

Paradiplomacy in Protecting West Kalimantan Migrant Workers in Malaysia during the Covid-19 Global Pandemic

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Abstrak

Pandemi Covid-19 mengharuskan beberapa negara di dunia menerapkan kebijakan pembatasan sosial dan lockdown untuk mencegah penyebaran Covid-19 di negaranya. Salah satu negara yang menerapkan lockdown adalah Malaysia yang turut berimbas pada pemberhentian sementara beberapa kegiatan sosial ekonomi non-esensial. Sebagai implikasi, Malaysia juga melakukan kebijakan pemulangan sebagian pekerja migran ke negara asalnya termasuk Pekerja Migran Indonesia (PMI) secara masif. Proses pemulangan tersebut kemudian menjadi tantangan bagi pemerintah Indonesia, khususnya Provinsi Kalimantan Barat yang menjadi pintu masuk pemulangan PMI dari Malaysia di tengah upaya pencegahan penyebaran Covid-19. Di sisi lain, terdapat pula upaya untuk melindungi PMI di Malaysia yang terdampak Covid-19. Tujuan penelitian ini adalah untuk mengidentifikasi faktor-faktor yang menyebabkan belum optimalnya paradiplomasi yang dilakukan oleh pemerintah Provinsi Kalimantan Barat dalam menangani konsekuensi buruk dari wabah Covid-19 terhadap Pekerja Migran Indonesia (PMI). Perlindungan PMI di Malaysia seharusnya menjadi perhatian mengingat kebijakan lockdown yang diterapkan di Malaysia membutuhkan upaya sinergis baik oleh pemerintah maupun organisasi yang memiliki peran dalam melindungi hak-hak PMI. Penelitian ini menggunakan metode eksploratif dan pendekatan kualitatif dengan teknik wawancara sebagai sumber data primer, serta kajian literatur sebagai sumber data sekunder. Analisis dalam penelitian ini mengacu pada upaya paradiplomasi menurut Nugrahaningsih (2015) yang menyatakan perlunya mutual priority, wider participation, dan komitmen pemerintah. Hasil penelitian ini menunjukkan bahwa kurang optimalnya paradiplomasi perlindungan pekerja migran pada saat pandemi Covid-19 disebabkan antara lain oleh: (1) Belum adanya prioritas bersama antara Pemerintah Kalimantan Barat dan Pemerintah Sarawak (Malaysia) terkait perlindungan PMI, (2) Belum terdapat partisipasi yang lebih luas dari NGO dan civil society, dan (3) Kurangnya komitmen Pemerintah Kalimantan Barat dalam mengoptimalkan perlindungan PMI melalui kerjasama dengan Pemerintah Sarawak (Malaysia).

Kata Kunci: paradiplomasi, pekerja migran, Covid-19.

Abstract

The Covid-19 pandemic has required many countries to implement social restrictions and lockdown policies to prevent the spread of the virus within their borders. Malaysia was one of the countries that went into lockdown, which affected the temporary suspension of various non-essential socio-economic activities. As an implication, Malaysia had to implement a policy of massively repatriating some migrant workers to their countries of origin, including Indonesian migrant workers or Pekerja Migran Indonesia (PMI). The repatriation then became a challenge for the Indonesian Government, particularly in West Kalimantan, a province becoming the port of entry for PMI repatriation from Malaysia amidst the measures to prevent the spread of Covid-19. On the other hand, Malaysia's measures are underway to protect PMI affected by Covid-19. The purpose of this study is to identify the factors causing the non-optimal paradiplomacy carried out by the West Kalimantan Provincial Government in dealing with the consequences of the Covid-19 outbreak on PMI. Protection of PMI in Malaysia should be a concern, considering the lockdown policies implemented in Malaysia require synergistic efforts by both governments and organizations holding a fundamental role in protecting the rights of PMI. This study employed an exploratory method and a qualitative approach with interview techniques as the primary source of data and literature review as a secondary source of data. The analysis in this study refers to the efforts of paradiplomacy proposed by Nugrahaningsih (2015), stating the necessity for mutual priority, wider participation, and government

commitment. The results of this study revealed that the non-optimal paradiplomacy of the protection of migrant workers during the Covid-19 pandemic was caused by: (1) The absence of shared priority between both of West Kalimantan and Sarawak Governments regarding the protection of PMI, (2) The lack of participation from NGOs and civil society, and (3) The lack of commitment of the West Kalimantan Government to optimize the protection of PMI through the cooperation with the Sarawak Government (Malaysia).
Keywords: paradiplomacy, migrant workers, Covid-19.

INTRODUCTION

Global conditions have dramatically changed since the outbreak of Covid-19. Due to its alarming spread and severity, in mid-March 2020, the World Health Organization (WHO) decided to label the outbreak a pandemic. There were at least 118,000 cases of Covid-19 in 114 countries before the pandemic status was established. Countries are expected to be more open and cooperative due to this status determination and to step up efforts to combat the virus’ spread and the danger of transmission (Widyaningrum, 2020).

More than 2.4 million people have been infected with Covid-19 since it was first detected at Wuhan International Airport in Wuhan-China on April 23, 2020. There have been 7,418 confirmed cases and 635 deaths so far, most occurring in Indonesia. According to data from West Kalimantan, 31 confirmed cases, seven recovered patients, and three fatalities were reported (Task Force for the Acceleration of Handling Covid-19, 2020).

Covid-19 directly impacts the global economy, including Indonesian workers and laborers. An early appearance of Covid-19 in the country was reported in

March. Indonesia’s efforts to stop the spread of Covid-19 have decreased buyer interest, resulting in a drop in income. In terms of social and economic stability, the global pandemic has had a significant impact on Indonesia, which can be seen in the impact on Indonesian migrant workers and the rest of the world.

Table 1 reveals that Malaysia has the most PMI employees in the top ten nations, with more than 80,000. PMI is in great demand in Malaysia because of its role in the development and economic growth. There are three reasons for the increased need for PMI in Malaysia. First and foremost, there is a disparity between Malaysia and Indonesia’s population and economic levels. Second, there is an established network of brokers (intermediaries), sponsors, and job placement agencies. As a result of their cultural, linguistic and historical ties, Indonesian migrant employees and their employers have an easier working environment than their counterparts from other nations (International Organization for Migration, 2009).



Figure 1. Number of Indonesian Workers in Destination Countries (BNP2TKI, 2020)

Malaysia imposed a lockdown from March 18 to 31, 2020, and extended it until April 14, 2020. On May 12, Muhyiddin Yassin renewed the Mobility Control Order (MCO) for another year or limited residents' movement. The Malaysian Government has prolonged the lockdown for the third time to persuade the government that the MCO/lockdown program successfully managed the new form of Covid-19 (Republika, 2020). Since the lockdown was implemented, there have been significant social and economic movements restrictions. The Malaysian Government then locked the country's borders but maintained its doors open to the outside world. As a result of the lockout, PMI in Malaysia has been unable to fulfill its daily demands, which has significantly impacted its ability to compete in the market. As a result, a large number of PMI were returned to their home countries.

Throughout the Covid-19 pandemic, the West Kalimantan Provincial Government sought to convince the Sarawak Government not to repatriate PMI through the PLBN of Entikong, Aruk, and Badau. Governor Sutarmidji coordinated this initiative with the assistance of the Indonesian Consulate General in Kuching. He believed the number of PMI working in Sarawak from outside West Kalimantan had surpassed 10,000, and if the Malaysian Government continued to repatriate them during the Covid-19 pandemic, it would be difficult for the West Kalimantan Government to accommodate them, the majority of whom came from outside West Kalimantan (Pontianak Post, 2020).

Meanwhile, Indonesia and Malaysia have established a platform for collaboration called the Indonesian Malaysian Social Economy (Sosek Malindo). The Malaysian-Indonesian Social-Economic Working Group (KK), or as Malaysia refers to it, the Malaysian-Indonesian Socio-Economic Working Group (JKK), has one primary objective: to examine collaborative initiatives between the two nations in the border region for the benefit of the people in both countries (150; Nugrahaningsih, 2015).

Faris Alfadh (2013) underlined that migrant workers have developed into a complex issue in current Indonesia-Malaysia relations. In terms of diplomatic resolutions, the many unresolved incidents of marginalization and persecution demonstrate that the

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two nations' legislation and diplomacy remain weak and ineffectual, particularly when defending the rights of migrant workers.

Djelantik (2019) uttered that Indonesian diplomacy has been criticized for being "too sluggish, too weak, and too late" in defending migrant workers. Workers with insufficient education and experience contribute to various social and economic challenges in receiving nations. Domestic issues include corrupt politicians, an ineffective bureaucracy, and a lack of collaboration among government departments. As many of the studies above examined the difficulties experienced by migrant workers and the shortcomings of Indonesia's diplomacy, it is critical to identify answers in the application of diplomacy, particularly in light of the dramatic worldwide changes brought about by the present pandemic. This paper focuses on paradiplomacy or the sub-role state in diplomacy by emphasizing the critical role of local government commitment and non-governmental organization engagement in safeguarding migrant workers during the Covid-19 pandemic.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK PARADIPLOMACY THEORY

Panayotis Soldatos, a Basque scientist, created the term paradiplomacy. Aldecoa, Keating, and Boyer defined paradiplomacy as "the foreign policy of non-central governments" (Mukti, 2013). Ivo Duchacek (1990) used the term 'micro-diplomacy' to describe paradiplomacy. Micro diplomacy is a term that Durhacek used to describe the external operations of small governments. Durhacek replaced the term micro diplomacy with paradiplomacy in his 1986 revision of the idea (Kuznetsov, 2015). According to Keating (2000), to ensure the success of paradiplomacy, local governments must first recognize the capabilities of their own areas and those of other nations in forming partnerships and the steps necessary to accomplish it. In order to form a partnership or a collaboration, the areas involved must have similar requirements, resources, and experience. Moreover, there are the institutions themselves. Lastly, the areas that will collaborate must have a comparable organization, authority, and power at the same level.

Paradiplomacy, according to Nugrahaningsih (2015), necessitates (1) the presence of a joint priority (shared priority) to accomplish particular aims. Achieving the goals of one party will be difficult if the other party does not prioritize the problem that the first party deems important. (2) The significance of increased engagement is the importance of increased participation from the community and non-state actors to engage in paradiplomacy. A crucial aspect of a problem-solving strategy is the inclusion of community members and other stakeholders, expected to provide a more factual and diversified viewpoint to the problem-solving process. Diplomacy activities must be implemented following democratic ideas, including wide community engagement. In the opinion of Karlina (2020), non-state players play a vital role in facilitating more informal initiatives and breaking the government's perceived standstill in negotiations. Even in the framework of paradiplomacy, the community's contacts and goals may affect policymaking. Governments may be persuaded to implement paradiplomacy policies by non-state entities or the general public both directly and indirectly. (3) Government involvement in paradiplomacy operations is essential. Government attention and consistency in protecting and addressing social issues Indonesian people encounter, particularly PMI overseas, are factors in this situation. The government's pledge must be fully achieved. There are a variety of goals to be met, and they are not just restricted to a single conversation. The local government must strongly commit to resolving and responding quickly to the border and transnational issues.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study utilized exploratory research to better understand a particular social phenomenon (symptom). The researchers employed interviews and documentation to collect primary data and library research to gather secondary data. The researchers analyzed the concerns addressed in this study using the paradiplomacy theory and the notion of international migration. The researchers conducted interviews at the Regional Secretariat of Assistant I (Assistant for Government

Administration and People's Welfare) of West Kalimantan in its capacity as Chair of the Malindo Social Sector Working Group. Additionally, the researchers also conducted interviews at the UPT BP2MI for the Pontianak City Region, BP2MI Sambas, the One-Stop Integrated Service for Placement and Protection of Indonesian Migrant Workers (LTSA-P2TKI) in Sambas, the Manpower and Transmigration Department of Sanggau Regency, and the One-Stop Integrated Service for the Placement and Protection of Indonesian Migrant Workers (LSTA P2TKI) in Entikong, as well as the Manpower and Transmigration Department of West Kalimantan Province. These resource persons were selected because they function in protecting workers in West Kalimantan. Meanwhile, the Social Service of West Kalimantan Province, the Entikong State Border Post (PLBN), the Sambas Police, and the Sanggau Police were selected as resource persons for being members of the PMI Repatriation Task Force. Then, the researchers conducted interviews with the Indonesian Migrant Workers Union (SBMI) for the West Kalimantan Region as one of the non-governmental organizations playing a role in protecting migrant workers.

The researchers validated data using a source triangulation approach, involving comparing data from many sources. In this instance, the researchers compared the findings of interviews and observations to those from the literature. The researchers then employed Miles and Huberman's analytical model as follows: (1) collecting data, (2) reducing data, (3) presenting data, and (4) making conclusions (Sugiyono, 2015). After acquiring the data, the researchers triangulated the sources by comparing the data from each resource person's interview. The researchers also performed a literature search on paradiplomacy and West Kalimantan Provincial Government policies on PMI protection and assistance to supplement the data gathered throughout the interview. After data collection, both primary and secondary data were combined to address the research topic of the West Kalimantan Provincial Government's paradiplomacy attempts to safeguard PMI during the Covid-19 pandemic.

RESULT AND ANALYSIS

In this section, the researchers present the research results based on the aspects of paradiplomacy put forward by Nugrahaningsih (2015) regarding paradiplomacy efforts that require mutual priority or shared priorities between the West Kalimantan Provincial Government and the Sarawak Government regarding the involvement of non-government actors and civil society, and their commitment to protecting migrant workers.

MUTUAL PRIORITY

Malaysia is the primary country of destination for PMI. Most migration to Malaysia has been carried out by unskilled or semi-skilled migrant laborers. Malaysia has a significant need for migrant labor due to its expansion and industrialization. According to Migrant Care statistics, an estimated 125,000 migrant workers from Indonesia to Malaysia have left each year since 2016, most of whom worked in industries, construction, plantations, agriculture, and homes (BBC News Indonesia, 2020). Prior to the Covid-19 pandemic, Malaysia had around six million foreign workers or approximately 18.6 percent of its 32.6 million inhabitants. Around 2.27 million foreign employees have worked legally, while it was estimated that between 2.5 and 3.37 million foreign workers have labored illegally. In 2020, only around 4,000 to 6,000 PMI departed before Malaysia enacted a lockdown in response to the pandemic, halting migrant worker departures (BBC News Indonesia, 2020). The table below details the number of problematic PMI returned across the West Kalimantan border, as determined through the interview with Sri Jumiadatin, West Kalimantan's Assistant 1 as the Governor and Chair of the Malindo Sosek Working Group (Jumiadatin, 2020).

According to BNP2TKI statistics, the government, particularly West Kalimantan, supported the repatriation of PMI and PMI with problems through BNP2TKI. Naturally, this repatriation was also coordinated with the Indonesian Consulate General in Kuching. Normally, service was from 05.00 a.m to 05.00 p.m but has been moved to 08.00 a.m to 02.00 p.m. At the moment,

Table 1. Number of Troubled PMI Deported and Repatriated 2020

No	Return Time	Number of People
1	January	218
2	February	231
3	March	686
4	April	459
5	May	139

Note. Data adapted from Jumiadatin (2020)

Indonesian people are not permitted to enter Malaysia but are permitted to leave. Therefore, they are concentrating their efforts on offering return services (BNP2TKI, 2020a). Despite the difficulties associated with PMI, repatriation is nonetheless supported. It is simply that, under present circumstances, PMI is permitted to depart Malaysia but is not permitted to re-enter temporarily to defend Malaysia. As a result, the Indonesian Government has focused on returning services.

With the increasing number of PMI returning from Malaysia, particularly to West Kalimantan, the number of People Under Monitoring (ODP) has increased in response to the Covid-19 crisis. Throughout April 2020, up to 1,100 PMI returned to Indonesia through the following repatriation routes: 462 PMI took leave of absence and returned to Indonesia through the Aruk PLBN. Meanwhile, 638 others returned to Indonesia through the Entikong PLBN. Those working in Malaysia hailed from various cities in Sarawak, including Sibul, Bintulu, Kuching, and Miri. The Malaysian Government's application of the Movement Control Order has increased PMI flow from March to April 28, 2020. (BNP2TKI, 2020b). Additionally, Malaysia deported troublesome PMI on April 24, 2020, in response to the Covid-19 pandemic. A total of 252 troubled PMI in Malaysia were repatriated through PLBN Entikong, Sanggau Regency, West Kalimantan, with 240 individuals coming from the Bekenu Immigration Depot, six from the Semuja Immigration Depot, and six others from the Indonesian Consulate General in Kuching. Then, 25 were deported for lack of passports, 221 for lack of work visas or permits, and 104

from West Kalimantan (Kompas, 2020). BP3TKI Pontianak has supported the return of PMI deported from Malaysia. Additionally, many returning migrant workers (PMI) were subjected to health examinations by the Health and Port Office (KKP) following the health minister's procedure.

On the one hand, once regional limits are implemented, the repatriation of problematic PMI is successfully finished, the legal procedure will remain applicable (Suara Pemred Kalbar, 2020). On the other hand, repatriating PMI presents significant difficulties, prompting the West Kalimantan Provincial Government to resist. It is predicated on the repatriation of 252 migrant laborers from different regions throughout Indonesia who were deported from Malaysia in April 2020 through the Entikong PLBN. As a result, Governor Sutarmidji promptly wrote to the Indonesian Consulate General in Kuching requesting that Sarawak cease returning PMI from outside West Kalimantan through the PLBN gateways at Entikong, Aruk, and Badau. The Malaysian side's large-scale repatriation may jeopardize PMI owing to the provincial government's lack of housing capacity. Governor Sutarmidji stated that if repatriation resumed, PMI from areas outside West Kalimantan might be transported straight to their areas of origin using special aircraft or charter (Pontianak Post, 2020).

According to an interview with the Head of Social Rehabilitation of West Kalimantan Social Service, Abdillah said his party suffered housing troubles. The Provincial Social Service's shelters and temporary shelters have a maximum capacity of 50 persons. Meanwhile, over

500 of PMI came home each month during Covid-19. Currently, the biggest shelter has been constructed at Tanjung Pinang as a point of return for PMI from Malaysia, particularly Johor Bahru. Meanwhile, the Central Government has not budgeted for special shelters for PMI repatriation from Sarawak in West Kalimantan. However, attempts to build shelters have been made by the Provincial Social Service and the Central Government. The Provincial Government's approach is to work with the Provincial Industrial Work Training Center (BLKI) and the Cooperative Service to house the returning PMI temporarily. The Provincial Government's next challenge is limited shipping capacity for PMI repatriation beyond West Kalimantan. Through the Ministry of Social Affairs, the Central Government has covered the whole expense of PMI's housing. PT. PELNI's ships served as the mode of transportation. It had temporarily suspended shipping operations till the end of March 2020. Local governments lack the power to repatriate migrant workers since this expense is not included in the APBD budget or because repatriation of PMIs is the duty of the Central Government (Abdillah, 11 August 2020).

PMI is a government-to-government issue. It indicates that the Provincial or Regional Government cannot enact particular legislation for PMI or its preservation. Thus, the Provincial Government of West Kalimantan cannot formulate policies or oppose Malaysia's decision to repatriate Indonesian PMI. However, the Provincial Government stated that not all PMI repatriates originated from West Kalimantan, making it impossible for them to concentrate on preserving West Kalimantan's PMI. According to the interview findings, Assistant 1 of the Governor of West Kalimantan stated:

"...We cannot also ignore Sarawak's request to repatriate the troublesome PMI. During the Covid-19 time, the Indonesian Consulate General in Kuching has requested Sarawak not to return PMI with issues. On the other hand, Sarawak ignored the proposal and proceeded to deport the problematic PMI who were imprisoned. As of June 2020, almost 2,000 problematic PMI have been deported, both from West Kalimantan and outside West Kalimantan." (Jumiadatin, 14 July 2020).

The explanation above demonstrates that the Governor of West Kalimantan sought to cooperate with the Sarawak side through the Indonesian Consulate General in Kuching through a request letter sent by the Border Agency. However, the Sarawak Government continued to deny the plea. Additionally, since the Border Agency was formed in January 2020, there has been no repositioning of the Governor's Decree addressing the treatment of problematic PMI (July 14, 2020, Friday).

The above criteria demonstrate that the two nations have no shared priority for defending PMI. On the one hand, the Malaysian Government implemented a lockdown policy and repatriated PMI from Indonesia, including problematic PMI and those from West Kalimantan, through West Kalimantan's border gates. The West Kalimantan Government has attempted to prevent PMI from being repatriated to Indonesia through the West Kalimantan border gate due to a lack of capacity and funds for repatriation to their area of origin. In this instance, the Governments of West Kalimantan and Sarawak have competing interests, demonstrating unequivocally that the two parties could not agree on the destiny of PMI during the Covid-19 epidemic. If not handled effectively, it will negatively influence support for PMI in terms of logistics and transportation and the uncertain position of Indonesian migrant workers to remain in Malaysia or return to their hometowns.

WIDER PARTICIPATION OR INVOLVEMENT OF NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS (NGOs) AND CIVIL SOCIETY IN PARADIPLOMACY

The engagement of civil society, academia, and non-governmental organizations, is critical to increasing the openness and participatory nature of diplomacy by incorporating more players. Governments have more negotiating leverage, NGOs may provide connections, viewpoints, and supporting information, and academics can contribute relevant research, analytical insights, and credible models that assist negotiation strategies and tactics.

There has been no official collaboration between the West Kalimantan Provincial Government and NGOs such as the Indonesian Migrant Workers Union (SBMI) and other groups defending migrant workers. However, the NGOs continue to participate in conferences and discussions on migrant labor problems. According to a conversation with the Governor of West Kalimantan's Assistant 1, it was stated that:

"If there was no COVID, it did not exist in the framework of direct collaboration, but we addressed what he (from an NGO) claimed around two years ago when I was the Head of Manpower Department, that he handled instances of labor trafficking... if for a meeting, our coordination would invite him. We are welcome to speak, but there is no official collaboration because I believe that we need to cooperate on the problem of migrant workers or trafficking. They may get financing from foreign donors, and so on, but the government also has constraints in such situations. Even if our 'objectives' vary, I simply said that it would be nice to be aware of the situations and discuss them with us first." (Jumiadatin, 2020).

BP2MI also acknowledged coordination with NGOs such as the Indonesian Migrant Workers Union (SBMI). In an interview with the Head of the Protection and Empowerment Section of BP2MI Pontianak, Andi Kusuma Irfandi mentioned, *"...We always coordinate with SBMI. SBMI always reports on its performance. We have the principle that this PMI problem is a common problem... even before this pandemic, we also always coordinated."* (Irfandi, 2020). SBMI is one of the NGOs monitoring the fate of migrant workers abroad (PMI). SBMI once surveyed the impact of Covid-19 with the Human Rights Working Group (HRWG) and the Migrant Workers Network (JBM) in April 2020. SBMI and JBM assessed that migrant workers experienced various problems; for example, around 54% of PMI working in many factories and construction in Saudi Arabia and Malaysia were unpaid. SBMI, HRW and JBM demand the role of the Government of Indonesia in providing basic assistance and other needs for the affected PMI in placement countries (Lumbanrau, 2020).

Regarding the protection of migrant workers, the SBMI assessed that the government's role still needed encouragement and was not yet fully optimal. Iswandi (a

representative of the West Kalimantan SBMI) stated that the government or BP2MI understood cases of migrant workers abroad, but there were indications that they had not paid more attention or that there was no maximum effort (Iswandi, 2020). Iswandi also added in his interview that several cases had not been well resolved. He stated:

"...such as the case of underage migrant workers from Sungai Pinyuh who departed around the 1990s, until now their whereabouts are unknown. We (SBMI) have reported it, but their coordination (BP2MI) is only to the embassy. The Central BP2MI should be able to take advantage of the existing components, such as collaborating with other parties, but they do not." (Iswandi, 2020).

SBMI has determined that communication and information attempts to the government have not elicited an appropriate reaction in this situation. On the one hand, SBMI views the government and BP2MI as partners in safeguarding migrant workers, but on the other hand, SBMI believes the government has not performed properly. Iswandi also recounted an example of the government ignoring a PMI from West Kalimantan who died in Taiwan in early 2020; he indicated that he had cooperated with BP2TKI (BP2MI) but received no reaction. Additionally, SBMI contacted the embassy. However, BP2MI did not investigate the situation (Iswandi, 2020).

According to SBMI, the government must maintain active communication with all institutions and safeguard both procedural and non-procedural migrant labor. SBMI further noted that although not all instances were settled immediately, the SBMI requested the government's preparedness and presence in dealing with problems involving migrant labor. SBMI also requested the government's assistance in assisting the repatriation of victims or troublesome migrant workers. It was expressed by Iswandi, who mentioned that repatriations were consuming the personal budgets of SBMI members due to the slow pace of the government's follow-up procedure and financial constraints (Iswandi, 2020).

Meanwhile, in an interview concerning cooperation or coordination with NGOs regarding the protection of PMI, Riki as the Head of LTSA-P2TKI Sambas, stated that:

“It did not previously exist. The Sambas SBMI, on the other hand, was created just a month ago. This SBMI will work with us to provide advice, placement, and protection. This location of service is not just the duty of the government but also of other parties, such as NGOs like SBMI and academics.” (Riki, 2020).

As a result, it is necessary for academics to support the PMI development program, either through socializing or training that may support talents or abilities qualified or relevant to the demands of working overseas. The synergy between the government and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) or the corporate sector is also critical. It relates to the knowledge and cooperation offered in understanding and executing rapid resolution of the problematic PMI. NGOs may also serve as advocates of government programs and policy monitors, strengthening institutions and providing advice and feedback to stakeholders or the government on the steps required to manage and safeguard PMI. Another function that NGOs may play is that of a liaison between PMI and the government, where NGOs are actively engaged in the field situation to offer true and genuine data about the situations of PMI both at home and abroad.

The active engagement of NGOs or civil society may undoubtedly serve as a partner to the government in terms of information exchange, communication and as a party that safeguards the rights and duties of PMI in other countries. While NGO participation in forums and collaboration amongst West Kalimantan Government departments has occurred, there has been no written agreement or understanding between the government and NGOs about the management or protection of PMI, which is restricted to meetings or coordination. Nugrahaningsih et al. (2020) discovered a lack of synergy between the central and regional governments in collaborating with NGOs to protect the human rights of migrant workers. Therefore, coordination between parties, government agencies, NGOs, and civil society is necessary to safeguard migrant workers since it requires the exchange of services, which is accomplished through communication and coordination among all involved parties. Thus, the government may undoubtedly enlist

NGOs, civil society, academia, and the mass media to promote or give alternative answers to issues, increasing the diversity, variety, and relevance of the final solutions to the field’s real situation and circumstances.

GOVERNMENT COMMITMENT

The Regional Government of West Kalimantan and the Government of Sarawak, Malaysia, have established an interregional cooperation forum named the Malaysia-Indonesia Socio-Economic Cooperation (Sosek Malindo) to facilitate economic, commercial, and transportation cooperation. Economic concerns, including trade and labor difficulties, are often debated in the forum. Each country’s central authority determines the rules in Sosek Malindo. At the Sosek Malindo event, the Indonesian Government presented numerous messages, including labor training, overseas apprenticeship, and PMI protection, covering salaries and health care. On the other hand, Malaysia is a royal nation, and as such, it always employs royal policies or central government policies in meetings, not those of states or regions. On the Indonesian side, the central government, through the ministry, is responsible for PMI protection measures. The Regional Government makes recommendations and gives feedback to the Central Government (Gregorius, 2020).

It resulted in the West Kalimantan Government being unable to formulate legislation and make decisions about migrant labor. Mrs. Jumiadatin also expressed it in her capacity as Assistant 1 to West Kalimantan’s Governor and Chair of the KK Sosek Malindo. She said the following.

“Sosek Malindo has not handled PMI since ancient times. It is a problem that must be addressed from the West Kalimantan side. In Malaysia, however, the PMI is the state’s authority. Meanwhile, Sosek Malindo is a state cooperation inside a province between West Kalimantan and Sarawak in East Malaysia. Sarawak is also not permitted to address or make decisions on labor issues. We include BP2MI in the coordination of PMI management. On the other hand, the PMI problem cannot be addressed in Sosek Malindo. We may only request information on work orders and PMI’s expulsion. However, if it cannot be

handled through Sosek Malindo, we may do it through the Indonesian Consulate General in Kuching.” (Jumiadatin, 2020).

In other words, the Sosek Malindo forum has been unable to accommodate and serve as a diplomatic endeavor for the West Kalimantan Government in defending West Kalimantan’s migrant workers. However, the West Kalimantan Government has attempted to debate employment orders about wage lists, protection, years of service, and other conditions in the context of PMI. It, however, is hampered when PMI operates informally and without clear terms and some labor agreements, such as maintaining a store or raising children (Jumiadatin, 2020).

Meanwhile, when it comes to PMI protection under Covid-19, the West Kalimantan Government can only coordinate State or Central Government policies and cannot create rules. Meanwhile, BP2MI owns the regulation-making process and is responsible for protecting and exporting PMI. Concerning the situation and condition of PMI in Malaysia, the West Kalimantan Government may communicate with the Indonesian Consulate General in Kuching, which serves as the Indonesian representative in Sarawak (Malaysia), to obtain information and coordinate the protection and repatriation of PMI during the Covid-19 pandemic (Jumiadatin, 2020).

Malaysia does not want the issue of migrant workers to be included in the Sosek Malindo agreement or Memorandum of Understanding (MoU), according to the Head of Social Rehabilitation of the West Kalimantan’s Social Department. The Indonesian side attempted to include a migrant worker agenda in the Sosek Malindo working paper, but Malaysia protested (Abdillah, August 11, 2020).

According to Governor Sutarmidji, Sosek Malindo has not performed optimally. Sutarmidji mentioned during his visit to Aruk, Sambas Regency that the bilateral organization had made little contribution to the economic development of border settlements. He felt that Sosek Malindo should be used to foster West Kalimantan’s potential. He even requested the dissolution of Sosek Malindo in the West Kalimantan

border area while chairing the Coordination Meeting for the Acceleration of Development of the Aruk Border Area as a Center for New Economic Growth (Putri, 2020).

According to the description above, the government’s commitment to paradiplomacy, particularly through the Malindo Sosek Forum, was still inefficient. Sosek Malindo’s presence has been unable to influence the two parties’ choices or policies to resolve PMI issues. Meanwhile, Malaysia’s rejection to address PMI at the Sosek Malindo conference demonstrates that the government has not utilized the forum as a vehicle for paradiplomacy. The Governor of West Kalimantan even suggested that the Sosek Malindo forum be disbanded because it did not provide significant benefits. It, of course, emphasizes the importance of a more active commitment to using bilateral cooperation forums to advance the government’s and community’s interests, not just as a venue for meetings or coordination, but as a source of tangible outputs and comprehensive solutions to problems.

CONCLUSION

The following conclusions were taken from the study findings. To begin, there are still conflicts in interests between the Governments of West Kalimantan and Sarawak Malaysia over preserving PMI. Malaysia, for example, has a lockdown policy affecting the enormous repatriation of PMI. Meanwhile, the Provincial Government has attempted to prohibit Malaysia from repatriating PMI from outside West Kalimantan, citing the Provincial Government’s fiscal responsibilities. Additionally, there are a few shelters that the Provincial Social Service privately owns. Second, the importance of broader engagement in PMI protection, such as NGOs and civil society, has been overlooked in paradiplomacy, particularly during the Covid-19 epidemic. NGOs, on the other hand, have been significantly engaged and had a part in other situations, such as human trafficking and contract marriages. NGOs have taken the initiative to defend PMI, even though they have not been actively engaged in paradiplomacy initiatives. Thirdly, the government’s commitment to paradiplomacy was

inadequate. It is connected to the presence of the Sosek Malindo institution, which has made insufficient contributions, particularly in terms of PMI protection. Additionally, the Governor of West Kalimantan's official statement announcing the dissolution of Sosek Malindo demonstrates it.

Researchers have made the following suggestions about the West Kalimantan Regional Government's paradiplomacy efforts: The Regional Government is anticipated to engage in more proactive diplomacy with the Malaysian Government to bridge divides caused by divergent goals. Additionally, the West Kalimantan Government's extensive collaboration with the Central Government about the circumstances or impediments encountered by PMI must be improved. Additionally, the government should include NGOs as partners in formal agreements and include a wide range of stakeholders in managing and safeguarding migrant workers so that solutions created are more diverse and applicable to field situations. Policymakers who deal with migrant worker issues should be held accountable by parties focused on understanding the topic, particularly negotiating skills in bilateral cooperation forums, so that paradiplomacy activities may yield outputs that align with the desired goals. PMI protection efforts should be directed exclusively to institutions associated with these disciplines, and it is envisaged that these institutions would be more proactive in resolving pressing issues, particularly those of a high priority.

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