



Protection and Empowerment of Indonesian Migrant Workers in Jember Regency

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Abstract— This research investigates the implementation of protection and empowerment for former migrant workers in the Jember Regency. It utilizes a descriptive qualitative approach, collecting data through interviews, observations, and documentation. Primary data is gathered from interviews, while secondary data is obtained from various sources such as documentation, websites, journals, books, and government publications. Data analysis employs interactive analysis, involving data collection, condensation, presentation, and conclusion. The findings reveal that the Jember Regency Government empowers former migrant workers through multiple strategies. They established the Desbumi program at the village level to integrate empowerment. Additionally, the government collaborates with Migrant Care Institutions to provide training and capacity-building. Moreover, Desbumi members independently engage in empowerment activities, creating their high-quality products. Future research in this area should focus on migrant workers' group formation, considering sociological, economic, and political perspectives, beyond the government's role in empowerment.

Keywords— *Ex-Migrants, Empowerment, Regional Government.*

I. INTRODUCTION

Indonesia is a developing country with a large population, Directorate General of Dukcapil, Ministry of Home Affairs [1] stated that the number of people in Indonesia in June 2022 was 275,361,267 people. The large population and high societal growth have resulted in Indonesia facing problems regarding the world of work, namely difficulties in providing employment opportunities. The high population and limited employment opportunities can result in high levels of unemployment, and these problems can increase the problem of poverty. Central Bureau of Statistics [2] stated that the poverty rate in Indonesia was 26.16 million people in March 2022, and the open unemployment rate was 5.83% in February 2022.2022.

The problem of unemployment and poverty is not only caused by the lack of available jobs but it is also caused by the lack of available jobs to achieve prosperity. Meanwhile, in this case, the offer to become a migrant worker with a higher salary is a more attractive offer for the community. Becoming a migrant worker is considered the easiest job to help get out of economic problems, therefore many people who don't have a job decide to work abroad to become migrant workers or Indonesian Migrant Workers. Migrant workers are among the jobs most desired by migrant

workers, this is because there are motivating factors such as salaries abroad being higher than at home,

Rasyid [4] stated, "Migration is the movement of people to settle from one place to another beyond political/state boundaries or administrative boundaries/partial boundaries of a country". According to Achsin and Rosalinda [5], "International migration is the process of moving people from their original place of residence to a new area that crosses the borders of a sovereign country. The transfer is from the country of origin of citizenship to a country of which one does not have citizenship." Indonesian migrant workers are Indonesian citizens (WNI) men and women who work abroad within the agreed deadlines in their work contracts, passing the procedures for placing Indonesian migrant workers. Indonesian migrant workers also apply to every Indonesian citizen who will, is and has already carried out work and received a salary outside the Republic of Indonesia.

Indonesian migrant workers are the largest foreign exchange contributors in Indonesia. According to Bank Indonesia [6], the amount of money transferred from Indonesian migrant workers abroad in 2021 was US\$9.16 billion. Migrant workers working in Saudi Arabia are the largest contributor to foreign exchange in Indonesia in 2021, reaching US\$2.82 billion. The money earned by Indonesian migrant workers plays a role in driving the wheels of the national economy. This makes Indonesian migrant workers called foreign exchange heroes. Due to the large assistance for Indonesia, the government should be more serious in protecting Indonesian migrant workers. However, in reality, protection for Indonesian migrant workers is not adequate and they still often receive humane treatment from their employers and work providers. Even though it is called one of the largest foreign exchange contributors in Indonesia, However, there are still various problems that Indonesian migrant workers have to face. According to BP2MI (2023), the number of complaints from migrant workers in 2020 was 1,811 cases, in 2021 there were 1,700 cases, in 2022 there were 1,987 cases. If we look at 2020-2022, the number of complaints decreased in 2021 and increased again in 2022. In detail, in 2021 the number of complaints decreased by 6% and increased again in 2022 by 16.8%. In the last 3 years, complaints from female migrant workers have dominated, namely 59%. Based on the country of placement, the most complaints in 2022 will be from Indonesian migrant workers placed in Saudi Arabia, Malaysia, Taiwan, Hong Kong, and the United Arab Emirates. Based on case categories, the six cases that dominate in 2022 are migrant workers wanting to

be sent home, failure to leave, job opportunity fraud, illegal recruitment of prospective migrant workers, wages were not given, and death in the country of placement. The many problems experienced by Indonesian migrant workers must be addressed properly. To protect migrant workers, the government enacted Law Number 18 of 2017 regarding the protection of Indonesian migrant workers and Government Regulation Number 59 of 2021 concerning the implementation of protection for Indonesian migrant workers. These two regulations are implemented to guarantee the rights of Indonesian migrant workers before work, during work and after work. Efforts undertaken to overcome the problems of Indonesian migrant workers include increasing protection for migrant workers; increasing supervision from recruitment, and departure to placement; strengthening cooperative relations between BP2MI, the Indonesian Embassy, and migrant agents; and supporting the Indonesian Embassy in carrying out operations by security forces from countries where migrant workers live, so that migrant workers receive protection and avoid acts of violence.

Table 1. Number of Indonesian Migrant Workers

No	Year	Man	Woman	Amount
1	2019	85,316	192,173	277,489
2	2020	22,982	90,454	113,436
3	2021	8,771	63,853	72,624

Source :BP2MI, 2022

Table 1.1 contains female Indonesian migrant workers during 2019, 2020 and 2021, respectively, dominating the number of migrant workers. The number of female migrant workers is greater than male migrant workers. The majority of female PMI work in the informal sector while male PMI work in the formal sector. This is because the request for female PMI is quite open without requiring special diplomas and skills. Apart from that, female PMIs' views on working abroad are often influenced by successful PMIs who do not consider the background that underlies their success. As a result, many migrant workers often experience discrimination and violations of their rights due to the lack of mental preparation of female migrant workers and a lack of information regarding safe migration for women.

According to the Indonesian Migrant Worker Protection Agency (BP2MI), the highest number of Indonesian migrant workers in 2019, 2020 and 2021 came from East Java Province. The number of Indonesian migrant workers in 2019 was 70,410 people, in 2020 there were 37,829 people and in 2021 there were 28,810 people. Jember Regency is ranked number 10 with the most PMI at the East Java Province level in 2021, namely 934 PMI. This is a problem for the Jember Regency, where the Jember Regency Government must think about how to overcome the problem so that PMI does not return abroad. The most important action that should be implemented by the government is to resolve domestic problems, especially those related to providing employment opportunities. So people don't need to go far from their families to earn a living. Because most migrant workers decide to become TKI, it is generally driven by subsistence needs and economic factors.

Jember Regency has one of the empowerment programs for women former migrant workers, the program is Village Care for Migrant Workers (Desbumi). A total of four villages out of 266 villages in the Jember Regency have PERDES related to Migrant Worker's Care Villages. The four villages are Wonoasri Village, Tempurejo District, Dukuhdempok Village, Wuluhan District, Ambulu Village, and Sabrang Village, Ambulu District. The aim of establishing Desbumi is to help provide information on how to become a legal migrant worker candidate and can also help former migrant workers who have returned from abroad to develop their potential in the village. Desbumi ensures that migrant workers can gain knowledge regarding safe migration, the rights of migrant workers, handling cases of problems experienced while abroad,

DESBUMI is an organization whose activities provide empowerment to the community, especially female migrant workers from villages who are shaded by the village government and collaborate with the non-governmental organization Migrant Care. DESBUMI connects the village government with Migrant Care in assisting migrant workers both before and after migration and also the families of these migrant workers. The form of assistance provided by DESBUMI is in the form of guidance on migration rights and choices, case management and referrals, skills training after migration, and increasing sources of income.

Based on this background, it can be concluded that many migrant workers still experience problems when working abroad, this is often experienced by female illegal migrant workers. Even though there are many problems that women who are former migrant workers have to face, they continue to work abroad, because that is their only source of income. Jember Regency handles this problem through the Desbumi program, namely by providing information on safe migration to prospective migrant workers and helping to increase the personal potential of former migrant workers when they return to the village. It is hoped that former migrant workers will be more empowered and can generate income domestically so that they will no longer become migrant workers. Based on that incident,

II. LITERATUR REVIEW

A. Protection

Nuridin [9] states that legal protection is an activity to guarantee someone which is carried out based on law or by going through legal procedures. Meanwhile, according to Sukomono[10], protection is protecting and providing maximum opportunities to obtain a life and livelihood worthy of being a human being.

B. Empowerment

Margolang [11] states that "Empowerment is an effort to increase or restore the power of a group so that it can do something that is in harmony with its self-esteem and position, obligations and rights as humans and citizens". As Wahyuni and Hutasuhtut [12] stated the community empowerment process can be carried out in the following ways:

- 1) The initial stage is that all empowerment activities originate from the government, by the government, and are intended for the people;

- 2) The participatory stage is an empowerment process that originates from the government and the community, by the government and the community for the people;
- 3) The emancipatory stage is a process of empowerment of the people, by the people, and for the people, and is encouraged by the government and the people.

Noor [13] states that efforts to provide empowerment to the community can be viewed from 3 aspects:

- 1) *Enabling*, is to create situations that give people the possibility to develop their potential.
- 2) *Empowering*, is to strengthen the abilities of the people.
- 3) *Protecting*, namely defending the interests and protecting the lower classes of society.

According to Margayaningsih, [14] Community empowerment has objectives, including:

- 1) Creating independent individuals in society;
- 2) Building an environment that has positive work principles so that a good work situation can be created and provide mutual benefits;
- 3) Forming a society with high sensitivity to the surrounding environment and good personal potential;
- 4) Directing the community to carry out planning and accountability for their actions in meeting their needs;
- 5) Improve negotiation and thinking skills or find solutions to problems that may be experienced in their environment;
- 6) Reducing the amount of poverty by increasing the basic abilities and potential of the community.

C. Indonesian Migrant Workers

Workers are linguistically defined as people who receive a salary from their work, people who work, employees or laborers. Meanwhile, a migrant is someone who moves from one location to another. In the context of workers, migrant means moving work abroad. Therefore, a migrant worker is a worker outside the country of his previous residence. According to Wardani et al., [15], "A migrant worker is a worker abroad for some time based on a work agreement and receives a salary." According to law Officially Indonesian residents as overseas workers are referred to as Indonesian migrant workers (PMI). Meanwhile, the definition of Indonesian migrant workers is explained by Widodo & Belgradoputra [17], namely "all Indonesian residents who want to, are doing, and have already carried out work and received a salary outside the borders of the Republic of Indonesia".

III. METHODS

This research used descriptive qualitative methods which were carried out in Jember Regency. This research aims to find out how the protection and empowerment of former migrant workers in the Jember Regency is implemented. Data collection techniques through interviews, observation, and documentation. The data sources in this research are 1) Primary data in the form of interviews with informants; and 2) Secondary data in the form of documentation, websites,

journals, books, and government publications related to this research. The data that has been obtained is then tested for validity using the source triangulation method, method triangulation, and time triangulation. According to Moleong [18] "Triangulation is a technique for checking the validity of data by using something other than the data to check or to differentiate the data." Data that have been tested for validity are then analyzed using interactive analysis techniques [19] namely data collection, data condensation, data presentation and conclusion.

IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

A. Protection of Migrant Workers in Jember Regency

The Jember Regency Government implements protection for Indonesian Migrant Workers, namely through prevention by providing outreach to the community at the sub-district and village levels. Apart from that, the Jember Regency Government also carried out outreach when visiting PMI homes who were delivered directly to their homes and approached their families not to send them again illegally. Even though this method of socialization is quite difficult, this method can reduce illegal departures.

The Jember district government provides protection not only to legal migrant workers, but also to illegal migrant workers as well. This is because, in the eyes of the Jember Regency Government, all of them are Indonesian citizens. If migrant workers experience cases or problems, the Jember Regency Government takes action in coordination with the Provincial Manpower and Transmigration Service, BP2MI, and the Indonesian Embassy to send home migrant workers who experience these problems. For example, 12 migrant workers from the country of destination Cambodia who came from Jember Regency experienced cases of human trafficking, the Jember Regency Government coordinated with the Provincial Manpower and Transmigration Office, BP2MI, and the Indonesian Embassy to repatriate migrant workers who had departed illegally.

B. Empowerment of Former Migrant Workers in Jember Regency

• Initial phase

The Jember Regency Government carries out empowerment through seminars and training activities. These activities are carried out by agencies related to the topic being discussed. For example, entrepreneurship training on processing fish into shredded fish; training to strengthen business and financial management of the post-migrant women community; financial literacy and inclusion training for migrant workers in the Desbumi group; etc.

Empowerment for women former migrant workers by the Jember Regency Government is carried out jointly with other villages which are also included in the Desbumi program. Villages that have the Desbumi program in Jember Regency include Dukuh Dempok Village, Wuluhan District, Wonoasri Village, Tempurejo District, Ambulu Village, Ambulu District and Sabrang Village, Ambulu District. Due to the limited number of training quotas, not all Desbumi members can participate in all the training provided by the Jember Regency Government. Desbumi in selecting members who

will take part in the training are members who are active in Desbumi activities. Even though the members selected as training participants are active members, they must be replaced for each training activity.

- Participatory phase

The empowerment process in the participatory phase in question is empowerment carried out by the government together with the community. Desbumi in this empowerment process was provided by the Jember Regency Government together with the private sector, namely the Migrant Care Institute. The Desbumi program is a form of collaboration between the Government and Migrant Care. Therefore, in its implementation, Desbumi was accompanied by both parties. The collaboration between the Government and Migrant Care in empowering Desbumi is by increasing capacity, handling cases and providing training to its members. For example, in training activities carried out by the Migrant Care Institute by bringing in resource persons such as successful entrepreneurs, this activity was also attended by the Jember Regency Government.

The Jember Regency Government in empowering women former migrant workers has limitations. The government cannot carry out empowerment itself, but needs assistance from Migrant Care Institutions. Therefore, the Government can only provide support and encouragement to Desbumi members. Furthermore, in increasing capacity, the Government handed over to the Migrant Care Institution.

- Emancipatory phase

Empowerment in this emancipatory phase is carried out by Desbumi members independently and supported by the government. The empowerment carried out by Desbumi in this phase is that members run their respective businesses, by making various processed food and beverage products. Meanwhile, the marketing process is carried out jointly by all Desbumi members. Even though they make products individually, Desbumi members still carry out marketing and sales activities together. Desbumi members market products, both personal and other members' products, through their respective social media, such as via Whatsapp and Facebook. The marketing process is also carried out when there are certain events, for example the MSME bazaar and taking advantage of the Ramadhan moment to sell takjil. Besides that, Desbumi Sabrang Village also carries out marketing and sales through a Joint Business Group (KUB) which is run jointly. The KUB provides various products that have been made by Desbumi members, for example bitter melon chips, herbal turmeric tamarind, samiler crackers, floss, etc. Apart from products made by Desbumi members, KUB also provides various necessities such as basic necessities, coffee, fast food and drinks.

V. CONCLUSION

A. Protection of migrant workers in Jember Regency, including:

The Jember Regency Government implements protection for Indonesian Migrant Workers, namely through prevention by providing outreach to the community at the sub-district and village levels. Apart from that, they also carried out socialization when visiting PMI's homes, who were delivered directly to their homes and approached their families not to send them again illegally. If migrant workers experience cases or problems, the Jember Regency Government takes action in coordination with the Provincial Manpower and Transmigration Service, BP2MI and the Indonesian Embassy to send home migrant workers who experience problems.

B. Empowerment of former migrant workers in Jember Regency, including:

1) Empowerment from the Government

The Jember Regency Government carries out empowerment by uniting several villages that are included in the Desbumi program. The amount of empowerment carried out jointly is limited, so not all Desbumi members can participate in the empowerment. The agency that provides training is also adjusted to the topic to be given.

2) Empowerment from the Government with Migrant Care

The government and Migrant Care Institutions collaborate in providing training and capacity building. In every empowerment, Desbumi always involves the Village Government, Jember Regency Government and the Migrant Care Institute.

3) Empowerment of Desbumi Members

Desbumi members carry out empowerment independently by creating their own superior products. Meanwhile, the marketing and sales process is carried out together by utilizing social media, Joint Business Groups (KUB) and certain moments.

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