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Strengthening Sumbanese Women's Economic-Self Resilience to Alleviate Poverty

Rini Hastuti¹, Angelina Ika Rahutami², Shandy Jannifer Matitaputty³, Elizabeth Lucky M. Sitinjak⁴

¹ Taxation Department, Soegijapranata Catholic University, Indonesia
rien@unika.ac.id

² Management Department, Soegijapranata Catholic University, Indonesia
ika@unika.ac.id

³Taxation Department, Soegijapranata Catholic University, Indonesia
shandy@unika.ac.id

⁴Accounting Department, Soegijapranata Catholic University, Indonesia
lucky@unika.ac.id

Abstract:

1. Introduction

A university cannot be sustainable without being socially responsible. The expression is also a commitment of the Soegijapranata Catholic University (SCU). Spirit and tagline of the university is *talenta pro patria et humanitate*, that means rendering your talent to the nation and humanity. As with the slogan, SCU realizes that social involvement for the community is something that cannot be avoided. Serving the community is a critical component of the socially responsible institution.

One of the provinces in Indonesia that received attention from SCU was East Nusa Tenggara. This province is the poorest province in Indonesia. One of district in NTT is East Sumba which is the second rank of poverty in NTT. The number of poor people in East Sumba was 144,010,000. SCU itself has given attention and provided facilities and scholarships to study at SCU for students from NTT. But caring through scholarships is not enough. Poverty alleviation in NTT must be a commitment of SCU.

Poverty is a situation in which someone does not have an income to satisfy his or her basic daily needs, especially food, and does not have the ability to support human basic needs of sustainable living (UNDP, 2000; Bappenas, 2002). Cahyono (2005) found that Indonesian women's work hours are 30-50 percent longer than men in terms of same age and type of work. Women in Sumba tend to be marginalized because of the culture and low level of their education. If women are not the ones who participate in poverty alleviation programs and if gender analysis is not used to seek the root causes of poverty, poverty alleviation programs will have limited impact in public space. The Indonesian government has serious concern for gender equality and poverty alleviation. It can be inferred from some policies and regulations related to the protection and empowerment of women. Starting from 2002 to 2008, there have been at least six gender based regulations. But there has not been comprehensive gender regulation that yet integrates both of gender equality and poverty reduction dimensions.

Based on this situation and the concern of SCU to do a good University social responsibility, we are motivated to do community service in East Sumba. The main motivation is how to encourage changes in women's behavior for reducing poverty and strengthening economic resilience? This project has three objectives that are

- i. To assess and analyze poverty condition and poverty alleviation policies with gender perspective in East Sumba
- ii. To provide workshops on gender mainstreaming in development policy and strategy for local government
- iii. To provide workshop on productive economy for female-headed of poor household

2. Theoretical framework/literature review

There is a big movement from Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) into University Social Responsibility (USR). CSR must be understood as a concept whereby companies integrate social and environmental concerns in their business operations and in their interaction with their stakeholders on a voluntary basis (Vasilescu, et.al., 2010). The concept of CSR can be applied and modified in the university. The USR concept is about the need to strengthen civic commitment and active citizenship; it is about volunteering, about an ethical approach, developing a sense of civil citizenship by encouraging the students, the academic staff to provide social services to their local community or to promote ecological, environmental commitment for local and global sustainable development (Bokhari, 2017, Vasilescu, et.al, 2010).

As many universities realize, serving the community is a critical component of a socially responsible institution. The university should work in a triple dimension, economic, social and environmental, and at the same time, it undertakes specific action in its structure across three sections: teaching, research and community services. The concept of social responsibility is no longer confined to charitable and voluntary activity, but it is in fact a broader and more comprehensive concept that comprises solutions for societies economic, social and environmental problems (Bokhari, 2017, Vasilescu, et.al, 2010).

This project tried to implement the USR in East Sumba. Any groundwork that we have conducted are supporting and in line with poverty and whole person education. Some of our previous researches are: Gender issues of poverty alleviation in Indonesia (2017), Poverty alleviation through family empowerment (2017), The Development of Outdoor Learning to Foster a Sense of Social Awareness and Nationalism Insight through Community Service Outdoor service learning (2017), Ensuring Food Security and Reducing Poverty through Gender on Development: Indonesian Case (2016), Does the Feminization of Poverty Really Occur in Indonesia? A critical analysis of gender and development (2016), The Development of Self-helping Model for Poverty Alleviation on the Productive Poor Group (2015). The government budget synergy to alleviate poverty (2011).

3. Methods/analysis

There are three main activities designed to achieve the objectives, as outlined below:

1. The poverty assessment and alleviation policy analysis. We have assessed the conditions of poverty especially women who head poor households. We also have analysed the poverty policies in East Sumba. The gender and development approach were used in the assessment and analysis.
2. Workshop for local government and NGOs. The local government has a serious concern about gender and poverty problems. The workshop was focused on gender mainstreaming and women empowerment. Local NGOs that have the same concern are also invited and involved to get more comprehensive description about real condition of woman empowerment.
3. Workshop for women head poor household. This workshop was intended to provide knowledge about women equal rights and how to develop the productive household economy.

4. Results and Discussion

The assessment resulted in Sumba as the poorest region in Indonesia. Nevertheless, the assessment criteria set by the central government needs to be adjusted to be more focus on local conditions because it is relatively difficult to be executed. Many poverty alleviation programs have been carried out in handling poverty into four groups: (a) Social assistance (donation or charity); (b) Micro-economic and financial empowerment; (c) Community empowerment through job creation and opportunity; (d) Food security. They however have not been able to reduce poverty yet. Even though there is 31,47% of the total local government budget in 2018 was allocated for the poor, it has not had direct implications on the poor as mandated by the law nor it has not involved the community in the grass root.

Poverty in Sumba also has multi-dimensional aspect; it cannot implement woman perspective only but it must consider the local context. Gender issues in Sumba are (i) The division of role between men and women, (ii) Genealogy or family history that composes social stratification, (iii) Family generation that shows different role in every level of generation. Second generation plays a leading role in the family, while the third are not necessarily involved, and (iv) Income earned: the greater the income, the greater the role in the family.

Another challenge was to seek an indigenous public figure people who can share her inspiring experience that can motivate other women to strengthen their economic resilience. During the session of sharing in which the participants expressed their opinions they listened and discussed the lecture and inspirational stories from the successful native speaker. We found that most of Sumbanese women understand the importance of education. This is indicated by their commitment to support their children to pursue higher degree of education although they are in financial difficulty. One surprising thing was that the participants were very open-minded to receive new information or new knowledge. They have high curiosity and willingness to try new things. This reality was against our previous belief that Sumbanese poor-people are difficult to receive a new paradigm.

5. Conclusions and contributions to theory and practice

Poverty is not merely measured in terms of social economic, but is also related to the gender aspect. We have found that poverty has caused women have heavier burden than men. This condition is exacerbated by the patrilineal culture of the Sumba people. The USR of SCU showed that women empowerment deals with poverty should be accompanied by cultural approach. The most effective way to harmonize culture, paradigm and behavior is through whole person education.

Keywords: University Social Responsibility, Poverty, Woman Empowerment, Economic Resilience

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Biographical sketch of each presenter

Please send the biographical sketch of the presenters together with the proposal using the following format:

Presenter 1:

- i. Last name followed by first name: Hastuti, Rini
- ii. Position/department/organisation/country: Taxation Department/Soegijapranata Catholic University/Indonesia
- iii. Short biography (word count should not exceed 70 words)
Rini Hastuti, SE, MSi, CA is a lecturer on taxation at Soegijapranata Catholic University Semarang. In the university, she has managed as a Department Head of taxation program (2008-2012). She currently officiates as the head of Unika Soegijapranata Tax Center. She is also active in tax research and publication in the national and international forums.
- iv. Contact information (address, email address, homepage)
Email: rien@unika.ac.id
Website: -
Address: Karangrejo Selatan VI/30 RT 4 RW 8 Tinjomoyo, Banyumanik, Semarang, Indonesia

Presenter 2:

- i. Last name followed by first name: Rahutami, Angelina Ika
- ii. Position/department/organisation/country: Management Department, Soegijapranata Catholic University, Indonesia
- iii. Short biography (word count should not exceed 70 words)
She is a doctor of philosophi at management department of Faculty of Economics and Business Soegijapranata Catholic University Semarang, Indonesia. Her latest researches that are relevant to this project are Alleviating poverty and strengthening economic self-resilience in East Sumba: woman and development approach (2018), Gender issues of poverty alleviation in Indonesia (2017)
- iv. Contact information (address, email address, homepage)
Email: ika@unika.ac.id
Website: -
Address: Mawar II no. 10 Taman Bukit Hijau, Semarang, Indonesia

Presenter 3:

- i. Last name followed by first name: Matitaputty, Shandy Jannifer
- ii. Position/department/organisation/country: Taxation Department/Soegijapranata Catholic University/Indonesia
- iii. Short biography (word count should not exceed 70 words)

She is a full time lecturer and researcher in Faculty of Economics and Business Soegijapranata Catholic University Semarang, Indonesia. She became a lecturer in 2014. Before working as a lecturer, She worked as a research assistant at Institute for Research and Community Services (LPPM) Universitas Diponegoro. She has been developing many research in terms of economic development, poverty and taxes.

- iv. Contact information (address, email address, homepage)
Email: shandy@unika.ac.id
Website: -
Address: Kruing Timur Dalam 2 No. 30, Semarang, Indonesia

Presenter 4:

- i. Last name followed by first name: Sitinjak, Elisabeth Lucky Maretha
- ii. Position/department/organisation/country: Accounting Master Degree
Department/Soegijapranata Catholic University/ Indonesia
- iii. Short biography (word count should not exceed 70 words)
She is a doctor of phylosophy at Accounting Department. She has some research on the gender-based investment decision making. Results of the research lead her to pursue research on demographic differences in investing. Apparently, women are more conscientious in investing because they consider about family finances, they also care about the importance of saving to pay immediate expenditure.
- iv. Contact information (address, email address, homepage)
Email: lucky@unika.ac.id
Website: -
Address: Gondang Timur IV Perum. Grand Tembalang Regency blok D1 no.4, Semarang, Indonesia

Abstract overview:

A university cannot be sustainable without being socially responsible. This is also a commitment of Soegijapranata Catholic University (SCU), especially to alleviate poverty in east Sumba. We have found that poverty has caused women have heavier burden than men, some customs even make it heavier. Therefore we have held some activities to encourage changes in women's behavior for reducing poverty and strengthening economic resilience. The most effective way to harmonize culture, paradigm and behavior is through whole person education.