

# THE IMPACT OF PANDEMIC COVID-19 TO THE WOMEN PORTER IN BERINGHARJO MARKET

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

The COVID-19 pandemic that occurred in various countries, including Indonesia, had a severe impact on health and multiple sectors. One of the most affected is the informal sector. As Neil Adger said, casual workers are vulnerable because they cannot adapt to change (Adger, 2003). Based on the BPS (Central Bureau of Statistic) report informal workers in Indonesia dominate the workforce, about 59.62% (Badan Pusat Statistik, 2021). This has the potential to provide social problems, such as poverty. One of the informal workers suffering from the pandemic is woman porters at Beringharjo Market. During the pandemic, the income of woman porters has decreased significantly. This is because the government's policies reduce the mobility of the people.

**Table 1: Number of Tourist Visits Yogyakarta 2020 (Source: BPS DIY)**

|      | Jan    | Feb    | Mar    | Apr    |
|------|--------|--------|--------|--------|
| 2018 | 10.849 | 12.607 | 14.055 | 11.435 |
| 2019 | 8.055  | 9.604  | 10.550 | 9922   |
| 2020 | 8.371  | 7.100  | 0      | 0      |

The decline in the number of tourists in Yogyakarta is a problem for woman porters because of the loss of customers. This condition makes woman porters have to cut the cost of the services they offer. From the researcher's initial observations, one of the woman porters admitted that she had to be willing to be paid five thousand rupiahs to carry 50 kilograms of groceries. The suffering experienced by woman porters is that they cannot meet their daily needs. The women porters have to sleep and stay at the storefront because they do not have money for going back home.

Various problems then arise in the life of the woman porters. Like informal workers, woman porters also find it challenging to find alternatives. On the other hand, the government does not provide specific guarantees to save casual workers from economic and social problems. In the Regulation of the Minister of Manpower and Transmigration Numb.14, 2020, it is explained that the recipients of assistance/subsidy for workers' wages during the pandemic are formal workers registered as BPJS Ketenagakerjaan (Health Social Security Agency) participants. On the other hand, woman porters are not legal workers and are registered with BPJS Ketenagakerjaan (Health Social Security Agency). So far, woman porters are marginalized and find it difficult to get job security. Meanwhile, the double burden of woman porters, namely as housewives and breadwinners, makes their lives even more difficult.

This study wants to explain the impact felt by woman porters due to the pandemic from this background. This study also shows that woman porters are one of the groups that suffer

but go unnoticed.

## 2. METHODOLOGY

In this study, the researcher used descriptive qualitative research with a case study approach. The emphasis in this study is on the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on woman porters at Beringharjo Market. Therefore, the researchers used a qualitative design. This study seeks to find facts and convey understanding according to the actual situation so that researchers use descriptive methods. Descriptive research studies the problems in society, including patterns, systems, relationships, and ongoing conditions (Moleong, 2011). In this case, the researcher tries to describe the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on woman porters at Beringharjo Market. The location of this research is Beringharjo Market, at Margo Mulyo Street Number 16, Yogyakarta City, Special Region of Yogyakarta. This research was conducted from November 2020 to June 2021. In collecting data, the researchers used a process of interviews, observations, and document collection. The primary data in this study were obtained from woman porters at Beringharjo Market. The secondary data in this study were obtained from various literature sources, documents, news reports related to woman porters at the Beringharjo Market, the COVID pandemic, and social security in Indonesia. Secondary data were also obtained from Yasanti (an organization empowering woman porters since 1982), the Yogyakarta City Trade Officer, the Dapur Umum as a community that cares about woman porters for food needs. In this study, researchers used source triangulation from various data collected with the same method. This study uses an interactive model by Miles and Huberman in data analysis techniques. This model is carried out interactively and takes place continuously. The data analysis stage includes data collection, data reduction, data presentation, and conclusions (Sugiyono, 2011).

## 3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The COVID pandemic experienced by woman porters has caused various impacts. Researchers explain these impacts by dividing based on the sectors experienced, namely the economic, social, health, and family welfare sectors. In the results of interviews and observations of seven woman porters, it was found that the economic impact they felt was a significant decrease in income often, they also did not get any money at all. This makes woman porters unable to return home because there is no transportation cost and spend the night at the shop's overhang. During the pandemic, woman porters rely on food assistance from Dapur Umum solidarity because of the difficulty in buying food.

The economic problems felt by woman porters are in line with the theory explained by Cohen, namely, one indicator that shows the economic impact is a change in the amount of income which indicates a negative value (Cohen, 1984). Cohen's theory also explains if the financial implications cause changes in spending and economic activity (Cohen, 1984). This can be understood if informal workers are highly dependent on the industrial sector (Noeraini, 2015). The double burden by woman porters, namely as housewives and fulfilling family needs, makes the situation worse. It is not only the women porters themselves who feel the impact of the economic downturn but also their families. This then raises various social problems. From the data obtained by researchers, woman porters experience internal conflicts. One of the woman porters experienced a divorce due to not fulfilling the functions of a family member. Based on what happened, it is true what Parsons said if social disorganization causes social problems (Parsons, 1939).

The social problems that occur in the life of the woman porters above can be explained based on two main factors. First, by the pandemic itself. As said by Wiryohandoyo if social impacts are caused by changes in the environment and nature (Wiryohandoyo, 2002). The inherent vulnerabilities made adjustment difficult, and woman porters failed to cope with the pandemic. In reality, the social problems by woman porters are challenging to find a solution because there is no social protection net. In observation, researchers found that only 17 of the 218 woman porters used BPJS Ketenagakerjaan (Health Social Security Agency) facility. Most of the woman porters who do not use the BPJS (Health Social Security Agency) facility are due to the limited age of membership, no fees to pay dues, and the limited ability of human resources to take care of themselves. On the other hand, the distribution of conditional cash is adjusted to the background of the condition of the beneficiary. From the statement of the woman porters, the Program Keluarga Harapan (conditional cash transfer) obtained was only able to meet the needs of food or necessities. Then during the pandemic, it was difficult for woman porters to get help from the government. Assistance in the form of wage subsidies is only given to the formal sector, based on Minister of Manpower and Transmigration Regulation Number 14 of 2020. As Guy Standing explains, informal workers are vulnerable to problems because of the uncertainty they experience, one of which is the absence of guarantees that protect them (Standing, 2012).

Regarding the health impact, the work environment significantly influences the health and safety of workers and women porters. In the conditions of the COVID pandemic, health protocols are highly emphasized, especially the use of masks and reduce crowds. According to the researcher's observations, woman porters cannot keep their distance from people in need because of the narrow road. She also does not use gloves when handling goods. The masks used also do not meet the standards recommended by WHO, namely three-layer masks. This is because there is no cost to buy a disposable three-layer cover. The findings show that there are woman porters who are exposed to COVID. Diseases suffered by woman porters during the pandemic are not only infected by COVID but also anxiety. As a result, their bodies often suddenly feel unwell, such as nausea, colds, dizziness, canker sores, loss of enthusiasm, and weakness. As stated by Knesebeck, informal workers tend to be easily stressed, excessively anxious, tired quickly, and depressed. (Kim & Knesebeck, 2015). Responding to the high risk of spreading the virus in Beringharjo Market, the Ministry of Health and the local government then held a mass vaccination. The Yogyakarta City Trade Officer explained that more than 7000 workers at Beringharjo Market had been vaccinated, including woman porters. The following impact is welfare. Based on measurements with the prosperous family indicator from the BKKBN (National Family Agency), it is found that the welfare level of the woman porter's family is at the pre-prosperous stage. On average, woman porters have not met the eight indicators of a prosperous family stage I. From these indicators, woman porters cannot fulfill the ability to eat three times a day. On average, woman porters say they can only eat one to two times a day, especially during the pandemic because of the limited income to buy food. Internal factors that affect welfare can be analyzed from the resilience of the family itself. During a pandemic, these basic needs are difficult to meet. Another internal factor that burdens family welfare is the dual role played by woman porters. The patriarchal Javanese culture requires women to continue to work at home (Permandeli, 2015). Then responsibility as the fulfillment of family needs must be carried out. These two things that clash in the end must be done simultaneously by woman porters. The woman porters often feel inter-role conflict. In Jalung Wirangga's research (2017), it was stated that woman porters had verbal aggression towards family members at home and co-workers in the market due to the burden of the problems they

had to bear. The aggression carried out by the woman porters then causes social conflict (Jakti, 2017).

#### 4. CONCLUSION

The COVID-19 pandemic has harmed the socio-economic conditions and welfare of the woman porters' families. The economic impact felt by woman porters is a significant decrease in income. Then the social results handled by woman porters are problems in the family, changes in attitudes in the work environment, and a decreased sense of kinship between woman porters. The health impacts experienced by woman porters are exposure to COVID-19 and decreased health due to stress. The pandemic has also caused the welfare level of the woman porters' families to be at a pre-prosperous stage because they failed to meet basic needs. Meanwhile, woman porters cannot get wage subsidies because they are not included in the scheme, according to the Minister of Manpower and Transmigration Regulation Number 14 of 2020, specifically for formal workers. Women porters can only hope that the government will get protection guarantees in setting basic tariffs and providing easy-to-access social assistance without the constraints of terms and conditions. The Ministry of Social Affairs needs to protect woman porters by coordinating with the Yasanti, the local government and the woman porters themselves through their current social service program, namely, socio-economically vulnerable women. Then the Yogyakarta City Trade Officer needs to provide a wage protection policy in a basic tariff for woman porters.

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