

Women's voices: an international audio series of AMARC

“The struggle of a women migrant worker to obtain justice”

by JRKDem



Women migrant workers or TKW (women worker) like it is commonly known are part of a group of people who work abroad. Throughout 2014, the National Agency for Placement and Protection of Indonesian Workers (BNP2TKI) recorded that the placement of workers to various countries in the world is approximately of 430.000 thousand peoples.

The phenomenon of many Indonesian's people who work abroad shows that poverty and economic problems in Indonesia has been chronic. (There are) limited decent jobs for women in Indonesia, making them prefer to be women migrant workers or TKW. Although in fact (most) of Indonesian's women migrant worker experienced violence, torture, harassment, deportation and other injustices during the time they work abroad.

Mrs.Tarmini Eko, is a housewife with three childrens who once worked as a migrant worker from the village of Sawentar Kanigoro Blitar - East Java. Tarmini started out has a migrant worker in 1993. She has worked as a migrant worker in Saudi Arabia, Singapore and Hong Kong.

Tarmini decided to work abroad because she wanted to help her husband in meeting the economic needs of their family and for the future of their childrens.

Insert 1 :

"My name is Tarmini Eko, my address in Tegalrejo, Sawentar Kanigoro Blitar. I work as TKW since 1993, first in Saudi Arabia, second in Singapore and then in Hong Kong".

Tarmini has had happy and sorrow experiences as a migrant worker.

Insert 2 :

"My experiences are happy and there has been sorrow. I'm happy when vacation time came and I could meet friends and neighbours. It is sorrow if there is a problem with the employer"

When Tarmini completed her work contract in Hong Kong in 2004, she got in trouble with her employer in Hong Kong who did not pay her salary for two months. She even was accused of being a thief.

Insert 3 :

"In 2004, when my contract ran out, I had a problem because before I got home I saved my money with the employer for two months for the cost to travel home. It turned out my employer lied to me. After (the contract ended), I was ushered to buy tickets from agents, (he) usher me to the airport and said that my money will be given to me at the airport but in reality they were not giving me my money so I do not want to go home because I'm not stupid. Eventually it became a police matter, because my employer reported me to the police at the airport, they were accusing me of stealing but they had no proof that I steal".

Tamini received unfair treatment and was accused of stealing by the employer. She did not stay silent, she resisted and denied the charges through the courts of law in Hong Kong and then she reported her employer for the injustice she experienced.

Insert 4 :

"After that morning, I did not accept the accusation because I wanted to give a lesson to my employer. Before I got in, they already terminated some people. First I reported my salary was not given and then also that about the less of my off work day because in one month I was just given two times even though it should every week and holidays".

Addressing this issue, Tarmini's sure that what she did was right and she was not afraid to fight for her rights as women migrant worker. Her employer didn't meet all of its obligations towards her. Until finally after awaiting trial for 3 months, she won her case and obtained all her rights.

Insert 5 :

"Finally, after 3 months I finished that problem, then I appeal to the top (for what) I did not receive. Eventually success and survived, my salary was given, and (I was compensated) also for my off work day. Anyway before reporting it, I filled all claims and it was all sorted out".

With that experience, Mrs.Tarmini advised her fellow workers to be brave and to fight if they are treated unfairly by employers provided that all obligations have not been met.

She said that if a migrant worker is weak and submissive with the employer, hence it will be vulnerable to experience violence cases and arbitrary actions from the employer.

Insert 6 :

"The important thing as a women migrant worker (TKW) we have to be brave. It is correct to do not let the employer step on our self-esteem. If we oppose as long as (we are in our rights) the employer (will be) scared. If we always obey to the employer, they will (act) evil and they will think we are foolish. "The point is as TKW, we must always be vigilant and careful abroad".

In addition, Mrs.Tarmini hope to that the Indonesian government do more to appreciate the migrant workers, to provide justice and protection to them on the various problems faced while working abroad.

Insert 7 :

"From the government we just need justice, to the Indonesian State: if there are migrant workers who are having difficulties abroad please help them, help them sincerely and seriously because the problems there are so varied".

Listener, the story experienced by Mrs.Tarmini Eko is a small picture of the problems faced by Indonesian migrant workers. Like the iceberg phenomenon, actually problem of the women migrant worker is much larger than it appears on the surface.

The attitude and courage of Mrs.Tarmini in fighting for her rights as a migrant worker should be an inspiration for migrant workers who are work abroad currently to make them be treated humanely and fairly.

Of course we all hope to the Indonesian government will be able to provide jobs and a decent life for their citizen so that they no longer need to find a bite of rice in another country.

Thank you very much for your attention. I'm Noor Chasanah who guides this event will withdrew from your listening room, greetings democracy.

This event is presented by the Community Radio Network for Democracy (JRKDem) cooperates with community radio Grast Fm - Blitar in commemoration of International Women's Day.

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