

# Portraying the Factual Condition of Low-Income Women in Padang

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**Abstract**—The number of women living in poverty in Indonesia has not significantly decreased. This study aims to investigate the individual characteristic of the women in Padang, the entrepreneurial potential they can maximize, and kinds of factors hindering them from starting entrepreneurship. The data were collected through questionnaire and interview. The results show that, they are working-age women, married and have low level of formal education. Most of them are housewives and have low amount of earnings. They have an array of potential that can support them to start entrepreneurship. Some key factors hindering them from realizing the potential, among which are their low level of education, and poor financial management.

**Keywords**—Characteristic, Economy, Low-income

## I. INTRODUCTION

National development is carried out to realize the mandate of the Constitution of the Republic of Indonesia 1945, particularly as stipulated in its preamble. The essence of the national development is to develop the whole people of Indonesia and the entire spectrum of the Indonesian society. As such, it is to protect the whole people of Indonesia and the entire homeland of Indonesia in order to advance general prosperity, to develop the nation's intellectual life, and to contribute to the implementation of a world order based on freedom, lasting peace, and social justice. Moreover, the short-term goal of the national development is to improve the standard of living, intellectual life, and to realize social justice and equity for all the people of Indonesia.

Development is not only to be enjoyed by a handful of people only. It is for the whole people of Indonesia, not least for women. The women have played an essential role in the national development. This situation is closely related to the large number of women in Indonesia. Based on population statistics, demographics of female population reach 50.3% from the total population

[1]. It means that in Indonesia women outnumber men. With such an immense population, they need empowering as both subjects and objects of the development to realize their full potential [2]–[4]. For this reason, the women should seize a strategic role in the development process [5]–[8].

However, the reality tells something different as the goal of national development has not been completely realized [9], [10]. It is evidenced by the fact that many women in Indonesia still live at or under the poverty level [11]–[13]. They even have not been touched by the development, let alone actively participate in it.

The recent phenomena have informed us kinds of challenges that Indonesia faces grow harder and more complex, including the quality of the human resources [14]. With regard to the quality of Indonesian women particularly, it has not been encouraging. To face the force of globalization, the need for quality human resources, particularly among women, who are highly competitive is a matter of urgency [15].

Such a phenomenon, as having been pointed out, is also evident in Padang city, spreading among the people. In Padang there are many women who still live a hard life facing various shortcomings and limitations. This is due to various factors such as their low level of knowledge, skills, and abilities to make ends meet. This is also due to their low level of motivation to improve their quality of life. Most of them feel complacent to life as it is. Most of them live in marginalized areas such as along the coast and in street corners.

Such problems warrant serious attention from various parties, among which are educators who are challenged to provide non-formal education for them. It is intended to educate them by developing their insights, attitudes, and entrepreneurship skills to free themselves from the shackles of poverty [16]–[18]. To do so, it is necessary to provide them with a training that leads to the enhancement of

their skills as women [19], [20]. To prepare a proper training program, it requires rigorous assessment and investigation of their factual account of conditions [21].

To overcome the problems faced by the aforementioned women, the main obstacle is not due to the unavailability of funds or programs for such a matter. However, what often occurs is that the existing programs are not properly implemented and they, therefore, do not run effectively. To arrive at an effective and a well-implemented program, it is essential to study and discern their characteristics, potential, and possible hurdles that hinder these economically weak women from starting entrepreneurship. They have distinctive cultures and environments. Accordingly, this study is aimed to investigate the women living on a coastal area located in Padang. Most of them are fishermen's wives, who spend their time awaiting their husbands to return from the sea. They waste their time in unproductive activities, whereas they live in an environment laden with many potential, which can be of great help if they possess good entrepreneurial attitudes.

## II. METHOD

This study employed a descriptive research design, further used as the basis for the establishment of entrepreneurship training model. The respondents involved in this study were the women having poor economic status and living in coastal areas in Koto Tengah district, Padang, West Sumatra. To obtain samples for the study, areal random sampling was employed by randomly choosing some *RTs* (neighbourhood), the residents of which then were randomly opted for the study. Regarding the data collection technique, primary data were obtained through observation, interview, questionnaire, and survey which were all administered to local areas and related institutions. Secondary data were obtained by means of reviewing available literature through books, research articles, and journals relevant to this study, followed by collecting statistical data obtained from sub-district or village and related institutions. Furthermore, the collected data were analysed quantitatively and qualitatively. Quantitative analysis was applied to data obtained from instruments administered to the respondents. Qualitative analysis was applied to data gained from interview with the community leaders.

## III. FINDINGS

### A. Characteristics of Low-Income Women in Coastal Areas in Padang

#### 1. An Aspect of Age

To know the characteristics of these low-income women, as seen from their age range in Coastal Areas, Pasia Nan Tigo Village, Koto Tengah District, Padang is most of the women living in this specific area are from 31-45 years of age representing 65 females out of 150 (44%). It means that these women are in their productive age or included in the working-age population.

#### 2. An Aspect of Marital Status

To know the marital status of low-income women in coastal areas, Pasia nanTigo Village, Koto Tengah District, Padang is out of 150 females opted for this study, the number of married women is 130 (87%). It means that these women are housewives who have to raise their children.

#### 3. An Aspect of Formal Education

To know the formal education background of low-income women in coastal areas, Pasia nanTigo Village, Koto Tengah District, Padang is most of the women in this area obtained elementary school education. There are 72 women including in that category (48%). 58 women obtained junior high school education (39%), and 20 of them obtained high school education (13%).

#### 4. The Main Source of Livelihood

To know the kinds of occupations of low-income women in Coastal Areas, Pasia nan Tigo Village, Koto Tengah District, Padang is most of them, consisting of 120 women (80%), do not maintain or get a steady job for living. It shows that they do not have a clear and dependable job that can financially support them.

#### 5. The Number of Children in a Family

To know the number of children that each woman has to raise in their family in Coastal Areas, Pasia nan Tigo Village, Koto Tengah District, Padang is there are 3 to 4 children that the women have to raise in their family. It means that most of them have a big family size.

#### 6. Monthly Income

To know the amount of monthly income that the family earns in Coastal Areas, Pasia nan Tigo Village, Koto Tengah District, Padang is the amount of monthly income that each family earns for their family ranges around 2 to 3 million.

#### 7. Monthly Family Spending

To know how much money each family spends in a month in Coastal Areas, Pasia nan Tigo

Village, Koto Tengah District, Padang is the family spends approximately 2 to 3 million in a month.

#### 8. Monthly Income on Individual Basis

To know the amount of monthly income that each woman earns in Coastal Areas, Pasia nan Tigo Village, Koto Tengah District, Padang is most of the women earn less than one million for each month.

#### B. The Potential of Low-income Women in Coastal Areas in Padang

Based on the results of interview and focus group discussion conducted towards the community, its leader and the local government, it was discovered that there was a variety of potential that could encourage low-income women in this area to start a business. These following categories illustrate the potential of these low-income women.

The individual potential is divided into physiological and psychological conditions. First, Physiological Condition. Physiologically, the low-income women have a good physical condition. As specified by their age, they can run a variety of daily activities well. This was shown by how they were able to be organized in their routine houseworks, active to many social events, and highly mobile within and outside their environmental area. Even though there were some women having suffered several health problems, those did not disrupt their daily activities. Most of the health problems were not significant and only lasted in the short-term period. Second, Psychological Condition. Psychologically, they are welcoming amiable, affable, and respectful of each other.

#### 1. Natural Environment

As presented previously, the participants of this study live in the coastal areas in Padang. Most of the residents choose fishing as their main livelihood. The fishermen sell their catch to a traditional market which sells an array of local seafood and any other household needs.

The traditional market there is not only visited by the locals, but also by outside community with all layers of society. The potential seafoods of Padang coastal area are diverse, including various kinds of pelagic fish (Skipjack, Tuna, and Sailfish) and various kinds of demersal fish (Snapper and Grouper). In addition, there are also other kinds of marine biota such as crabs, shrimps, sea cucumbers and shellfish.

Besides the rich nature potential, the coastal area in Pasia nan Tigo village is also located in a very strategic area. The area is near to the main arterial road. The local government center is just 6 km away and can be reached only within 20-30 minutes. Moreover, the area is also close to the

tourism area of Jambak sand beach which can be reached within 10-15 minutes. As it is a tourism area, Jambak sand beach attracts a lot of tourists to come and pass Pasia nan Togo village, since the only road that is available to reach the beach only passes through Pasia nan Togo village. The transport infrastructures and facilities of the village are sufficient, including the public facilities, such as places of worship, educational facilities and health facilities.

#### 2. Family Environment

Most of these women are housewives. Their husbands work as fishermen as their main source of livelihood. They reside closely to their relatives. Together as a family, they live closely with the neighbours and help each other in everyday routine. Beside carrying out household chores, they have a lot of spare time since they only await their husband come from fishing.

#### 3. Social Environment

The social stratification of this village consists of various shapes and layers. The village is led by formal leaders such as village head, community group head, and neighbourhood head. Besides formal leaders, local public figures such as *ninik mamak*, *bundo kanduang*, and religious leaders also contribute as the informal leaders of the village. All of these community leaders devotedly work together and play an important role to build the village by sharing their thoughts, advice and resources to the development of the community.

#### 4. Aspiration

These women basically want their children to pursue higher education than what they have got. They want their children to earn a better salary to have a better life. They expect that there will be guidance and counselling from the local government for their children in order to obtain a steady job which can support and improve their daily needs fulfilment.

#### C. Factors Preventing the Low-income Women from Starting a Business

#### 1. Educational Attainment

Even the women have obtained either formal and non-formal education, their educational level is still relatively low. The data of educational level shows that majority of women have attained educational background of elementary school; it is only very few of them that obtained junior high school education, senior high school and college. In terms of non-formal education, the women only got education from incidental counselling conducted by the local government. Thus far, they have not attempted to obtain non-formal education by their own efforts, costs and willingness.

## 2. Financial Management Behavior

Basically, the financial management of these women is still poor. Their main source of income is irregular since it depends on the sales of their husbands' seafood catch. This condition indirectly influences the way they manage their finance. If they earn a considerable amount of income, they become extravagant with their money. On the contrary, if they face unfavourable conditions, they become financially difficult. This happens basically because they are not able to manage their finance well.

## 3. Marketing Incapability

Several women have already started small-scale businesses. Most of them work as small traders at adjacent traditional markets in their residential area. They sell their products in small stalls around residential homes and around public service places, such as roadside, schools, and near other public service facilities. The obstacles they face are the capital problems and the quality of the products they sell.

## 4. Lack of Experience

Based on the interview, it is revealed that the women of Pasi nan Tigo are still lack of entrepreneurship experiences. This happens because they are not accustomed to entrepreneurship field. Most of them are still doubt and reluctant to start a small business. In the interview, they admitted that they have not attempted to start a business because they are afraid of failure.

## 5. Incapability of Maintaining Quality and Innovating the Business

The main reason of failure encountered by these women in their entrepreneurship is because they are less-competitive to their competitors. This is so, for they are incapable to maintain their products' quality and not creative enough in promoting their business products.

## IV. CONCLUSIONS

Based on the research findings, the conclusions of the study are drawn as follows: *First*, the characteristics of low-income women in Padang coastal areas are categorized based on their age, educational background, job, and earnings; in terms of age, they are working-age women and married. They have low level of formal education. They are mostly housewives with low amount of earnings. *Second*, the potential of these women encompasses various kinds of aspects, such as (1) individual potential: based on the research findings, it is revealed that their physiological and psychological conditions are well which can be seen from the way

they perform a variety of daily activities and their openness towards outside community; (2) environmental potential: based on the research findings, it is revealed that Pasia nan Togo village has rich potential of nature, supportive family environment, and conducive social environment that can be seen from the committed cooperation between the formal and informal institutions and the local government to improve the life quality of the community. Third, in terms of aspiration, the women expect that (a) their children to obtain better education compare to their educational background, (b) their children to pursue steady jobs to have regular and better earnings to fulfil their life needs, and (c) the local government can conduct a training for them so that they know how to pursue and obtain better jobs to improve their life. *Fourth*, factors hindering the women from starting entrepreneurship consist of (a) low level of education, (b) poor financial management, (c) incapability to market their entrepreneurship; (d) lack of entrepreneurial experiences, and (e) incapability to maintain their products and innovate their entrepreneurship.

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