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THEOLOGICAL ANALYSIS OF THE DUAL ROLE OF WIDOWS IN PROVIDING FOR THEIR FAMILIES IN THE ORA ET LABORA BOGAKELE CONGREGATION

ANALISIS TEOLOGIS PERAN GANDA PEREMPUAN JANDA DALAM MEMELIHARA KELUARGA DI JEMAAT ORA ET LABORA BOGAKELE

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ABSTRACT
This study aims to determine how widowed women carry out their dual role in raising families in the Ora Et Labora Bogakele congregation, identify the economic, social, and spiritual challenges they face, and analyze theological perspectives on the dual role of widowed women in family life. The method used in this study is descriptive with a qualitative approach. Data collection techniques were conducted through interviews and documentation.The participants in this study consisted of four widowed women and one pastor as a supporting informant from the Ora Et Labora Bogakele congregation. The results show that widowed women in the Ora Et Labora Bogakele congregation carry out dual roles as housewives, caregivers and educators of children, and also as the primary breadwinners of their families. To meet their family's needs, the informants work as farmers and weavers. This dual role presents various challenges, particularly in the economic, social, and spiritual spheres. Economic challenges are evident in income instability and limited financial resources. Social challenges are evident in the form of societal stigma, limited social support, and the burden of responsibilities that must be carried out alone. Meanwhile, spiritual challenges emerge in the form of inner struggles, feelings of loss, and the need to maintain faith amidst the pressures of life. the dual role of widowed women is understood as a form of calling to faith that reflects perseverance, responsibility, and faithfulness to God. Widowed women are not only seen as a vulnerable group, but also as individuals with dignity as images of God and capable of playing an active role in family and church life. The church is called to provide pastoral, social, and spiritual support to widowed women so that they retain hope and strength in their lives.
Keywords: Theological Analysis; Widowed Women; Dual Role; Family Care; Church Ministry

ABSTRAK
Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengetahui bagaimana perempuan janda menjalankan peran gandanya dalam memelihara keluarga di Jemaat Ora Et Labora Bogakele, mengidentifikasi tantangan ekonomi, sosial, dan spiritual yang mereka hadapi, serta menganalisis perspektif teologis terhadap peran ganda perempuan janda dalam kehidupan keluarga. Metode yang digunakan dalam penelitian ini adalah metode deskriptif dengan pendekatan kualitatif. Teknik pengumpulan data dilakukan melalui wawancara dan dokumentasi. Partisipan dalam penelitian ini terdiri atas empat perempuan janda dan satu orang pendeta sebagai informan pendukung dari Jemaat Ora Et Labora Bogakele.Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa perempuan janda di Jemaat Ora Et Labora Bogakele menjalankan peran ganda sebagai ibu rumah tangga, pengasuh sekaligus pendidik anak, serta sebagai pencari nafkah utama bagi keluarga. Untuk memenuhi kebutuhan keluarga, para informan bekerja sebagai petani dan penenun. Peran ganda tersebut menghadirkan berbagai tantangan, terutama pada aspek ekonomi, sosial, dan spiritual. Tantangan ekonomi tampak pada ketidakstabilan pendapatan dan keterbatasan sumber daya keuangan. Tantangan sosial terlihat dalam bentuk stigma masyarakat, terbatasnya dukungan sosial, serta beban tanggung jawab yang harus dipikul seorang diri. Sementara itu, tantangan spiritual muncul dalam bentuk pergumulan batin, perasaan kehilangan, serta kebutuhan untuk tetap mempertahankan iman di tengah tekanan kehidupan. Dari perspektif teologis, peran ganda perempuan janda dipahami sebagai wujud panggilan iman yang mencerminkan ketekunan, tanggung jawab, dan kesetiaan kepada Tuhan. Perempuan janda tidak hanya dipandang sebagai kelompok yang rentan, tetapi juga sebagai pribadi

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yang memiliki martabat sebagai gambar Allah serta mampu berperan aktif dalam kehidupan keluarga dan gereja. Oleh karena itu, gereja dipanggil untuk memberikan dukungan pastoral, sosial, dan spiritual kepada perempuan janda agar mereka tetap memiliki harapan dan kekuatan dalam menjalani kehidupan.

Kata Kunci: Analisis Teologis; Perempuan Janda; Peran Ganda; Pemeliharaan Keluarga; Pelayanan Gereja.

1. INTRODUCTION

The family is the smallest social unit and plays a fundamental role in human life. Within the family, life values, character, and faith are first nurtured and developed. From a Christian theological perspective, the family is understood as an institution established by God from the beginning of creation (Genesis 2:18–24). Therefore, the family serves as the primary environment for cultivating love, responsibility, and faith in God. Through the family, each member learns to live in relationships characterized by mutual respect, love, and shared responsibility.

Within the family structure, women hold a unique and essential role. Biologically, women are endowed with the ability to conceive, give birth, and breastfeed children—natural responsibilities that cannot be fulfilled by men. Pregnancy and childbirth are not merely biological processes but also expressions of motherhood characterized by sacrifice, love, and perseverance. Likewise, breastfeeding establishes the earliest bond between mother and child, strengthening emotional attachment while laying the foundation for the child's character development and sense of security. In the light of the Christian faith, these responsibilities can be understood as part of God's mandate to humanity to preserve life and continue future generations (cf. Genesis 1:28). Thus, from the very beginning, women have carried significant responsibility for the continuity of generations and the formation of families.

In reality, however, not every family experiences ideal circumstances. Various life situations may affect family unity, one of which is the loss of a spouse. Such a condition often results in a woman becoming a widow. When a woman becomes widowed, her responsibilities within the family do not diminish; instead, they frequently increase. Widows often face challenging circumstances because they are required to perform dual roles within the family. They serve not only as mothers who nurture and educate their children but also as heads of households and primary breadwinners.

This reality is also evident in the congregation of Ora Et Labora Bogakele Church. Established on November 27, 1982, this congregation has become a place where church members grow in faith and support one another as one family in Christ. The congregation is predominantly composed of farming, fishing, and weaving families, and it includes several widowed women who carry dual responsibilities in maintaining their households. The ministry of Ora Et Labora Bogakele Church is led by Rev. Yapersanti N. Waang, S.Th., who guides the congregation in spiritual growth and church life. The majority of the congregation earns a living as farmers, fishermen, and traditional weavers, occupations that constitute the primary source of income for their families.

Based on preliminary interviews with one of the church elders, identified by the initials F.A., it was found that there are ten widowed women within the Ora Et Labora Bogakele congregation, distributed across three ministry groups. The first ministry group consists of two widows, the second group includes four widows, and the third group also consists of four widows. This study focuses on the third ministry group, namely four widowed women who face daily struggles in maintaining and supporting their families.

These four widowed women are between 45 and 53 years of age. Although they have lost their husbands, they remain committed to fulfilling their family responsibilities, particularly in financing their children's education. All of their children are currently attending school. In their daily lives, these women work as traditional weavers. They weave from morning until late afternoon with patience and perseverance. Income generated from selling their woven

products is used to meet their families' daily needs, including food, clothing, and educational expenses.

In addition to working as traditional weavers to support their families economically, these women continue to fulfill their responsibilities as mothers by managing the household and raising their children. This situation demonstrates that widowed women perform dual roles within the family: they function as caregivers and educators while simultaneously serving as the primary providers responsible for sustaining their households. Their experiences reflect the ongoing struggle to balance faith in God with the practical demands of daily life through perseverance and dedication.

Numerous studies have examined widowed women, particularly from economic, social, and psychological perspectives within the family context. However, most previous research has focused on widows primarily as a socially vulnerable group. Studies that specifically examine the dual roles of widowed women from a theological perspective within the context of a local church congregation remain relatively limited. Therefore, this study offers a significant contribution by integrating social and theological analyses of the lived experiences of widowed women in the Ora Et Labora Bogakele congregation. This research not only describes the roles and challenges encountered by widowed women but also reflects on the theological significance of their experiences as expressions of faith, calling, and responsibility under God's providence. The findings of this study are expected to contribute to the development of pastoral ministry, particularly in strengthening pastoral care and empowering widowed women as an integral part of the Christian faith community.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. The Concept of Women's Dual Roles

Women's dual roles refer to the condition in which women perform more than one role in their daily lives, both within and outside the household. Within the family, women serve as wives and mothers who are responsible for managing household affairs, caring for children, and maintaining family harmony. Outside the home, women also undertake public roles, such as working to contribute to the family's economic needs. According to Soerjono Soekanto (2012), a role is the dynamic aspect of a person's status or position in society. Furthermore, Goode (1960), through the theory of role strain, explains that individuals who simultaneously perform multiple roles may experience role conflict and psychological pressure. Similarly, Moser (1993) identifies the reproductive role and the productive role, which women frequently perform concurrently within both family and community life.

In many societies, domestic responsibilities continue to be regarded as women's primary obligation. Traditionally, women have been viewed as those responsible for household management. Consequently, women often remain responsible for domestic duties even when they participate in paid employment outside the home. Soerjono Soekanto (2012) argues that social roles are shaped by society's expectations of an individual's status. Within this context, women are commonly associated with domestic responsibilities. Likewise, Moser (1993) emphasizes that women generally perform both reproductive roles (household management and child care) and productive roles (income-generating activities).

2.2. Widowed Women in Family Life

A widowed woman is a woman who has lost her spouse through death or divorce and must continue family life without the presence of a husband. This condition brings significant changes to family structure and functioning, requiring widowed women to assume multiple responsibilities as heads of households, breadwinners, and primary caregivers. Responsibilities that were once shared with a spouse must now be carried independently. Consequently, widowed women face various economic, social, psychological, and spiritual challenges in sustaining their families (Barot & Parmar, 2024).

Within family life, widowed women serve as the primary caregivers for their children while simultaneously acting as the main providers for the household. They are responsible for meeting essential family needs, including food, education, and healthcare. In addition, they play a crucial role in shaping their children's character and providing emotional support throughout their development.

2.3. The Biblical Perspective on Widows

The Bible demonstrates profound concern for the welfare of widows. In the Old Testament, widows are frequently portrayed as members of vulnerable groups deserving protection. God is described as the defender of widows and the oppressed (Deuteronomy 10:18; Psalm 68:5). These passages illustrate God's compassion toward widows and His concern for their well-being. God commands His people not to oppress widows but to care for them. Such commands indicate that concern for widows is an integral expression of faithful obedience to God.

In the New Testament, care for widows remains an important aspect of the life of the early church. Acts 6:1 records that the early Christian community established a special ministry to ensure that widows' needs were not neglected. This demonstrates the church's calling to care for and support widows. James 1:27 further affirms that genuine religion is demonstrated through care for orphans and widows. This passage emphasizes that Christian faith is expressed not only through worship but also through practical acts of compassion toward those in need.

2.4. Theological Perspective on the Dual Roles of Widowed Women

From a theological perspective, the dual roles of widowed women are understood as a life reality closely connected with God's calling. When a woman loses her husband, she experiences not only grief but also a significant transformation of family responsibilities. She is often required to fulfill two functions simultaneously: serving as the family's primary breadwinner while also acting as caregiver and family leader. Within the Christian faith, this condition is understood not merely as a social burden but as part of God's calling to be lived faithfully in His presence.

The Bible presents several examples of widowed women who carried out their responsibilities with faith. The widow of Zarephath (1 Kings 17:8–16) continued striving to provide for her son during a severe famine while demonstrating obedience and trust in God. Her economic responsibility was inseparable from her spiritual commitment. Likewise, the story of Ruth (Ruth 2:2–3) portrays a young widow who worked diligently to support both herself and Naomi, illustrating the close relationship between family responsibility and faithful devotion to God.

The dual roles of widowed women represent a social reality arising from changes in family structure following the loss of a spouse. The death of a husband creates not only emotional suffering but also significantly increases a woman's responsibility for meeting her family's needs. Under these circumstances, widowed women are expected to fulfill dual responsibilities as mothers who nurture and educate their children while simultaneously serving as heads of households and primary income earners.

The implementation of these dual roles presents numerous challenges, particularly in the economic, social, and spiritual dimensions of life. Economic challenges involve unstable income and limited financial resources. Social challenges include social stigma, limited community support, and increased family responsibilities. Spiritual challenges are reflected in inner struggles, experiences of loss, and efforts to maintain faith amid the pressures of everyday life.

From the perspective of Christian theology, the lived experiences of widowed women are understood as part of a faith journey sustained by God's providence. The stories of Ruth, the widow of Zarephath, and various biblical teachings concerning care for widows

demonstrate that God does not abandon those in vulnerable circumstances but continually provides strength, guidance, and sustenance. Therefore, the dual roles of widowed women should be understood not merely as social responsibilities but also as expressions of faith manifested through perseverance, responsibility, and faithfulness to God.

Based on this conceptual framework, the present study focuses on three principal aspects: (1) the dual roles of widowed women in maintaining their families; (2) the economic, social, and spiritual challenges they encounter; and (3) a theological analysis of the dual roles of widowed women in family life within the Ora Et Labora Bogakele Congregation.

3. METHODS

This study employed a qualitative research approach using a descriptive method. A qualitative approach was selected because the study seeks to gain an in-depth understanding of the lived experiences of widowed women in performing dual roles to sustain their families. The descriptive method was used to portray the actual conditions and realities encountered in the field. The research was conducted at the Ora Et Labora Bogakele Congregation. This site was selected because it includes widowed women who simultaneously undertake dual responsibilities, namely managing their households and earning a living for their families. This condition served as the primary rationale for conducting the study. The research was carried out over a one-month period, from March 1 to March 31, 2026.

This study utilized both primary and secondary data sources. Primary data were collected directly through interviews with four widowed women from Ministry Group Three and one pastor serving in the Ora Et Labora Bogakele Congregation. Secondary data consisted of supporting information obtained from various written sources relevant to the study. These included the Bible, theology books, scholarly publications on widowed women, scientific journal articles, and church documents related to pastoral ministry and the lives of widowed women within the Ora Et Labora Bogakele Congregation. These secondary sources were used to support the analysis and interpretation of the research findings. Data was collected through interviews and documentation.

The data were analyzed using qualitative data analysis techniques. Information obtained from observations, interviews, and documentation was selected, organized, and categorized according to the research focus, namely the dual roles of widowed women in maintaining their families. The categorized data were then analyzed from a biblical theological perspective to gain a deeper understanding of the lived experiences of widowed women. Finally, the findings were synthesized into conclusions that serve as a theological reflection and provide recommendations for the pastoral ministry of the Ora Et Labora Bogakele Congregation.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

4.1. Results

4.1.2. The Dual Roles of Widowed Women in Sustaining Their Families

The findings indicate that widowed women in the Ora et Labora Bogakele Congregation assume dual roles following the loss of their husbands. They serve not only as mothers responsible for nurturing and educating their children but also as heads of households and primary breadwinners. This condition was evident in the experiences of all participants, who assumed full responsibility for their families after the death of their spouses. They work as farmers and traditional weavers to meet their families' daily needs and finance their children's education. These findings demonstrate that widowhood brings significant changes to family roles and responsibilities.

These findings are consistent with Haini (2022), who argues that widowed women frequently perform two simultaneous functions: family caregivers and primary income earners. The loss of a spouse requires women to assume responsibilities that were previously shared

with their husbands. This situation was clearly reflected in the participants' experiences, as they managed household responsibilities while simultaneously working to support their families economically. Thus, the dual roles performed by widowed women represent an adaptive response to changes in family structure following the loss of a spouse.

The study further revealed that the participants continued to fulfill their responsibilities for child care and education despite working every day. This finding indicates that widowed women are concerned not only with meeting their families' economic needs but also with ensuring the well-being and future of their children. These findings support the view that widowed women play a strategic role in maintaining family continuity and well-being by simultaneously managing household responsibilities and providing financial support.

From a theological perspective, these findings can be related to the story of Ruth (Ruth 2:2–3), which portrays a widow who worked diligently to support herself and Naomi. Rather than surrendering to her circumstances, Ruth actively sought to provide for her family through honest labor. This biblical account closely resembles the experiences of the widowed women in the Ora et Labora Bogakele Congregation, who continue to work as farmers and traditional weavers to provide for their families. Their experiences demonstrate that productive work and family care constitute expressions of faithful responsibility carried out with perseverance and devotion to God.

4.1.3. Challenges Faced by Widowed Women in Sustaining Their Families

a. Economic Challenges

The findings reveal that economic hardship is the primary challenge experienced by widowed women. All participants reported relying on farming and traditional weaving, occupations characterized by unstable and unpredictable income. Consequently, they often struggle to meet their families' daily living expenses and their children's educational costs. The economic burden becomes even greater because they bear full responsibility for supporting their households after the loss of their husbands.

These findings are consistent with Haini (2022), who explains that widowed women generally work in the informal sector, where income is often unstable. This condition places widowed women in economically vulnerable situations because they must provide for their families with limited financial resources. The participants' experiences illustrate that income uncertainty constitutes one of the greatest challenges associated with their role as heads of households.

From a theological perspective, these economic challenges may be understood through the story of the widow of Zarephath (1 Kings 17:8–16). Despite experiencing severe poverty and famine, the widow continued striving to provide for her household while placing her trust in God. This biblical narrative demonstrates that economic hardship does not diminish God's sustaining care for His people.

b. Social Challenges

The findings also indicate that widowed women encounter various social challenges. The participants described feelings of loneliness, limited social support, community skepticism regarding their ability to make family decisions, and negative perceptions that questioned their capacity to fulfill the responsibilities of household leadership.

These findings are consistent with Barot and Parmar (2024), who argue that widowed women frequently experience social pressures in the form of stigma, discrimination, and diminished social recognition. Their status as widows often places them in vulnerable social positions, affecting both their self-confidence and their relationships within the community.

Nevertheless, the study found that the participants actively sought to maintain positive relationships with their surrounding community and continued participating in church

activities. This finding demonstrates their capacity for positive social adaptation despite experiencing various forms of social pressure.

c. Spiritual Challenges

In addition to economic and social challenges, this study identified significant spiritual challenges experienced by widowed women. The demands of work and household responsibilities limited the time available for prayer, Bible reading, and regular participation in church activities. Several participants also acknowledged experiencing periods of spiritual exhaustion and questioning God's purpose for their lives.

These findings are consistent with Hidayah et al. (2021), who explain that the pressures experienced by widowed women frequently affect both their psychological and spiritual well-being. The burdens of daily life may reduce spiritual vitality when not accompanied by adequate social and spiritual support.

Despite these challenges, the participants continued striving to maintain their faith in God. Their experiences demonstrate that faith serves as a vital source of strength, enabling them to persevere through various life struggles.

4.1.4. Theological Analysis of the Dual Roles of Widowed Women

The findings reveal that the participants interpreted their lives through the lens of faith in God. All participants acknowledged that the strength to fulfill their dual roles as mothers, heads of households, and primary breadwinners originated from God's sustaining presence. Their life experiences demonstrate that faith functions as the primary source of strength in confronting economic, social, and spiritual challenges.

These findings are consistent with Moltmann (1997), who argues that God is present with humanity in the midst of suffering. The lives of the widowed women in the Ora et Labora Bogakele Congregation demonstrate that despite experiencing bereavement, economic hardship, and social pressure, they continue to perceive God's presence in their daily lives. Their experiences testify that God does not abandon His people during times of suffering.

Furthermore, the findings support Bevans (2002), who emphasizes that human experience constitutes an important context for theological reflection. The experiences of these widowed women became a context in which they learned to depend on God, discovered renewed strength, and interpreted suffering as part of their journey of faith. Consequently, their lived experiences may be understood as a locus theologicus, a context in which faith is experienced, interpreted, and expressed in everyday life.

From a biblical perspective, the participants' experiences also correspond with Psalm 68:5, which declares that God is "a father to the fatherless and a protector of widows." This passage emphasizes God's special concern for those living in vulnerable circumstances. The divine assistance experienced by the participants through the strength to work, raise their children, and endure life's hardships—reflects God's continual providential care.

Therefore, the dual roles of widowed women should be understood not merely as social and economic responsibilities but also as a vocation of faith carried out under God's sustaining presence. The church is called to respond through pastoral care, accompaniment, and empowerment so that widowed women may continue to grow in faith and fulfill their roles effectively within both their families and society. This understanding is consistent with Christian theology, which affirms that the church's mission extends beyond temporary assistance to the long-term support and empowerment of widowed women as valued members of the community of faith.

5. CONCLUSION

This study demonstrates that widowed women in the Ora et Labora Bogakele Congregation assume interconnected domestic, caregiving, and economic responsibilities following the loss of their husbands, thereby performing dual roles that sustain the continuity of family life. Beyond nurturing and educating their children, they become the primary breadwinners through farming and traditional weaving to meet household needs and support their children's education. These findings indicate that the transition to single-parent household leadership requires substantial adaptation, as widowed women negotiate multiple responsibilities while maintaining family stability despite limited resources. Rather than representing merely an expansion of domestic obligations, these dual roles reflect resilience expressed through continuous responsibility, sacrifice, and commitment to preserving family well-being.

The findings further reveal that these responsibilities are accompanied by multidimensional challenges spanning economic, social, and spiritual domains. Economic vulnerability emerges through unstable incomes derived from agriculture and traditional weaving, creating persistent financial pressure in fulfilling daily household needs. Socially, widowed women continue to encounter limited support networks, community skepticism regarding their capacity to lead their families independently, and the burden of carrying household responsibilities without a spouse. At the same time, they actively maintain relationships within their communities and continue participating in church life whenever possible. Spiritually, the demands of balancing work and family responsibilities often reduce opportunities for prayer, worship, and personal spiritual formation, yet these constraints do not negate their faith. Instead, participants consistently identify their relationship with God as a sustaining source of strength that enables them to endure ongoing hardship.

From a theological perspective, the experiences of widowed women in the Ora et Labora Bogakele Congregation illustrate that their dual roles may be understood as expressions of a lived vocation carried out under God's sustaining presence. The participants' perseverance amid bereavement, economic hardship, and social pressure resonates with biblical narratives that portray God as the protector of widows, particularly as reflected in Psalm 68:5, as well as in the examples of Ruth and the widow of Zarephath, whose faithfulness, responsibility, and reliance upon divine providence are presented as enduring theological models. These findings therefore extend the understanding of widowhood beyond a condition of vulnerability by highlighting widowed women as individuals who embody dignity, agency, and faithful stewardship within both family and church contexts. Consequently, the study underscores the importance of strengthening pastoral, social, and spiritual support systems that recognize widowed women not only as recipients of care but also as active contributors to the vitality of family and congregational life, while enriching theological discussions on lived faith, resilience, and community responsibility in contemporary Christian contexts.

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