991) and Yousof (1995) also indicate that more women are generally represented in the lower management and lower paying positions compared with men. Eighty percent of executive positions in the modern sector are still held by men even though many women have migrated to manufacturing jobs from agricultural jobs (Malaysia, 2001).

In addition, women are constrained by the demand of domestic labor and child care which inhibit them from participating in the forms of employment involving inflexible hours, overtime, and extensive travel or shift work, not to mention the cost and difficulty of making child care arrangements and the difficulties of leaving children unattended (Aminah, 1998). Women themselves may choose typically female occupations, influenced by strong socio-cultural norms and gender stereotypes inculcated through the educational system (Aminah, 1998; Maimunah, 2001). Finally, it can be said that, despite the progress women have made in education and employment in the last 30 years (1971 to 2001), they still lag behind their male counterparts in terms of authority and opportunities in employment.

METHODOLOGY

Respondents in this study were identified using purposive sampling technique. The sampling was based on their experience, understanding and knowledge about the educational attainment of Bidayuh men and about employment participation in the three sectors of development namely agriculture, services, and manufacturing sectors. All of them have indicated that they are experiencing a change in the Bidayuh community in terms of development and their socio-economic status over the past 10 years. According to Merriam (1998, p. 60), “purposeful sampling in a qualitative research is based on the assumption that one wants to discover, understand, gain insights; therefore, one needs to select a sample from which one can learn the most”. In this study, the researcher felt that the data had reached saturation after six interviews. Data saturation is referred to as the point where the information one gets from the interview becomes redundant (Bogdan & Biklen, 1998). Strauss and Corbin (1990) say that the researcher has sufficient data
when the latest actor interviewed within the category, provided little additional information, where the same patterns are seen repeatedly. However, to be certain, the researcher conducted two further interviews, which subsequently confirmed it. Therefore, a total of eight respondents took part in this study. For this study, the respondents were a Bidayuh community leader, an assistant agriculture officer, a manager of palm-oil factory, a head master, an administrative officer, and an Assistant District Officer. The reason for choosing these respondents was because previous literature shows that these groups of people often serve and have direct dealings with the Bidayuh community in their respective tasks in development (Hew Sim, 1985; Jayum, 1994).

Data Collection
Data were gathered through in-depth interviews with the respondents. Interviews were conducted by using an interview guide and were tape-recorded. Each interview lasted for about an hour. A total of 8 hours of interviews were taped and later transcribed verbatim, producing 20 single-spaced typewritten pages of transcription. Statements from respondents were identified for clarity. Nevertheless, the original meanings were retained. Again, after the categories and sub-categories were developed, each transcription was then reviewed several times for clarity. Interviews with all the respondents were conducted in Bidayuh language, except, one involving the palm oil manager and the Assistant District Officer where the interview was a mixture of English and Bahasa Melayu.

Data Analysis
The analysis of qualitative data was done based on the information derived from in-depth interviews focusing on the differences between men and women in educational attainment and employment participation supported by field notes from non-participant observations. The analysis used a more traditional approach similar to cut-and-paste method. A sequence of activities was generally carried out during the analysis. The activities were as follows: Transcription of data from recorded interview of each respondent was made. It was first written in Bahasa Bidayuh, the native language of the researched population. Then, the researcher listened to the taped interviews at least twice before having the taped interviews transcribed. Once transcribed, each transcription was reviewed several times and reorganized to represent a brief explanation on the differences of men and women in educational attainment and employment participation. This led to the process of cleaning up the data that included making the necessary corrections and excluding any redundancies. Data were then saved under different file names.

To clarify and reduce the influence of researcher’s biases, the transcription was then translated to English. A language expert was then consulted to check for its language accuracy. A focus was made to explain the differences between Bidayuh men and women in terms of educational attainment and employment participation in three sectors, namely, agriculture, service, and industry. The next important step in managing the data was by doing process categories. The researcher developed a matrix table as a means of tabulating the findings into a more organized fashion. Using the themes produced from constant comparative analysis (Bogdan & Biklen, 1998), the researcher tabulated particular quotes according to the line numbers that appear in the script.

RESULTS

There are two parts in this section. First part provides the description of within-case analysis that is about the participants, followed by the second part, which presents the results of cross-case analysis.
Interpretation and discussion of results will be based on themes, which were generated from categories. Clues with regard to conclusions were derived during interpretation and discussion.

**The Respondents**

Six of the eight respondents were Bidayuhs and another two were Malays. They live or work in or around the districts of Serian and Bau in the State of Sarawak, Malaysia. The average age of participants is 40 as of 2003. Most are married with at least four children. All of them received secondary school education with at least a Malaysian Certificate of Education (MCE). As mentioned earlier, their selection was based on their experience, understanding and knowledge about the lives of Bidayuh community and their participation in development. In order to protect the confidentiality of the group, each participant has been assigned a fictitious name.

**Reasons for differences in Educational Attainment between Bidayuh Men and Women**

This study found that there are two reasons contributing to the differences between Bidayuh men and women in educational attainment. The most prominent reason is cultural influence followed by effect of history in which women have long been neglected from the mainstream development. These two major reasons have led to the difficulties faced by women in getting education and work opportunities. Providing education to women is not considered economical by their parents and the society. Of late, however, women do have access to higher education but they prefer to choose courses considered more suitable for women such as home economics, teaching, and hotel catering. This, to a certain extent, limits their opportunities to wider choices of employment.

**Cultural Influence**

Majority of the respondents felt that culture was the main reason for the differences between Bidayuh men and women in educational attainment. Interviews revealed two cultural issues, which could influence participation of Bidayuh women in education, namely, stereotypical views on women from the perspectives of parents and the society, incentive and encouragement. These issues to a certain extent inhibit women from making choices in the pursuit of education.

i) **Stereotypical Views on Women towards Education**: Majority of respondents in this study indicated that stereotypical views of women were the main reason behind the differences between Bidayuh men and women in educational attainment. According to them, stereotypical views of women in this study can be divided into two types, that is, the view of the parents and the society. The view of parents towards education was based on whether participation of Bidayuh women in educational process was significant. However, society’s stereotypical views of women can be seen as the way it placed concern, appreciation and recognition on the significance of participation of Bidayuh women in educational attainment activities. This stereotypical view does not encourage girls to continue their education beyond primary schooling. Cecelia, who was involved for 10 years in educational profession, made the following remarks on the Bidayuh parents’ view of the participation of Bidayuh women compared to that of men in education especially at the higher level.

I have been involved for 10 years in educational profession and I felt that most of Bidayuh parents still did not recognize and think negatively of the participation of Bidayuh female students in education especially at the higher level. You know what is the perception of the parents about their involvement? They said that even though women with high qualifications, they will end up in the kitchen. They will not go further with their education and high education is not significant for Bidayuh women. Thus, it is better that women do not go to school because in the end their husbands will support them when they get married.
On the same point, Ali thinks that perception of Bidayuh parents on women not recognizing the importance of their education had influenced their present status of education. He had this to say:

Even though I am Malay, I still remember that some of my Bidayuh friends still have wrong perceptions about participation of women in education. The saying like ‘no matter how high the education a woman has, she will still go back to do household chores and in the end she will follow her husband,’ was a common perception to Bidayuh families. This trend somehow influenced participation of Bidayuh women in educational programs because they were less supported and recognized than what was being perceived to Bidayuh men.

**ii) Society’s Views: **Majority of the respondents felt that society’s stereotypical views on women regarding careers and education have also prevented an active participation of Bidayuh women in educational efforts. This is because Bidayuh society does not give opportunities or improvement to their women. Most of them pass negative comments and sometimes do not appreciate the participation of Bidayuh women to pursue higher education compared to men. The society will respect and recognize Bidayuh sons with good academic achievement but not the daughters. The above view was strongly felt by James:

Based on my own experience as a Bidayuh community leader, I felt that Bidayuh society in my area prefers to show off their boys rather than daughters. For example, if their daughter pass with good results they will say that she is not going anywhere with it. Some of the individuals in the Bidayuh communities also felt that it is not significant for Bidayuh women to study at the higher level of learning because it was not too useful compared to their men. Most of them felt that it did not make much economic sense for women to study higher such as at the university, because when they get married they would follow their husbands and some of them would decide to quit their job.

Another respondent, Cecelia, who also echoed the same view:

I think, one of the reasons why Bidayuh society thinks that it is not too significant for Bidayuh women to study at the higher level of learning is that once they get married they will follow their husbands in the end, rather than help their parents in terms of financial support, compared to Bidayuh men who always marry late. I feel that in the lower level of learning like primary school and secondary school the scenario is not as serious compared to that at the higher level of learning.

**iii) Incentive: **Majority of the respondents feel that Bidayuh families give less incentive towards participating women in the pursuit of higher education compared to men. Most of the respondents agreed that incentive here refers to investment made in the form of financial and material support in the form of facilities from educational institutions. They spoke strongly about the fact that women receive less incentive from the family compared to men. Parents are less keen to support educational undertakings for their daughters. They believe that after spending so much on education, women may get married and they would go to their husband’s families. And this means that they could not make use of their education to bring economic benefits for the parents. Because of this, it is not surprising why the access of Bidayuh women for better education especially at the tertiary level is still lower than the men. This was strongly felt by James who said that:

Based on my experience, I feel that Bidayuh women had received less financial support compared to men especially for higher learning. Most of Bidayuh parents prefer to make more financial investments to men especially on educational facilities like computers and transportation because they feel men have a higher potential for bringing in benefit than do women. Since women have been receiving less financial support than men, it is not surprising when most of them had no choice to stop schooling early.
Historical Background on Lack of Educational Opportunities

Majority of the respondents agree that since Bidayuh women have long been neglected and given less opportunity to access various levels of education, it is not surprising when the pattern of Bidayuh women begins to move to a higher level of educational attainment than men, who have been given more opportunities. The Bidayuh community, which is one the native groups in Sarawak, has been long neglected by the Brookes, a group of British colonials who administered the state before the country gained independence in 1963. It was reported that the colonial administration has caused Bidayuh women to have a lukewarm attitude to education (Jayum, 1991). Returns from education were not perceived to be immediate compared to expanding efforts in farming, hunting, and gathering. Ali had this to say:

I think the differences of Bidayuh men and women resulted from the Brooke rules for many years ago. It seems that women have been left behind for quite some time so it is hard for them to compete with the men nowadays. For that reason also the participation of Bidayuh women in education remains lower compared to their men counterparts.

Mary, another respondent, said since Bidayuh women have not been given emphases to proper education compared to men for a long time, it is, therefore, unfair to expect their level of education to be equal or better than men. Mary said:

Since Bidayuh women had long been neglected and had has less opportunity in education for a long period, how would we expect that the level of participation in education to be equal or higher than men. Of course, the participation of Bidayuh women are much better today compared to that decades ago, but I think history has brought about the marked differences in educational attainment between Bidayuh women and men.

Reasons for Differences in Employment Participation between Bidayuh Men and Women

The analysis further reveals that reasons for differences in employment participation between Bidayuh men and women were traditional gender division of labor followed by employer’s bias and lack of education, skills and training. It is also found that the Bidayuh community considers teaching as the best job, which is seen as a “half day” work, for their women, as they will be able to fulfill their traditional role as nurturing mothers and good housewives. Respondents also felt that the Bidayuh community still believes that the women’s primary role is to take care of their homes and concentrate more on their domestic duties. For that purpose, most of Bidayuh women prefer to choose jobs that fit their own characteristics such as a teacher so that they could be able to effectively combine their roles as mothers and workers. The section that follows explains each of the themes as mentioned earlier in relation to reasons for differences in employment participation between Bidayuh men and women.

Traditional Gender Division of Labor

Traditional gender division of labour simply refers to what used to be the jobs of men and women are currently dictated by society and culture (Maimunah, 1993; 2001). Hence, traditional gender division of labor influences Bidayuh women’s choice in employment. All of the respondents felt that traditional gender division of labor were the main barriers, which hinder participation of Bidayuh women from getting seriously involved in employment. In Bidayuh culture it has always been considered that a Bidayuh woman’s role is that of a housewife and mother while the man is considered to be the breadwinner. Therefore, Bidayuh women do not need to earn an income whereas men do. Because of this traditional division of labor by gender, few conscious efforts have been made to enable women to qualify for positions and to seize opportunities besides those tasks in the domestic sphere.
For Bidayuh women who have jobs, two sub-themes explain for their participation in employment; namely, women’s personal choice and society’s view towards employment.

i. Women’s Personal Choice: Except for two respondents, others felt that participation of Bidayuh women in employment is very much influenced by the women’s personal choice. It shows that they are more constrained by the demands of domestic labor and child care, which inhibit them from participating in employment involving inflexible hours, overtime, extensive travel or shift work, given the costs and difficulty of making child care arrangements and the difficulties of leaving children unattended. Therefore, women themselves may choose typical female occupations with low pay and less security than lacking in opportunities for upward mobility. These jobs are often related to perceived female characteristics such as patience, dexterity, caring, docility, or to traditionally female activities within the household such as cooking, cleaning, sewing, tending the sick, and personal services of various kinds.

James, who felt that participation of Bidayuh women in employment is greatly influenced by the women themselves, indicated that “for those who have high qualifications they prefer feminine kind of job like teaching and nursing because this kind of jobs could give them greater opportunities to pay more attention to their husbands and children. Most of the Bidayuh women also feel that involvement in employment is not part of their responsibility”. Like James, Cecelia also felt that most of Bidayuh women prefer to choose jobs, which are suitable to their characteristic as women. This is because this kind of job could give them opportunity to pay more attention and be responsible to their husbands and children. Ali also indicated that since Bidayuh women believed that it is important for them to divert more effort to the growth of their family and the successful relationship with their husbands, therefore it is difficult for them to be involved in technical jobs, which require greater commitments.

ii. Society’s Views toward Employment: The participation of Bidayuh women in employment also seems to be related to the views towards employment of the husbands, parent and society. These views discourage Bidayuh women from engaging in outside employment as well as putting emphasis on household duties for their children and taking care of their husbands, rather than to seriously concentrate on employment. In other words, the negative views of husbands, parents, and society about the women’s participation in the public sphere have led to their low participation in the labour force. According to another male respondent, “At first women work, but after getting married most of them will quit their job – this is especially for those who work in the industrial sector. Most of Bidayuh women who decided to quit their job were not due to their total decision but because of the influence of their husbands who want their wives to be at home to do household chores”.

Cecelia also indicated that most of Bidayuh husbands did not encourage their wives to be involved in a technical job which requires a lot of time and concentration. The demands of domestic labor and child care have also forced Bidayuh husbands to push their wives to change their jobs. She said: “Because of the demands of domestic labor and child care some of Bidayuh husbands have forced their wives to quit job or change it with other jobs which is more suitable for housewives and mothers”. Cecelia also added that, “their husbands’ attitude placing the full responsibility on their wives, have caused the latter to give more attention to the family and children. Some of them have to quit their jobs. This is the scenario that I have seen in my area”.

Employer’s Bias

There are respondents who indicated that participation of Bidayuh women in employment was also influenced by employers’ bias. Employers are reluctant to hire women because of their perceived higher rates of absenteeism, higher turnover, lesser human capital endowments and higher costs. Employers also
perceive that certain kinds of jobs are deemed inappropriate for women. Overall, respondents felt that participation of Bidayuh women in employment is also very much influenced by employers who sometimes use criteria that are not applied to men but to women in recruiting workers. All respondents also felt that since the Bidayuh women are constrained by the demands of domestic labor and child care, some of the employers highly prefer men compared to women because of the reasons alluded to earlier. According to Maimunah (2001) and Aminah (1998) gender consideration were also used by the employers in the recruitment of supervisors among the production workers in which men were more preferred than women due to the latter’s challenging roles as a wife and a mother as well as a worker.

**Lack of Education, Skills and Training**

Respondents also revealed that the lower level of participation of Bidayuh women compared to men in employment is related to lack of education, skills, and training among Bidayuh women. Overall, respondents felt that since Bidayuh women have less education and skill, they were involved in agricultural work as laborers with low pay. It is very difficult for them to be involved in sectors that require some level of education and skills like in manufacturing and technical sectors. The respondents also agree that with a lack of education and skills, Bidayuh women concentrate more on unskilled manual work or clerical works like general workers, cleaners, and laborers while for Bidayuh men they concentrate more in skilled manual positions with more security, higher pay, and opportunities for upward career mobility.

**CONCLUSION**

There are two reasons for the differences between Bidayuh men and women in educational attainment. The two reasons are cultural influence and historical background, which may have caused Bidayuh women to be long neglected in many aspects of educational opportunities. Similarly for the differences in employment participation between Bidayuh men and women, the three reasons are traditional gender division of labor, employer’s bias on gender and the lack of education, skills and training received by women compared to men. The above conclusions give several implications as follows:

1. Illiteracy level among Bidayuh women is still higher than that of Bidayuh men. This implies that Bidayuh women need to improve their educational attainment. This result suggests that Bidayuh organizations like Dayak Bidayuh National Action (DBNA), should be more aware about gender differences in educational attainment by directing more advisory services and explanation to the Bidayuh rural society on the importance of education in development regardless of gender. In addition, Bidayuh organizations should also make a concerted effort to especially encourage more Bidayuh women to grab the opportunities toward better education.

2. Majority of Bidayuh women are still concentrated in agriculture sector with low skill and low paying job compared to men. This implies that with no education, skills and training, it is difficult for Bidayuh women to perform better and have good positions in the employment outside agriculture. In order to protect them against gender-based disadvantages in the context of economic participation, it is important to revise the development policy to make it more gender sensitive. Agencies concerned should create programs to provide support for skills development, for instance, for the retrenched Bidayuh women workers, skills improvement for women engaged in low level employment, assist re-entry of women who have taken time off for childcare, encourage young women to select studies leading to higher-skilled and better-waged jobs through vocational counseling, and provide...
management training for Bidayuh women at supervisory levels, entrepreneurship development, and access to labor market information.

3. In most farming activities, Bidayuh women participated in the same way as their husbands (Hew, 1985). They also participated in farming management decision making while their husbands seasonally migrated to town for jobs. This proves that Bidayuh women contributed positively to agricultural production as well as to maintenance of their homes. The practical implication of this finding is that planners or rural development projects should recognize women’s productive activities by directing more services to women as producers and processors of food and cash crops. Development planners and policy makers should make a concerted effort to encourage Bidayuh women to participate in rural development programs.

4. One of the most important factors explaining the differences between Bidayuh men and women in employment participation is traditional gender division of labor which is influenced by strong cultural norms, and by gender stereotypes inculcated through the educational system. This implies that if women are confronted with two roles of taking care of their younger children and taking part in productive activities, priorities should be given to the reproductive role of the family rather than on involvement in productive economic activities. But it should not be at the expense of their opportunities for better education because to be a better wife and mother, education is undeniably a factor that guarantees effective women’s role in upbringing the families and the community.

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