

Women and Tourism: Study of Empowerment of Women Workers in Special Economic Zone at Mandalika, Kuta – Lombok, Indonesia

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Abstract – This study aims to investigate the types of work, gender inequality and patterns of women workers empowerment in the tourism service sector at Mandalika Special Economic Zone Lombok, Indonesia. This study employed survey methods by using groups as a unit study. The results indicate that the tourism service industry has encouraged the growth of new types of jobs for women. Currently, women work as sales, waitress, receptionists, traders, handicrafts, tour guides, cashiers, cleaning services, housekeeping and hotel managers. Some misperception about women workers in the tourism sector lead to inequality in working space for women. To empower women resources in the tourism sector, it is necessary to strengthen the capacity of women workers and the empowerment of women including the development of their working skills, the changes in culture and policies beneficial for women workers.

Keywords – tourism, empowerment, women workers

I. INTRODUCTION

Communities are living in Central Lombok regency with an area of 1.208.40 Km² and number of populations about 903,432 inhabitants where female population greater than men which are 427.134 men and 476.298 women [1]. The number of working populations in the age of 15 years old and above was 428. 016 consisting of (1) 230.967 in agriculture sector; (2) 52. 132 in industrial sector;(3) 49. 045 in trading sector;(4) 43.800 in service sector; and (5) 52.072 in other working sectors. These data show an imbalance number between jobs capacity and the capacity of human resources. Thus, this can cause various social problems such as migration, economy, education, health, disadvantaged children, unemployment and poverty.

Study conducted by Syafruddin [2] found that the level of education of women who are working in the tourism sector in the Mandalika, Special Economic Zone, Lombok was still dominated by women with secondary education level certificate (71%), and with university level certificate (25%). These data indicate that the workforce in the tourism sector is still dominated by unskilled labor. The women workers only got formal education at a lower level and did not have adequate expertise regarding working

experiences in tourism sector and thus, they work at the sectors which do need certain expertise.

Paying attention to the conditions in this area, especially the conditions of community living in Mandalika Special Economic Zone Lombok, the researchers were interested in conducting a study dealing with women workers and tourism. The results of this study are expected to contribute the ideas in making policies and compiling practical programs related to empowering women workers, particularly, policies and programs that are beneficial to women workers. Thus, good conditions of working environment will take place and women workers will be protected from all forms of marginalization and exploitation economically and socio-culturally in society.

II. RESEARCH METHOD

This research employed a qualitative research approach. This approach reveals about people lives, behavior, social movements, and kinship relationships. According to Strauss and Corbin [3], a qualitative research is used to find and understand what is hidden behind existing phenomena or symptoms. With qualitative research method, researchers can create and arrange essential concepts which they can not find in other methods [4].

To study types of work for women workers and the development of work empowerment models, the researchers used survey research method by using group as unit of study. The survey was conducted at the individual level (female workers), and to check the validity of the survey data, the researchers carried out triangulation measurement: (1) triangulation of data sources by finding data from many sources, informants and research subjects; and (2) triangulation of theory by studying the relevant theories, not in a single but in a plural. The analysis used in this research was gender analysis technique with a model commonly called as SWOT (Strength, Weakness, Opportunity, and Threat). This technique can identify strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats to be used in designing programs for improving women resources [5].

There are several analysis stages conducted in this study, namely (1) open coding stage, which includes breaking down, examining, comparing, conceptualizing

and categorizing data; (2) axial coding stage, the results obtained from open coding are reorganized based on categories to be developed in the direction of propositions; and (3) selective coding stage, classifying by examining the relationships between the core categories and other categories. Through examining the relationship among categories, the conclusions will be drawn and finally will be general design [6]. This study attempts to find and map the types of work and employment opportunities for women, and the empowerment pattern for women workers so as to improve the quality of women resources in the Mandalika Special Economic Zone at Lombok Indonesia.

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

A. Work Types of Women

This study revealed the distribution of work types for women in various work sectors that were previously unknown to the public. Previously, women worked only at home, such as housewife, farming and livestock farming. This research has mapped various work types of women after the development of the tourism service sector as an industry. The work types of women are beauty salon staff, trader, waitress, chef, receptionist, housekeeping and bartender. The data in Figure 1 provides information that the work prepared by tourism industry services has given women new directions for social mobility.

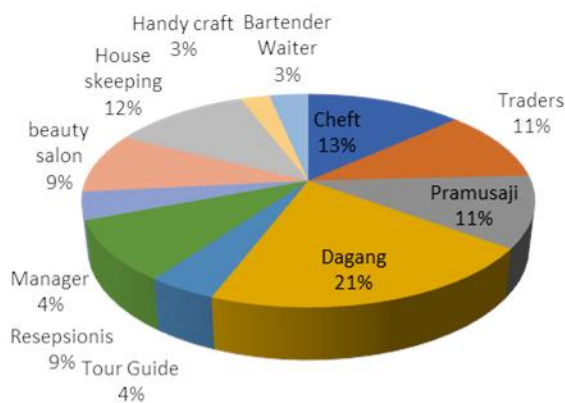


Fig. 1 Types of work for women

These data argued the traditional social theories about the division of labor based on gender which always distinguished the work for women and men. The sexual division of labor was substantially detrimental and did not reflect justice for women. The assumption was that men physically have many advantages and are psychologically more active in which they prioritize ratios rather than emotions. While women are always in the opposites, and thus the domestication of women are considered to be in nature of things (Budiman, 1982). The results of the study found that work carried out by men and women in the tourism sector had more differences and this can lead to gender equality where men and women have the same opportunity to get work and participate in tourism sector.

A claimed for biological determinants from time to time, believing that men were superior than women is rejected. It was believed that men were active and women were passive. Women were incomplete and considered as humans who had no soul. The biological inferiority of

women has made the women inferior in terms of ability to think and ability to make decisions. Men were superior and women were inferior, men were born to rule and women were born to be ruled. It was stated that the courage of men was indicated in the acts of mastering, and the courage of women was shown in the acts of obedience [7]. For the theory of gender inequality, the suppression of women gender is a continuation of a structural and cultural exploitation system. This exploitation has implications for the marginalization of women from public life such as poverty, education, and working space. Consequently, an access to make asset, earn money, get information, study at schools, and have authority is dominated by men.

B. Women Workers and Tourism

It cannot be denied that women involvement in working sectors is increasingly open. Tourism as a new sector offers expectations for women to be involved. After interviewing women workers in the Mandalika Lombok Special Economic Zone and questioning the number of men working in the tourism sector, the researchers found that, according to them (women), factors that cause men more dominant in tourism sector are (1) men are needed by tourism services; (2) men hold higher education level certificate; (3) habit of society; and (4) the freedom of men in terms of working flexibility. The results of the study also found that women could not work in the tourism service sector because of some assumptions from men which state that women are slow, work in the tourism sector is heavy, employment in the tourism sector is not suitable for female, and tourism sector requires permission from the parents and family. The argument for explaining these phenomena, as offered by [8], is called the argument of the gender inequality theory. The theory of gender inequality can be seen in figure 2 below:

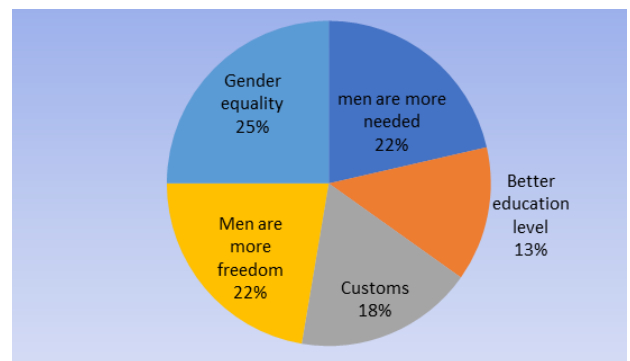


Fig. 2 Women's perspective on number of men working at the tourism sector

It can be said that the position of women in most situations was not only different, but also less fortunate or not equal to the position of men. As Ritzer-Goodman [8] argued that men and women in society are not only different, but also imbalance, because women have material resources, social status, less power to actualize themselves than those what men have, social class bias, occupation, education and religion. Those inequalities originate from community organizations. From feminism perspective, gender inequality is a result of the sexist and patriarchist patterns of work division and also a social creation. To achieve gender equality, it is necessary to

reformulate important institutions in society such as law, employment, family and education [8].

C. Empowerment of Women Resources in the Tourism Sector

The results of research on women workers in the Mandalika Special Economic Zone found that there are 5 factors that hinder women participation to be equal to men workers. Those factors are (1) Women must have working skills; (2) institutionalization of women potential; (3) assistance in doing business; (4) women work motivation; and (5) women must be given a freedom. Empowering human resources particularly for women workers, a culture-based development orientation is needed [9]–[11]. Culture-based orientation is values which are embodied in community beliefs.

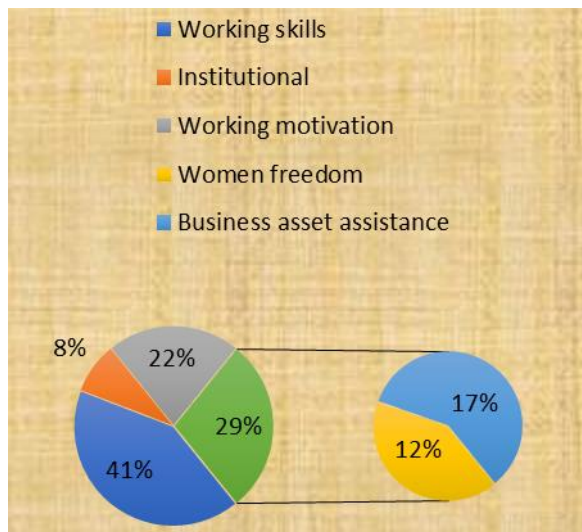


Fig. 3 Women empowerment perspective

To realize the empowerment of women based on culture, it is important to do the process of strengthening the capacity of women workers who work in the tourism sector such as individual capacity building. The data found that 22% of women needed to strengthen work motivation and to improve the quality worker characteristics, therefore, they will be more effective and efficient workers.

Strengthening individual capacity is related to personality capacities such as physical appearance, behavioral values that refer to social habits, norms and ethics. In addition, women must have the capacity to enter working space particularly in the tourism sector such as technical, and managerial sectors. Capacity can be obtained through training, internship and upgrading skills and also strengthening the capacity of the entity (institutional). This is important because the results of the study found that empowerment of women workers is still

hampered by institutional problems and business assets assistance. Entity capacity building is more focused on developing the quality of the entity/organization involving organization culture and organization management such as planning, organizing, implementing, financing and controlling [9], [12], [13].

IV. CONCLUSION

The existence of new tourism sectors in the Mandalika Lombok Special Economic Zone has brought up new types of work for women that were previously unknown to the public such as beauty salon staff, saleswoman, waitress, tour guide and manager. There is still misperception about women workers in the tourism sector and this leads to gender inequality in working space for women. To empower women resources in the tourism sector, it is necessary to use a culture-based development by strengthening the capacity of women workers, which is related to strengthening individual capacities and the capacity of entities (institutions).

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