EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES AND SOCIAL NETWORKS OF
INDONESIAN WOMEN MIGRANT WORKERS AT THE BORDER

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ABSTRACT

Purpose: Migration of Indonesian women abroad and the challenges they face have become an interesting topic recently. There has been a shift in migration rates, where women have begun to dominate this phenomenon known as the feminization of migrants. Despite risks such as violence and fraud attached to the work of migrant women, many Indonesian women still choose to work abroad due to limited employment opportunities, limited education, poverty and heavy family responsibilities. Several factors drive women's migration, such as limited job opportunities in the area of origin, changes in agricultural systems, and competition for low-paid jobs.

Method: The pull factor in the destination area also plays a role in offering better job opportunities. Social networks support Indonesian women's migration, both through legal and illegal channels, providing information and assistance during the migration process.

Results: Transit areas such as Tanjung pinang in the Riau Archipelago are also important exit points for women migrant workers. Research has highlighted employment opportunities and shifting migration patterns in Indonesia, with unequal employment conditions, limited employment opportunities in the agricultural sector, and economic and social changes as driving factors for migration.

Conclusions: The shift from male migration to female migration is also influenced by poverty, gender equality, and women's responsibilities towards the family. This article provides a better understanding of the phenomenon of migration of Indonesian women abroad, the challenges they face, and the factors that influence their decision to migrate.

Keywords: employment, opportunities, women migrant, workers, poverty.
OPORTUNIDADES DE EMPREGO E REDES SOCIAIS DAS TRABALHADORAS MIGRANTES INDONÉSIAS NA FRONTEIRA

RESUMO

Propósito: Migração de mulheres indonésias para o exterior e os desafios que elas enfrentam têm se tornado um assunto interessante recentemente. Houve uma mudança nas taxas de migração, onde as mulheres começaram a dominar este fenômeno conhecido como feminização dos migrantes. Apesar dos riscos, como a violência e a fraude ligadas ao trabalho das mulheres migrantes, muitas mulheres indonésias ainda optam por trabalhar no exterior devido às oportunidades limitadas de emprego, à educação limitada, à pobreza e às pesadas responsabilidades familiares. Vários fatores impulsionam a migração das mulheres, tais como oportunidades limitadas de emprego na área de origem, mudanças nos sistemas agrícolas e competição por empregos mal remunerados.

Método: O fator de atração na área de destino também desempenha um papel na oferta de melhores oportunidades de trabalho. As redes sociais apoiaram a migração das mulheres da Indonésia, tanto através de canais legais quanto ilegais, fornecendo informações e assistência durante o processo de migração.

Resultados: Áreas de trânsito como Tanjung pinang, no Arquipélago de Riau, também são pontos de saída importantes para as trabalhadoras migrantes. A investigação tem destacado as oportunidades de emprego e a mudança dos padrões de migração na Indonésia, com condições de emprego desiguais, oportunidades de emprego limitadas no setor agrícola e mudanças econômicas e sociais como fatores impulsionadores da migração.

Conclusões: A mudança da migração masculina para a migração feminina também é influenciada pela pobreza, igualdade de gênero e responsabilidades das mulheres em relação à família. Este artigo fornece uma melhor compreensão do fenômeno da migração das mulheres indonésias para o exterior, dos desafios que elas enfrentam e dos fatores que influenciam a decisão delas de migrar.

Palavras-chave: emprego, oportunidades, mulheres migrantes, trabalhadores, pobreza.

1 INTRODUCTION

Migration is a common phenomenon that we can find anywhere, both in the world and in Indonesia. In Indonesia, migration occurs more driven to meet economic needs. Unavailable jobs are a very strong driving force for migration. At the beginning of the widespread phenomenon of overseas migration, the highest number of migrations when viewed from gender was men. But in the last few years there has been a shift. Men no longer dominate the highest rate of migration out of the country, currently the highest number of migration flows is dominated by women, Muhadjir mentions this as the feminization of migrants (Devasahayam, Huang, & Yeoh, 2004; Hickey, Narendra, &
Rainwater, 2013; Kusmanto, 2014; Muhajir Darwin et al, 2005; Piper, 2004). In fact, from various mass media reports and research results, it is found that being a female worker abroad is not something pleasant. Various cases of violence often hit Indonesian women workers abroad. Ranging from those sentenced to prison for several months or several years to life imprisonment or even the death penalty. In fact, violence against women workers does not only occur where they work, but before they cross other countries they have experienced violence (Andrijasevic, 2010; Kusmanto, 2014; Muhajir Darwin, Anna Marie Wattie, Siti Rubaini Dzubayatin, 2005; Piper, 2005; Silvey, 2004; Sukamdi, 2007; Susi Eja Yuarsi, 2002). However, this fact has not dampened the desire of Indonesian female workers to seek work opportunities abroad. Limited job opportunities, education, poverty and great responsibility towards the family are the drivers for the international migration of Indonesian women. According to Susi Eja Yuarsi (Susi Eja Yuarsi, 2002), women's migration abroad is often seen as a shortcut to breaking the chain of poverty. (Severo, et al, 2022). The success of women working abroad as shown by the increasing economic standard of life of Indonesian Migrant Workers (PMI) has resulted in women applying to become Migrant Workers in droves.

The urge to work abroad is not without an uncertain basis, there is a social network that is owned so that finally Indonesian women workers can work abroad and are in Tanjungpinang as a transit area. Relatives, friends and intermediaries are the biggest contributors of information sources in the context of international migration activities. Research by Haris (2002) and Kaur (2010) found that Indonesian Migrant Workers tend to prefer to choose the illegal route over the legal route. In general, Indonesian female workers who go abroad are women who come from rural areas and with limited education. With this limited education, prospective Indonesian Migrant workers are actually vulnerable to problems related to violence and fraud. And in accordance with the sexual division of labor, actually Indonesian women are only people who deal with the domestic sector (Asis, Huang, & Yeoh, 2004; Bunnell, Warr, Sidaway, & Sparke, 2007; Devasahayam et al., 2004; Hickey et al. ., 2013). From the issue of gender division of labor, actually Indonesian women cannot freely leave the house. (Biryukov, et al, 2023) Large family, husband and children are responsibilities that must be held by a woman (Eckert, Penelope and mCConnell Ginet, 2013; Pamela Sharpe, 2002).

Prospective Women Migrant Workers are also vulnerable to problems in getting to the destination of work, both in terms of bureaucracy, adjustment and knowledge of
the place of work and the work contract that will be entered into. All of these are problems that will be faced by prospective Indonesian Migrant Workers, especially the bureaucracy which is always considered to be the cause of the slow departure process for prospective Migrant Workers so that in the end there is a tendency to use illegal channels. The tendency to choose illegal paths is supported by existing social networks. The social network also supports circular migration between the Riau Islands, Singapore and Malaysia. this is due to the Singapore, Johor and Riau agreements that were formed in 1992 (Bunnell et al., 2007; Yani, 2018). With this cooperation agreement, migrant workers from the Riau Islands can freely enter and leave Singapore and Malaysia without having to provide a work visa. So this research tries to examine the phenomenon of female migrant workers who carry out circular migration activities and work without having a work permit. this phenomenon is relatively common in the Riau Archipelago. there are several entry and exit points to get to Singapore and Malaysia both legally and illegally. We can get the entrance and exit via Batam, Tanjungpinang and Karimun.

2 LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 MIGRANT’S JOB PROSPECT

As mentioned by Lee (Lee, 2007) that migration occurs because there are push and pull factors for migration to occur. For the eastern Indonesian regions, according to Haris' research, this is supported by the fact that in general the labor conditions in these areas are unbalanced and the geographical conditions are unfavorable, this is the driving force for migration. Due to the lack of job opportunities in the village itself, migrating is one way to open up opportunities to get a permanent job. According to Tadjuddin (1993) which states that employment opportunities in rural areas are a serious problem, because jobs that can accommodate jobs still rely on the agricultural sector while land that can be cultivated for agriculture is increasingly limited. In addition, land owners (wealthy farmers) who have been able to protect farm laborers and smallholders are starting to act commercially, they are trying to get the maximum profit by reducing harvest costs or other costs.

Furthermore, according to Tadjuddin, there are symptoms of patron client relations or bonds between rich farmers and poor farmers starting to loosen. According to Collier (Tadjuddin Noer Effendi, 1993), this change was made possible due to changes in the harvesting system from bawon to slashing and changes in rice processing from
mash to huller. As well as starting to change the arable system that used to apply the maro system to the doconic system. These changes have reduced the possibility of agricultural laborers to involve themselves in agricultural activities. Even if there is work, usually the wages received are low. According to Kasryno (Tadjuddin Noer Effendi, 1993), the existence of population pressure on land followed by limited employment opportunities outside the agricultural sector led to a decrease in wage rates. In addition to the decline in wage rates, the limited agricultural land is caused by population growth and this makes it increasingly difficult to find work. With various factors, the existence of a relatively low wage rate, as well as high competition for jobs, even with this low value, is one of the drivers for migratory activities to occur.

According to Cadwallader's theory of neoclassical economics (Douglas S. Massey, Joaqui Arango, Graeme Hugo, Ali Kouaouci, Adela Pellegrino, 2007), population mobility is seen as a natural response to regional differences in obtaining social and economic opportunities. Residents will move to areas that have excess capital, but lack of manpower. In this case it can be said that population mobility or migration is related to job opportunities that exist in the area of origin. This relates to the level of welfare of an area where the area has greater employment opportunities when compared to their area of origin. Meanwhile, according to Speare's historical structuralist approach (1975) (Waridin, 2007), population mobility can only be understood by paying attention to the broad socio-economic and political changes that occur in the structure of economic development because population mobility is more a macro process than an individual level process.

Prior to the occurrence of overseas migration activities, the trend of shifting of the Indonesian workforce, especially in rural areas, occurred from the agricultural sector to the non-agricultural sector, especially activities belonging to the informal sector (Tadjuddin Noer Effendi, 1993). Activities in the informal sector that absorb relatively large numbers of workers include trading, selling meatballs, noodles, hawkers, ice, salad and rickshaw pullers.

2.2 SHIFTING PATTERNS OF MIGRATION IN INDONESIA

Migration comes from the word migration which means population movement, including the meaning of moving houses, schools and so on both in cities, regions and to places that are farther away (Mantra in Mardiani & Purnomo, 2018). According to Lee
(2007), the decision to move from one place to another can be seen as a product of differences in wage levels between one region and another. The main factors behind labor migration to a destination area are macro or contextual factors which are often seen as factors of attraction and encouragement (push and pull factors). BN Marbun (1979:45) in Haryono (2008) states that in general migration flows can occur due to push factors from the place of origin and pull factors from the destination.

Since the last few years, there has been a shift in the trend of migration, men no longer dominate migration activities. According to the results of Susi Eja Yuarsi's research (Susi Eja Yuarsi, 2002) which stated that the increasing number of women migrating abroad was driven more by entangled poverty and the difficulty of getting a job and women's significant responsibility for family welfare.

In addition, the shift in the trend of migration from men to more women can also be seen from the opinion of Agassi (Harmona Daulay, 2001) who says that the balance of women's status in the new household can be obtained if there is equal power between husband and wife in the economic field and control over vital resources. Women are no longer only placed in the domestic sphere and act as housewives, but they also have the freedom to work even abroad. Krisnawaty (Susi Eja Yuarsi, 2002) responds to this condition as a tendency for the emergence of the feminization of poverty. The feminization of poverty is defined as the trend of increasing the burden of poverty borne by women. At first glance, women's departure abroad is the starting point for women's liberation from domestication that has been going on.

According to Mantra (1995) in (Haryono, 2007) that circular migrant workers have a tendency to return to their hometowns both periodically and unscheduled. Meanwhile, circular migrants according to Jellinick (1986) are migrant workers who leave their hometown to work elsewhere, but still consider their hometown as their main place of residence. Where they come from, there are their family members, including their wives, children and relatives (Haryono, 2007).

2.3 SHIFT IN THE ROLE OF WOMEN IN THE FAMILY

Role is something that must be played by someone in accordance with the position and status possessed by someone. This means that the role of women is something that must be played by a woman, the role of a woman depends on the socio-cultural conditions that a person has, in this case the role of a woman is related to the pattern of gender
relations that live in society. As Fakieh's opinion states that when viewed from the basic concept of gender, gender is a trait that is inherent in men and women that is socially and culturally constructed (Dr. Mansour Fakih, 2005). And these traits are interchangeable with time and place. Sajogyo (Harmona Daulay, 2001) classifies the role of women in the household and society in four aspects, namely: decisions in the field of production, decisions in the field of expenditure of basic needs, decisions in the field of family formation and decisions in the field of social activities.

From the fact that the division of labor according to gender, women are actually only the holders of the domestic sector, namely taking care of the household. But it turns out that women's influence on the domestic sector affects family welfare. Women have the responsibility for the welfare of the family, because this is related to the role of the domestic sector. In order to prosper the family, women are forced to take part in supplementing the family's income. In addition, the echo of the struggle for gender equality makes women begin to change the role that has been culturally constructed so far.

When examined from Moser's opinion (Harmona Daulay, 2001) gender relations in the household basically women hold 3 responsibilities namely, reproductive responsibility, productive responsibility and community management responsibility. The productive sector includes activities aimed at raising and educating children as well as domestic tasks needed to ensure the reproductive continuity of working household members. Thus, the duties and responsibilities of women do not only cover biological reproduction, but also service and continuity of work for husbands and children who work or are still in school. The productive sector includes activities carried out to obtain rewards in the form of money or goods. The field of community management includes activities carried out at the community level as an extension of reproductive duties and responsibilities. This activity is to support the availability and means of limited resources. According to Moser (Harmona Daulay, 2001) that for the lower class, the role of women is not only related to domestic sector affairs, but has undergone changes, women have responsibility in all matters for the continuity of their families.

The shift in patterns of gender relations in society can be said to be related to matters proclaimed as gender equality and women's empowerment. Various policies are implemented in the framework of gender equality, women are involved in everything. From these women's involvement activities, in the end, women receive wages according
to the tasks carried out in society. And with this gender equality, the role of women has shifted because it has made women no longer only take care of the domestic sector but have been outside the home in order to meet demands for wages. In addition, the shift in the role of women has shifted due to demands to be able to pay attention to family welfare.

3 RESEARCH METHOD

In order to explain the phenomenon of Indonesian female labor migration, this study uses qualitative analytical methods with descriptive data presentation. Descriptive presentation in order to explain the phenomena experienced by Female Migrant Workers so that in the end there is a shift in job opportunities, creating greater opportunities for women to work abroad. In addition, through a descriptive presentation, it will be explained the social network owned by migrant workers so that they have such a relationship that they can find employers regularly even if they only work in a matter of days. This research also tries to describe the obstacles experienced before leaving for a foreign place to the obstacles experienced upon arrival in the country of work. This research on migrant workers is supported by qualitative analysis techniques developed by Creswell which explains that qualitative methods are research activities originating from the research object itself. The information obtained in research activities is an interpretation that is obtained from the experience and background of the informants themselves because humans are social beings who always have their own meaning for their world (John W. Creswell, 2016).

In carrying out the research, informants were used, namely female migrant workers who carry out mobility activities as migrant workers in a circular manner, both working in Singapore and in Malaysia. as an area directly adjacent to Singapore and Malaysia, it is easy for people from the Riau Archipelago to enter and leave Singapore and Malaysia. This is supported by the large demand for workers from the Riau Islands to fill informal sector job positions and jobs as house maids. Singapore and Malaysia's need for a very large domestic workforce has attracted women workers from the Riau Islands to try their luck in the area. Their activities as migrant workers are not accompanied by documents to work as migrant workers. In addition, their activities as migrant workers are carried out in a circular manner or do not stay for a long time in Singapore or Malaysia. all their activities are challenges that migrant workers have to
face. Domestic workers, traders and providers of health therapy services are among the jobs carried out by female migrant workers from the Riau Archipelago.

In order to fulfill the data and information, this research uses data collection techniques of in-depth interviews, observation and utilization of documentation studies. In the framework of interview activities used interview guidelines. In-depth interviews were conducted in order to obtain detailed and accurate information from research informants.

4 RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 BACKGROUND OF BEING A CIRCULAR MIGRANT WORKER

4.1.1 Widening job prospects and opportunities

In general, prospective migrant workers are casual workers or do not have a permanent job and are housewives. There are several research informants who are single mothers with several children. There were several informants who had adult children and some who were still in their educational period. The need for economic fulfilment is one of the drivers of circular migration by migrant workers from the Riau Archipelago.

Not all migrant workers who choose to become migrant workers are people with low education. Among several informants, Adda has an undergraduate education. The opportunity to get a job throws them out as migrant workers. Starting with trial and error and being invited by friends and finally making them stick with jobs as circular migrant workers. However, there are also circular migrant workers from the Riau Archipelago, starting with former legal migrant workers whose contracts have expired. with the support of their old employer where the migrant worker concerned does not need to work using a contract again if he wants to continue working with that employer. Gan It is enough for migrant workers to return to their employers to continue their work. their employers reasoned that contactless work would be more profitable for the migrant worker. Rupakan Because income from migrant workers will not be subject to deductions to pay companies sending migrant workers.

Introductions are one of the reasons it is easy to get a job in the informal sector. Some circular migrant workers from the Riau Islands already have social networks in the form of acquaintances and kinship that have existed so far. Through this friendship network, it is a way for migrant workers to get information to get a job. There are times when employers from Singapore or Malaysia will contact them and ask the migrant
worker to work for the employer. This relationship continues like a snowball because information about job opportunities in Singapore or Malaysia will continue from one migrant worker to another.

4.1.2 The shifting role of women in the family

The changing role of women in the family is a contributor to the shift in job opportunities from men to greater opportunities for female workers to go abroad. Women’s responsibility to be able to meet the economic needs of the family and take responsibility for caring for the welfare of the family makes women try to find work opportunities to earn income. The shift in work roles in the family is related to the division of labor in the family. In terms of the division of labor within the family, there is a shift in the role of women in the economic sector. Where women are no longer only in charge of the domestic sector but must be responsible for the economic needs of the family.

Family income is not only expected from the head of the family who is called the husband but has shifted to expecting women to contribute to the family economy. Apart from being related to the shift in roles in the economic sector, there has also been a shift in the role of women in the family in terms of responsibility for children. For some areas, responsibility for children is the responsibility of the extended family. However, as a result of the modernization process, responsibility has become the responsibility of the nuclear family. This encourages the demand for the role of women in terms of responsibility for their children and on the one hand, they are also required to be able to help the family economy.

4.1.3 Goals in the recruitment process

There has been a change in opportunities for working abroad where in the past there was more demand for male migrant workers but currently there is more demand for female migrant workers. Besides that, it is also supported by targets that occur in the recruitment process that occur through brokers, friends, relatives and requests for labor. Due to the high demand for labor to fill positions in the informant sector, the highest recruitment process is more targeted at women. In addition, this need is only to fill low-level job positions such as restaurant waiters, household work, child care and parent care. The large demand for domestic helpers from Indonesia is due to the fact that Indonesian workers have cheaper selling power than workers from other Asian regions. Support for
ease of obtaining employment opportunities is supported by the existence of kinship relations and the cognate language that each citizen has.

The process of recruiting migrant workers occurs through the social networks that they have previously built. Possibilities such as old employers, introductions and kinship ties are one of the means for the recruitment process of migrant workers. Employers in Singapore and Malaysia have a tendency to choose migrant workers from the Riau Islands because they are not bound by contracts and tax financing for migrant workers. Apart from that, wages that are low and adjusted to the ability of employers are another reason why it is easy for migrant workers from the Riau Islands to get jobs. Although there is no set standard for wages, employers in Singapore and Malaysia have standards for paying wages to migrant workers from the Riau Islands who work as maids.

Introductory relationships and friendship also support the ease of migrant workers from the Riau Archipelago getting jobs. The existence of friendship and brotherhood has built a sense of mutual trust between workers and employers.

4.2 BARRIERS FACED BY CIRCULAR MIGRANT WORKERS

The significant obstacles faced by circular migrant workers from the Riau Archipelago are not cultural ones. It can even be said that the culture that lives in society has experienced a shift. Where there is no longer a prohibition for women or a wife to leave the house. Even for regions that still adhere to the extended family system, the extended family is the driving force for a woman's migration. This happens because the responsibility of the child will be handed over to the extended family.

The obstacles most felt by prospective Women Migrant Workers are structural ones. In this case related to:

1. The low level of education of female migrant worker candidates

With limited education, prospective Women Migrant Workers do not have valid access to job opportunities abroad in relation to the type of work they will be engaged in and the work contract they must enter into. There is even an impression that a work contract is something they have to carry out without knowing the contents of the work contract. This is motivated by the inability to understand the contents of the work contract that was offered to them, and to entrust the work agreement to the distributor of the working country. In addition, due to limited
education, it is difficult for female migrant worker candidates to absorb the skills provided prior to departure to the destination country.

2. Too much trust in the distributor of employment countries

This happens because at the time of recruitment, the prospective workers are generally recruited by people they know closely. Because this makes the prospective workers' trust in the supplier so great. Prospective workers entrust all decisions made by labor distributors. Apart from that, this trust is also due to the fact that their recruiters are close people or in their terms “still close family”. However, the trust they give to labor distributors is taken advantage of by employers by treating them arbitrarily. As was the case during the waiting period, there were prospective Female Migrant Workers who, for reasons of training prior to departure, were placed first in the homes of families who needed workers as domestic helpers. But the salary given by the temporary employer is taken by the labor supplier. Apart from that, while in the shelter, prospective Women Migrant Workers experience violence, conditions where they experience such strict guarding that they do not have the freedom to go back even if only to contact their families.

5 CONCLUSION

From the analysis found in the field, the problem of shifting job opportunities from men to greater opportunities for female workers to go abroad occurs as a result of shifting job opportunities in the areas of origin, shifting roles of women in the family and targets in the recruitment process. The shift in job opportunities in work areas is due to the high demand for female workers to work in the informal sector.

The shifting role of women in the family also encourages greater employment opportunities for women going abroad. Women's responsibility towards the family has experienced a shift, women participate in paying attention to the welfare of the family. The family economy is no longer the responsibility of the man or husband but has been divided into shared responsibility between husband and wife. And further shifting opportunities for work abroad are also caused by targets in the labor recruitment process carried out by labor sending companies or brokers. Recruitment is more focused on women related to the demand for workers abroad. In accordance with the demand for foreign workers originating from Indonesia, in general Indonesian workers are to fill
positions as workers in the informal sector, namely as domestic helpers and Indonesian workers have cheaper selling power compared to other Asian workers.

Through this fact, there are things that must be considered by the Government, including:

1. Opening employment opportunities that can provide greater access to women, because women's responsibilities have shifted to having the obligation to improve family welfare.
2. Develop the resources of women who will be sent abroad so that they are able to compete in facing the globalization of the international labor market.
3. Prepare women migrant worker candidates to face the commercialization of work needs in the international world, so that they can exist according to the needs of international workers.
4. The government must improve the bureaucratic channels that must be passed so that illegal migration does not occur and must provide protection for women workers who are already abroad, so that unilateral deportation or matters involving violations of women's human rights do not occur.
REFERENCES


