

Between Distance and Obligation: Spousal Maintenance in Long-Distance Muslim Marriages in Sukowidi Village under Islamic Family Law

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Abstract: In the context of modern life, challenges in fulfilling financial obligations often arise when couples are in a long-distance marriage. This occurs because the husband or wife leaves the city to earn a living or improve the family's economic situation. This article will discuss the efforts of husbands and wives in long-distance marriages to provide for their families and the implications of long-distance marriages on the provision of livelihoods for husbands and wives in Sukowidi Village, Kartoharjo District, Magetan Regency. This research is field research using data collection techniques, interviews, observation, and documentation. The reality in the Sukowidi community in Kartoharjo Subdistrict is that many husbands work outside the Magetan area. To answer the research questions, the researcher interviewed four families. The results of the study show that the majority of couples are able to fulfill their material needs (clothing, food, shelter), and confirm that distance does not hinder the fulfillment of needs as long as both parties have responsibility and commitment to each other. Success in fulfilling the husband's financial obligations to his wife is highly dependent on open communication, fair division of roles, and efforts to maintain emotional and spiritual needs. Long-distance marriage has significant implications for the psychological, emotional, and communication aspects of the family.

Keywords: Spousal Maintenance, Husband's Financial Responsibility, Long-Distance Marriage, Family Harmony

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Abstrak: Dalam konteks kehidupan modern, tantangan pemenuhan nafkah sering muncul ketika pasangan harus menjalani pernikahan jarak jauh. Hal ini terjadi karena suami atau istri pergi ke luar kota untuk mencari nafkah atau memperbaiki perekonomian keluarga. Artikel ini akan membahas usaha suami istri pernikahan jarak jauh dalam pemenuhan nafkah dan bagaimana implikasi pernikahan jarak jauh dalam pemenuhan nafkah suami istri di Desa Sukowidi, Kecamatan Kartoharjo, Kabupaten Magetan. Penelitian ini merupakan penelitian field Research (Penelitian Lapangan) dengan teknik pengumpulan data, wawancara, observasi, dan dokumentasi. Realitas yang terjadi pada masyarakat Sukowidi Kecamatan Kartoharjo banyak suami yang bekerja di luar wilayah Magetan. Untuk menjawab masalah penelitian, peneliti mewawancarai empat keluarga. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa mayoritas pasangan dapat memenuhi nafkah lahir (sandang, pangan, papan), dan menegaskan bahwa jarak tidak menghambat pemenuhan nafkah selama keduanya memiliki tanggung jawab, komitmen antar pasangan. Keberhasilan dalam pemenuhan nafkah suami kepada istri sangat bergantung pada komunikasi yang terbuka, pembagian peran yang adil, serta upaya menjaga kebutuhan batin dan spiritual. Pernikahan jarak jauh membawa implikasi signifikan pada aspek psikologis, emosional, dan komunikasi dalam keluarga.

Kata Kunci: Nafkah, Tanggung Jawab Suami, Pernikahan Jarak Jauh, Keharmonisan Keluarga

Introduction

Marriage constitutes a formal and spiritual bond between a man and a woman that is institutionalized within a legal framework as a relationship between husband and wife. This bond is not merely legalistic or procedural in nature; rather, it encompasses profound spiritual, moral, and social dimensions. The fundamental objective of marriage is to establish a family that is *sakinah*—characterized by tranquility, harmony, and sustainability—grounded in belief in the One Almighty God as the ethical and normative foundation of domestic life.

From the Islamic perspective, marriage occupies a central position as an integral component of religious teaching. It is conceived not only as a social institution but also as an act of worship endowed with transcendent value. Through marriage, a Muslim seeks to perfect their religiosity while simultaneously fulfilling the Sunnah of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him). Moreover, marriage serves to ensure the continuity of generations,

safeguard human dignity and honor, and embody an expression of gratitude for the blessings and divine favors bestowed by Allah (SWT).

According to McBride and Bergen, the concept of *Long-Distance Marriage* (LDM) refers to a condition in which married couples are required to reside in separate locations for a certain period due to work obligations or career advancement, thereby preventing them from engaging in daily physical interaction as is typical in conventional marital relationships. In such circumstances, one spouse leaves the shared residence to fulfill professional responsibilities, while the other remains at home and assumes primary domestic roles. This phenomenon of long-distance marriage has become increasingly prominent in modern society as a consequence of intensified globalization, heightened labor mobility, and the growing complexity of professional demands.¹

Although spouses may be physically separated, the ideal of a harmonious family remains the primary orientation in the organization of marital life. From an Islamic perspective, family harmony is articulated through the concepts of *sakinah*, *mawaddah*, and *rahmah*, which serve as the foundational principles of a just and sustainable domestic relationship. Such harmony is not determined solely by physical presence; rather, it is substantially sustained by the quality of effective communication established among family members. Well-maintained communication functions as a central instrument for preserving emotional closeness, strengthening psychological bonds, and minimizing the potential for disharmony, even when family relations are conducted under conditions of geographical separation.²

The rights and obligations between husband and wife not only reflect shared responsibilities but also encompass the respective rights and duties of each party, which are systematically regulated in the Compilation of Islamic Law (Kompilasi Hukum Islam/KHI), particularly Articles 80 and 83. These provisions affirm the role of the husband as a guide and leader for his wife and

¹ Ika Pratiwi Rachman, Pemaknaan seorang istri terhadap pengalamannya menjalani pernikahan jarak jauh, *Jurnal Ilmiah Mahasiswa Universitas Surabaya*, .2, (2017), 5.

² Agus Riyadi, *Bimbingan Konseling Perkawinan Dakwah dalam Membentuk Keluarga Sakinah*, (Yogyakarta: Ombak, 2013), 104.

family, without negating the principle of *musyawarah* (mutual consultation) in making strategic household decisions, which should be undertaken jointly by both spouses. In addition, the husband bears the obligation to provide protection for his wife and to fulfill the family's financial maintenance (*nafkah*) in accordance with his economic capacity and ability.

The phenomenon of long-distance households in Indonesia has increasingly become a common social reality in everyday life. This condition is generally driven by economic pressures, wherein one spouse—most often the husband—chooses or is compelled to work outside the region or even abroad as a private-sector employee, factory laborer, or Indonesian migrant worker. The growing prevalence of long-distance marriages over time is frequently intertwined with differences in attitudes and preferences within the family. In many cases, the husband, who carries the primary obligation of providing financial support, must work in locations far from the family residence, while the wife opts to remain at home due to social, cultural, or emotional considerations. As a result, the couple conducts their marital life within a long-distance relationship as a strategy to sustain the family's economic continuity. Similar conditions are also observed among married couples residing in Sukowidi Village, Kartoharjo District.

Ideally, marital life is lived within a shared residence, with daily communication serving as the foundation of family harmony and resilience. However, increasingly complex economic pressures have prompted some couples to undertake long-distance marriages as a means of meeting basic needs and maintaining family stability. In this context, the issue of fulfilling financial maintenance obligations in long-distance households becomes a relevant and significant subject of inquiry, given that geographical separation has the potential to generate various forms of harm within the husband-wife relationship, even as it simultaneously offers economic benefits for the sustainability of the household.

Based on empirical realities in Sukowidi Village, Kartoharjo District, Magetan Regency, this study finds that the practice of long-distance marriage gives rise to distinctive dynamics in the fulfillment of spousal rights and obligations, particularly with regard to financial maintenance from the

perspective of Islamic economic law.³ The researcher identified four married couples who are living in long-distance marriages. This condition arises because one spouse, either the husband or the wife, is required to leave the place of origin to work in order to improve the family's economic condition. The couples engaged in long-distance marriages are Mr. DRP and Mrs. AAS, Mr. BAL and Mrs. UQH, Mr. AN and Mrs. NM, as well as Mr. KH and Mrs. UZ.

This study is a field-based investigation aimed at examining in depth the practices of fulfilling financial maintenance (*nafkah*) in long-distance marriages among Muslim couples in Sukowidi Village, Kartoharjo District, Magetan Regency. The research employs a qualitative approach with a juridical-sociological orientation, integrating the analysis of Islamic legal norms—particularly provisions on maintenance in the Compilation of Islamic Law—with the social realities prevailing in the community. This approach is adopted because the issue of *nafkah* in long-distance marriages is not solely a normative-legal matter but is also shaped by social, economic, psychological conditions, as well as patterns of spousal relations in everyday life. Research data were collected through in-depth interviews, non-participant observation, and documentation in order to obtain a comprehensive empirical picture and to ensure data validity through source and technique triangulation.

The research subjects consist of four married couples living in long-distance marriages, namely DRP-AAS, BAL-UQH, AN-NM, and KH-UZ. The selection of informants was conducted purposively, based on the consideration that these couples have experienced long-distance marriage over a relatively extended period and possess direct experience regarding the fulfillment of both material and non-material maintenance obligations. The data obtained were subsequently analyzed using a descriptive-analytical technique involving data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing. The analysis links field findings with the principles of Islamic family law, the concept of *nafkah*, and the values of *sakinah*, *mawaddah*, and *rahmah*, thereby yielding a comprehensive understanding of the implications of long-distance

³ Interview with Mr. Wawan, Village Official of Sukowidi, October 31, 2024.

marriage for the fulfillment of maintenance obligations within the context of contemporary Muslim family life.

Long-Distance Marriage

1. The Concept of Long-Distance Marriage

According to Rahmat Hakim, the term *nikah* originates from the Arabic word *nikāḥun*, which functions as a *maṣḍar* (verbal noun) derived from the past-tense verb (*fi l māḍī*) *nakaha*. It is synonymous with *tazawwaja* and is translated into Indonesian as *perkawinan* (marriage). In Islamic legal discourse, the term denotes a lawful bond that establishes marital relations between a man and a woman, carrying legal, moral, and religious implications.⁴

From the perspective of *fiqh*, the definition of *nikah* or marriage has been articulated by classical and contemporary scholars using varied formulations; however, these definitions are substantively convergent in meaning. In general, they may be distilled into the understanding that marriage constitutes a contract (*‘aqd*) prescribed by Islamic law, which confers legal legitimacy upon a man and a woman to establish a marital relationship. Through this marriage contract, both spouses acquire rights and obligations that are valid under Islamic law, including the lawful enjoyment of physical and emotional intimacy in a dignified manner, within a framework that upholds honor, human dignity, and the higher objectives of marriage.⁵

Long-distance marriage (*long-distance marriage*) refers to a condition in which husband and wife are unable to live together in the same residence. This situation arises due to significant geographical separation—such as living in different regions, islands, or even countries—which makes it impractical for the couple to meet regularly within an expected timeframe. Such substantial distance, coupled with financial constraints and limited mobility, constitutes the primary indicator compelling spouses to maintain their marital relationship while living apart. This condition ultimately results in reduced frequency of

⁴ Tihami, Sohari Sahrani, *Fikih Munakahat: Kajian Fikih Nikah Lengkap*, (Jakarta: PT Raja Grafindo Persada, 2013), 6-7

⁵ Dedi Junaedi, *Keluarga Sakinah (Pembinaan dan Pelestariannya)*, (Jakarta: CV Akademik Pressindo, 2007), 23

meetings and diminished family togetherness, both in physical and emotional terms.⁶

Based on the degree of physical proximity, interpersonal relationships may be classified into two types: *Geographically Close Relationships* and *Long-Distance Relationships*. In the context of marriage, the latter is commonly referred to as *Long-Distance Marriage*, denoting a marital relationship characterized by geographical separation between spouses. Linguistically, the term *long-distance marriage* consists of three words: *long*, meaning far; *distance*, meaning separation or space; and *marriage*, meaning a legally and socially recognized marital union. Accordingly, in its literal sense, a long-distance marriage refers to a marital relationship conducted across significant physical distance. Substantively, it describes a condition in which husband and wife, along with other family members, are separated by geographical distance and therefore do not reside under the same roof.

2. Factors Contributing to Long-Distance Marital Relationships

As a manifestation of responsibility toward the family, individuals are sometimes required to live apart in order to fulfill their family's economic needs. Such conditions are certainly not undertaken without reason; rather, there are several underlying factors that lead a person to decide to live separately from their family, whether in another city or even abroad. Kaufman identifies two principal factors contributing to long-distance marital relationships, namely education and employment, as cited by Ardi Akbar T and Ariyadi in their study on long-distance marriage from the perspective of Islamic law.

Education constitutes one of the contributing factors to long-distance marriage when an individual is required to pursue higher education at an institution located far from the family residence, thereby necessitating physical separation from other family members. Employment, on the other hand, becomes a determining factor when job demands imposed by an employer, or the inadequacy of income in the place of origin, compel one spouse to seek work elsewhere. In such circumstances, individuals may choose to migrate to

⁶ Eka Rahmah Eliyani, Keterbukaan Komunikasi Interpersonal Pasangan Suami Istri, *Jurnal Ilmu Komunikasi*, 2(2013), 87

another city or even overseas in order to secure better employment opportunities and ensure the fulfillment of their family's livelihood.

3. Impacts of Long-Distance Marital Relationships

a. Limited Communication

One of the primary challenges in long-distance marriages is the lack of sufficient communication. Differences in time zones and the busy schedules of each spouse often result in infrequent interaction. If such a situation persists, the relationship may become fragile and susceptible to misunderstandings and mistrust, potentially giving rise to new conflicts.

b. Spousal Presence

The physical presence of a spouse is expected to provide emotional support and alleviate feelings of loneliness. However, in a long-distance marriage, one spouse may feel neglected if the other rarely communicates or provides updates. This condition can exacerbate relational strain, as prolonged loneliness may lead to dissatisfaction within the marriage.

c. Infidelity

Infidelity is frequently associated with feelings of loneliness. Geographical separation may prompt one spouse to seek emotional attention from others as a substitute for their partner. Beyond being a potential cause, infidelity can also intensify the sense of isolation experienced by the betrayed spouse, further deteriorating the condition of the long-distance marital relationship.

Financial Maintenance (*Nafkah*)

Nafkah is derived from the term *alinfāq*, which literally means “to spend” or “to expend.” Technically, *nafkah* refers to the provision given by a husband to his wife, a father to his children, or a family member to relatives, intended to meet their basic and essential needs.⁷ Another definition states that *nafkah* comprises food, clothing, and shelter provided to those who are entitled to receive them.⁸

⁷ Direktorat Jenderal Pembinaan Kelembagaan Agama Islam Departemen Agama, Ilmu Fiqh, (Jakarta: Kementerian Agama, 1985), 184.

⁸ Abu Bakar Jabir Al-Jazari, *Minahul Muslim Pedoman Hidup Seorang Muslim*, (Jakarta: Umul Qura, 2014), 863

In Islamic legal terminology, *nafkah* refers to the necessities and essential provisions required in a given context and place, such as food, clothing, and shelter. The provision of *nafkah* is considered obligatory (*wajib*), and there is consensus among scholars that this duty must be fulfilled without dispute.⁹

It can be understood from the definitions outlined above that *nafkah* represents a form of provision with material or practical value, given to a wife, children, and other family members as a manifestation of the husband's responsibility to fulfill the needs of those under his care. The fulfillment of *nafkah*, encompassing food, clothing, and shelter, becomes applicable once a legitimate marriage contract has been established. The *nafkah* provided by the husband should be lawful (*halal*) in nature. Any provision of *nafkah* derived from unlawful (*haram*) sources will incur accountability in the hereafter, even if the provision has already been consumed or integrated into the recipient's sustenance.

Regarding the timing of *nafkah* provision, scholars (*fuqahā'*) hold differing opinions. According to the Hanafi school of thought, the husband's obligation to provide *nafkah* arises immediately upon the execution of a valid marriage contract (*'aqd nikāh*).¹⁰ In contrast, scholars from the Shafi'i, Maliki, and Hanbali schools of thought argue that the husband's obligation to provide *nafkah* does not arise immediately upon the execution of a valid marriage contract. Rather, the duty becomes incumbent only after the husband consummates the marriage with his wife.

A husband is obligated to provide *nafkah* to his wife and children. The primary *nafkah* is intended to meet the basic necessities of life, including food, clothing, and shelter. This obligation is determined according to the husband's financial capacity and the actual needs of the family. According to Abdurrahman, *nafkah* encompasses all living expenses, covering the rights of

⁹ Muslimah Abdul Karim, *Keistimewaan Nafkah Suami dan Kewajiban Istri*, (Jakarta: Quantum Media, 2007), 54

¹⁰ Wahhab Zuhaili, *al-fiqh al-islami wa adillatuhu*, jilid 10, (Jakarta:Gema Insani, 2011), 112-113

the wife and children with respect to food, clothing, and housing, as well as other essential needs, even if the wife is a wealthy woman.¹¹

From the perspective of Islamic law, a husband's obligation to provide *nafkah* to his wife—including food, clothing, and shelter—is absolute. This duty is not contingent upon the wife's personal needs or her ability to contribute to household sustenance; rather, it is mandated by the command of Allah (SWT). Therefore, even if a wife possesses independent financial resources, whether through personal wealth or employment, the husband remains responsible for providing *nafkah* in accordance with Sharia law. This principle affirms that *nafkah* constitutes a legally guaranteed right of the wife and simultaneously serves as a manifestation of the husband's responsibility in maintaining a harmonious family in compliance with religious guidance.¹²

The amount of *nafkah* is determined solely by the husband's financial capacity. The wife has no right and is prohibited from demanding more than what the husband can reasonably provide. If the husband and wife live together in the same household, he is obliged to fulfill the *nafkah* of both his wife and children, covering food, clothing, drink, shelter, and other essential needs. Should the husband act stingily—providing only the minimum required without a valid reason—the wife has the right to claim an appropriate amount of *nafkah* to adequately meet her and her children's needs for food, clothing, and housing.¹³

Husband and Wife Obligations in Fulfilling Family Nafkah

Couples who uphold the values of marriage and are capable of mutual forgiveness are assumed to possess the potential to build a harmonious family. Such harmony is realized through active cooperation between husband and wife in fulfilling their respective obligations in a balanced manner. The duties of spouses encompass two dimensions: material obligations, which involve providing for tangible needs, and non-material obligations, which include emotional attention, support, and spiritual guidance. In terms of rights, the wife

¹¹ Abdurrahman, *Perkawinan dalam Syari"at Islam*, (Jakarta: Rineka Cipta, 1992), 121.

¹² Husni Fuaddi, *Konsep Nafkah Keluarga Dalam Islam*, (Jawa Barat: Guepedia, 2020), 34

¹³ H.M.A. Tihami dan Sohari Sahrani, *Fikih Munakahat (Kajian Fikih Nikah Lengkap)*. Jakarta : Rajawali Pers, 2014, 153.

is entitled to proper treatment, fulfillment of basic needs, the *mahr* (marital gift), and opportunities for education and religious learning. Meanwhile, the husband is entitled to the wife's obedience in matters that are good, her full commitment to the marital relationship, as well as the protection and maintenance of family property. This reciprocal framework of rights and obligations establishes a normative foundation that supports harmony, justice, and balance within the household.¹⁴

Emotional (*batin*) *nafkah* is directed toward both spouses, whereby the husband is obliged to treat his wife kindly, and likewise, the wife has a corresponding duty to behave well toward her husband. Meanwhile, material (*lahir*) *nafkah*, consisting of financial and tangible provisions, remains primarily the husband's responsibility, although under certain circumstances the wife may contribute, particularly if she possesses the ability to work on par with her husband. In principle, there is no essential difference between men and women regarding rights and obligations. Especially in the contemporary era, women are no longer positioned as subordinate to men, as both are under the authority and will of Allah (SWT), which affirms equality in rights, duties, and responsibilities within the household.¹⁵ Islamic law positions husband and wife in roles that align with their respective nature, with the aim of enabling mutual complementarity in fulfilling household responsibilities. This division of duties is structured so that neither spouse is entirely dependent on the other; rather, each contributes proportionally to maintain balance, harmony, and the continuity of family life in accordance with the principles of Sharia.¹⁶ The fulfillment of *nafkah* within the domain of family economics is primarily the responsibility of the husband as the head of the household. However, with the progression of time, women are no longer required to remain passive recipients of *nafkah* from their husbands; they may also contribute to sustaining the family's economic well-being, for instance, through employment. The husband's provision of *nafkah* must be carried out fully, proportionally, and in

¹⁴ Nawawi Al Batani, *Hak-Hak dan Kewajiban Suami Istri*, (Yogyakarta: Penerbit Kalam, 2020), 10

¹⁵ Sudarto, *Fikih Munakahat*, (Yogyakarta: CV. Budi Utama, 2021), 141

¹⁶ Imad Zaki Al-Barudi, *Tafsir Al-Qur'an Wanita 2*, (Jakarta: Pena Pundi Aksara), 63

accordance with Sharia principles, without reduction or stinginess, ensuring that the wife's rights are fulfilled and household balance is maintained.

Strategies for *Nafkah* Fulfillment by Couples in Long-Distance Marriages in Sukowidi Village, Kartoharjo District, Magetan Regency

From an Islamic perspective, the fulfillment of *nafkah* is primarily the husband's responsibility to meet the basic needs of the family. This obligation arises from the moment the marriage contract is executed and serves as an instrument to maintain the integrity, stability, and continuity of the household.

Based on the researcher's findings from four informants engaged in long-distance marriages in Sukowidi Village, it was generally observed that material *nafkah*—including food, clothing, and shelter—has been provided. However, challenges arise when the husband fails to fulfill his obligations optimally toward his wife and children, even though geographical distance does not excuse neglecting family rights. The long-distance nature of the marriage encourages husbands to value shared time more consciously and strengthens their desire to foster emotional closeness with the nuclear family whenever opportunities to meet arise.

The following analysis presents an examination of *nafkah* fulfillment in long-distance marriages based on the researcher's observations, integrated with the theoretical framework guiding this study:

1. The DRP–AAS Couple

The DRP–AAS couple maintains a long-distance marriage with clearly defined and structured roles. The husband transfers his entire income to his wife, who manages it to cover household needs, childcare, and health-related expenses. Emotional (*batin*) *nafkah* is fulfilled through direct meetings whenever possible and through remote communication via video calls. The couple preserves harmony through openness and regular conversations during shared mealtimes. In terms of religious practice, although both have relatively limited religious backgrounds, they actively ensure their child receives religious education through TPA (Islamic teaching centers) and study sessions, while mutually reminding each other to perform religious duties.

From a *fiqh* perspective, the husband is obligated to provide both material and emotional *nafkah* to his wife, including food, clothing, shelter, affection, and fulfillment of biological needs. According to Wahbah al-Zuhaili, the obligation of *nafkah* arises from the moment a valid marriage contract is executed and remains the husband's full responsibility, independent of the wife's financial condition. The situation of the DRP-AAS couple reflects this principle, as *nafkah* is consistently provided despite the challenges posed by geographical separation.¹⁷ In the context of long-distance marriage, communication and emotional closeness are also crucial elements. According to long-distance marriage theory, geographical separation necessitates open communication and joint efforts to maintain commitment, ensuring that the marital bond remains strong despite physical distance.¹⁸

This couple demonstrates effective fulfillment of spousal *nafkah* in terms of material support, including financial planning and ensuring the family's essential needs are met. They also address emotional (*batin*) needs through direct interactions and video calls, reflecting an understanding of the importance of maintaining emotional closeness. Although their level of religiosity is limited, their efforts to enroll their child in religious education and to remind each other of religious duties represent a commitment to fulfilling their spiritual responsibilities.

2. The UQH-BAL Couple

The UQH-BAL couple demonstrates strong adaptability to the challenges of a long-distance marriage. The husband transfers a portion of his salary to cover family needs, while the wife, living with her in-laws, manages finances frugally and saves diligently. Emotional (*batin*) *nafkah* is maintained through regular communication, humor, and monthly meetings to fulfill intimate needs. In the religious domain, the wife—working as an MI teacher and actively involved in

¹⁷Wahbah az-Zuhaili, *Al-Fiqh al-Islami wa Adillatuhu*, (Jakarta: Gema Insani, 2011), 112-113.

¹⁸ M. Saadah & M. Sulthon, "Studi Komparatif Kualitas Komunikasi pada Pasangan Long Distance Marriage (LDM) dan Non-LDM Perspektif Interaksi Simbolik". *Tasyri': Journal of Islamic Law*, 4(1), 2025, 21-54.

NU—takes the lead in their child’s religious education, while the husband provides support from afar.

From a *fiqh* and Islamic legal perspective, fulfilling *nafkah* is the husband’s primary responsibility, encompassing both material and emotional aspects. In long-distance marriages, open communication and emotional presence are crucial factors for sustaining household harmony. The wife retains her rights to attention, protection, and the fulfillment of biological needs, even if they do not reside together. Regarding religious education, parental responsibilities must be executed collaboratively despite physical separation.

Based on this perspective, the UQH-BAL couple has successfully established a stable long-distance family system. Economic functions are effectively managed, while emotional and spiritual needs are addressed in balance, particularly through the wife’s active role. Household harmony is maintained through light-hearted communication, mature conflict management, and synergy between maternal involvement and the husband’s remote support.

3. The AN-NM Couple

This couple has maintained a long-distance marriage since the beginning of their union. The husband serves as the primary provider of the family’s *nafkah*, while the wife takes on contract work to supplement household management, including overseeing two kitchens. Emotional (*batin*) *nafkah* and the maintenance of emotional closeness are achieved through intensive communication, particularly via video calls, which serve as the main medium for preserving marital bonds and household harmony despite physical separation.¹⁹ Particularly when facing challenges, this intensive communication serves as a crucial means for conflict resolution and maintaining harmony. The couple fulfills their biological needs through weekly visits. In the spiritual domain, both acknowledge their limited religious knowledge and continue to

¹⁹ Nabilah Falah, “Pemenuhan Hak Dan Kewajiban Suami Istri Pada Pasangan Long Distance Marriage”. *ALASHLAH : Jurnal Hukum Keluarga dan Hukum Islam*, Vol. 1, No. 2, July 2022, p. 124-141.

rely on guidance from their parents to perform religious duties and educate their child in accordance with Islamic principles.

In Islam, young couples bear the same responsibilities regarding *nafkah* and child education as any other spouses. The religion does not differentiate spousal duties based on age but emphasizes cooperation and communication as key to marital harmony. Long-distance marriages particularly highlight the importance of active efforts to maintain emotional stability and uphold religious values within the family.²⁰

Based on this theoretical framework, the NM-AN couple has carried out their roles flexibly and adaptively. Both material (*lahir*) and emotional (*batin*) *nafkah* are consistently fulfilled despite economic and emotional challenges. While their religious understanding remains limited, their openness to learning and guidance from their parents reflects a positive commitment to maintaining religious values within the family.

4. The UZ-KH Couple

This young couple maintains their long-distance marriage with a collaborative spirit. The husband works and regularly provides *nafkah*, while the wife, employed as a village official, also allocates part of her income for their child's future. Emotional (*batin*) *nafkah* is fulfilled through respectful phone communication and face-to-face meetings during holidays, serving to maintain emotional closeness and household harmony despite geographical separation.²¹ In the religious domain, the wife, who has a background in Islamic education from her university studies, serves as the primary guide, instilling spiritual values from the very beginning of the marriage.

²⁰ Sudarto, *Fikih Munakahat*, (Yogyakarta: CV. Budi Utama, 2021), 141

²¹ M. Saadah & M. Sulthon, "Studi Komparatif Kualitas Komunikasi pada Pasangan Long Distance Marriage (LDM) dan Non-LDM Perspektif Interaksi Simbolik". *Tasyri': Journal of Islamic Law*, 4(1), 2025, 21-54. <https://doi.org/10.53038/tsyr.v4i1.147>.

Syafi'i posits that the provision of *nafkah* is determined solely by the husband's ability, and the wife's wealth or financial status does not affect the amount of *nafkah* owed.²²

From an Islamic law perspective, the husband remains responsible for providing *nafkah* as stipulated in Article 80, paragraph (1) of the Compilation of Islamic Law (KHI), while the wife may contribute to the family's economic needs without diminishing her position. According to Harun Nasution, an ideal family in Islam is one founded on love and mercy (*mawaddah wa rahmah*), coupled with the early cultivation of children's faith and moral character.

Based on this analysis, the UZ-KH couple demonstrates an adaptive and educational approach to marriage. They not only fulfill each other's basic rights but also build a household grounded in spiritual values. The wife assumes the role of religious guide without diminishing the husband's authority as the head of the family. Harmonious collaboration and healthy communication serve as the key factors enabling this couple to successfully navigate the challenges of long-distance marriage while maintaining a balance between roles, responsibilities, and household harmony.

Implications of Long-Distance Marriage from the Perspective of *Nafkah* Fulfillment in Sukowidi Village, Kartoharjo District, Magetan Regency

Indonesian positive law, as regulated in Law No. 1 of 1974 on Marriage, alongside the Islamic perspective, emphasizes that husband and wife possess reciprocal rights and obligations. The husband's responsibilities include providing *nafkah*, protection, and guidance for his wife and children, while also being physically and emotionally present in family life. The wife's duties encompass household management, child education, supporting her husband, and safeguarding the family's honor. Shared rights between spouses include receiving affection, maintaining harmonious communication, fulfilling

²² Afrizal Karimuddin, "Standardisasi Nafkah Istri: Studi Perbandingan Mazhab Maliki dan Mazhab Syafi'i", *MEDIA SYARIAH: Wahana Kajian Hukum Islam dan Pranata Sosial*, Volume 23, Number 1, Year 2021, 82-96.

material and emotional needs, and enjoying togetherness in child-rearing and family development.

In long-distance marriages, some of these rights and obligations may experience altered patterns or distortions due to physical separation. Nevertheless, marriage continues to be understood as a bond of body and soul between a man and a woman as husband and wife, with the goal of forming a happy and harmonious family grounded in mutual willingness, responsibility, and cooperation.²³ The following outlines the implications of *nafkah* fulfillment for couples engaged in long-distance marriage in Sukowidi Village, Kartoharjo District, Magetan Regency.

First, the DRP-AAS couple experiences a long-distance marriage with significant implications for household dynamics. Physical separation creates challenges in terms of presence and direct involvement in daily life, particularly in child-rearing and domestic decision-making. This situation requires both spouses to act independently and responsibly in fulfilling their respective duties. Despite maintaining their roles, feelings of loneliness and psychological burden frequently emerge due to the geographical distance.²⁴ However, this couple consistently demonstrates strong adaptability through commitment, trust, and intensive communication, serving as key strategies to maintain relationship stability.

Second, the UQH-BAL couple experiences a long-distance marriage with notable psychological and emotional implications. Initially, they assumed that physical separation would only affect their daily routines, but over time they realized that emotional distance also develops. This necessitates greater effort to maintain emotional closeness through scheduled, intensive, and consistent communication. The couple emphasizes the importance of discipline in setting aside regular time for interaction, as a strategy to adapt and sustain harmony in the context of a long-distance marriage.

²³ Agus Riyadi, *Bimbingan Konseling Perkawinan Dakwah Dalam Membentuk Keluarga Sakinah* (Yogyakarta: Ombak, 2013), 101.

²⁴ Rihab Said Aqil S., "Ketika Berjauhan Adalah Sebuah Pilihan" Studi Fenomenologi Pengalaman Istri Yang Berkerja Menjalani Pernikahan Jarak Jauh (Long Distance Marriage), *"Jurnal Empati"*, Volume 12, Nomor 05, Oktober 2023, 350-358.

Third, the NM-AN couple faces significant psychological implications from living apart. The husband experiences emotional pressure due to his inability to fully participate in daily childcare, while the wife sometimes feels like a single parent managing the household alone. Despite these challenges, both demonstrate mutual support, continuous communication, and reminders of their shared purpose to provide *nafkah* and raise their child responsibly. Open and effective communication thus becomes the key factor for maintaining harmony despite physical separation.

Fourth, the UZ-KH couple has practiced a long-distance marriage since the beginning of their union, resulting in substantial implications both emotionally and in terms of role distribution. Emotionally, the wife feels fatigued as she handles most domestic responsibilities, particularly caring for the baby, although parental support provides some relief. They acknowledge that their situation would differ if they lived together. In terms of role distribution, the wife assumes a more dominant role in childcare, while the husband focuses on providing financial support. Despite these challenges, both agree that their efforts are crucial for the family's future, especially for the child's well-being, reflecting strong commitment to sustaining a long-distance marriage.

A family is considered harmonious when it embodies three core elements aligned with the objectives of marriage in Islam. First, *Sakinah*—signifying tranquility, peace, and security—requires a household founded on faith, mutual love, acceptance of each other's shortcomings, and balanced fulfillment of material (*lahir*) and emotional (*batin*) needs. Second, *Mawaddah*—representing deep affection—implies a family life imbued with love and hope. Third, *Rahmah*—compassion within the family—entails the husband showing sincere affection to his wife, respecting her, avoiding harshness, and providing *nafkah* willingly, while the wife reciprocates with genuine love for her husband and children, safeguarding the family's honor, and upholding religious duties and the Sunnah of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him). Together, these principles foster divine blessings (*rahmat*) upon the household.²⁵

²⁵ Moh Idris Ramulyo, *Hukum Perkawinan Islam Suatu Analisis Dari Undang-Undang No 1 Tahun 1974 Dan Kompilasi Hukum Islam* (Jakarta: Bumi Aksara, 2004), 25.

Based on data obtained from couples in Sukowidi Village, despite living apart, they uphold the principles of faith while continuing to show affection and complement one another. Although they occasionally experience loneliness and emotional stress, their love and hope for the future strengthen their resolve to sustain family life. The husband's responsibility in providing *nafkah* and the wife's dedication in caring for the children reflect a foundation of trust and a loving family environment.

The fulfillment of emotional (*batin*) *nafkah* in these couples aligns with characteristics of a harmonious family described by scholars: effective communication, mutual respect, acceptance of each other's shortcomings, spending quality time together, and the ability to resolve conflicts positively and constructively. These findings indicate that long-distance marriages among couples in Sukowidi Village have positive impacts on family relationships, contributing to the development of a harmonious and prosperous household.

Fulfillment of *Nafkah* in Long-Distance Marriages: Perspectives from Islamic Family Law

The provision of alimony constitutes a fundamental pillar in Islamic family law, inherently attached to the husband's obligation as a consequence of a valid marriage contract. This obligation extends beyond mere economic responsibility, representing a manifestation of the principles of protection (*hifz al-nafs*) and the preservation of a dignified household. In the context of long-distance marriages, the concept of alimony encounters structural challenges, as physical separation can influence relational patterns, communication, and the implementation of spousal responsibilities. This situation necessitates an approach within Islamic family law that accounts for contemporary social practices, ensuring that fiqh norms remain operative even when spouses do not cohabit.

Classical fiqh literature emphasizes that alimony encompasses the fulfillment of the wife's basic needs, including food, clothing, and shelter, under the assumption of co-residency. Long-distance marriages challenge this assumption, as the fulfillment of alimony relies on the transfer of material support and remote communication. In Desa Sukowidi, this practice has

emerged as a response to economic demands and limited employment opportunities, making the separation of residences an adaptive strategy for families. Field findings indicate that most husbands continue to provide material alimony consistently, reflecting the persistence of normative awareness regarding this obligation. The fulfillment of material alimony can thus be seen as the actualization of a *shar'ī* duty within a changing social context, demonstrating the flexibility of Islamic law in responding to shifts in family structure.

Spiritual and emotional alimony (*nafkah batin*) is not limited to physical relations but encompasses psychological and emotional support. Intensive communication emerges as a primary strategy to maintain emotional closeness and household stability, in line with the Islamic objective of marriage as both a spiritual and psychological institution. This approach illustrates the adaptive interpretive space within Islamic family law, where open and consistent communication forms an integral part of the husband's moral obligation.

Long-distance marriages also generate new dynamics in role distribution. Wives often assume dual roles as household managers and decision-makers, while husbands retain responsibility as providers. Spousal relations tend to be collaborative and deliberative, reflecting the principles of justice and reciprocity (*mubāḍalah*). This pattern demonstrates that long-distance marriages encourage a more egalitarian negotiation of roles without weakening family structure.

Trust serves as a critical element in sustaining long-distance marriages. Husbands and wives who cultivate trust through open communication are able to maintain harmony despite physical separation. The concept of alimony as a trust (*amanah*) encompasses material, moral, and emotional dimensions, positioning trust as a normative foundation that strengthens the marital bond.

Social legitimacy for long-distance marriages in Desa Sukowidi reflects the community's collective awareness of such practices. Provision of alimony across distance is recognized as an economically valid strategy, consistent with the principle of *ʿurf* in Islamic law, provided it does not contradict sharia. This practice highlights Islamic family law as a *living law*, actively manifested within social consciousness.

The evolving meaning of the husband's responsibility is evident in the provision of alimony through consistency in obligation and moral commitment rather than mere physical presence. From the perspective of Islamic family law, this demonstrates normative adaptation to social and economic changes. Long-distance alimony underscores that the substance of the obligation outweighs the form of its execution.

Psychological effects of long-distance marriage, such as longing, anxiety, and loneliness, require careful attention. The provision of alimony cannot be separated from the wife's mental and emotional well-being. Husbands who actively maintain communication can mitigate negative effects, illustrating that the husband's obligation encompasses emotional support, thereby ensuring that Islamic family law functions holistically.

Economic context constitutes a structural factor underlying long-distance marriages in Desa Sukowidi. Residential separation represents a rational strategy to ensure family economic sustainability. Provision of alimony across distance demonstrates that Muslim families can adapt without abandoning religious values. These findings underscore the socio-economic dimension of Islamic family law, situating legal analysis within a broader social context.

Long-distance marriages encourage stronger internalization of responsibility for both spouses. Wives actively contribute to household sustainability, while husbands continue to fulfill their alimony obligations. The principle of reciprocity affirms the interconnection between spousal rights and duties, which remains relevant in a distance-separated context.

The Compilation of Islamic Law (*KHI*) allows interpretive flexibility regarding alimony, emphasizing the husband's duty in accordance with his capacity. Practices in Desa Sukowidi demonstrate coherence between *KHI* norms and social practice. Integrating *fiqh* principles, statutory law, and empirical realities preserves the relevance of Islamic family law in community life.

Long-distance marriage does not necessarily result in family dysfunction. On the contrary, many cases reveal strengthened commitment and responsibility. Islamic family law functions pedagogically rather than merely as regulatory control, ensuring that social practices align with Islamic values.

Theoretically, this study enriches the concept of alimony as a multidimensional construct encompassing material, emotional, and spiritual aspects. Long-distance marriage provides an empirical arena that challenges and broadens understanding. The reinterpretation of alimony obligations remains grounded in sharia principles, illustrating that Islamic family law is both contextual and relevant.

Overall, the findings affirm that the provision of alimony in long-distance marriages is not a binary issue. Islamic family law offers an adaptive analytical framework, integrating normative values with social practice, thereby functioning as a *living law* responsive to social change and contemporary challenges faced by Muslim families.

Conclusion

The fulfillment of alimony in long-distance marriages in Desa Sukowidi remains grounded in Islamic family law, which positions the husband as primarily responsible for both material and spiritual support from the moment a valid marriage contract is established. Research findings indicate that although spouses live apart geographically, the obligation to provide alimony does not lapse; rather, its implementation adapts to the circumstances. The majority of couples successfully meet material needs—such as clothing, food, and shelter—through regular transfers, which normatively can be regarded as the actualization of *shar'ī* obligations in accordance with the husband's capacity, as stipulated in *fiqh* and the Compilation of Islamic Law (*KHI*).

The practice of long-distance marriage in Desa Sukowidi reflects a congruence between legal norms and social realities. The fulfillment of alimony is not measured solely by the physical presence of the husband but by the consistency of responsibility, moral commitment, and genuine effort to maintain family welfare. This underscores that the substance of the alimony obligation is more important than the form of its execution. Long-distance marriage cannot be considered a legal neglect as long as the rights of wives and children are adequately met.

Spiritual and emotional alimony (*nafkah batin*) has also acquired an expanded meaning. In Islamic family law, *nafkah batin* is not confined to

biological needs but encompasses the fulfillment of emotional, psychological, and spiritual requirements. Intensive communication, openness, and deliberate efforts to maintain emotional closeness serve as essential instruments to achieve the objectives of marriage: the realization of a household characterized by *sakinah* (tranquility), *mawaddah* (love), and *rahmah* (compassion). This practice highlights the interpretative flexibility of Islamic family law in responding to the dynamics of modern families.

The implications of long-distance marriage are also evident in a collaborative division of roles. Wives not only manage the household but, in certain circumstances, contribute economically without diminishing the husband's primary responsibility as the provider. This arrangement aligns with sharia principles as long as it is based on mutual agreement, justice, and reciprocity. Such relations reflect deliberation and shared responsibility, demonstrating the capacity of Islamic family law to operate dynamically within contemporary social contexts.

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