



Welfare of Garment Industry Workers in Improving Family Economy in Sukabumi Regency, West Java

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ABSTRACT. *This research is motivated by the changing welfare conditions of workers at PT Muara Griya Lestari (MGL) in Sukabumi Regency over time. The changes in the welfare of workers at PT Muara Griya Lestari have had some positive impacts, notably in meeting the household needs of factory workers' families. Furthermore, the changes in workers' welfare can transform their family's lifestyles. This study aims to examine, analyze, and describe the welfare, lifestyle changes, and the influence of welfare on the lifestyle of workers' families at PT Muara Griya Lestari in Sukabumi Regency, West Java. The research method used in this study is qualitative with a descriptive approach. Data collection techniques employed include interviews, observations, questionnaires, and documentary studies. The results of the study indicate that the welfare of workers at PT Muara Griya Lestari, in general, has changed. Two aspects that have experienced noticeable changes are income and household consumption or expenditure, shifting from the moderate category to the high category. This has had an impact on the changes in the lifestyle of factory workers' families, which can be seen in three dimensions: activities, interests, and opinions. However, the changes in the lifestyle of factory workers' families at PT MGL have not reached a consumptive lifestyle and remain within reasonable conditions. Meanwhile, welfare has only a small influence on the changes in the lifestyle of workers' families. Lifestyle changes are influenced by the social and environmental conditions in which the workers reside. Therefore, lifestyle changes are a process that occurs as a result of the interaction between the members of the workers' families and their environment.*

Keywords: *Welfare, Workers, Family*

ABSTRAK. Penelitian ini dilatarbelakangi oleh kondisi kesejahteraan buruh di PT Muara Griya Lestari (MGL) di Kabupaten Sukabumi yang mengalami perubahan dari waktu ke waktu. Perubahan kesejahteraan buruh di PT Muara Griya Lestari memberikan beberapa dampak positif, terutama dalam memenuhi kebutuhan rumah tangga keluarga buruh pabrik. Lebih jauh

lagi, perubahan kesejahteraan buruh dapat mengubah gaya hidup keluarga mereka. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengkaji, menganalisis, dan mendeskripsikan kesejahteraan, perubahan gaya hidup, dan pengaruh kesejahteraan terhadap gaya hidup keluarga buruh di PT Muara Griya Lestari di Kabupaten Sukabumi, Jawa Barat. Metode penelitian yang digunakan dalam penelitian ini adalah kualitatif dengan pendekatan deskriptif. Teknik pengumpulan data yang digunakan antara lain wawancara, observasi, kuesioner, dan studi dokumentasi. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa kesejahteraan buruh di PT Muara Griya Lestari secara umum mengalami perubahan. Dua aspek yang mengalami perubahan yang cukup mencolok adalah pendapatan dan konsumsi atau pengeluaran rumah tangga, bergeser dari kategori sedang ke kategori tinggi. Hal ini berdampak pada perubahan gaya hidup keluarga buruh pabrik, yang dapat dilihat dari tiga dimensi yaitu aktivitas, minat, dan opini. Namun, perubahan gaya hidup keluarga buruh pabrik di PT MGL belum sampai pada gaya hidup yang konsumtif dan masih dalam taraf yang wajar. Sementara itu, kesejahteraan hanya memiliki pengaruh yang kecil terhadap perubahan gaya hidup keluarga buruh. Perubahan gaya hidup dipengaruhi oleh kondisi sosial dan lingkungan tempat tinggal pekerja. Oleh karena itu, perubahan gaya hidup merupakan suatu proses yang terjadi sebagai akibat dari interaksi antara anggota keluarga buruh dengan lingkungannya..

Kata kunci: Kesejahteraan, Pekerja, Keluarga

INTRODUCTION

Development is an ongoing process carried out by the Indonesian government. Currently, industrialization is considered a pathway to bring society towards prosperity in economic development and has become a serious concern for the government. This has also captured the attention of local governments to pursue economic development. This is in line with the implementation of Law Number 23 of 2014 concerning Regional Governments, which influences changing development activities and improving the economy in the regions. Additionally, every region in Indonesia has its own Medium-Term Development Plan (RPJM). In this context, development is a tangible manifestation of the government's desire for a better life for its people. This statement is supported by regulations issued by the government through Law Number 25 of 2004 concerning the National Development Planning System.

The various regulations further support the fact that development is carried out in a region to achieve a better life. The Indonesian government is currently promoting development in all sectors, one of which is the industrial sector. These efforts aim to improve the standard of living and welfare of the people. Data from the Central Statistics Agency (BPS) issued in 2022 showed that the number of poor people as of September 2022 increased by 0.03 percent compared to March 2022. Thus, the number of poor people in the country increased by 0.2 million to 26.36 million people in September 2022. This increase occurred in both urban and rural areas. Although the poverty rate in rural areas is much higher than in urban areas, the

poverty rate in rural areas, which reached 12.36 percent, is higher than the urban poverty rate of 7.53 percent. These figures demonstrate how the lives of people in rural areas are still closely associated with suffering and poverty.

Cicantayan District has recently become one of the districts in Sukabumi Regency that shows a growing presence of factories in its area. One of the factories that contribute significantly to the population of Cicantayan District and its surrounding areas is PT Muara Griya Lestari. Significant changes can be seen in the welfare conditions of the community, marked by the fulfillment of clothing, housing, food, health, and social relationships that are in harmony with the environment and achieve self-adaptation (Fahrudin, 2012).

PT Muara Griya Lestari (MGL), as the most popular factory in Cicantayan District, has gained a reputation for exporting its products to countries such as the United States, Japan, England, China, Hong Kong, and several other Asian and American countries. PT MGL has become an attraction for both the residents around Cicantayan District and outsiders. Currently, the workforce at PT MGL is recorded at 2,180 employees, with 1,760 female employees and 420 male employees, with the largest composition of workers coming from the Cicantayan District. Meanwhile, two other districts that contribute significantly to the factory workforce are Cisaat District with 426 factory workers, and Caringin District with 409 factory workers. However, some migrant employees usually come from neighboring districts of Sukabumi Regency, such as Cianjur and Bogor.

The interest in this research stems from the improving welfare conditions of PT MGL factory workers, which have an impact on lifestyle changes for both the workers and their families. Lifestyle, in this context, cannot be understood merely as a self-existential effort, but it is greatly influenced by the social environment one is in, how one perceives their leisure time, and their response to the emerging issues in society (Suyanto, 2013).

The research conducted by Siska (2013) concluded that the coal industry has transformed the livelihoods of the community in Jembayan Village, Loa Kulu District, Kutai Kertanegara Regency, from farmers to laborers, and this has influenced their consumer spending habits. Another study by Marselia (2015) focused on the factory workers of PT Adi Satria Abadi and stated that there has been a change in the lifestyle of the workers toward consumerism after working at PT Adi Satria Abadi. Meanwhile, Handayani's research (2014) examined the impact of the mining industry on the lifestyle of rural communities, with the conclusion that there have been changes in the lifestyle of rural communities in three aspects:

activities, interests, and income. Furthermore, Karlina et al.'s research (2017) on migrant workers from Cikedung Village, Cikedung District, Indramayu Regency, stated that there has been a change in the lifestyle of migrant workers from a simple life to a consumerist lifestyle. Another study by Tarigan (2015) focused on the lifestyle changes in Bahu Subdistrict, Malalayang District, Manado City, which reflected glamorous, royal, and hedonistic lifestyles due to the influence of migrants. Similar to previous studies, Wulandari et al.'s research (2016) showed that the consumerist lifestyles of former female migrant workers (TKWs) in Ponggok District, Blitar Regency, were driven by the community's perception of success standards, leading the former TKWs to behave hedonistically.

The research conducted by the author intersects with previous studies in terms of examining lifestyle changes within a specific group or community. However, a significant difference in this research is that the author did not find a consumerist lifestyle trend among the families of PT MGL factory workers. This study also focuses on the laborers in the factory sector, which needs to be distinguished from the broader definition of laborers in the industrial sector.

THEORETICAL REVIEW

Social welfare is a dynamic aspect of society and serves as an important indicator for measuring a country's development. The study of social welfare has evolved alongside the advancement of knowledge and is expected to contribute to overall well-being. Efforts to achieve social welfare are not only a response to the challenges faced by society but also aimed at nurturing and developing high-quality human resources. The objective of social welfare is the attainment of two fundamental goals: the achievement of a prosperous life characterized by the fulfillment of basic needs such as clothing, shelter, food, health, and harmonious social relationships within the environment, and the attainment of self-adaptation (Fahrudin, 2012).

Meanwhile, changes in the lifestyle of working-class families follow the progress of time. The dynamics of lifestyle within a community may vary from one group to another, depending on the environment in which the community is situated.

An individual's interest in various goods is greatly influenced by their lifestyle, and whatever they purchase represents that particular lifestyle (Setiadi, 2011). If elaborated upon, Setiadi's argument reflects two aspects: self-orientation and resources. It can be understood that resources should not only be defined as material possessions, but also encompass the means

and capacities of psychology, physicality, and demographics. The aspect of self-orientation consists of three elements: principles, status, and actions. The principles category depicts an individual's decision to purchase goods based on their rational will. Therefore, this category can be considered rational. On the other hand, the status category is the opposite of the principles category, as an individual's decision to buy something is greatly influenced by references or the influence of others. The actions category, on the other hand, is related to an individual's decision when purchasing goods as a drive to engage in social or kinesthetic interactions that entail risks.

RESEARCH METHOD

This research employs a qualitative approach. The reasons for using a qualitative approach are as stated by Merriam in Creswell (1994): (1) Qualitative researchers are more concerned with the process rather than the outcomes or products; (2) Qualitative researchers are interested in meaning, that is, how people strive to understand their lives, experiences, and environmental structures; (3) Qualitative researchers serve as the primary instrument in data collection and analysis. Data are obtained through human instruments rather than inventories, questionnaires, or machines; (4) Qualitative research is closely related to fieldwork. It means that researchers are physically involved directly with people, settings, places, or institutions to observe or record behavior in their natural settings; (5) Qualitative research is descriptive, in the sense that researchers are interested in processes, meanings, and understandings obtained through words or images.

Meanwhile, to obtain data to address the issues mentioned above, a descriptive method is used. The reason for using the descriptive method is that it provides a clearer picture of social situations. Additionally, the descriptive method is more specific, focusing on particular aspects and often showing the relationships between various variables. As expressed by Nazir (2003, p. 63), the descriptive method is one method used to examine the status of human groups, an object, a condition, a thought systems, or a class of events in the present time. The purpose of this descriptive research is to provide a systematic description, portrayal, or depiction, as well as the relationships between the investigated phenomena.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

1. The Welfare Condition of PT MGL Factory Workers

One crucial indicator commonly used to determine the welfare of a community is the income of its residents. The assumption is that with increasing income, the level of poverty will decrease. In addition to income improvement, another aspect that needs to be considered is income distribution among the community.

The level of income for factory workers from Cijalingan Village, Balekambang Village, and Cibadak Village, who occupy positions other than production division and staff, is generally the same, amounting to Rp 3.125.444. The production division has a higher income because they sometimes have to work overtime. According to Ministerial Decree No. 102 of 2004, employers who require their employees to work beyond regular working hours are obligated to pay overtime wages.

In Homans' theory of social exchange (1974), income/wages are seen as rewards. To obtain these rewards, a factory worker must earn them through work (cost). In this social exchange, the emphasis is on the action of a worker receiving a reward. Homans assumed that every action will receive a reward in the theory of social exchange. If an action taken by an individual is rewarded and benefits the individual, they will repeat the action. Therefore, Cropanzano & Mitchel (2005) describe that income acquisition is based on the agreement between workers and PT MGL as a consequence of their working relationship, which usually has short-term implications.

Another aspect of welfare is a household expenditure, where the average expenditure of PT MGL factory workers for food is Rp 1.000.000. Meanwhile, non-food needs with the largest expenditure come from housing facilities, household furniture, children's allowances, electricity, water, and fuel (gasoline and petrol for motor vehicles), with an average monthly expenditure of around Rp 1.000.000. However, some PT MGL workers, such as those from Cijalingan Village, allocate a portion of their wages to pay for transportation to and from the factory, amounting to Rp 300.000 per month, and they usually employ their unemployed siblings for this purpose. The remaining wages that are not spent are usually set aside for savings. These expenditures are highly fluctuating because the needs of factory workers are relative. The most noticeable difference in expenditures between factory workers from Cijalingan Village and Balekambang Village is in terms of purchasing gasoline. Unlike the factory workers from Cijalingan Village, the factory workers from Balekambang Village and Cibadak Village have to spend a minimum of Rp 20.000 per day to travel approximately 24 km for the workers from Balekambang Village and 13 km for those from Cibadak Village to reach PT MGL. If calculated for a round trip in one day, the distance that must be traveled by factory workers from Balekambang Village is 48 km, and for those from Cibadak Village, it is 26 km.

The living conditions of PT MGL laborers in Sukabumi Regency are mostly decent. The criteria for suitable living conditions can be seen from several aspects, including:

- 1) Access to affordable clean water sources.

- 2) Access to bathing, washing, and toilet facilities (MCK).
- 3) Permanent building materials used (roof, walls, and floors are made of permanent materials).
- 4) Good lighting and ventilation.
- 5) Clear room divisions.
- 6) Well-organized house layout.
- 7) The houses are in good condition/not damaged.

The common residential facilities owned by the workers and their families are electronic appliances, lighting devices, motor vehicles, house yards, gas fuel, and toilets. Generally, health complaints among the MGL laborers and their families consist of mild illnesses such as cold, fever, headache, toothache, and relatively manageable diseases. Many health complaints are found among the elderly due to decreased immune systems and suboptimal organ functions.

One of the health complaints posing a threat to the MGL laborers' family members is malnutrition. Data from Cicantayan Sub-district in 2021 recorded three villages, namely Hegarmanah, Lembur Sawah, and Cimanggis, with residents suffering from malnutrition. The total number of malnourished individuals in the Cicantayan Sub-district reached 14, with the highest number in Hegarmanah Village, while Nagrak Sub-district had 5 residents suffering from malnutrition. Based on this data, neither Cijalingan Village, Balekambang Village, nor Cibadak Village has any community members suffering from malnutrition. The health services provided by the government for factory workers are Basic Health Insurance (Jamkesda) and National Health Insurance (JKN) through Premium Assistance (PBI) for the poor.

Family members of PT MGL factory workers in Cijalingan Village who need to access a hospital must leave Cicantayan Sub-district because there is no hospital in their area. So, when they need to seek medical treatment, they have to go to Cibadak. Cibadak Sub-district itself has two general hospitals, namely Sekarwangi Hospital and Kartika Hospital, which are located 13 km away from Cicantayan Sub-district. Similarly, family members of PT MGL factory workers in Balekambang Village, Nagrak Sub-district, have to travel a long distance to access a hospital because there is no hospital in the administrative area of Nagrak Sub-district. Syamsudin Hospital is often chosen by residents of Sukabumi Regency. Unlike ordinary residents, PT MGL workers have access to healthcare services provided by the factory.

Cicantayan Sub-district has schools located in several areas. Each area has schools of specific types. Some villages have Senior High Schools (SMU) but do not have Vocational

High Schools (SMK), and vice versa. This applies to schools with lower levels such as Elementary Schools (SD), Junior High Schools (SMP), and Kindergartens (TK) units. The largest distribution of schools is found in Cicantayan Village with a total of 28 units, consisting of 15 TK, 6 SD, 1 SMK, and 2 SMU. Meanwhile, in Cijalingan Village, where PT MGL is located, there are 8 schools divided into 1 TK, 2 SD, 1 State Elementary School (SD Inpres), 1 General Junior High School, and 3 SMK. Balekambang Village has 7 schools, including 2 TK/PAUD, 3 SD, and 2 SMP.

In general, the transportation access in Cicantayan Sub-district is through road routes with paved and concrete roads that can be traversed by various types of vehicles. The distance from each village to the sub-district capital does not exceed 10 km. Based on the estimated time, PT MGL factory workers who need to access the factory take no more than one hour. This indicates that access to the factory is relatively easy with the use of private vehicles. According to the data from 2021, Cicantayan Sub-district does not yet have a terminal or public transportation route.

Meanwhile, in Balekambang Village and Cibadak Village, the transportation access is also through road routes with paved and concrete roads that can be traversed by two-wheeled and four-wheeled vehicles. The distance from each village to the sub-district capital does not exceed 10 km. Based on the estimated time, it takes a maximum of one hour for PT MGL factory workers from Balekambang Village and Cibadak Village to reach the factory. This is because the distance from Balekambang Village and Cibadak Village to PT MGL is relatively close and can be accessed using private vehicles.

The transportation facilities in Cicantayan Sub-district can be observed from the public transport vehicles that pass through the area and can access PT MGL. The two public transport routes that pass through PT MGL in Cicantayan Sub-district are the Cisaat-Cibadak route and the Sukabumi-Bogor Elf route. The fare paid by workers varies depending on the distance traveled, ranging from Rp 5,000 to Rp 8,000. The travel time required by workers to reach PT MGL depends on the distance between their place of residence and the factory. The farther the distance, the longer the travel time. Public transportation payment in Cicantayan Sub-district, like in other places in Indonesia, is usually made in cash.

2. Changes in the Lifestyle of PT Muara Griya Lestari (MGL) Factory Workers' Families in Sukabumi Regency, West Java

Lifestyle changes involve four dimensions: activities, interests, opinions, and demographics:

1) Activities

The dimension of activities encompasses a person's daily life activities, spending

tendencies, and leisure activities. Some activities used as measurements include shopping, hobbies, community memberships, social activities, vacations, and sports.

Generally, social activities conducted by factory workers and their families are limited to activities within their local community, such as participating in communal cleaning activities, repairing residential roads, and attending social gatherings. These social activities usually involve a large number of residents, providing an opportunity for factory workers and their families to interact with other community members.

Factory workers often do not have sufficient time to pursue specific hobbies. During their allocated days off on weekends or major holidays, they prefer to rest or travel to the city with their families for entertainment purposes. Engaging in recreational activities allows factory workers and their families to strengthen their familial bonds.

The shopping habits of factory workers and their families have undergone significant changes, primarily driven by the substantial income earned by the workers. They can allocate their earnings to purchase essential goods, clothing, cosmetics, electronic items, motor vehicles, and household facilities. Additionally, there has been a shift in the location where factory workers shop for their needs. While they used to frequent traditional markets, nowadays, factory workers and their families often purchase their necessities from franchise stores.

Engaging in sports activities is essential for factory workers to maintain their stamina. The nature of their work, which involves handling garment items, as well as the mental demands placed on staff and supervisor positions, requires physical stretching through sports activities.

2) Interests

Interests, as one dimension of lifestyle, are closely related to an individual's choices and preferences, as well as their motivations. Aspects included in the interest dimension are housing, recreation, fashion, food, and media.

The primary priority for factory workers and their families is ensuring adequate housing. A home holds significant importance in the lives of factory workers and their families because, in addition to being a place for daily life, homeownership reflects the success of their lives as workers and as a family.

Another interest of factory workers and their families is recreation. As a form of compensation for their work and a means to unwind from the factory routine, they require leisure time that can be utilized for recreational activities. The choice of recreational activities is determined by budget allocation and mutual agreement, as each family member may have different preferences when it comes to going on recreational outings.

Another aspect of the interest dimension is the fashion interest of factory workers and their families. With the progress of time, various clothing styles have emerged, produced on a mass scale. The interest in fashion is directly proportional to the interest in media and food. The greater the publicity and dissemination of information about media and food, the greater the interest of factory workers in consuming them.

3) Opinions

Opinions refer to someone's perspective and feelings towards themselves, others, or the world around them. Aspects included in opinions are views on oneself and the issues prevailing in society. Their views on the issues prevailing in society reflect the perspectives of the workers who desire a stable and future-oriented condition. The workers have the opinion that they want a better future after working at PT MGL.

In terms of opinions, the workers consider themselves fortunate to be employed at PT MGL because it improves their well-being. Improvements in income are important considerations because it is the rational reason why the workers choose to work in the factory sector as their livelihood. According to them, working as laborers is the best choice for now since there are no other job opportunities that provide better income to accelerate the improvement of their lives.

4) Demographics

The demographic dimension includes family composition, cultural background, educational history, income, occupation, age, and residential location. It encompasses age, education, income, occupation, cultural background, family structure, and the residential location of individuals. The majority of workers at PT MGL fall within the age range of 27-35 years old. The level of education in the community is relatively good, with a high number of students at various educational levels.

The factory workers at PT MGL, whether they come from Cijalingan Village, Balekambang Village, or Cibadak Village, have a Sundanese cultural background, as evidenced by the concentration of workers from indigenous regions. The majority of factory workers at PT MGL are women who serve as the backbone of their families. Their family structure consists of wives who have responsibilities for their children and other family members, such as elderly parents living together in one household. Geographically, the largest number of PT MGL factory workers reside in the Cicantayan District, a highland district located between 100-1000 meters above sea level.

CONCLUSIONS

Based on the findings and discussions on the welfare of garment industry workers in improving family economies in Sukabumi Regency, West Java, the following conclusions can be drawn: 1) The welfare of workers at PT Muara Griya Lestari (MGL) in Sukabumi Regency, consisting of income, household consumption, living conditions, and residential facilities, has generally experienced changes. The most significant change in the welfare of factory workers is driven by an increase in income. Overall, the changes in welfare fall into the moderate category, particularly in terms of income and household consumption, which have shifted from the moderate category to the high category; 2) The lifestyle of families of factory workers at PT Muara Griya Lestari (MGL) in Sukabumi Regency, West Java, including aspects of activities, interests, and opinions, has changed. However, these changes are still within reasonable limits and have not led to a consumptive lifestyle. The changes in the lifestyle of MGL factory workers' families are influenced by the reciprocal environment, which serves as a reference for decision-making and behavior.

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