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## **Bargaining Position of Indonesia Women International Migrant Labors**

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**Background.** Indonesia is the state with the fourth largest population number in the world, with 270 million populations, 208.54 millions of total population are at productive age. Out of the productive-age populations 8.40 millions are unemployed. Unemployment problem in Indonesia is due to labor forces unabsorbed by the job opportunity existing; thus unemployment problem will always appear and no appropriate formula has been found to deal with the unemployment in Indonesia until today. This condition is worsened by pandemic situation for about 2 years. Amid uncertain and unpredictable condition, we should willy-nilly keep existent and wake up to get out of the crisis. Fortunately, as an agrarian state with fertile land, Indonesia can survive because the performance of agricultural factor supporting it through improving the farming productivity and thereby can suffice their need for food themselves and even export it to Saudi Arabia. However, agricultural extensification program implemented has not been able to solve unemployment problem completely, recalling the imbalance between the growth of labor force number and the available job opportunity. Massive work relation termination due to the slow economic growth leads to the shutdown of large-scale companies employing a large number of employees. Unemployment rate in Indonesia is recorded 57.93 percents of total productive-age populations, 208.54 millions people, in January 2022 (<https://www.unair.ac.id/2022/06/20>). Out of the unemployment rate existing, 39.52 percent or 57.97 million populations aged 15 and above who are working are women (BPS 2021). Considering the data of unemployment rate aforementioned, job seekers, particularly women, migrate abroad as Indonesian migrant labors, because they are not absorbed by the domestic job opportunities. Most job seekers try to migrate to other countries to get job, despite limited skill.

Being migrant care with limited protection and skill is a difficult choice, but many people, particularly women, do it. Therefore, they can just enter into relatively low-waged jobs with minimum protection such as household assistant and plantation labors. Only very few of them can enter professional job like administrative staff. Data cited from Agency for Indonesian Migrant Labor Protection (*Badan Perlindungan Pekerja Migran Indonesia* or BP2MI) processed by Kompas' Research and Development Division (Litbang Kompas) shows that there were a total of 277,489 migrant labors in 2019. This figure decreased to 72,624 in 2021, with 8 top-ranked destination states: Hongkong, Taiwan, South Korea, Singapore, Japan, Saudi Arabia, Italia, and Malaysia. The decrease in the number of migrant labors is due to the decreased demand for labors, in addition to limited mobility between one state and another due to COVID-19. However, along with the subsiding COVID-19 case and the signs of global economic growth, the demand for migrant labors increases again. The increased demand for migrant labors in Malaysia today is due to the scarcity of labors in strategic sectors and thereby needing migrant labors from other states, particularly Indonesia. This improves the bargaining position of Indonesian migrant labors. The stronger bargaining position of Indonesian labors becomes a sufficiently good and strategic beginning. This moment should be utilized to improve the bargaining position of Indonesian migrant labors touching both technical and foreign language skills and strengthening migrant labor organization, in the attempt of internal consolidation. The unemployment in Indonesia occurs due to the imbalance between population growth and the available job opportunity. Meanwhile, in other states, particularly Malaysia, there is an increase in the number of migrant labors in either formal or informal sector. Therefore, many Indonesian labors, particularly female, become migrant labors. Migrant labors are largely not equipped with adequate skill and thereby their bargaining position is low. It makes the protection is given minimally to the migrant labors. From the background above, the problem statement is formulated as follows: What are attempts taken to improve the bargaining position of Indonesian migrant labors? The objective of research is to analyze the extent to which the Indonesian female migrant labors working abroad have appropriate skill. The result of research showed that there are three categories of job the women can enter: housemaid, plantation (factory) labor, and nurse or other formal sector still with limited protection. **Method.** This research used descriptive qualitative method. This research tried to describe, to analyze and to interpret why Indonesian female migrant labors do not have good bargaining position and thereby lead to the weak protection for them and the wage they receive often incompatible to the contract. To collect the data, this research used

literature study, and finding previous studies, and interview with international migrant labors, either having gone back to Indonesia or still in foreign countries like Mekah, Saudi Arabia. **Conclusion. 1)** An alternative attempt taken by some Indonesian people to reduce unemployment rate due to limited job opportunity available at home is to be migrant labor with the top 8 state destinations (Saudi Arabia, Hong Kong, Taiwan, South Korea, Japan, Singapore, and Malaysia). **2)** The wage received by Indonesian migrant labors range between 5 and 7 millions without the need for spending money for local transportation, food, and house rent costs. Indonesian migrant labors can send about 5 millions rupiah per month to their family existing in Indonesia. It is a fairly high value compared with what they will get when they work in domestic sector. **3)** Types of job done by Indonesian migrant labors do not need high education. They include household assistant, plantation labor, ship attendant, and doing light administrative jobs such as librarian in Saudi Arabian masjid. **4)** The weaknesses of Indonesian migrant labors include poor technical skill and language ability, and the difficulty to adapt to the destination state's culture, and the inadequate protection in the term of working system, payroll system, physical violence, and sexual abuse, particularly to female migrant labors. **5)** The presence of government is very desirable to protect Indonesian migrant labors and to improve their skill in order to improve their bargaining position.

Keywords: female labors, abroad migration, skill