

**EVALUATION OF LABOR MIGRATION POLICY FROM NIAS TO MALAYSIA
CASE STUDY IN THE DEPARTMENT OF COOPERATIVES, SMEs, TRADE AND
EMPLOYMENT OF NIAS REGENCY**

By

**Famonaha Ndruru¹, Syah Abadi Mendrofa², Ayler Beniah Ndraha³, Meiman Hidayat
Waruwu⁴**

Universitas Nias

Email: Famonahandruru14@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

This study aims to evaluate the labor migration policy from Nias Regency to Malaysia, focusing on the role of the Cooperatives, SMEs, Trade, and Manpower Office in implementing the migration program. This study uses a descriptive qualitative approach with data collection techniques through in-depth interviews, observation, and documentation. The results of the study indicate that the office has implemented various efforts, such as pre-departure training and cooperation with related agencies. However, a number of challenges were also found, such as the low understanding of prospective workers regarding their rights and a weak monitoring system. This study recommends strengthening training programs, simplifying bureaucracy, and developing reintegration programs for returning migrant workers.

Keywords: migration policy, migrant workers, Nias, Malaysia, policy evaluation

**EVALUASI KEBIJAKAN MIGRASI TENAGA KERJA DARI NIAS KE MALAYSIA:
STUDI KASUS DI DINAS KOPERASI, UMKM, PERDAGANGAN, DAN TENAGA
KERJA KABUPATEN NIAS**

ABSTRAK

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengevaluasi kebijakan migrasi tenaga kerja dari Kabupaten Nias ke Malaysia, dengan fokus pada peran Dinas Koperasi, UKM, Perdagangan, dan Tenaga Kerja dalam melaksanakan program migrasi. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif deskriptif dengan teknik pengumpulan data melalui wawancara mendalam, observasi, dan dokumentasi. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa Dinas telah melaksanakan berbagai upaya, seperti pelatihan pra-keberangkatan dan kerja sama dengan instansi terkait. Namun, ditemukan pula sejumlah tantangan, seperti rendahnya pemahaman calon pekerja tentang hak-haknya dan sistem pemantauan yang lemah. Penelitian ini merekomendasikan penguatan program pelatihan, penyederhanaan birokrasi, dan pengembangan program reintegrasi bagi pekerja migran yang kembali.

Kata kunci: kebijakan migrasi, pekerja migran, Nias, Malaysia, evaluasi kebijakan

INTRODUCTION

The phenomenon of international labor migration has become an integral part of the dynamics of globalization and economic growth between countries. This migration involves the movement of individuals from their country of origin to their destination country in order to obtain employment opportunities and improve their welfare. The International Labor Organization (ILO, 2020) noted that more than 169 million migrant workers are spread across various countries, most of whom come from developing countries. This phenomenon not only affects individual migrants, but also the sending and receiving countries in economic, social, and cultural aspects.

In Indonesia, labor migration, especially to Southeast Asian countries such as Malaysia, is a common strategy to reduce unemployment and increase foreign exchange through remittances. The Indonesian government has formulated various policies as stated in Law No. 18 of 2017 concerning the Protection of Indonesian Migrant Workers, as well as various other derivative regulations aimed at ensuring the rights, security, and welfare of migrant workers (Ministry of Manpower of the Republic of Indonesia, 2019). However, implementation in the field often encounters various obstacles, ranging from weak coordination between institutions to minimal legal protection for informal workers.

Nias Regency, as one of the regions in North Sumatra Province, also experiences this reality. The lack of local employment opportunities and high unemployment rates encourage people to seek employment opportunities abroad, especially Malaysia. Based on data from the Cooperatives, SMEs, Trade, and Manpower Service of Nias Regency (2024), more than 35 workers from Nias have been sent to Malaysia in the last five years through collaboration with companies in the manufacturing and plantation sectors. Unfortunately, this process has not been fully optimal because administrative problems, skills gaps, and legal protection issues are still found.

Previous studies have highlighted the importance of evaluating labor migration policies, especially in the context of sending regions. Ruhs and Martin (2018) emphasized that the protection of workers' rights must be balanced with the needs of the labor market. Meanwhile, Wickramasekara (2019) emphasized the need for policy design that is not only administrative, but also supports aspects of humanity and social justice. In the local context, policy evaluation is needed to measure the effectiveness of local government interventions, such as pre-departure

training programs, facilitation of legal documents, and reintegration support for returning migrant workers.

Based on this background, this study was conducted to evaluate the labor migration policy from Nias Regency to Malaysia. The main focus of the study is on the role of the Cooperatives, SMEs, Trade, and Manpower Office of Nias Regency in facilitating legal and safe labor migration, as well as on the implementation challenges faced. This evaluation is expected to provide strategic input for the formulation of regional policies that are more effective, responsive, and in favor of the welfare of migrant workers and their families.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The Concept of Labor Migration

Labor migration is defined as the movement of individuals from one region to another—either domestically or internationally—with the aim of obtaining employment and improving their standard of living (Hadi, 2020). This process is influenced by economic, social, and political factors, and has major implications for the country of origin and destination. According to Neoklasik (2019), migration is a response to differences in wage levels and job opportunities. This is reinforced by Rizal (2022) who states that differences in quality of life are the main driver of cross-country labor migration.

The labor migration policy in Indonesia is regulated by Law No. 18 of 2017 concerning the Protection of Indonesian Migrant Workers, and Government Regulation No. 59 of 2021 concerning the Placement and Protection of Migrant Workers. This policy aims to increase legal protection, improve the recruitment system, and improve the welfare of migrant workers (Setiawan, 2020). The government also designs competency training programs and bilateral cooperation with destination countries to ensure protection and security for workers (Spitzer, 2020).

Policy evaluation is a systematic process to assess the effectiveness, efficiency, and impact of policies that have been implemented. In the context of migration, evaluation is used to assess how well policies address labor needs and provide adequate protection (Ruhs, 2020). Bryman (2019) emphasizes the importance of a combination of qualitative and quantitative approaches in evaluating policy implementation, as this approach provides a comprehensive picture of individual experiences and institutional outcomes.

Labor migration has significant economic impacts, both in the form of remittances and workers' skills development. Remittances are known to increase household consumption, educational investment, and small business development (Gibson & McKenzie, 2023). However, there are also social impacts such as family disintegration, cultural tensions, and the risk of violations of migrant workers' rights, especially when they work in the informal sector (Dustmann & Görlach, 2023; Harris & McLaughlin, 2024).

According to Ruhs (2021), best practices in labor migration policies include: (1) protection of workers' rights, (2) alignment with labor market needs, (3) relevant pre-departure training, (4) international cooperation, and (5) ongoing monitoring and evaluation systems. Inclusive and evidence-based policies are believed to be able to maximize economic benefits while minimizing social risks for migrant workers and their home communities.

RESEARCH METHODS

This study uses a descriptive qualitative approach. Data were collected through interviews with five main informants and supporters, field observations, and documentation from related agencies. The evaluation focused on three main aspects: the role of institutions in training and support, the effectiveness of the administrative process, and the challenges of policy implementation. Data were analyzed through the process of data reduction, data presentation, and drawing conclusions.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The Role of the Department in Labor Migration Policy

The results of interviews with the heads of departments and related officials indicate that the Cooperatives, SMEs, Trade, and Manpower Office of Nias Regency has carried out its main functions in implementing labor migration to Malaysia. The office provides pre-departure training, collaborates with official placement agencies, and coordinates with the Indonesian Embassy (KBRI) in Malaysia. This reflects efforts to meet worker protection standards according to national and international regulations (ILO, 2020; Law No. 18 of 2017).

However, the effectiveness of implementation still faces challenges. One of them is the low understanding of prospective migrant workers regarding their rights and obligations. This

finding is in line with Ruhs and Martin (2018) who stated that the protection of migrant workers is often hampered by limited legal literacy and access to information.

Quality of Training and Socialization Programs

The training programs provided by the agency cover basic work skills, understanding the culture of the destination country, and an introduction to workers' rights. However, the training has not been fully tailored to the needs of specific work sectors in Malaysia, such as the manufacturing and plantation sectors. In addition, not all prospective migrants have equal access to training, especially those from remote areas. This indicates the need for an evaluation of the curriculum and scope of training.

According to Spitzer (2020), the success of a migration program is largely determined by the readiness of the workforce sent, both technically and psychologically. Therefore, the involvement of local training institutions and the private sector is key to improving the quality of the workforce.

Effectiveness of Migration Administration and Bureaucracy

The long and complex administrative process is a common complaint from prospective migrant workers. They face obstacles in processing legal documents and fulfilling requirements. Although the agency has conducted socialization and simplified procedures, there are still discrepancies between central regulations and implementation at the regional level.

Bryman (2019) emphasized that bureaucratic efficiency is a key indicator in evaluating migration policies. Without an efficient administrative system, even good policies are difficult to implement optimally.

Challenges of Worker Protection and Reintegration

Cases of workers' rights violations, violence, and abuse of work contracts are still reported, despite formal cooperation with agencies in Malaysia. In addition, there is no systematic reintegration scheme for workers returning to Nias. This hampers the sustainability of economic benefits from migration because many former workers do not have alternative businesses or jobs.

Gibson & McKenzie (2023) stated that sustainable migration programs require reintegration support in the form of advanced training and access to capital. Local agencies need to strengthen MSME-based empowerment programs as part of a post-migration strategy.

CONCLUSION

This study concludes that the labor migration policy from Nias Regency to Malaysia facilitated by the Cooperatives, SMEs, Trade, and Manpower Office has contributed to expanding employment opportunities and reducing unemployment rates in the region. However, the effectiveness of the policy still faces a number of crucial challenges, such as the gap between the training provided and the needs of the labor market in the destination country, the complexity of the migration administration bureaucracy, and the suboptimal protection and reintegration mechanisms for migrant workers.

The implementation of the policy has reflected the local government's commitment to worker protection, but improvements are needed in the implementation aspect so that the benefits of the program can be felt more widely and sustainably. Strengthening cross-sector coordination, improving the quality of relevant training, and developing a structured reintegration program are important steps to increase the effectiveness of future labor migration policies.

Thus, this evaluation provides an empirical basis for evidence-based policy-making, particularly in the context of labor-sending regions, and opens up space for more equitable, humane, and regional development-oriented migration governance practices.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Abdullah, M. (2018). *Kebijakan Migrasi dan Peningkatan Kesejahteraan Pekerja Migran*. Jakarta: Pustaka Global.
- Arikunto, S. (2017). *Prosedur Penelitian: Suatu Pendekatan Praktik*. Jakarta: Rineka Cipta.
- _____ (2019). *Prosedur Penelitian: Suatu Pendekatan Praktik*. Jakarta: Rineka Cipta.
- Aydin, H., & Yavuz, M. (2021). *Labor Migration and Economic Development*. Ankara: Global Migration Studies Press.
- Bansak, C., & Chellaraj, G. (2019). *Migrasi Tenaga Kerja: Perspektif Ekonomi*. Jakarta: Pustaka Ekonomi.
- Becker, G. S. (2022). *Kebijakan Migrasi Tenaga Kerja: Tujuan dan Implementasi*. Bandung: Citra Pustaka.
- Basri, M. (2022). *Pemberdayaan Ekonomi dan Migrasi Tenaga Kerja*. Jakarta: Penerbit Ekonomi Global.

- Bryman, A. (2019). *Social Research Methods*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Burchardt, T., & Vickers, R. (2020). *Evaluating Social and Economic Contexts in Migration Policies*. London: Routledge.
- Dustmann, C., & Görlach, J. (2023). *Social Integration of Migrant Workers: A Comprehensive Review*. Berlin: Springer.
- Gibson, J., & McKenzie, D. (2023). *The Effects of Labor Migration on Home Country Economies*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Hadi, S. (2020). *Migrasi Tenaga Kerja dan Dinamika Sosial Ekonomi*. Surabaya: Graha Ilmu.
- Handoko, H. (2021). *Manajemen Sumber Daya Manusia*. Jakarta: Penerbit Salemba Empat.
- Harris, J., & McLaughlin, D. (2024). *Labor Rights and Working Conditions of Migrant Workers*. Melbourne: Migrant Rights Press.
- Joko, A., & Rina, S. (2020). *Teori Kebijakan Publik dan Implementasinya*. Yogyakarta: Pustaka Akademik.
- Kabeer, N. (2016). *Economic Empowerment and Development Policies*. London: Routledge.
- Khan, A., & Raza, S. (2019). *Challenges in Labor Migration Policy Evaluations*. Karachi: Policy Insights Publications.
- Kumar, S. (2021). *Cultural Impacts of Labor Migration: Evidence from Recent Studies*. Delhi: Sage Publications.
- Miller, P., & Lee, J. (2023). *Global and Local Policy Changes in Labor Migration*. Seoul: International Policy Press.
- Neoklasik. (2019). *Teori Migrasi Tenaga Kerja*. Yogyakarta: Kanisius.
- Putra, D., & Dewi, A. (2021). *Dinamika Migrasi Tenaga Kerja dan Tantangan Globalisasi*. Bandung: Alfabeta.
- Prasetyo, R. (2021). *Remitansi dan Kontribusinya terhadap Ekonomi Indonesia*. Bandung: Literasi Ekonomi.
- Rahman, A. (2020). *Perlindungan Hukum bagi Pekerja Migran Indonesia*. Yogyakarta: Graha Ilmu.
- Rizal, F. (2022). *Dinamika Migrasi Tenaga Kerja: Studi Global dan Lokal*. Medan: Universitas Sumatera Press.
- Ruhs, M., & Martin, P. (2018). *Tenaga Kerja Migran dan Regulasi Pasar Global*. Jakarta: Erlangga.
- _____ (2020). *Evaluasi Kebijakan Migrasi Tenaga Kerja: Metode dan Pendekatan*. Jakarta: Gramedia Pustaka Utama.
- _____ (2021). *Best Practices in Labor Migration Policy Management*. Geneva: International Labor Organization Press.
- Saraswati, D. (2019). *Kerjasama Internasional dalam Melindungi Pekerja Migran*. Jakarta: Bina Cipta.
- Sari, D., & Nanda, F. (2023). *Migrasi Tenaga Kerja: Fenomena Globalisasi dan Tantangan Masa Depan*. Bandung: Alfabeta.
- Scholte, J. A. (2022). *Globalization: A Critical Introduction*. London: Palgrave Macmillan.
- _____ (2022). *Indicators of Labor Migration Policies*. Brussels: European Migration Studies.
- Sengupta, A. (2022). *Coordination in Migration Policy Implementation*. Mumbai: Oxford India Press.
- Setiawan, A. (2020). *Kebijakan Migrasi Tenaga Kerja di Indonesia*. Jakarta: Rajawali Pers.

- Sihombing, R. (2020). Kesiapan Tenaga Kerja dalam Migrasi Internasional. Medan: Universitas Sumatera Utara Press.
- Soekanto, S. (2020). Metodologi Penelitian Hukum. Jakarta: Rajawali Press.
- Spitzer, R. (2020). Strategi dan Program Kebijakan Migrasi Tenaga Kerja. Bogor: IPB Press.
- Sundjojo, B., & Alim, T. (2022). Teori Pembangunan Ekonomi Lokal. Surabaya: Graha Ilmu.
- Sugiyono. (2016). Metode Penelitian Kuantitatif, Kualitatif, dan R&D. Bandung: Alfabeta.
- _____ (2017). Metode Penelitian Kuantitatif, Kualitatif, dan R&D. Bandung: Alfabeta.
- _____ (2018). Kerangka Pemikiran dalam Penelitian Ilmiah. Bandung: Alfabeta.
- _____ (2018). Metode Penelitian Kombinasi (Mix Methods). Bandung: Alfabeta.
- Tayeb, M. (2022). Economic Implications of Labor Migration Policies: A Review. Singapore: World Migration Research Institute.
- Tanuwijaya, F. (2023). Koordinasi Antar Lembaga dalam Kebijakan Migrasi. Jakarta: PT RajaGrafindo Persada.
- Wahyuni, L. (2021). Peran UMKM dalam Meningkatkan Kesejahteraan Pekerja Migran. Yogyakarta: Gadjah Mada University Press.
- Wickramasekara, P. (2019). Hak-hak Pekerja Migran di Sektor Informal. Surabaya: Mitra Wacana Media.
- Wijayawardena, T. (2020). Labor Migration Policies and Their Impact. Colombo: South Asia Migration Press.
- Yuliawati, A., & Ismail, T. (2021). Migrasi Tenaga Kerja: Perspektif Sosial dan Ekonomi. Bandung: Remaja Rosdakarya.
- Peraturan Perundang-Undangan:
- Undang-Undang Nomor 13 Tahun 2003 tentang Ketenagakerjaan.
- Undang-Undang Nomor 18 Tahun 2017 tentang Pelaksanaan Perlindungan Pekerja Migran Indonesia.
- Peraturan Pemerintah Nomor 59 Tahun 2021 tentang Pedoman Penyusunan Standar Operasional Prosedur Administrasi Pekerja Migran Indonesia.
- Peraturan Menteri Pendayagunaan Aparatur Negara dan Reformasi Birokrasi Nomor 35 Tahun 2014 tentang Pedoman Penyusunan Standar Operasional Prosedur Administrasi Pemerintahan.
- Peraturan Menteri Ketenagakerjaan Nomor 2 Tahun 2014 tentang Standar Pelayanan Minimal Ketenagakerjaan.
- Peraturan Daerah Kabupaten Nias Nomor 2 Tahun 2021 tentang Pedoman dan Susunan Perangkat Daerah Kabupaten Nias.