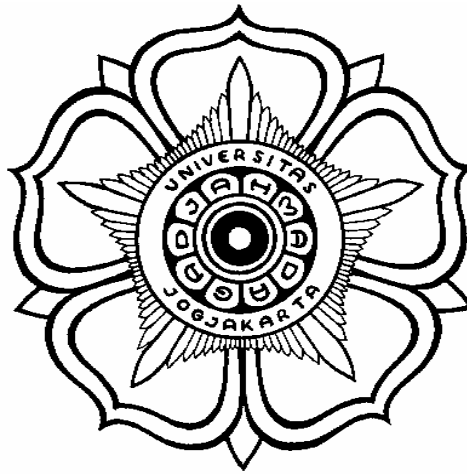


WOMEN'S ROLE IN SOME ECONOMIC SECTORS



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Introduction

Indonesia is a country with a population of approximately 220 millions. Most of them work as farmers, fishermen, and a few of them become civil servants. With the percentage of about 50,03 %, women get jobs which are lower than those of men. Most women work in the informal sectors, such as housemaids, agricultural sector, fishery, and animal breeding. Generally they have three big roles: domestic role, public role, and social role. Domestic role has to do with household chores; public role deals with the jobs while social role is related to PKK (Organization of Women's Welfare), women organization and religion organization.

Women's Role in Mangrove Forest

Papua is one of the big islands located in the most eastern part of Indonesia. It is a scarcely populated area and is surrounded mangrove forest. The people in Papua are still very traditional relying on its natural resources.

This paper is taken from a book which was written based on the result of a research in West Papua in 1999 entitled " Women in Mangrove Forest ". This research was conducted by Centre of Asia Pacific Study GMU in Bintuni Bay, one of the bays in West Papua Province.

There are many women's activities of the life of some ethnic groups in Bintuni Bay. They take advantage of mangrove forest which can help them increase the family's economy. One of the dominant activities done by the women in catching crabs and shrimps. It is the main job of the ethnic groups living around the seas, for example, Wamena, Ironu, and Sebiyar which live in the areas of Bintuni Bay. Their environment is surrounded by mangrove forest that becomes the habitat of crabs, fish, and oysters.

Generally, the activity of looking for crabs done by the women is considered as a job inherited from their ancestors. In their daily activity of looking

for crabs, they have to do their household chores such as preparing food for the members of the family and also for the supply of food to bring along with them when they look for crabs. Meanwhile the job of taking care of the children is given to their oldest sister or their relatives.

The activity of looking for crabs is done almost everyday starting at 8 to 15:00 WIT (East Indonesian Time). The women do it in a group consisting of 3-5 members in one boat. Usually they are still related to one another. One of the equipments they bring is a row. They row the boat alternately. The others, those who don't row, have to bring "gae-gae", that is a kind of tool to show whether there are crabs in the holes or not. This tool is made of the branch of a mangrove tree with branches on its end.

The usual tool to check whether there are crabs or not is a wire or a long knife. Crabs that are caught are tied using raffia and put in a plastic bag. Meanwhile a fish hook and a net are usually used for fishing crabs in the rivers.

There are two ways to get crabs i.e. plunging into the "mange" (a large muddy land), or fishing in the rivers. In looking for crabs, they often have to walk through mangrove trees that grow very close to each others so that they have to be careful to the threats of animals such as snakes, crocodiles, insects, and so on. In their opinion they can get more crabs by plunging into the mud rather than fishing in the rivers.

If the tide of the water rises in the morning, it can be predicted that there are many crabs. The natural sign like that is strongly believed by the people as a guide in doing their daily activities. Sometimes the husbands help row the boats if they want to look for fish together with the wives. The women plunge into the "mange", while the men stay on the boats to fish. The job the men do is a temporary job as labors of the factories and they catch fish on the seas based on their willingness. So, income of the men is relatively instable compared to that of the women's activity to sell the crabs. Averagely the women get around Rp. 40.000,- until Rp. 60.000,- per day from selling the crabs. Besides that the women try to get additional income by selling vegetables, oysters, shrimps, etc.

Besides supporting the family's economy, however, they are still responsible for doing their household chores and are assisted by their daughters. The job of the men and the women becomes unbalanced and there is a tendency that the women's job is heavier than that of the men. It results in the emergence of problems related to the women's attitude and role because women have "double" burden. A new problem is caused by deforestation of mangrove forest and also because some new factories have been built in Bintuni Bay. Destruction of the mangrove forest will, in turn, also destroy the environment of the vegetation that becomes the source of income especially by the women.

The people there can not do much to prevent extensive exploitation done by the companies which destroy the ecosystem of mangrove forest. Threat of forest destruction is also a threat to women in doing their daily activities.

Women's Role as Housemaids

Because of low education and inadequate skills, most women work as housemaids. It happens usually to village women who have to abandon their family working in the city. They help the host family doing household chores such as doing laundry, washing the dishes, sweeping and mopping the floor, etc. Sometimes they also have the responsibility to take care of the children or the babies.

History of people's life is totally built from the existence of two different sexes, male and female. They are not as two opposing parties but as absolute partners. In doing this job, these two different sexes divide the job, function, and role. This division of labor becomes very stereotypical and there is an impression that there is a domination of one party over another especially if this division becomes a kind of social construction. This pattern of domination brings about a bias in the relationship between men and women. In the beginning this bias took the form of structure or culture. It can be done matriarchal or patriarchal and

finally it supports a domination of patriarchal pattern as hegemony in the structure of a relationship between men and women.

In a total partnership between the two sexes, women have actually taken part and function in economic field ranging to almost all sectors. There are some facts that support the part and function ranging from reproductive economic sectors such as agriculture, trade to industrial sectors.

There are no complete data showing the profile of women working in industrial sectors nationally. Because of that this paper tries to describe examples of a profile of women's role in some sectors: housemaid, role of women in mangrove forest, and mining industries.

Role of Women as Housemaid

It can be concluded, based on a research, that there are two influential factors in understanding the problems of housemaid:

- Factor of poverty of village women
- Factors of women's need as housewives

Poverty factor is multidimensional since village women are economically poor and they are not ready to complete in looking for a job. They don't have special skills and work experience other than doing laundry, ironing, cooking, sweeping the floor, and taking care of children. They also have a burden to support their family who live in the village.

The external factor that becomes a problem of housemaids is that there is no formal rule (yuridis formal) and there is no written agreement about their responsibilities, salary and social security. Sometimes if their masters don't fulfill their obligations, housemaids don't have power to struggle their rights in facing the problem.

One of the problems housemaids often face is violence both physical and sexual. In facing these cases not all housemaids have courage to open the cases and report it to the authority. It can also be caused by housewives prohibition for housemaids not to go out of the house. In addition, the problem can also be caused

by wage which is below minimum regional wage and unclear volume of work so that the working hours become very long. If a written agreement is made, it will not be effective because some of them are illiterate. Besides, acts of manpower have not regulated informal labors such as housemaids. Housemaids choose the job because they are forced to and have no other choice. It supports the idea that the appropriate job for women is domestic role. As a matter of fact there is another motivation that being a housemaid is a stepping stone to look for another job in towns.

After that women try to look for better jobs for example a shop keepers and factory labors. It shows 2 aspects:

1. Housemaids' leaving their job is not always caused by inhuman treatment by housewives but because they want to have a stepping stone to get other jobs especially those who have sufficient educational background, for example, junior high school.
2. Housemaids dare to make a decision to gain self confidences for their future life (Saparinah Sadli & iii).

These are two positive aspects for housemaids. The negative aspect is that housemaids often make a quick decision of accepting the job without discussing everything related to the job with housewives. Activities done by housemaids are usually the reproductive ones for examples, cooking, taking care of the baby, cleaning the house, doing laundry and ironing, etc.

Unlike the job in industrial sectors, housemaids are not influenced by monetary crisis. Demand for housewives' is always increasing. It indicates that housewives job is important and always needed. There are no complete data on the number of housemaids in regencies, provinces, world wide nation, and even abroad. Usually the length of service is not limited by the two parties.

Women are mobile considering that they often move from one company to the other companies and because of that it is not easy to give census.

The Role of Women in Community Development of PT. Newmont NTT (East Nusa Tenggara)

NTT is a small province located in the eastern part of Indonesia. It is a province with little natural resources so it's difficult for the people there to make good use of the land. Most people there work in the sectors of animal breeding such as cows and horses, and fishery. The establishment of PT. Newmont NTT (PT NNT) in NTT, to a certain extent, helped women in the surrounding area in the form of micro credit so they could develop their skills.

PT. Newmont NTT (PT NNT), a mining company, is a joint venture of Newmont Indonesia Limited (USA) with 40 % share, Nusa Tenggara Mining Corporation (Japan) with 35 % share, and PT Palenafu Indah Indonesia with 20 % share. PT NNT is famous for its Green Rock Newmont Project located in the south western part of Sumbawa Island, West Nusa Tenggara Province covering an area of 116.900 hectares.

From the beginning, PT NNT has been aware that the establishment of mining projects brought about process of social charge. The impact ranges from infrastructures resulted from the increase of population to cultural differences as a result of various kinds of cultural encounters. It happens simultaneously in the same area. PT NNT aims to provide a program entitled "Community Development" with the hope of increasing the quality of life of the people surrounding the mining area.

According to Yuanita Darmono, manager of Community Development, the presence of the program is a form of social responsibility of the company to the people surrounding the mining area. Five main targets as the key of responsibility area:

- a) The development of small enterprises for example giving sewing training, economic micro credit, and skills training.
- b) Program of People's Health to give understanding about the basic of health standards in the society.

- c) The development of agriculture to bring people back to do agricultural activities covering agricultural techniques, marketing network, pest control, etc
- d) The development of education to give education through formal basic education.
- e) The development of facilities and infrastructures which support activities of economy, education, and health.

In doing the programs above, the company gives authority to Yayasan Olat Parigi (YOP), a foundation established by some figures surrounding the mining area. YOP was founded to support and develop aspirations of the people to help identify people-based projects. The presence of community development may push new jobs for the people at least to free themselves from dependence that becomes the burden of PT NNT. In health sector, there are some community health centers set up. Even PT NNT gives donation in the form of micro business credit. Averagely, each person gets Rp. 500.000,- to develop his/ her business. However, not all the people get direct benefits from PT NNT, so some of them become unemployed. Some of them have given their land for the development of PT NNT. Since Benete Bay becomes a harbor owned by PT NNT so there are many fishermen who lose their job.

Women's Perspective in Community Development

There are advantages the women get such as health facilities and micro credit. There is also another program that is to give tender to a cooperative of "Samba Sewing". On the one hand, there are many women getting new job as tailors and as tailors they get the benefits, but on the other hand there are also other women who lose their jobs. In Rantung Bay along the bay of Semunu, many women can no longer catch "nener" fish and other fish. There are also some fishermen who lose their jobs. PT NNT doesn't employ many women. If there is any, the number is limited and the positions given are not strategic. In conclusion, social charge might show disadvantageous roles for the position of women.

Conclusion

Women in Indonesia, in general, have gained an opportunity to work in almost all sectors of life but their position is lower than that of men. One of the factors is because of low education and strong patriarchal culture. Therefore women's role both in educational and economic sectors must be increased in a sustainable program. To reach it, there must be a good coordination among the government, private institutions, colleges, women organization and the society in general.