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In Art Design & Cultural Heritage

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Empowering Local Mind  
In Art Design & Cultural Heritage

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# Empowering “Girli” Batik Craftswomen to Enhance Family Economy and Develop Tourism Village in Sragen District

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**Abstract** -This research which underlines several issues concerning the empowerment of “Girli” batik craftswomen in Sragen District was generally aimed at formulizing strategies to empower “Girli” batik craftswomen in Sragen District. The method which is used in the first step of this study is explorative study to some potency which is related to Girli in Sragen District. The data were collected from primary and secondary sources. Primary sources involved the informant such as Batik businessman, the artist, the leaders of Kliwonan and Pilang village , the officials of Diperidag (Dinas Perindustrian dan Koperasi). The data were collected by deep interview, observation, and document analysis. To make the data become valid the technique which is used is called triangulation of data. Interactive model analysis is used to analyze the data. The results show that there are several strategies to empower “Girli” batik craftswomen, they are: (1) improving the capacity of batik of the craftswomen so that they are able to get better status, from craftswomen becoming enptrepreneurs; (2) improving the competency of “Girli” batik craftswomen in Sragen District so that they are able to increase the quality and competitiveness of the batik products; (3) strengthening the networks and partnerships with various stakeholders including the private sectors, government and society; (4) facilitating the promotion and enhancing marketing networks; (5) building institutional system which takes sides to “Girli” batik craftswomen; (6) improving business management; (7) providing support on working-capital in a form of soft loan; (8) providing technical supervision in a form of training and mentoring; and (9) increasing the quantity and quality of access and transportation.

**Key words:** “Girli” batik, batik craftswomen, tourism village.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Sragen District holds a potential industry of batik handicraft that has long developed particularly in Kliwonan and Pilang villages in Masaran sub-district. Batik, as a homemade industry and produced by the local people, has a specific name or term, which is “Girli” batik. The word “Girli” is an abbreviation of “*Pinggir Kali*” which means edge of the river. It is because the location of the villages that produce the batik is in the edge of Bengawan Solo river. Administratively, the center location of “Girli” batik is located in two sub-districts, which is Masaran – located in the south side of Bengawan Solo river and Plupuh – located in the north side of the river. The center of batik production villages in Masaran sub-district is Kliwonan and Pilang village. Whereas, the center of batik production villages in Plupuh sub-district is Gedongan, Jabung, and Pungsari village.

Women are the key players in the homemade industry, especially in making of batik until its finishing process. To create powerful competitiveness, “Girli” batik handicraft that is produced must have good quality. The improvement of product quality can be achieved through the skill enhancement of the craftswo/men by widening their knowledge and developing their skills to produce batik with special characteristics. The development of central production of batik handicrafts is expected to give benefits for the craftswomen to increase their family income and living standard.

## 2. METHOD

The method which is used in the first step of this study is explorative study to some potency which is related to Girli in Sragen District. The data were collected from primary and secondary sources. Primary sources involved the informant such as Batik businessman, the artist, the leaders of Kliwonan and Pilang village , the officials of Diperidag (Dinas Perindustrian dan Koperasi). The data were collected by deep interview, observation, and document analysis. To make the data become valid the technique which is used is called triangulation of data. Interactive model analysis is used to analyze the data.

## 3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION.

### 3.1. The Development Of Batik in Sragen District

Since 2009 there was a batik community in Sragen District. This community was formed from 4,771 craftswo/men or businesswo/men that were able to take in 15,671 human resources as their workers and produce 70,630 *kodi* (a quantity of wholesale purchase of clothes) in a year. Meanwhile, the production values reached 351,200,000,000 rupiahs and the investment values was 1,201,000,000 rupiahs. There were some supporting facilities, such as 47 showrooms, 3 art galleries, and 1 Batik Business Centre of Sragen (*Sentra Bisnis Batik Sragen - SBBS*) in the town-center. The target market of the batik products ranged from local, regional, up to national level, such as Solo, Yogyakarta, Semarang, Bandung, Jakarta, and Bali. Whereas, outside Java Island, the market included Kalimantan,

Sumatera, and Sulawesi, also exported through third parties. Because of that, batik in Sragen District has been established as a superior product in which all concerned stakeholders should have commitment to develop batik.

“Girli” batik in Sragen District has particular excellence that can sustain the development of batik to become a superior product of Sragen District. “Girli” batik has a potency to be developed as superior commodity considering to these several factors: (1) “Girli” batik has an excess in its supporting human resources, the craftswomen, in numbers and for their readiness to work well and diligently. They also have willingness to improve themselves by joining various trainings, which have been joint by many craftsmen/women and businessmen/women in order to improve the diversification and quality of the product. (2) “Girli” batik has a chance to raise the special characteristic of Sragen, particularly on its motifs and colors. (3) “Girli” batik already has its market, which is not only local but also wider range, such as areas of Yogyakarta, Surabaya and other cities. Besides, “Girli” batik has been sold to several areas outside Java Island, like Sumatera, Kalimantan and Sulawesi. (4) “Giri” batik has the supremacy of employing kinship that can optimize the marketing not only in local, regional, or national scale but also international. Many families who have relatives in Singapore and Malaysia bring them to do shopping in batik industry (SMEs) centre. (5) There are many tourism attractions in Sragen District, especially in Masaran and Plupuh sub-districts, that are potential or already developing, and can be synergized with batik development, mainly in the contexts of promotion and marketing. Batik products can be sold as souvenirs in various tourism attractions in Sragen District, such as in Sangiran Homosapiens Site, which is a world heritage, Prince Samudro Memorial Park, Bayanan Hot Water Pond, and many more.

### **3.2. The Problems of “Girli” Batik Craftswomen in Sragen District.**

In an attempt to develop the potency of “Girli” batik in Sragen District there are several problems occur, particularly in relation to the limitation of the effort in building capacities, no foster parents system, less competency of the craftsmen/women, limitation of tools, management, financial capital, and marketing strategies.

#### **3.2.1. The Limitation of the Attempt to Build Capacity (Capacity Building)**

The batik craftswomen in Sragen District basically experience some obstacles in improving their capacity to develop themselves not only becoming craftswomen for the entire of their lives, but improving their status to have better position as batik entrepreneurs. The initial step of empowering can be started by giving them intellectual capital by restructuring the education level, whether it is through formal or informal way.

#### **3.2.2. No Foster Parents System**

One of the obstacles in empowering “Girli” batik craftswomen is on the non-

existence of foster parents system. This system actually needs to be expanded by involving as many local businessmen/women as possible that are already succeed and develop, so they can raise the status of batik craftswomen who have been working on batik industry in a very long period to become new and independent businesswomen. Basically, this foster parents system will be able to widen the access of production resources, all information in relation to batik business, target market and also batik marketing.

### **3.2.3. Craftswomen's Competence**

One of the obstacles faced by "Girli" batik craftswomen in Sragen District is related to the limitation of competence. Because of that, it needs to be solved early with the most appropriate solution. In this case, the competence refers to knowledge and skills of "Girli" batik craftswomen on all aspects related to batik production.

### **3.2.4. Business Managerial**

There are still many industries of "Girli" batik in Sragen District which are unable to hold management based on professional bookkeeping system. Until today the management applied in the batik business is still the traditional system, so that it is hard to know for sure about the total investment, capital, selling, and benefit from the production.

In the context of developing "Girli" batik of Sragen District, the marketing is done without any professional plans and strategies. Nowadays, the marketing is inclined to be based upon instant demand, not based on marketing knowledge. As consequence, they do not have marketing strategies and target market which suit with the characteristics of "Girli" batik products. Most of the consumers of "Girli" batik, which is also known as Masaran batik, are from local market, though there are some industries that have markets in outside towns or islands or even in some foreign countries.

### **3.3. The Needs of "Girli" Batik Craftswomen.**

Within an attempt in improving the access, capacity, and competency, the batik craftswomen in "Girli" Sragen District need several things that should be paid attention by the related sides. The needs of the batik craftswomen are as follow: 1) The improvement of knowledge and skills in improving batik designs and motifs based on innovation and creativity; 2) The improvement of knowledge on batik coloring techniques, whether using chemical or natural colors; 3) The knowledge on managerial system of batik industry which is done professionally; and 4) The knowledge on promotion methods and strategies, also batik marketing, whether in local, regional, national or international level.

Among those needs, it can be seen that basically in the improvement of batik production, the "Girli" batik craftswomen in the areas of Masaran and Plupuh sub-

districts, Sragen District, need attention, support, and alignment from all elements that concern, government and private sectors.

### **3.4. The Efforts from The Stakeholders in Empowering “Girli” Batik Craftwomen in Sragen District.**

The steps carried out by the government of Sragen District as the efforts to empower “Girli” batik craftwomen in the areas of Masaran and Plupuh sub-districts, Sragen District, which is known as “Girli” batik can be clarified as follow.

- 1) Facilitating batik industry (UKM) to improve the promotion through exhibitions of local superior products, including batik, in various places, whether national or international. In empowering batik craftwomen, indirectly, the government of Sragen District has facilitated batik industry (UKM) in Sragen to join exhibitions of local superior products in many areas, which in the level of national, like in Surabaya, Jakarta, and even outside Java, such as Batam and Palembang.
- 2) Improving the competency (knowledge and skills) on batik techniques and its coloring. In order to produce high quality batik, the craftwomen need adequate knowledge and skills. Up to now, some parties, including the government of Sragen District, have given provisions of knowledge and skills, especially in improving batik diversification by applying natural coloring. It is because batik that is colored with natural sources has higher price. Mentoring on the abilities of batik craftwomen in Sragen District has been hold by the government by sending some human resources (the batik craftwomen themselves) to several official trainings organized by the government. Trainings on batik coloring with natural sources can gain the interest of some batik handicraft industries.
- 3) Organizing batik tourism package. The head of a Pilang village, who is also a committee of “Girli” batik cooperation, organizes batik tourism package in order to develop, generally, batik industry (UKM), and particularly to empower batik craftwomen. This batik tourism package has run for years and made cooperation with a high school in Sidoarjo District, East Java. Annually, the high school holds a field trip, and one of the tourism objects visited is the tourism village in the area of Masaran sub-district.
- 4) A synergy between tourism and batik in Sragen District. “Girli” batik, which is also known as Masaran batik, though already covers many other administrative areas (e.g. Plupuh sub-district), at the very beginning it shows identical characters to Surakartan batik. This refers to the historical backgrounds of the batik craftswomen/men in Kliwonan, Pilang, and some other villages around Masaran sub-district who worked for batik companies that were owned by Surakartan businesswo/men.

#### 4. CONCLUSION

“Girli” batik handicraft, which is produced in the area of Kliwonan, Pilang and Sidodadi villages in Masaran sub-district, and also Jabung, Gedongan, and Pungsari villages in Plupuh sub-district, has potency to become a superior product of Sragen District. Considering to this potency, batik handicraft needs to be maintained because it is a heritage that is able to give significant contribution to District Income (*Pendapatan Asli Daerah* – PAD) and improve the people’s prosperity, especially “Girli” batik craftswo/men and businesswo/men of Sragen District.

“Girli” batik holds power to support batik development as superior potency of Sragen District, because it has several excesses, such as its human resources, opportunity to enhance the unique characteristics of Sragen, especially in its motifs an colors, and having a wide range of market, not only local, but also wider areas (e.g. Yogyakarta, Surabaya, and other cities).In expanding the access, capacity and competency, “Girli” batik craftswomen in Sragen District need several important things that require attention from related sides, such as: 1) to develop the knowledge and skills in improving the designs and motifs of the batik based on innovation and creativity enhancement; 2) to improve the knowledge of batik coloring techniques, whether by using synthetic/chemical or natural colors; 3) to improve the knowledge on management system of batik industry that is applied professionally, and 4) to improve the knowledge on strategy and method of batik promotion and marketing, in the level of local, regional, national, and international.

Basically, the production output of batik industry (UKM) in the areas of Masran and Plupuh sub-districts in Sragen District can be synergized with the development of tourism in there. The synergy of batik and tourism is hoped to support widening the market for batik products. This is through various tourists’ visitation in “Girli” batik center and continued with their information to their families and relatives on the existence of “Girli” batik center in Sragen District. Thus, tourism can be a new potential market.

There are several strategies in empowering “Girli” batik craftswomen to enhance their family economy and develop tourism village in Sragen District, they are: (1) improving the capacity of batik of the craftswomen so that they are able to get better status, from craftswomen becoming entrepreneurs; (2) improving the competency of “Girli” batik craftswomen in Sragen District so that they are able to increase the quality and competitiveness of the batik products; (3) strengthening the networks and partnerships with various stakeholders including the private sectors, government and society; (4) facilitating the promotion and enhancing marketing networks; (5) building institutional system which takes sides to “Girli” batik craftswomen; (6) improving business management; (7) providing support on working-capital in a form of soft loan; (8) providing technical supervision in a form of training and mentoring; and (9) increasing the quantity and quality of access and transportation infrastructures.

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