



CENTRIS

CURRENT AFFAIRS

WIFE WORKING WITHOUT MUTUAL AGREEMENT

BY LUQMANUL HAKEEM BIN MUHAMMAD SHAH, MUHAMMAD UMAR HARITH BIN MOHAMMAD SALLEH, MUHAMMAD RAYYAN BIN HUSNI BALIS, DR. FATIMAH KARIM

INTRODUCTION

This article provides a comprehensive analysis of the Islamic legal rulings concerning a wife working without her husband's permission, an issue that has become increasingly relevant in contemporary Muslim societies due to social, educational, and economic developments. As Muslim women continue to actively participate in professional fields such as healthcare, education, business, and administration, discussions on marital authority, women's autonomy, and family responsibilities have become more significant. The article aims not only to explain the legal rulings from the perspective of Islamic jurisprudence but also to highlight the ethical principles and objectives of Sharia behind these rulings, particularly in preserving justice, family harmony, mutual rights, and societal stability within the institution of marriage.

ISLAMIC PERSPECTIVE

In Islam, if a wife works without mutual agreement or her husband's permission, it may fall under forms of *nusyuz*, especially if it directly affects marital rights. *Nusyuz* refers to serious disobedience or conduct that damages the marital relationship. When a wife commits *nusyuz* towards her husband, the husband's obligation to provide maintenance (*nafaqah*) to the wife is no longer required according to Islamic family jurisprudence. A wife is obliged to seek her husband's permission before leaving the house. This is related to a hadith narrated by Abu Hurairah (may Allah be pleased with him), who reported that the Prophet ﷺ said:

"لو كنت أمرًا أحدًا أن يسجد لأحد لأمرت المرأة أن تسجد لزوجها"

"If I were to order anyone to prostrate himself before another, I would have ordered a woman to prostrate herself before her husband".
(At-Tirmidhi)

From this hadith, we understand that Islam encourages wives to respect their husband's authority and decisions, especially in matters that may affect family welfare, responsibilities, or the rights of both spouses.

However, a wife is permitted to work without her husband's permission if:

- Her husband fails to provide maintenance (*nafaqah*).
- Her husband's income cannot cover necessities such as food, clothing, and shelter.
- The wife was already working before marriage, and her husband explicitly or implicitly agreed to allow her to continue working.

The wife must also ensure that the work environment and nature of the job are halal and do not lead to the complete neglect of her primary family duties. Any income earned by the wife belongs entirely to her. She is not legally or religiously obligated to spend her income on the household. If she chooses to contribute, it is considered an act of voluntary charity (*sadaqah*).

All in all, a wife working without mutual agreement is a crucial issue nowadays, as it can be one of the reasons *nusyuz* occurs in society. A wife is allowed to work, and Islam recognises women's contributions to society and the economy. Nevertheless, marriage in Islam is based on mutual consultation, respect, and the fulfilment of responsibilities. Therefore, both spouses need to communicate wisely and understand each other so that personal ambitions and fairness can be preserved.

Contemporary Challenges

In the modern era, divorce has become an increasingly significant issue due to rising marital conflicts caused by misunderstandings between husbands and wives. Factors such as work pressure, financial problems, lack of communication, and differences in opinions regarding family responsibilities often contribute to this issue. In addition, changes in lifestyle and the roles of spouses today may also create conflicts, especially regarding a wife's career and employment. If these problems are not managed properly, they may weaken the relationship and eventually lead to divorce. Therefore, tolerance, effective communication, and mutual understanding are essential in maintaining harmony in marriage.

Various studies have shown that communication problems between husbands and wives are among the main factors contributing to divorce. Ineffective communication can lead to misunderstandings about each partner's roles and responsibilities, including issues such as a wife working without her husband's permission or mutual agreement. Differences in opinions regarding employment, family responsibilities, and financial needs that are not discussed openly may create dissatisfaction and continuous conflict between spouses. As a result, the relationship may become increasingly strained and eventually contribute to divorce if there is no tolerance and mutual understanding between both parties.

To sum up, the issue of a wife working without her husband's permission may lead to misunderstandings and conflicts in marriage when there is a lack of communication and tolerance between spouses. Differences in opinions regarding careers and family responsibilities should be resolved through proper discussion to maintain harmony within the household. From an Islamic perspective, wives are encouraged to seek their husband's consent regarding employment, while Islam also emphasises fairness, tolerance, and mutual consultation to prevent conflicts that could lead to divorce.

One of the solutions to address the issue of a wife working without her husband's permission is to apply the principle of *musyawarah* (consultation) between spouses. In Islam, decisions related to family matters should be discussed openly to avoid misunderstandings and conflicts. Husbands and wives should communicate clearly regarding work responsibilities, financial needs, and family commitments before making any decisions related to employment. In addition, the principle of *maslahah* should also be considered, where every action should bring benefit and prevent harm to the family. If the wife's employment contributes positively to the household without neglecting her responsibilities, then it may help strengthen family welfare and stability.

Furthermore, the issue can also be addressed through the application of *Maqasid al-Shariah*, particularly the objective of preserving the family institution (*hifz al-usrah*). Islam emphasises the importance of maintaining harmony, trust, and mutual respect between husband and wife in order to protect the stability of marriage. Both spouses should avoid actions that may create tension and weaken the relationship. Besides that, the principles of justice and balance should also be practised within the household. Husbands should exercise leadership fairly and reasonably, while wives should respect their husbands' role as family leaders. A balanced understanding of rights and responsibilities can help reduce disputes and prevent conflicts that may eventually lead to divorce.

Several recommendations can be implemented to reduce conflicts related to a wife working without her husband's permission. Among them are strengthening premarital and marital counselling programmes, encouraging open communication between spouses, and increasing awareness of Islamic family values regarding rights and responsibilities in marriage. In addition, mutual respect, tolerance, and cooperation between husband and wife are important to ensure harmony within the household and prevent conflicts that may lead to divorce.

Solution and Recommendation

CONCLUSION

To wrap it all up, the rise of modern careers for Muslim women has naturally changed how families manage work and home life. While Islamic jurisprudence requires a wife to seek her husband's permission to work, it also provides protection through clear exceptions, such as when the husband is unable to provide basic maintenance or when she was already working before the marriage. In addition, Sharia strictly protects her financial independence: any income she earns belongs entirely to her, and contributing to household expenses is considered an act of voluntary charity (*sadaqah*). At the heart of this issue, when a wife's employment causes tension or leads to divorce, the root problem is rarely the job itself; rather, it is usually a breakdown in communication, stress, and misaligned expectations. The best way forward is to rely on core Islamic values such as *musyawarah* (open consultation), *maslahah* (acting for the family's shared benefit), and the overall objectives of Maqasid al-Shariah to protect the marriage. By investing in better marital counselling and focusing on mutual respect, empathy, and fair leadership, couples can effectively balance their career ambitions with a happy and stable home.

REFERENCES

- Abu Bakr Ba-Dhib, Muhammad. 2025. "Can a Woman Work Without Her Husband's Permission?" SeekersGuidance. January 23, 2025. <https://seekersguidance.org/answers/jobs-and-income/can-a-woman-work-without-her-husbands-permission/>.
- Darul Iftaa Jordan. 2023. "Ruling on Woman Working Without Husband's Permission." IslamQA. October 1, 2023. <https://islamqa.org/shafii/darul-iftaa-jordan/226035/ruling-on-woman-working-without-husbands-permission/>.
- Hasanah, Annisa Nurul. 2020a. "Hukum Wanita Bekerja Tanpa Izin Suami." Bincang Syariah. January 9, 2020. <https://bincangsyariah.com/hukum-islam/nisa/hukum-wanita-bekerja-tanpa-izin-suami/>.
- Hasanah, Annisa Nurul. 2020b. "Tiga Ketentuan Hukum Istri Yang Bekerja Tanpa Izin Suami." Bincang Muslimah. January 10, 2020. <https://bincangmuslimah.com/kajian/tiga-ketentuan-hukum-istri-yang-bekerja-tanpa-izin-suami-28034/>.
- Fatin Nabilah, Nur, Afiqah Haris, Liana Ab Latif, et al. 2024. "Analisis Faktor Perceraian Dalam Kalangan Pasangan Belia Di Seberang Perai Utara Menurut Undang-Undang Kekeluargaan Islam." In ESTEEM Journal of Social Sciences and Humanities, vol. 8. no. 1. <https://ir.uitm.edu.my/id/eprint/99017/>.
- الدكتور محمد سعيد المجاهد & أستاذ مشارك في الفقه وأصوله, 2016, كتاب فقه الأسرة, https://italeemc.iium.edu.my/pluginfile.php/289806/mod_resource/content/0/%D9%83%D8%AA%D8%A7%D8%A8%20%D9%81%D9%82%D9%87%20%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%A3%D8%B3%D8%B1%D8%A9.pdf

This article is part of the Synergized Academic with Student Activities (SAA) initiative.

Luqmanul Hakeem Bin Muhammad Shah

Muhammad Umar Harith Bin Mohammad Salleh

Muhammad Rayyan Bin Husni Balis

Dr. Fatimah Karim an Assistant Professor of Department Fiqh and Usul al-Fiqh, AHAS IRKHS IIUM.



WIFE WORKING WITHOUT MUTUAL AGREEMENT

prepared by:
umar - rayyan - luqman

THE ISSUE

- A wife working without her husband's permission may lead to marital conflict.
- The issue is often caused by misunderstandings about rights, responsibilities, and family roles.
- Differences in opinions on careers, finances, and household matters can create disputes.
- These conflicts may affect marital harmony and family stability.

FIQH PRINCIPLE

- A wife working without her husband's permission may fall under form of nusyuz
- Nusyuz = serious disobedience or conduct that damages the marital relationship
- When nusyuz happened, she will not eligible to receive nafaqah from her husband
- The wife is obligatory to ask husband's permission first before leaving the house.
- The wife is permissible to work **IF**:
 1. her husband fails to provide maintenance (nafakah)
 2. her husband's income cannot cover necessities like food, clothing, and shelter
 3. the wife was already working before marriage and the husband explicitly or implicitly agreed to let her continue.

RELATED HADITH

وَعَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ قَالَ: قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ: «لَوْ كُنْتُ أَمْرًا أَحَدًا أَنْ يَسْجُدَ لِأَحَدٍ لَأَمَرْتُ الْمَرْأَةَ أَنْ تَسْجُدَ لِرَجُلِهَا»
رَوَاهُ التِّرْمِذِيُّ

Abu Huraira reported God's Messenger as saying, "If I were to order anyone to prostrate himself before another, I would order a woman to prostrate herself before her husband."

-Tirmidhi transmitted it-

ISLAMIC SOLUTION FROM MAQASID SHARIAH

1 Hifz al-Usrah



- Islam emphasises the preservation of family harmony and marital stability.
- Actions that create conflict and tension in marriage contradict the objectives of Shariah.

2 Hifz al-Din



- Islam emphasises mutual respect and responsibility between husband and wife.
- Wives should respect their husbands in matters that are good and lawful.
- Husbands are required to act fairly and avoid oppressing their wives.
- Mutual respect helps build a harmonious family based on Shariah principles.

3 Hifz al-Nafs



- A wife's employment may help support the family's financial stability.
- Reducing financial pressure contributes to family well-being.
- Employment is permissible if household responsibilities are not neglected.
- This is consistent with the objectives of Maqasid Shariah in preserving welfare and stability.

4 Hifz al-Mal



- Islam encourages proper financial management for family well-being.
- A wife's employment can help improve the family's economic condition.
- Additional financial support may benefit the stability and continuity of the family.