

Culture in Collective Parenting of Children of Indonesian Women Migrant Workers (TKW)

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Abstract—Children at the age of growth and development need attention and care from their parents, especially mothers. However, such ideal condition is not always available, especially for children whose mothers have to work abroad as women migrant workers (TKW). Therefore, family of TKW have to take over that responsibility. The care of TKW's family for TKW's children is strongly influenced by the culture they live in. Habits and uniqueness of caregiving in a certain environment will color the collective care provided by the family which different from one region to another. The purpose of this study is to map communication events occur in the process of caregiving in the scope of TKW's family and to analyze the caregiving culture built. This study develops communication patterns in collective care for children with local cultural backgrounds. The research method used is ethnography of communication to explore the culture emerges in caregiving. The research phase is mapping communication events that take place in childcare activities and analyze the culture built in the collective care process. Communication is believed to be a channel that can establish mutual understanding between members of family in building a culture of caregiving.

Keywords—culture, collective care, child communication, ethnography of communication, interaction

I. INTRODUCTION

Family is a primary social institution that has an important function for the establishment of children's character. Children's character will be formed through the process of socialization, enculturation, and internalization. The good or bad character of a child is largely influenced by the process of family socialization [1]. Family is the first agent or institution to introduce values, rules, and norms that apply in the surrounding environment. These values, rules, and norms that are prevailed in a family will later become provisions for a child before he/she enters and lives in a community. Social roles in each family are different, one of which is the role of parents in raising children as crucial responsibility for the development of children's attitudes and mentality that is conducted by caring for and guiding children well and attentively.

When mothers work outside the home for quite a long time, their children will need a substitute role from other family members, such as grandparents or other relatives. The reality for mothers who work as women migrant workers or TKW is that their children will be taken care of by secondary families such as grandparents or relatives. But more often than not, in the process of socialization, it turns out that social control over children becomes weak. This then affects the personality of children, for example, they would behave wrongly and have a spoiled attitude. The phenomenon of children who are left by their mothers to become women migrant workers has an impact on the development of children's character.

The development and growth of children is conducted through caregiving. Children will grow optimally under good care. Children who do not receive direct care/assistance from their parents, especially mothers, need special attention regarding child care. Children of mothers who work as women migrant workers (TKW) for a long time need care from people other than their mothers. The caregiving for these children is usually handed over to their father, grandparents, mother's or father's sisters, etc. Families around children take care of them together. We often find this collective care in villages that send a lot of TKW abroad. In fact, sometimes this collective care also involves the closest neighbors who take part in supervising the children.

Building communication in collective care of children is crucial. It is interesting to know how the characters in children's family play a role in caregiving process and how they communicate with children on a daily basis. The existence of different roles of each family member and the necessity to adapt to the needs and conditions of children is not an easy thing to do. They must be able to ensure that children feel comfortable and grow normally as in the care of their mothers.

Communication established in collective care is inseparable from the local cultural background exists in a particular society, which also include how to talk, how to support and how to empathize. Different cultural backgrounds will build different discipline system, where some will do it in a firm way, and some prioritize the persuasion. Things as such are indeed strongly influenced by local cultural background.

Culturally-based caregiving values include establishing effective communication with the key caregivers involved, namely father, grandfather, grandmother, aunt, and closest neighbors. The ethnographic approach to communication can read values built in the interactions between caregivers in caregiving process. Communication is believed to be a proper channel to build mutual understanding between actors to develop certain knowledge in order to have social added value [2].

In TKW families, parenting or caregiving does not work as perfect as that of a complete family where the caregiving that should be carried out by a mother is replaced by grandmothers, grandfathers or relatives as seen in the reality of TKW families, especially families whose mothers have been working as TKW for quite a long time. Aside from the factor of children being cared for, environmental factors have also a positive influence on the provision of parenting, since coincidentally the environment where the research is conducted supports the formation of good social norms. This research is within the large scope of research on child communication. Parenting or caregiving chosen is the case of children being cared for by their families because their mothers have to work abroad as women migrant workers (TKW). This study aims to develop parenting patterns based on the cultural background grows in society.

Family is a relationship of a group of people bound by marriage, blood, and commitment to share life in the long term and also share hopes for the future together [3]. The interactions built between family members shape life within the family scope. Through communication, each member of a family perceives roles, rules, and expectations; they also form and manage relationships between family members by interacting with each other. For this reason, the family is also referred to as the first communication class [4].

Communication in a family needs to be established properly in order to create a good relationship between its members. The following are the characteristics of good and effective family communication [5]:

- Equality and justice for each member of the family where they get the same rights and treatment, without discrimination.
- Closeness and intimacy between family members.
- Open communication between parents and children, and also mutual respect.
- The willingness of each member to put aside small problems in order to maintain a good relationship.

Various problems faced such as obstacles in the relationship between parents, children and parents, children and the environment, and families and communities are dynamics that often occur in a family. Not to mention problems that arise when a mother has to work abroad and the child is cared for by relatives such as grandmother, aunts, or other family members. Caregivers should be able to replace the role and function of a

mother and family. The role of a family shown through behavior should be in accordance with duties and functions based on obligations and certain situations in the family and environment.

It is a family that teaches someone to eat, drink, dress, talk, and get along with his/her environment. A family is the first school to teach values and norms; it forms a system of thought, taste, attitude, and behavior, even the character and principles of one's life. Parenting patterns affect the growth and development of children. Children will grow optimally under good care, thus, children who do not receive direct care from their parents, especially mothers, need special attention from their immediate environment.

II. METHODOLOGY

This research is conducted by applying ethnography of communication approach to communication by tracking communication patterns emerged from the interactions of actors in a community group. To map the pattern of collective parenting communication with a cultural background, this study traces the interactions between fathers, grandfathers, grandmothers or other family members with children in parenting activities in the cases being studied. The qualitative data obtained are analyzed by organizing the data, sorting, synthesizing, searching, and finding patterns [6].

This research is conducted through various stages. In the first stage, the researchers map actors/caregivers involved in the collective parenting of children, identify figures who play a major role in building a collective parenting culture, and formulate collective parenting communications for children with local cultural backgrounds.

Subjects in this study are members of the family as caregivers, such as fathers, grandfathers, grandmothers and other family members. The families selected as cases for this research are families whose mothers work as TKW abroad and have children who still in the care.

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

A. *Communication Events in Child Care Process in the Scope of Family*

Women migrant workers leave their homeland to work abroad, but it doesn't mean all problems have been solved. There are still various problems at home. On average, women migrant workers leave their children to be taken care of by other family members. These children who are still in their age of care, automatically, do not receive care from their mothers. Most of them live with their grandmother and grandfather, but some are still with their father.

The culture of separating responsibilities in child care (where mothers take care of the children and fathers work to make a living) makes fathers' role in caregiving non-functional. On average, children who are left behind by their mothers to work abroad are in the care of their grandmothers and

grandfathers or their aunts. Changes in parenting mostly occur from mothers to extended families, especially to grandmother' as a new parenting pattern. On the other hand, time for fathers to be able to communicate with their children is in the afternoon until the evening after work or in the morning before work. Other than that time, for the rest of the morning, afternoon, and evening, caregiving and communication patterns are under the control of grandmother. The handover of care from mother to the closest family such as father, grandmother, grandfather or aunt often causes problem for children themselves, which is not easy to deal with [7]. Problems in children may be caused by the lack of attention and affection.

Children of women migrant workers have issues in religious and moral aspects, namely they have not yet performed their prayer in an orderly manner. Children's understanding of religious and moral values has an impact on patterns of behavior and actions in their daily lives. The cause of children taking negative actions related to interactions with others is the lack of education from parents or other adults who become their caregivers. In addition, children often imitate inappropriate examples, resulting in improper behavior that againsts local norms and rules. The results of the study indicate that children of women migrant workers are not yet performed their prayer orderly due to two things: they lose a parent figure who acts as a model in praying, and a caregiver (grandparenting) who is not assertive in educating religion and morals even though they have asked them to pray and provided examples of praying which causes the children to be negligent in carrying out their prayer.

Many children of TKW experienced education disruption, some of them even dropped out of school. Their psychosocial development also disrupted because some of them were born from unintended pregnancies. Some of them were also born abroad, hence they experienced culture shock. Not only that, they also went through bad stigmatization, even bullying because of their physical form or social conditions that were different from their environment. Various negative labels were attached to them.

Children of women migrant workers who experience bullying and stigmatization tend to be quiet and withdraw from social life. However, on the other hand, due to the lack of affection, they naturally seek attention from their environment. Children who grow up without parental care often behave differently because they have a tendency to seek for attention. Ideally, children get attention for their achievements, but since children of TKW have limited facilities and do not get attention they deserve, they often turn to doing things out of control to get that attention.

Many communication events are built up in the collective caregiving of migrant workers' children, mostly with grandmother as the main caregiver. Unfortunately, the unequal understanding, age, desire, and association create many barriers to their communication. When it is difficult to reach a mutual understanding, then one way to go is to use each other's point of view. Usually, grandmother or grandfather will become

lenient to make the children happy and it is considered as a compensation to replace the guilt feeling because those children don't get parental love. This kind of communication process overrides the core purpose of the communication built, namely the educational process.

The growth and development of children is closely related to social interaction. This is inseparable from the nature of humans as social and comunal beings who always live side by side with various kinds of environments, either physically and psychologically that provide reciprocity between one individual and another. As social beings, humans are characterized by social interactions that occur between, for example, children and their peers, children and their families, or children and their parents. Social interaction is the main factor that influences the relationship between two or more people [8].

Social interaction for children is an essential thing needed in their developmental age. Children at this age have demands and needs that must be fulfilled from various factors, either physically, psychologically, and socially. The main factor needed by children in supporting their developmental age is family. Children can meet their needs for security, respect, acceptance, love, and freedom to express themselves in the family they really need [9].

B. Building Parenting Culture

Personality problems faced by children of TKW include being easily embarrassed, lacking in self-confidence, easily offended, easily being emotional, impatient, feeling self-conscious, being cold, and ignorant. As for the problems of social relations and organization, they tend to be afraid of getting to know other people, afraid to associate with older people, confused when dealing with general public, easily offended, difficult to accept defeat, always want to be superior, bad tempered, easily to be embarrassed, impatient, and difficult to adjust to others.

Personal and social problems experienced by children of women migrant workers are caused by the lack of quality of care due to the absence of mothers. They don't get the skills in social relationship and are left to do whatever they want, thus they do not have the sense of responsibilities and have difficulty in establishing social relationships with others.

The busy life of parents who work as TKW and caregivers (grandparenting) is not an excuse for not being able to teach their children how to do their hobbies and and spend their free time positively. The low level of supervision and lack of understanding from parents regarding the use of free time can result in children choosing activities that they think fun without considering the pros and cons of these activities. Therefore, children of TKW need support and supervision in utilizing their free time and hobbies in order to stay on a positive path.

Based on the results of the study, parents who work as TKW provide a parenting style that tends to spoil children which actually makes them have a poor social competence and

are not independent according to their age. In addition, social support provided to children through collective parenting also tends to spoil them. Such a loose style of parenting applied to children for various reasons, one of which is the guilty feeling because children are not being able to be with their mothers so that they are left undisciplined. They are free to do what they want without parents (or caregivers) bother to find out whether what they do is good or bad. Caregivers pamper the children more, rarely demand them to do things according to the rules, and have a little control over them so that children never learn to control their own behavior and always demand to get what they want.

Collective parenting has a significant role in times when children are not with their migrant mothers. Collective parenting contributes greatly to children's development because they act as guardians of parents. Parenting patterns used in educating children are the primary factors that determine the character and personality of children [10]. Combination and collaboration of caregiving provided by fathers, grandfathers, grandmothers, or aunts in collective parenting should be able to encourage the children to become independent while still applying boundaries and control over them. Collective parenting is expected to create a pleasant atmosphere to discuss with children, provide psychological comfort and space for children to develop creativity in thinking. Children are expected to continue to learn independently and be responsible according to their age development, even though they do not receive direct care and assistance from their mothers.

IV. CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

Collective parenting involves the role of family members, be it father, grandmother, grandfather, or aunt. Even the communities, whose citizens become TKW, participate in this collective caregiving. Interaction of children of TKW with their fathers occurs only when they have difficulties or they need money or to fulfill their physical and financial needs; while interactions with grandmothers are related to eating rules, things that are allowed and not allowed at home, as well as what habits applied at home which include praying habits.

Collective parenting culture in children is formed in the family and surrounding neighborhood. The role of several family members in instilling values and rules in children is quite significant, as well as the surrounding community where the children live. The social culture grows in the environment

also colors the culture of collective parenting for children whose mothers leave to work abroad.

The combination and collaboration of parenting performed by parents who work as TKW and caregivers should promote an attitude of encouraging children to be independent, but still with limitation and control over children. Parents and caregivers should apply democratic parenting, which is to continue to give a warm attitude and psychological support, and also to train children to behave constructively. Thus, parents can encourage children to be mature, responsible, independent, and act in accordance with their developmental age.

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