

## ***Kaili Women's Empowerment in Indonesia***

*Indah Ahdiah*  
(University Airlangga)  
indahahdiah@gmail.com

*Bagong Suyanto*  
(University Airlangga)

*Ida Bagus Wirawan*  
(University Airlangga)

***Abstract - The focus of the study is to illustrate the cultural values which guide society to enhance human resources (HR), especially for women. The research is essential to demonstrate the diversity, wealth, and power of Indonesian culture in terms of women's position from society's perspectives. This research studies Kaili women, a native ethnic in Palu, Central Sulawesi Province, Indonesia. It aims to show the meaning, structure, and essence of Kaili women based on cultural values as their possessed resources. Furthermore, it applies the qualitative method and phenomenology approach. Based on the research findings obtained by examining the cultural values of the Kaili, they uphold a myth which perceives women (mombine) as creatures descending from the sky to the Earth (to manuru) as partners of strong men (tomalanggai) who have settled on Earth; thus, it makes Kaili women hold a respectable position in Palu society. In the daily life of Kaili families, women are assigned some tasks to preserve and guard family properties and heirlooms (tina nu mbara-mbara). Finally, based on the research findings, there are two aspects to draw the conclusion from: (1) human resources' quality that can be enhanced through the comprehension of culture and society; (2) and through cultural value comprehension, gender balance can be solidly made within a broader field.***

***Keywords: human resources, women, cultural values***

### **I. INTRODUCTION**

In general, women's conditions in some writings have been portrayed within the frames of violence and harassment due to the lack of women's visibility, women's problems, long-lasting prejudice, social support and sanctions, as well as expectations of equality, health, education, and others [1]. Therefore, some references are necessary to demonstrate the existence of socio-cultural values which value women. This research aims to be a cultural reference and policy reference to develop women's potential as a part of human resources.

Within the discipline of human resource development, studies about women's roles generally discuss about women's leadership [2]. According to the discipline of human resource development [3], Human Resource Development (HRD) belongs to theoretical areas, the research field, and practices

devoted to studying people [4]. As a product of social and ideological power, human resources (here after, HR) must be proactive as an advanced process to respond to social power, organisation development, and social structure. This is because inter-individual human potential and aptitude, as well as gender, ethnicity, class, environment and other important issues initiate a way to alter new organisational and social orders which promote social justice and eternal peace [5]. Therefore, this research has become crucial as it shows the diversity, wealth, and strength of Indonesian culture on women's position amidst society, as well as contributing to social studies in terms of human resources development.

The purpose of this research study is to examine and explore the meaning, structure, and essence of Kaili women's life experiences based the basic cultural values that they possess. This research descriptively discusses how Kaili women employ their own cultural values in their daily lives.

### **II. METHOD OF THE STUDY**

Phenomenology is an analytical approach. Research that focuses on the lived experiences of humans becomes the foundation of phenomenological research. This research study employed an analytical approach which was inspired by ethnography. Moreover, this research applied a field application which was followed by an interview. The approach adheres to Max van Manen's thought on practical phenomenology which also mentioned hermeneutic phenomenology [6]. The method was informed by ethnography through field observation (7), semi-structured interviews [8] and in-depth interviews using purposive sampling. The interview guidance was composed of post-field observation and consisted of open questions, as well as descriptive, structural, and contrasting questions [9]. The interview was conducted with women who were adequately knowledgeable about Kaili culture. There were five women interviewed for this research.

### **III. RESULT AND DISCUSSION**

Gender is one of national development issues in Indonesia, while social capital is proven as a

development generator [10]. Gender systems, however, are diverse and complex. The nature and extent of gender inequity and conditions necessary to empower women vary across countries, communities, and regions [11].

To better comprehend the mechanism behind social or gender inequalities, we need to be more thorough in inputting the impact of status inequality based on the differences in reward and respect towards the social environment which forms culture—besides those based on resources and power [12]. Therefore the development of human resources is a multi-dimensional process, which should enable women or group of women to realise their full identity and power in all spheres of life.

This finding is crucial to gain an equal understanding about gender. Some researchers have discussed about the position of women in the religious aspects [13] [14] and social aspects by examining contemporary women's lives in China, Hong Kong, and Taiwan. The research explained that even though there are stereotypes and gender ideologies, it could be a new challenge for women; despite progress in their socio-economic development [15] or chapter [16] revealing the importance of enhancing women's roles in society like in India, which has a dominant patriarchal culture in every aspect. Women have made contributions in all fields [17]. Therefore, more studies about women are necessary so that justice can be established in society.

Indonesia (also called Nusantara) built her epistemology based on axiology values. She has ethics, sociology, virtue, psychology, culture, and spirituality which are probably metaphysical. In such a way, Nusantara's thoughts assume that in order to be part of Indonesian culture, the epistemology of these thoughts should directly meet a number of value systems and society. Knowledge possessed by different ethnics all over Indonesia is one of the most fundamental factors to strengthen Indonesia's culture [18]. Indonesia has diverse perspectives in relation to viewing women's roles and positions within society. Previous studies in this topic included [19] those which wrote that women are basically actors in culture by pointing out that Minangkabau women are actors playing crucial roles to preserve culture, including local knowledge found within. The Ammatoa Ilalang Embaya community also demonstrates respect towards women's values and

dignity by avoiding all forms of violence toward women based on Pasanga teachings [20].

Meanwhile, Kailis are an ethnic tribe dwelling in Palu Valley, Central Sulawesi Province, Indonesia. It is also known as the indigenous tribe (tupungata) of Palu Valley. In Kaili language, women are called mombine. Through examining the cultural values upheld by Kaili based on its local myths, women (mombine) are viewed as creatures descending from the sky to the Earth (to manuru) as the partners for strong men (tomalanggai) who have settled on Earth. The myth makes Kaili women hold a respectable position within Palu society. The myth tells about a tomalanggai (a powerful man who later becomes the leader of the pack) who married a woman incarnated from yellowish golden bamboo (Bolo Vatu Bulava). From their marriage, their descendants become the kings of some of the Kaili kingdoms from generation to generation. Kaili people believe that the presence of manuru as wives significantly influences some changes in tomalanggai, in whose superpower and influence is increased along with their wisdom and sensible attitudes.

The application of Kaili culture in respecting women is illustrated in the Kaili's familial lives, in which they assign women to preserve and guard their family's wealth and heirlooms (tina nu mbara-mbara) [21]. Kaili women are given some spaces to perform on a stage at wedding ceremonies, to oversee the role of women in the public room [22]. Although culturally kaili women have gained respect, kaili poets still have to struggle to improve their role and position in society. The meaning and purpose of women as a traditional domestic housewife is merely to take care of the household, to always depend on the husband causing the feeling of boredom in the house, narrow insights, feeling depressed, a lack of communication, and being unable to make decisions. Women entering in to public space produce productive abilities; they are independent, able to meet the household economy, have a broader vision, feelings of freedom, are able to show self-actualisation, are community appreciated, confident and able to make decisions [23].

Kaili ethnics are barely known among general society; however, an informant stated that "There are actually many Kaili people, including women, who have achieved success outside Palu. However, there is a cultural tendency constructed by Kaili people to act like the flow of water. It is stated that wherever one might be, he/she should adjust him/herself to

his/her place, just like water adjusting itself in its container. When the place is round, the water will fit in, as it happens in other containers.” This self-adjustment is a method of survival for the Kaili people to show their presence at work and to become useful as humans. They believe that a successful human is one who can provide benefit to their surrounding social life. However, they have realised that in order to provide benefits to society, the identity of Kaili people (to Kaili) will be unknown to outsiders once they live beyond Palu or the Kaili community.

### I. CONCLUSION

Women’s status within society is incredibly diverse all over the world. Diverse perspectives on it should have enriched ways or strategies to generate gender equality. In this study, the meaning, structure, and essence of Kaili women has been examined according to their cultural values as their possessed resources. This finding adds references to turn women in to potential human resources whose existence can contribute to various socio-economic challenges in a global perspective.

### Acknowledgement

I extend my gratitude towards the Postgraduate School of Universitas Airlangga for giving me the chance to present this paper at the International Conference Postgraduate School of Universitas Airlangga Surabaya (ICPSUAS) 2017, sponsored by Atlantis press. I have been supported by Pemprov.Jati, Kemenpan & RB, Kotamadya Surabaya.

I further extend my thankfulness to Prof. Subagyo Adam as the Head of Human Resource Development Department, Postgraduate School of Universitas Airlangga, and Mrs. Nisbah who shared information about Kaili women.

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