

## Challenges and Solutions for Poverty Reduction Feminization Program (PFK) as Gender-Based Sustainable Economic Development Efforts in East Java

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### Abstract

This study aims to outline the arisen challenge and applied solution to the implementation of the feminization prevention program towards gender-based poverty of female-headed households in East Java. The study employs qualitative textual based, which refers to discover data from research journals and government institutions. The results of the study indicate that in the process of implementation, PFK still has challenges regarding the low education of rural communities in East Java, which affects the business continuity process of female headed-household. Therefore, this study suggests in implementing poverty programs for female-headed households in East Java include; specialized training for KRTP to start an independent home-based business. a collaboration between PKK cadres and educational institutions as well as non-governmental organizations to deal with problems during the realization of independent home based business.

**Keywords:** *challenges, gender based poverty, pfk program, female-headed household, east java.*

### 1. Introduction

Today, poverty is one of the most catastrophic problems which developing countries desire to solve as an effort to realize economic development to improve the welfare of society. Poverty alleviation itself is a global agenda as set out in the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG's). Thus, development policies in Indonesia both at the central and regional levels have prioritized poverty reduction programs and activities (Susilowati, 2018). The government has planned numerous programs to fulfill the poverty alleviation goal. One of which is Indonesia as a developing country (Febryani & Kusreni, 2017). The Indonesian government commits to alleviate poverty and it involves a significant role of local governments with their autonomous rights to come up with strategies in developing and advancing regions that still have severe poverty levels. As one of the provinces in Indonesia, East Java is inseparable from the problem of poverty.

Today the case of poverty is the main topic to be resolved in developed and developing countries as a regional development effort. Many programs launched by the government are poverty alleviation processes. The overall problem of poverty has been the primary concern of the East Java Provincial Government. However, the government has observed an increase in women POPULATION who live under the line of poverty that occur in FEMALE-HEADED households. This phenomenon is often known as the feminization of poverty or poverty that is increasingly faced by women, requires extraordinary efforts in its solution.

According to Statistics Indonesia in 2015, East Java is dominated by women about 51% or 19.674.951 million (BPS, 2019). Even though the majority are women, women are still marginalized because of strict patriarchal culture that places women as the subordinate class. As a consequence, women's rights are limited. Even more, for female-headed household who has dual role responsibility due to divorce, ill or dead husband, being neglected, and unsupported (Ningrum, 2017). The conditions cause higher case of gender inequality in economic activities in public sphere in the form of feminization of poverty or poverty faced by women (Cendriono, 2017). Feminization of poverty according to a gender study research by the National Team for the Acceleration of Poverty Reduction (TNP2K) is a representation of women in poverty which is the inability to fulfill their basic needs as the result of inequality in gender relations between man and woman. Hence, it impacts women's underdevelopment in economic, education, health, politic, and social (KEMENPPPA, 2016).

As one of the largest provinces in Indonesia, East Java is included as the province with a provincial poverty rate of 11.20% from the latest data of BPS-Statistics Indonesia in September 2017, with a population of 38,847,561 million. East Java is also the fourth province with the highest province category of female-

headed households in Indonesia with a percentage of 17.49% after Nusa Tenggara Timur according to the latest data. To overcome these problems, the Government of East Java designed a program to deal with women's poverty, especially for female-headed households (KRTP) through the Poverty Feminization Mitigation Program. The program is not only a short-term effort to assist KRTP but also as a sustainable program to anticipate poverty traps in KRTP (Cendriono, 2017). The goal of the Government itself that KRTP is able to become a productive widow to support her family independently and be able to reduce poverty in East Java.

Problem-solving is not enough until the existence of PFK program to overcome gender-based poverty. In its implementation, the program has challenges to cause poverty vulnerability in women as well as low education level. The vulnerability to poverty of women is also shown by data from the Statistics Indonesia in 2012, among others in education sector, which is seen from the percentage of the population aged 10 years or more who have never attended school according to sex. The percentage of female population aged ten who had never attended school in 2012 was higher than men (Cendriono, Ardiana, & Widhianingrum, 2019). As a consequence, this condition has caused a high level of poverty among families with female headed household. Furthermore, the stereotype that perceives women who do not have education are better at taking care of the things domestically and do not participate in work.

Data on other gender studies that discuss education states that another surprising and identified gender gap in the Integrated Database (BDT) is that Female Headed-Household (FH) from the lowest three deciles are less likely to complete primary and higher education compared to Male Headed-Household (MH). Only 52% of FH have completed at least basic education compared to MH with a percentage of 74%. The gender gap continues at the level of completion of education at the junior and senior high school levels. This condition has particular implications for program socialization strategies and shows the need for unwritten information when targeting this group. There is little difference in the highest level of education achieved by men and women in these three lowest deciles (Lockley, Tobias, & Bah, 2013). That is the basic factor causing high level of poverty among female headed-household families. besides there is also a stereotype that women who do not have or who have low education are limited to being able to take care of things that are domestic and do not work. In case of women who act as heads of households, they are required to have a dual role. It causes gender inequality in public space in economic activities between a FH and MH whom both have the role of the main breadwinner of the family.

## **2. Relevant Literature**

In a research journal written by Hasan (2016) about the pattern of informal economic education shows the relationship between education with the formation of behavior and economic decision-making of every individual in the community. In his research Muhammad Hasan explained that the household is the main unit of analysis in this study. Based on preliminary studies conducted by researchers in several households in Batua Village, Manggala District, Makassar, showed that there are still several heads of households who are illiterate and there are still many household heads who are only graduated from elementary school. It can be concluded, the low level of education of the household heads will have an impact on the informal economic education process that occurs within the family, specifically related to economic interaction and transformation. It includes the inculcation of economic education concepts in the family and the formation of good economic attitudes and behaviors.

In an accordance of the previous explanation Soesilo in Hasan (2016) states that the level of education and learning opportunities about everything related to life and things faced in daily life strongly related to someone with a rational mindset that necessary both in making decisions and developing attitudes towards other aspects of life. The low education of the community, especially the head of the family, indirectly affect the situation or condition of the family. It is due to the cultural community itself. The mindset of the poor is interrelated and influences each other. Therefore, informal economic education in the family is a very important thing to do. Through intense economic education in the family environment, it can form homo economicus, human beings that is productive to manage money and other resources.

### 3. Focus of Discussion

This article focuses on the PFK program which still facing challenges during the implementation process. The FHs that are target of the program, still embrace short-term mindset and tend to be fatalistic in continuing the business with business capital that has been assisted by the government in the form of business fund loans. Their mindset causes them to stand in a stagnant position in terms of economic development. Thus this article has a lot to discuss the emergence of challenges in the process of implementing the PFK program, including the low levels of education of rural communities that slow the rate of economic growth in the entrepreneurship sector as well as ways or solutions for its completion.

### 4. Method

This study applies descriptive qualitative research methods obtained from the systematic and intensive data collection process to describe the results of writing following the objectives of this study. Data was collected through previous studies such as journal and statistical data and the latest news as the main support in outlining the mechanisms and challenges in of PFK program. As well as suggestions to solve the problems, thus the program achieves its goal to help economic development especially widows as the head of the household, to be an independent and prosperous family.

### 5. Discussion

#### 5.1 Challenge: The Impact of Low Education Level on Way of Thinking to the FH's Bussiness Sustainability

The Eradication of Feminization Poverty (PFK) is an effort to realize sustainable development in the area of poverty alleviation based on gender equality through venture capital assistance amounting to Rp.2,500,000 per target KRTP in the East Java. The PFK program itself has been running for five years, starting from 2015 until now. However, in its implementation, the PFK program still has challenges that lead to becoming obstacles to the measurement of the success of the program. The factor is none other than due to the low level of education, especially those that occur in rural communities.

Education itself is an important thing to advance the level of HR (Human Resources) on improving the economy. With a high level of education it will boost the level of community skills which in turn to encourage the growth of entrepreneurial skills and new jobs, so it helps government programs to alleviate unemployment and poverty (Widad, 2017).

It is known, the development of public education in the last ten years is quite alarming. Many Women and men have low levels of education. As presented on data table below.

Table 1. The highest level of education completed in the RTP and RTL based on deciles (BDT) and in the population (Susenas 2010).

**Table 1. The highest level of education completed in the RTP and RTL based on deciles (BDT) and in the population (Susenas 2010).**

Ijazah/STTB tertinggi yang dimiliki	Desil 1-3				Populasi			
	RTP		RTL		RTP		RTL	
	Kepala	Semua Anggota	Kepala	Semua Anggota	Kepala	Semua Anggota	Kepala	Semua Anggota
Ukuran populasi (N) <sup>12</sup>	1.796.126	2.864.331	13.687.798	15.675.522	6.953.008	8.951.498	51.186.457	53.675.798
Tidak Punya Ijazah	48%	36%	26%	13%	36%	24%	18%	7%
SD	43%	30%	52%	38%	30%	20%	33%	23%
SMP	6%	19%	14%	28%	12%	18%	17%	24%
SMA	3%	14%	8%	19%	16%	28%	24%	34%
Pendidikan tersier	0%	1%	0%	1%	6%	10%	8%	13%

Source: result of gender studies by Integrated Database (January, 2013).

**Explanation :**

Susenas : national economic and social survey

Tidak punya ijazah : Tidak punya ijazah

RTP : Female Headed-Household

RTL : Male Headed-Household

SD : Elementary School

SMP : Junior High School

SMA : Senior High School

Pendidikan Tersier : Tertiary Education

**Note:**

Decile 1 (Households / individuals with welfare conditions up to the lowest 10% in Indonesia)

Decile 2 (Households / Individuals with welfare conditions between 11% - 20% lowest in Indonesia)

Decile 3 (Households / Individuals with the lowest 21% -30% welfare conditions in Indonesia)

Based on the table above, it shows the level of community education especially female headed-households do not own a diploma and only reach elementary school education with the highest percentage among other levels. During realizing PFP program in various regions in the East Java, based on the data that we obtained through previous research, a number of them have challenges related to the business continuity of the FH, which is undeniable caused by the low level of education in rural communities. Low level of education results a way of thinking that influence their spirit and willingness to try as well as maintain an independent business to improve their living. Data of research conducted in the Madiun showed under-developed perspective that tend to be fatal based on low level of education and less monitoring and training from PFP program. In another word, low level of knowledge among KRTP has hampered the process of empowering women to be economically independent.

NAME	SADIRAH	SUKIRAH	SUKINEM
ID RTS	519050012025176	519050012025941	51905001202493
TYPE OF BUSINESS	Cultivation of coffee and flour	Raising the goats	Raising the goats
CONDITION	Useless the tools	The goats never having breed but the goats seems healthy	The all of goats has been dead
PROBLEMS	Sadirah having the trouble with activating the tools	Breed problems	The goats are poisoned. The owner never understood with the animal care
CONCLUSION	Static	Static	Failed

Data Source: E-Journal of ADIMAS ( Maret, 2017)

According to data from ADIMAS, there are challenges in realizing gender-based economic development in East Java, especially in rural areas, because of the low level education of rural communities which has influenced their mindset to in decision making for solving a problem. The data above represents the results of the report which shows that 40% of the total 20 FHs surveyed for business development shows that there are still some that have stagnant or failed results. We only took the example of 3 FHs out of 8 FHs that experienced stagnation or failure in the results of the business activities they undertook.

For instance, FHs who receive livestock assistance, but lack of knowledge in managing or caring the livestock causes the animals are not well cared and die quickly. Also, FHs who receive direct funding for

snacks or clothing production businesses, yet do not know to promote them, then their business has no buyer and the economy come back to square zero. FHs mindset tends to be pessimistic in decision making when there is a problem faced by them regarding their business, which is a challenge that must be solved immediately in the process of implementing the PFP program. On that basis, regular training and assistance are needed for the FH, so that they get guidance that maintains the sustainability of their business.

## **5.2 Regular Assistance and Special Training (Workshop) in Collaboration with Educational Institution to Increase Potential Business of FH**

In the implementation of the PFK program in East Java, which has been running in the last few years. Previously, there has been assistance from community groups namely PKK cadre (Association of Women in Households) to monitor the business development of the targeted FHs. Nanang Cendriono, et al (2019), in his research explained that Mothercare (the term for PKK cadre) has been volunteering for family empowerment, to provide assistance and monitor the program as well as FHs business development. It does not stop there, to solve problems related to the low level of education in rural communities that affect the quality of human resources and way of thinking needs to be strengthened through its informal education. The informal education is in the form of knowledge workshops about business fields and intensive assistance to monitor door to door to the target FH's house. Workshop can be supported through collaboration with related educational institutions in East Java to provide knowledge to improve the hard skills of the target FH, thus the participants have sufficient knowledge to start a business. The organization can run effectively by establish a house of Mothercare, which is we term the "Omah Perempuan Produktif"(Productive Women's Home) as a service center for complaints and providing education for the target FH that has constraints in the business activities undertaken so that it can continue to grow and not stagnate.

Workshops have role in providing education in related business fields and training for business development of FHs professionally. Through collaborations with educational institutions to provide education about the businesses involved. For example, livestock business, then provides a training for FH. To realize the plan, it can involve educational institutions or institutions that have expertise in the fields of animal health and animal husbandry. Other examples such as training about creative marketing techniques, then engaged with educational institutions that have expertise in economics and marketing.

The assistance provided by the Mothercare cadre team to the FH must also reach the emotional approach stage, not only in terms of technical problem solving, but also include the values that women are no longer the object of development, but the subject of development. Because it is undeniable, there are some FH who give up quickly when face a problem or the business fails. So it has become the duty and responsibility of the Mothercare cadre team as a FH companion to provide motivation and education to be able to survive through their business.

## **6. Conclusion**

Outlining the FH program which is inseparable from the various forms of challenges that must be resolved. It has been able to encourage the emergence of a proposed solution as a solution to the problem and continuing the success of the FH program in improving the economy of rural communities in East Java. The intensive application of assistance is not only from the technical submission of fund disbursement, but also touches on the emotional aspects when FH fails and requires motivation to try to get back up will be an encouragement to raise the number of FHs into productive widows. Not only that, organizing workshops in collaboration with educational institutions conducted in the home of Mothercare cadres, which is we term the "Omah Perempuan Produktif" (Productive Women's Home) whose role is to be a companion to launch educational activities and consultations on the fields which are the FH independent business. This is nothing but an effort to increase knowledge of creativity to maintain productivity. It also is the supporting factor for the realization of the SDG's target in the focus of the PFK program which is engaged in poverty alleviation efforts based on gender equality that can run more optimally.

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