THE ROLE OF SOCIETY AND VILLAGE GOVERNMENT IN EMPOWERING POTENTIAL AND FORMER MIGRANT WORKERS

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Abstract— Being a migrant worker for rural communities remains the most promising expectations to ensure a better fate despite many problems and risks that must be faced. This study used Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) as a method of research involving the role of society and village government in empowering potential and former migrant workers. Research site was located in the village of Karangtawang and Sidaurip of Cilacap District as the region with the largest number of migrant workers in Central Java. The findings show that societies and village governments have not played an optimal role in economic empowerment for the potential and former migrant workers. Therefore, it is necessary to develop an empowerment approach through participatory communication in the planning and implementation of development programs in the village. So that people can earn a decent living and do not leave their village to become migrant workers abroad.

Index Terms— Migrant Workers, Government, Village, Empowerment.

I. INTRODUCTION

Villages should become a place to live which can guarantee the welfare of society. However, a lot of villagers still have to make a living to other regions and even abroad as migrant workers. This raised problems that always come to the public in terms of departures, at work and after returning home. Based on the record of National Agency for Placement and Protection of Indonesian Workers (BNP2TKI) several cases that arise were migrant workers wanted to return to Indonesia (3205), workers were not paid wages by the employer (3,189), workers broke up communication with their family (2676), jobs did not match the contract of employment (1633), workers died in the destination country (1574), workers suffered violence from employers (718), termination of work (458), workers failed to go (401), workers in custody (307), undocumented migrant workers (258), detention passport or other documents (236), workers run away from their employers (212) and sexual abuse on migrant workers as much as 201 cases (BNP2TKI, 2015) [1]. Relating to female migrant workers, Wulan (2010) asserted that they often suffer injustice ranging from pre-departure, in the workplace and up to returning to their homes. As an effort to meet the needs of the family, becoming women migrant workers are actually contributing to the country's foreign exchange and bringing remittances to the region.[2]

Becoming migrant workers for most villagers still rated as the most promising prosperity, despite many problems experienced by members of the community as former migrant workers. In addition, the reality shows migrant workers generate foreign exchange revenue for the state and local governments which fosters development in their region as well as prosperity of their family. Based on statistical data of Cilacap District as the area with the highest number of migrant workers in Central Java, remittances from migrant workers continued to rise from year to year. In 2008, the amount was recorded 324 billion rupiahs per year. In 2009 was amounted to 370 billion, and in 2010 the number increased to 570 billion. In 2011 the amount of remittances reached more than 700 billion. This was very big amount of remittance which exceeded half of the Cilacap District Budget. Noting the remittance, all stakeholders either from the public and the government, should be aware that migrant workers are an important sector in regional development. (Fadli, 2013). [3]
Accordingly, the purpose of this research is to identify the role of society and village government in empowering the former and potential migrant workers in the village of Karangtawang and the village of Sidaurip, Cilacap District.

II. RESEARCH METHOD

The method used is Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA), a participatory assessment of the state of the village which appreciates and implements the principles of empowerment for the community (Syahyuti 2006). [4} PRA enables the villagers to analyze the situation, optimally plan and carry out the determination in their own communities so that PRA is a participatory rural assessment (Mikkelsen, 2011). [5] Data collection was done by direct observation, interviews and Focus Group Discussion (FGD) and documentation. Locations were selected and determined by the consideration that the region is an enclave of the largest number of migrant workers in Central Java, which are the village of Karangtawang and the village of Sidaurip in Cilacap District.

The research subjects were determined by using purposive sampling with consideration that they can be useful to meet the needs and goals of the study. In each village we took 20-30 people from the potential and former migrant workers, as a group of community worker who will be the pioneers of development and agents of change in rural communities.

III. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

A. The Desire to Become Migrant Workers

Villagers have a high motivation to become migrant workers because it can generate greater revenues and savings compared to the income of farmers, ranchers, merchants and other ordinary jobs in Indonesia. In addition, there was strong inducement of labor recruiters who directly came to the villages in which the village governments tended to allow and support.

Generally, Villagers of Karangtawang and Sidaurip became migrant workers in Malaysia, Hong Kong, Saudi Arabia, Singapore and South Korea. In Malaysia they usually work as farm laborers, plantation and fisheries workers, as well as domestic servants. In Saudi Arabia, Hong Kong and Singapore mostly they works as housemaids, while in South Korea became laborers in the electronics and automotive industries. Many people still have a high desire to become migrant workers, although many former migrant workers have suffered mistreatment, deceived or failed.

There were a number of former migrant workers who had a productive orientation. Results of working abroad was then used for business investment such as buying rice paddies, fields, gardens, raising venture capital and trade. On the other hand, there were a number of former migrant workers with consumption-oriented. They used their savings to buy a house, vehicles and were less able to live frugally, and did not carry out productive activities in economic enterprises. In general, former migrant workers rarely invest their savings for children's education to a higher level, in order to improve their future. Moreover, the former and potential migrant workers mostly have low education level and lacked the capacity building in the form of sustainable economic empowerment programs.

B. The Nature of Migrant Workers Empowerment

The nature of business activities in the village was still individual, in small group, and not in the form of the community business bringing together the various groups within a single unit to support each other and to strengthen cooperation. However, at least the society has had the initiative to carry out economic activities compared to the village government that did not have community economic empowerment programs.

So far, the community or groups of villagers have not made proposals to the village government in order to prioritize the use of the village budget for empowerment program. Related to potential and former migrant workers, they also have not demanded the village government to provide business and employability skills training and other empowerment programs in the village to improve the welfare of rural communities.

The role of society in rural development mostly was run by men who have the opportunity, the courage and the ability to express opinions and participate in the decision process and the execution of rural development. Meanwhile women tended to succumb, passive, marginalized, and less daring expression. In fact, Suadanya (2011) stated that women have not been much involved in the process of collecting data and information in development planning. [6] Yet according to Dhak (2014) equality and the empowerment of women is the most important factor for achieving objectives and policy making. [7]

Furthermore, institutions and social organizations such as foundations, religious organization, non-governmental organizations and community organizations were not actively engaged in empowering migrant workers both in terms of legal knowledge, skill enhancement, advocacy or legal protection, as well as economic empowerment.

In fact, the Legal Resources Center for Gender Justice and Human Rights (LRC-KJHAM) in 2010 has provided a recommendation from its research findings that the government should provide an opportunity for people who become potential or former migrant workers to be able to submit opinions and advice to the government village, districts and counties to follow the Development Planning Meeting.[8]

The village governments gave people little opportunity to aspire and determine development programs and budgets including the empowerment program of potential and former migrant worker. Aspiration and decision making processes were mainly represented by the neighborhood association, the village council and village officers without the aspirations of the public.

The village government lacked idealism and initiative to create programs and allocate budgets for community empowerment program. So the village budget is not used to develop the potential of rural communities in the fields of agriculture, plantation, fishery and livestock, in order to change the thought and the culture of the community to no longer make migrant workers as the most important and prospective profession.

The village government determined all development programs and budgets, without giving an open opportunity for community involvement, resulting in a culture that is less democratic, less participatory, less transparent and less accountable in the development process. Purwaningsih (2008) states that a participatory approach is very important for the people in the area, to be able to know and to identify problems, potential and needs of the region ranging from planning, implementation, and assessment of development.

In relation to the protection of migrant workers, the village governments seemed helpless in the act of labor brokers. They even encouraged people to become migrant workers abroad as the most appropriate and prospective solution to improve their economic and social welfare.

The village governments have not utilized the Development Planning Meeting at the village level for

planning development programs oriented to empower rural communities. They have not developed the potential of human resources, natural resources and rural budget to create jobs or economic enterprise in the villages.

Furthermore, monitoring and evaluation of rural development budget was still in the form of formality. Besides the communication between society and village government has not been participatory, so that there is less transparency and accountability about the program and the budget of the village.

The empowerment programs that have been given to the villagers were still top down and at the initiative of local government agencies of Cilacap. The village government was still passive in making and budgeting empowerment programs for rural communities.

In addition, the empowerment programs conducted did not run sustainably. Once there were counseling and training but not pursued with mentoring, monitoring and evaluation. Nor was it accompanied by the partnership to improve institutional and marketing network. As a result, economic enterprises in rural communities did not have strength in terms of both production and institutional development of the business. Thus, the village government and society remain powerless to overcome labor recruitment agencies offer and have not been able to distract the villagers from the desire to become migrant workers as the ultimate solution to earn money and achieve prosperity.

CONCLUSION

On one side, the society has not made demands and proposals to the village government to focus on the economic empowerment through the village budget which can create jobs opportunity and improve the welfare of rural communities. On the other side, the village government also did not have the initiative to plan community development program through optimization of the potentials of human resources, natural resources, and financial resources available in the village.

The village government must be serious in making development policy to support community development programs, so that people do not leave their village to become migrant workers and considered it as the most promising professions.

Community and village government should therefore be able to take advantage of the forum at the grassroots level to create a participatory communication involving all parties which were open, dialogic, and be able to generate consensus in preparing the program and planning rural development budget. Community and village government should receive training from the relevant parties on the mechanism of the Development Planning Meeting as well as in terms of making the development program, using the budget, and evaluating the process of development.

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