

THE IMPACT OF THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF EMPOWERING THE ROLE OF WOMEN IN WEST JAVA

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Abstract

The Covid-19 pandemic has changed the fabric of people's lives, including women's lives. The concentration of various activities at home as a result of the policies taken by the government to prevent the spread of Covid 19 indirectly increases the work burden of women who are among the vulnerable groups. The role of women as individuals and social beings has decreased, resulting in disruption of the system in their social environment. This condition was also triggered by the inadequate women's empowerment program launched by the government by diverting the availability of funds for the Covid-19 response program. The purpose of this study was to analyze the impact of not implementing women's empowerment programs during the Covid-19 pandemic. A qualitative approach with data collection techniques through literature study, observation, and interviews with various relevant government agencies, activists and volunteers, and women's groups affected by Covid-19 in West Java is the method used in this research. The results showed that several program activities such as the role of women in development, budget absorption, family resilience, family economic life, and the socialization of the healthy and prosperous program during the Covid-19 pandemic had changed a lot. This shows that the Covid-19 Pandemic had a negative impact on the Implementation of Empowering the Role of Women in West Java. Therefore, it is necessary to have a special strategy that can accommodate the implementation of programs in the field of Women's Empowerment in the new era (post-Covid-19), one of which is through program redesign and policy advocacy that leads to technical implementation and advocacy of women's empowerment programs in West Java.

Keywords: Women's Empowerment, Program Redesign, Family Resilience, Covid-19

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Artikel yang diterbitkan Jurnal Analisa Sosiologi pada edisi khusus ICOSAPS ini telah memenuhi syarat-syarat karya ilmiah, diproses sama seperti pada penerbitan non edisi khusus (terbitan normal), dipresentasikan di International Conference on Social and Political Sciences (ICOSAPS) "Strengthening Resilient Society in the Disruptive Era" yang diselenggarakan oleh Fakultas Ilmu Sosial dan Politik Universitas Sebelas Maret Surakarta pada tanggal 7-8 Oktober 2020.

Abstrak

Pandemi Covid-19 telah merubah tatanan kehidupan masyarakat termasuk kehidupan perempuan. Terpusatnya berbagai kegiatan di rumah sebagai akibat kebijakan yang diambil pemerintah dalam mencegah penyebaran Covid 19 secara tidak langsung menambah beban pekerjaan perempuan yang termasuk kelompok rentan. Peran perempuan sebagai individu dan makhluk social mengalami penurunan yang berakibat terganggunya sistem di lingkungan sosialnya. Kondisi ini juga dipicu oleh kurang optimalnya Program pemberdayaan perempuan yang telah dicanangkan oleh pemerintah dengan pengalihan ketersediaan dana untuk program penanggulangan Covid-19. Tujuan penelitian ini untuk menganalisis dampak tidak terlaksananya program pemberdayaan perempuan dimasa pandemi Covid-19. Pendekatan kualitatif dengan teknik pengumpulan data melalui studi pustaka, observasi dan wawancara dengan berbagai instansi pemerintah terkait, aktivis dan relawan, dan kelompok perempuan yang terdampak Covid-19 di Jawa Barat merupakan metode yang digunakan dalam penelitian ini. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa beberapa program kegiatan seperti peran perempuan dalam pembangunan, penyerapan anggaran, ketahanan keluarga, kehidupan ekonomi keluarga dan sosialisasi program sehat sejahtera dimasa pandemi Covid-19 ini banyak sekali mengalami perubahan. Hal ini menunjukkan bahwa adanya Pandemi Covid-19 berdampak negatif terhadap Pelaksanaan Pemberdayaan Peran Perempuan di Jawa Barat. Oleh karena itu, perlu adanya strategi khusus yang dapat mengakomodasi pelaksanaan program-program di bidang Pemberdayaan Perempuan di masa tatanan baru (pasca Covid-19), salah satunya dengan adanya redesign program dan advokasi kebijakan yang mengarah pada teknis pelaksanaan dan advokasi program pemberdayaan perempuan di Jawa Barat.

Kata Kunci : Pemberdayaan Perempuan, Redesain Program, Ketahanan Keluarga, Covid-19

INTRODUCTION

The Covid-19 pandemic created a big shock around the world, in the last six months, everyone has faced problems due to the Covid-19 pandemic which is very dangerous for human health and lives. Without prior preparation, like it or not, like it or not, all people have to follow and comply with the various rules set by the government to stay at home to save from the threat of Covid-19 (Papadimitriou et al., 2020). This condition has a large and multidimensional impact, especially social aspects that have the potential for social vulnerability and social inequality which creates pressure and stress for society, especially for women, given their main role as caregivers in the family (Wenham et al., 2020).

Women are the most vulnerable group. This is evidenced by so many women who work in the health sector such as medical workers who are at the forefront who are at high risk of being exposed to Covid-19 (OECD, 2020). Data on the number of female nurses in handling Covid-19 in Indonesia were 259,326 people or 71% and the number of male nurses was 100,013 or 29%. This figure is not much different from the Global Health Workers, which according to WHO, 70% are women and 30% are men (lipi.go.id).

The proportion of elderly women is also greater, with an average life expectancy of four years longer than that of men. It is estimated that more than 9.3 million women are over 65 years old in 2019 (Sussenas, 2015) with minimal social security. Another group affected by Covid-19 are women heads of families who contribute to building a prosperous society through active participation in the development process. The woman as the head of the family takes over all the duties of the head of the family with the most dominant jobs being in the agricultural, service, and industrial sectors.

Another group that also has a double burden during this pandemic is women who have families and work. Several regions in Indonesia implement Large-Scale Social Restrictions, which means schools and many offices are closed so that various activities must be carried out at home (OECD, 2020). This heavy burden is felt by women who work in the public sector who usually carry out their activities in the office now had to carry out their work activities from home by caring for children and helping children learn which is done online. Women inevitably must accept the burden and could not avoid the situation as workers, mothers, wives, and all at once as teachers who substitute school teacher assignments.

The work from home policy for women, which is translated as dismissing workers, accompanied by a partial or even no wage payment policy, will have an impact on the reduced welfare of workers. For working women with daily income, this policy means losing income because she does not come to work (Mustajab at all., 2020). Women have a very important role in development in Indonesia. Although currently, efforts to improve the role and quality of women in development have been widely developed, gender disparities still occur on various fronts for women

compared to men (Paustian et al., 2014) The paradigm of women, which are still considered extras, has more or less affected the role of women when taking part in their environment. Women are still objects rather than subjects (www.nu.or.id, 2008). So those various policies taken by policy actors do not side with women.

The beginning of the sex division of labor is undoubtedly related to the different roles of men and women in reproductive function. In society, presenting the role played by a woman (Hubeis 2010). Analysis of women's roles can be carried out from the perspective of their position in dealing with indirect productive work (domestic) and direct productive work (public), as follows:

1. The role of tradition places women in reproductive functions, pregnancy and childbirth, and other functions related to the household (taking care of the household, caring for children, and protecting husbands).
2. The transitional role modeled the role of tradition over the other roles. The division of tasks follows gender aspirations, but the existence of maintaining harmony and household affairs remain the responsibility of women.
3. Double role positions women in the lives of two worlds, namely placing the domestic and public roles in equal importance.
4. Egalitarian roles consume women's time and attention for outside activities.
5. The contemporary role is the impact on women's choice to be independent in solitude. (Hubeis, 2010).

The policy of working from home causes the strategic plan that has been compiled and outlined in the program of activities at the Women Empowerment Service for Child Protection and Family Planning in West Java Province and every Regional Work Unit, especially in the Office of Women's Empowerment and Child Protection in West Java to be not optimal. Most of the absorption of the budget has been diverted to Covid-19 countermeasures activities so that several programs for empowering the role of women such as the Integrated Program for Increasing the Role of Women

towards Healthy and Prosperous Families are hampered. Program for Improving the Quality of Life and Protection of Women which is implemented through the establishment of a Family Learning Center. The next program that is hampered by the impact on the Covid-19 pandemic is Sekoper Cinta (School for Women to Achieve Dreams and Goals). This women's empowerment development program is a forum for women to exchange knowledge and experiences to improve their quality of life. School for Women to Achieve Dreams and Goals is also an effort to empower women to achieve equal roles, access, participation, control, and benefits between women and men in all fields.

Based on the description above, the research question is how to implement the empowerment program for the role of women during the Covid-19 pandemic.

RESEARCH METHOD

The research method used a qualitative approach with a descriptive research type. The data collection technique was carried out through literature study, observation, and in-depth interviews with the head of the Women's Empowerment Division of the Women Empowerment Service for Child Protection and Family Planning, West Java Province, several government agencies, activists and volunteers, and women's groups affected by Covid-19. Data analysis was carried out by describing several programs for empowering the role of women during the Covid-19 period, including the active role of women in development, budget absorption, family resilience, family economic life, socialization of healthy and prosperous programs.

RESULT & DISCUSSION

From the results of the initial discussion with the Office of Women's Empowerment for Child Protection and Family Planning, West Java, which was held on Wednesday, July 29, 2020, the Office of Women Empowerment for Child Protection and Family Planning, West Java

Province, it can be seen that several activities related to women's empowerment is as follows:

1. Almost all activities are focused on the State Revenue and Expenditure Budget / Regional Revenue and Expenditure Budget, so that there is a budget transfer policy for handling Covid-19 at the ministry, provincial, and district levels, the impact is on program implementation, so there are several programs that are not running according to planning. The Office of Women's Empowerment for Child Protection and Family Planning to work around this by mobilizing women's communities, including:
 - a) Empowerment of Women Heads of Families.
 - b) The Coordinating Board for Women's Organizations at the provincial level and the Association for Women's Organizations at the district/city level, and
 - c) Public Participation for the Welfare of Women and Children.

In addition, some activities collaborate with women's communities based on topics such as social, economic, health, politics, etc. These communities were met with third parties, including Care Indonesia and Health Polytechnic by holding webinars on family health, how to do business online, how to market a product during the Covid-19 pandemic, and given other general insights.

2. Each district and city have different programs for empowering women, for example, Bandung Regency has a great women's school program, in Bogor, there is a Mother School (Knowledge for Mothers and reducing the divorce rate), Cimahi City has cooking practices every Friday (focus on the direction of empowerment economy). These programs existed before the Love Sekoper Program existed. Several women's empowerment programs that are quite good include Bandung Raya and Bekasi City, this is because they are consistent with running their programs even during the pandemic. Meanwhile, the women's empowerment program, which is considered developing because the program has not been implemented much, is coupled with the current pandemic in several relatively new districts, including Pangandaran and Banjar districts.

The results of the interviews revealed that women's empowerment programs were dependent on funding from the State Revenue and Expenditure Budget and the Regional Revenue and Expenditure Budget. So that the Covid-19 pandemic has an impact on allocating budgets for ministries and local governments for handling Covid, leaving several women's empowerment activities neglected.

The women's empowerment program, after the Covid-19 pandemic, can be seen from the following five indicators:

1. Role in development

Women's before the Covid-19 pandemic, the active role of women in development in West Java was actualized in various activities such as the following:

- a) Sekolah Perempuan Capai Dreams and ideals as a forum for West Java women to exchange knowledge and experiences, and to improve their quality of life, is a compilation of all existing programs in the district or city, starting from the basic knowledge of women, then also to the specifications of improving the economy of women. This program has been appreciated by the Ministry of Women's Empowerment and Child Protection Center and has collaborated with Korea as well.
- b) Increasing the Role of Women Towards a Healthy and Prosperous Family is held to create coordination and collaboration between various related agencies in the local city/regency government to jointly carry out "village surgery".
- c) Family Resilience Motivator Program This program is not specific to empowering women but to family resilience, including children.

The emergence of the Covid-19 pandemic resulted in a diversion of budgets to focus on handling Covid-19 so that many other programs were canceled indefinitely. The dependence on the program on one source of funding has become a major problem with almost all government sectors, with the transfer of budgets, women's involvement in development has stopped because their usual activities are forced to stop. Whereas on the other hand, this pandemic has increased women's activities in the domestic

sphere, apart from being housewives, taking care of the daily household, serving husbands, looking after and caring for children, accompanying learning during Distance Pattern Education, and doing routine office work for those who work. Practically, women's access to the development is cut off due to the transfer of program activities, but on the other hand, the burden on women is increasing, but it cannot be counted as an active role of women in development, even though it has been agreed that the family is the main basis for the development of a nation.

2. Budget Absorption

All ministries and local governments are refocusing budgets related to the Covid-19 pandemic, as well as budgets for women's empowerment. During the Covid-19 pandemic, several provinces implemented large-scale social restrictions to prevent the spread of Covid-19, including West Java. The large-scale social restrictions policy, which is followed by reduced travel activities, a policy of implementing 50% of the capacity of workspaces and public areas as well as implementing online meetings, thus budgets allocations are relatively not distributed according to plan. Until the end of July 2020, almost all local governments who held activities because the pandemic had not shown a conducive cycle. The government's policy to start activities by continuing to apply the health protocol is aimed at stimulating the economy and absorbing the budget so as not to stagnate. The Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises and other non-formal sectors experienced a serious impact compared to the 1998-1999 monetary crisis, this was due to the drastic decline in production, distribution, and public consumption activities.

3. Family Resilience

As is well known, family resilience is the ability of the family to use the resources owned by the family in achieving family independence and welfare. A good and optimal family resilience pattern makes the family more ready and strong in solving problems and difficulties faced by the family. Family resilience is influenced by several factors, including the level of family income and consumption, housing conditions, harmony of the

couple, understanding, and education level. As a result of the Covid19 pandemic, many workers have experienced termination of employment, either male or female. The existence of a wave of layoffs, policies work from home, Distance Learning Patterns, and Large-Scale Social Restrictions are a package that is faced by families almost all over the world. There is a termination of employment, the backbone of the family is unemployed while the needs of the family are fixed, the needs of children to learn, and the responsibility for teaching children at home during the Distance Learning Patterns, making the psychological atmosphere of the home not as conducive as the pre-Covid-19 pandemic. This condition is very vulnerable to family resilience, data from the ministry of religion shows an increase in demands for divorce during the pandemic, one of the causes is economic factors and the mental unpreparedness of the family to face current economic difficulties and uncertainties. This condition threatens Indonesian families because the high rate of divorce will have an impact on the psychological development of children and other social aspects. The existence of an understanding of religion/faith, support from the family, and patience in facing problems can be one factor of maintaining family resilience.

4. Family Economic Life

In general, family economic life can be interpreted as human efforts to meet their needs through activities carried out by a person that is responsible for the needs and happiness of his family's life (group of the community). Thus, the implementation of large-scale social restrictions, the prohibition on traveling by long-distance public transportation, and the occurrence of the termination of employment, greatly affected the socio-economic life of the family. When economic resources are lost with the Termination of Employment, while the needs and demands of the family remain, it will have an impact on the psychology of family members. Starting from feeling bored, irritable, and angry because there is no income, while daily needs are fixed, refreshing cannot go out due to restrictions on activities outside the home, as a result, there is often disharmony within and between family members. Another thing is if the income in the family is

relatively constant, then fluctuations can be minimized because the relative needs can be controlled by the head of the family.

5. Socialization of the Healthy and Prosperous Family Program

In normal conditions before the Covid-19 pandemic, the Socialization Program Integrated for the Enhancement of the Role of Women Towards a Family was Healthy and Prosperous always carried out regularly every year. Several efforts by implementing healthy family programs are implemented by upholding 3 main pillars, namely:

- 1) Healthy paradigm application
- 2) Strengthening Health Services.
- 3) Implementation of National Health Insurance

In general, socialization of the Healthy and Prosperous Family Program can be carried out through several activities, including:

- 1) Family visits for data collection/family health profile data collection and updating of data;
- 2) Family visits in the context of health promotion as a promotive and preventive effort;
- 3) Family visits to follow up on in-building health services;
- 4) Utilization of data and information from the family health profile, community organizing/community empowerment, and health center management

In achieving a healthy family, 12 indicators are used which will be used as a reference to calculate the Healthy Family Index which reflects the condition of the Clean and Healthy Lifestyle of each family.

With the large-scale social restrictions policy, activities to gather and visit homes are eliminated to cut the circulation of Covid-19. After the new normal post-Covid19 or a new adaptation pattern that is poured out by always keeping a distance, using a mask, and getting used to washing hands with soap or hand sanitizer, the socialization patterns of the healthy and prosperous family program can be carried out again. Worry and fear of the spread of Covid-19 to gather and carry out joint activities, while socialization for healthy families online is still constrained, where the locations of several areas in West Java are not yet available infrastructure

and internet networks in all districts/cities, making online socialization difficult.

CONCLUSION

Of the five variables as indicators of women's empowerment that were evaluated before and after Covid-19, several indicators are very affected and need to be followed up in dealing with the current situation. The dependence on funding from the State Revenue and Expenditure Budget / Regional Revenue and Expenditure Budget in every women's empowerment activity becomes vulnerable to neglect if there are problems with the posture of the State Budget / Regional Revenue and Expenditure Budget, such as currently refocusing all budgets for handling Covid -19. So it is necessary to make efforts to change the funding scheme not to focus on one source of funding but to create schemes from other parties related to family empowerment.

The Covid-19 pandemic has affected budget absorption in addition to refocusing the budget, which has an impact on postponed and canceled activities. So that it affects the absorption of the planned budget. The Covid-19 pandemic which resulted in the implementation of Large-Scale Social Restrictions policies, restrictions on social activities, had an impact on production, distribution, and consumption which decreased, resulting in a deterioration in various economic sectors which led to the termination of employment. The wave of layoffs that occurred in almost all sectors had an impact on family economic life and family resilience. Changes in income, boredom due to Large-Scale Social Restrictions policies, and the increasing demands of life during the pandemic have made many family members feel depressed and frustrated. Women with the most affected conditions, apart from having to work in the domestic sector, demand routine work, plus a change in treatment when there are problems with the family.

The Covid-19 pandemic has changed the methods and patterns of activities in almost all sectors, and this requires adaptation from all parties. There is a new pattern of work that is done online. Preparation of infrastructure, Human Resources who understand Information Technology

and its substance and readiness to work extra during a pandemic. The box work patterns and accepting changes and adaptive are very necessary at this time. Women empowerment activists from both the government and the private sector were forced to change their empowerment plans and activities not to focus on women but the family as a whole.

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