

Article

The Role of the Indonesian Migrant Worker Protection Service Center (BP3MI) in Gender-Responsive Protection in Cilacap in 2024

Fika Deliana

Universitas Kristen Satya Wacana, Indonesia; e-mail : fikadeliana56@gmail.com

Abstract: This study examines the Indonesian Migrant Worker Protection Service Center (BP3MI) of Central Java's role in providing gender-responsive protection to Indonesian Migrant Workers (PMI) from Cilacap Regency. Despite Cilacap being Central Java's largest PMI hub with 13,274 placements in 2024 (69.78% female), the persistence of 27 complaint cases ranking 9th nationally indicates significant gaps in gender-responsive protection services. This research aims to evaluate BP3MI's gender-responsive protection mechanisms and identify improvement areas for female PMI vulnerability mitigation. This qualitative study employed in-depth interviews with the Head of Protection and Empowerment Team at BP3MI Central Java, complemented by policy document analysis to assess current protection frameworks and implementation practices. Findings reveal BP3MI implements three-stage protection: pre-placement (Pre-Departure Orientation), placement (Indonesian Embassy collaboration), and post-placement (skills training). However, critical limitations emerge in gender-responsive implementation: absence of gender-differentiated OPP materials, lack of psychological counseling services, and suboptimal gender perspective integration. While early warning systems and gender-based risk profile databases exist, enhancement is required, particularly in psychosocial support and gender-based violence handling mechanisms. The study concludes that comprehensive policy strengthening and improved technical implementation are essential to optimize gender-responsive protection for PMI. Recommendations include developing gender-specific training modules, establishing dedicated psychological support services, and enhancing inter-agency coordination for better protection outcomes, particularly for female migrant workers who constitute the majority of PMI placements.

Keywords: BP3MI; Central Java; Cilacap; gender-responsive protection; Indonesian migrant workers; migrant worker protection.

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1. Introduction

Indonesia is one of the countries with the largest migrant worker outflows in the Southeast Asian region. Data from the Indonesian Migrant Worker Protection Agency (BP2MI) recorded that the placement of Indonesian Migrant Workers (PMI) in 2024 reached 297,434 workers (BP2MI, 2025). The majority of worker placements, approximately 86.62%, were located in Hong Kong, Taiwan, Malaysia, Japan, and Singapore (Yonatan, 2024). Based on gender data, the number of female migrant workers reached 201,343 people, significantly higher than males at 96,091 people. This situation aligns with the high demand for labor in domestic and informal sectors such as domestic workers and elderly caregivers. Although PMI placement continues to increase annually and provides significant economic contributions, various challenges and risks are still frequently experienced by PMI.

The high public interest in working abroad and the increasing demand for migrant workers from destination countries make labor migration an important strategic issue requiring serious attention. This is due to various risks and vulnerabilities faced by PMI at every stage of migration, from pre-placement, placement, and post-placement periods.

Challenges such as discrimination, unpaid wages, rights violations, and gender-based violence are frequently experienced by PMI. Despite this, labor migration contributes significantly to national economic development. Remittances from migrant workers have become one of the main components of national income and help drive the national economy. Remittances generally refer to money sent by PMI from abroad to their homeland. In 2023, Bank Indonesia reported that remittances from PMI reached 227 trillion rupiah (BP2MI, 2024).

Given this substantial economic contribution, the protection of migrant workers becomes an aspect that cannot be ignored. Protecting migrant workers is a crucial aspect of labor migration policy due to humanitarian factors and the need to ensure safe migration stages (Agusmidah & Shalihah, 2023). Safe labor migration is a migration procedure designed to eliminate vulnerabilities at every stage of migration for work. In response to these challenges, the Indonesian Government then enacted Law Number 18 of 2017 concerning Protection of Indonesian Migrant Workers (UU PPMI), replacing Law Number 39 of 2004 concerning Placement and Protection of Indonesian Workers Abroad. However, this regulation is considered not yet fully adequate because it has not explicitly integrated gender-responsive approaches and dimensions that are deemed important for providing comprehensive protection for migrant worker issues. Gender-responsive elements are considered crucial for supporting a policy, especially in addressing specific vulnerabilities and needs faced by PMI based on their gender identity (Komnas Perempuan, 2024).

The inclusion of gender-responsive elements is not intended as a form of special privilege for female migrant workers only, but as a systemic approach that ensures equal access, participation, and benefits for all migrant workers, regardless of their gender (Thea Ady, 2022). Throughout 2024, the Data and Information Center of the Indonesian Migrant Worker Protection Agency (Pusdatin BP2MI) recorded 1,500 complaint cases involving PMI, where the majority of complainants were male, with 754 complaints, while females filed 746 complaints (BP2MI, 2025). One example of a case highlighting the high risks faced by PMI, especially women, occurred in November 2024, when a PMI from Cilacap Regency was found dead in Hong Kong, allegedly murdered by their employer (Tempo.co, 2024).

The high number of complaints throughout 2024 demonstrates the urgency to examine the extent of gender-responsive approach implementation through the role of the Indonesian Migrant Worker Protection Service Center (BP3MI), particularly in Central Java, regarding complaints filed by PMI, especially in Cilacap Regency. Based on Indonesian Migrant Worker Protection Agency Regulation Number 6 of 2022, Article 1 Paragraph 1, BP3MI (Indonesian Migrant Worker Protection Service Center) is a technical implementing unit of BP2MI (Indonesian Migrant Worker Protection Agency) tasked with implementing policies in the field of protection and placement of Indonesian migrant workers at the provincial level (Indonesian Migrant Worker Protection Agency, 2022). BP3MI is responsible for providing comprehensive protection services for PMI at every stage of migration, from pre-placement, placement, to post-placement.

To understand the implementation of PMI protection more deeply, this research will focus on one of the provinces with the largest PMI contribution in Indonesia. Central Java is one of the provinces with a significant contribution in migrant worker placement, ranking second nationally with a total of 66,611 PMI placements in 2024. From this number, Cilacap Regency is the largest contributor with 13,274 placements, making this area known as a PMI pocket region (Central Statistics Agency, 2025). The main driving factors for migration in this area include migration traditions, limited local job opportunities, large wage differences, and low education levels. The Regional Secretary of Cilacap Regency, Awaludin Murri, explained that many residents are interested in working as PMI due to financial considerations and higher wages in destination countries (Cindiana et al., 2022).

In line with the relatively high number of PMI placements in Cilacap Regency, complaints from PMI continue to occur. Throughout 2024, Cilacap Regency was recorded as ranking 9th nationally and first in Central Java with 27 complaint cases. This data indicates that Cilacap Regency, as a PMI pocket region, still faces various problems during the labor migration process. The fact that complaints still occur indicates that the basic and continuous protection that should be received by migrant workers has not been fully fulfilled by the government. Therefore, it is important to examine the extent to which migrant worker protection policies have considered gender-responsive approaches that are deemed necessary in supporting PMI protection.

Triyanto, in his research, examined the role of BP2MI and BP3MI Lampung in providing legal protection for PMI, particularly in the form of counseling, legal assistance, and supervision (Triyanto, 2024). This research also highlighted implementation challenges of

PMI Law No. 18 of 2017 regarding limited inter-agency coordination and low PMI understanding of rights and legal migration procedures. Based on gaps in previous research and the urgency of field problems, this research will examine gender responsiveness that has not been discussed in depth, especially in the context of migration policy implementation at the regional level.

Therefore, the problem formulation of this research is: How does the Indonesian Migrant Worker Protection Service Center (BP3MI) Central Java play a role in protecting Indonesian Migrant Workers (PMI) from Cilacap Regency through gender-responsive policies in 2024? This research is expected to provide theoretical contributions in developing gender-based migrant worker protection studies, as well as practical recommendations for BP3MI Central Java in improving gender-responsive policies and services for PMI needs in Cilacap Regency.

2. Methodology

This research employs a qualitative research method with a descriptive approach. The data collected is presented in the form of words, narratives, or visuals, thus not focusing on numerical aspects or statistical calculations. In qualitative research methods, two types of data sources can be used: primary data and secondary data. Primary data is data obtained directly from the first source using either interview or observation techniques (Fadilla & Wulandari, 2023), while secondary data is data obtained indirectly through intermediaries or written documents that have been compiled by other parties and used as additional information to primary data (Kaharuddin, 2021).

The researchers analyzed data descriptively to provide a comprehensive understanding of the implementation of gender-responsive labor migration policies in Cilacap Regency during 2024 through the role of BP3MI Central Java. The researchers gathered more in-depth information by interviewing Mr. Danang Adil Luhur, as Head of the Protection and Empowerment Team of BP3MI Central Java, who possesses expertise and direct experience in this field. This research involved only one key informant who is directly responsible for the implementation of migrant worker protection policies in the Central Java region. The selection of informants was conducted purposively, with the consideration that the informant has direct access to core information, field experience, and authority in policy-making. This approach aligns with Patton (2015), who states that one key informant with comprehensive information access can provide a deeper understanding compared to multiple informants with limited access. However, the researchers also utilized supporting data obtained from documentary sources such as laws, policy reports, BP3MI regulations, migration data, and others, ensuring data triangulation is maintained.

3. Results and Discussion

Gender Responsiveness in Labor Migration Policy

Gender responsiveness stems from gender issues that have become one of the important topics in International Relations studies. Gender refers to social constructions related to roles, behaviors, activities, and attributes generally associated with men and women in social life. Unlike biological sex, gender is dynamic and influenced by specific cultures and social structures (Rokhmansyah Alfian, 2016). Gender inequality has been a long-standing problem in society. To address this, an approach called gender responsiveness is deemed necessary for implementation. This approach aims to ensure that every policy, program, and public service needs to consider the different needs, experiences, and challenges faced, because policies that appear gender-neutral often still produce different impacts for men and women.

The International Labour Organization (ILO) then developed the concept of gender responsiveness in the context of labor migration governance. In its 2021 report, the ILO stated that gender-responsive migration governance must ensure special protection, equal access to services, and empowerment for vulnerable groups, particularly female migrant workers (International Labour Organization, 2022). The existence of gender-responsive labor migration policies and management is assured to create significant differences in living and working conditions for Indonesian Migrant Workers (PMI). Gender responsiveness becomes a tool to ensure that safe and fair labor migration is a right for every migrant worker, without exception. Therefore, it becomes crucial to ensure that labor migration governance is responsive to gender.

In Indonesia, gender responsiveness is implemented through the Gender Mainstreaming (PUG) strategy. PUG has been officially adopted through Presidential Instruction No. 9 of 2000 as an effort to realize gender justice in various aspects of life. Its main objective is to eliminate all forms of discrimination and Gender-Based Violence (GBV) in the policy formulation process, program implementation, and development evaluation. GBV is violence directed at women because of their gender or that has a greater impact on women compared to men. This form of violence is very diverse, including physical, sexual, and psychological violence. GBV has wide-ranging impacts, not only on the physical and mental health of victims but also on their social and economic well-being.

Through PUG, the principle of gender responsiveness not only becomes a theoretical concept but is also realized in policy practice to create a fair and safe environment for all individuals, including in PMI protection. Gender responsiveness is a concept different from gender equality. If gender equality in a policy emphasizes providing equal rights and opportunities for men and women, then the gender-responsive approach goes further. This approach not only emphasizes equal treatment but also aims to identify and address structural barriers faced by vulnerable groups, particularly women in patriarchal societies. Although the PUG strategy includes the principle of gender equality, the gender-responsive approach is the main focus in Presidential Instruction Number 9 of 2000. This Presidential Instruction instructs all government agencies to mainstream gender in all development fields. This means that every policy must be designed and implemented by considering the different experiences, needs, and vulnerabilities experienced by men and women.

The concept of gender responsiveness in addressing inequality and GBV requires natural improvement and application by policymakers in Indonesia. To gain a more comprehensive understanding regarding policy implementation, especially in labor migration governance within the context of protection for Indonesian migrant workers (PMI), researchers conducted in-depth interviews with the Head of the Protection and Empowerment Team of BP3MI Central Java. BP3MI serves as the frontline institution in PMI services and protection. The functions of BP3MI are regulated in Article 5 paragraph (1) of Presidential Regulation Number 90 of 2019 concerning the Migrant Worker Protection Agency, including the implementation of PMI services and protection, supervision of social security service implementation, fulfillment of Indonesian Migrant Workers' rights, implementation of protection during work in coordination with Indonesian Representatives in destination countries, and implementation of social and economic empowerment for former PMI and their families (Permatasari & Nugroho, 2023). Broadly speaking, BP3MI functions include protection and placement functions. The researchers focused the discussion on the protection function, which encompasses protection during work from the pre-departure orientation period until the work contract ends (Permatasari & Nugroho, 2023).

Research Findings

Based on the interviews conducted, researchers obtained information regarding policies and stages that must be completed by Prospective Indonesian Migrant Workers (CPMI) before being dispatched to destination countries. This stage is indeed crucial in preparing prospective PMIs before they work abroad, as it becomes a contributing factor in reducing the number of complaint cases by PMI. In this regard, Mr. Danang Adil Luhur, as Head of the Protection and Empowerment Team of BP3MI Central Java, explained that the assistance process for PMI from Cilacap Regency has been conducted since 2015 and includes three main stages: pre-placement, placement, and post-placement.

In this research, researchers obtained data regarding the implementation of these policies through direct accounts from informants. In the pre-placement stage, it was stated that BP3MI Central Java routinely conducts annual socialization at the village level, including in Cilacap Regency. The selection of villages as activity locations is based on the fact that villages are the smallest government units that become the starting point for the administrative registration process of prospective migrant workers. Socialization is one of the mandatory stages before the departure of candidates who participate in Pre-Departure Orientation (OPP) activities. In this activity, prospective PMI will be equipped with motivation, self-protection information, and education regarding potential violence and other risks that may be faced in destination countries. OPP is mandatory and becomes the main requirement for obtaining departure certificates. This was conveyed by Mr. Danang Adil Luhur, who stated:

"In the pre-placement stage, the institution routinely conducts socialization at the village level in rotation, providing education and motivation before PMIs are dispatched. This education is mandatory, evidenced by the existence of certificates."

Prospective PMIs who do not pass the OPP stage cannot be officially dispatched. OPP becomes a mandatory stage to ensure that prospective PMIs understand their rights and obligations and are physically, mentally, and administratively prepared. Prospective PMIs who do not pass the OPP stage but still force themselves to go to destination countries will be categorized as non-procedural prospective PMIs. Thus, OPP becomes an important foundation in ensuring preparedness and initial protection for PMI and serves as an official mechanism to reduce risks of rights violations and legal protection in destination countries.

In the placement stage, BP3MI does not work alone but collaborates with the Embassy of the Republic of Indonesia (KBRI) in placement countries as strategic partners in efforts to protect and supervise PMI. KBRI plays an important role in providing legal assistance, mediation, and emergency protection when PMI faces problems in destination countries. This collaboration includes monitoring working conditions, handling complaints, and reporting cases involving PMI, under the Labor Attaché (Atnaker) or Protocol and Consular Function (Protkons) at KBRI, depending on the structure of each Indonesian representative abroad. The cooperation between KBRI and BP3MI is crucial for minimizing cases affecting PMI, both administrative and legal, including those related to non-procedural and procedural migrant workers. Administrative orders and clear tracking systems become the primary foundation for detecting and addressing problems early.

To anticipate problems that may occur during the placement stage, BP3MI also conducts a comprehensive verification of worker status through an integrated recording system. One mandatory requirement that must be fulfilled before placement is PMI registration in the employment social security program, particularly BPJS Ketenagakerjaan. This insurance functions as basic protection that provides a compensation guarantee if PMI experiences work risks in destination countries. Through strategic synergy between BP3MI and KBRI, the placement process is designed not only as an administrative procedure but as an active and responsive protection system for various challenges faced by PMI during their work period abroad. This was conveyed by Mr. Danang Adil Luhur, who stated:

"Problems related to migrant workers abroad become the responsibility of KBRI representatives, so KBRI always coordinates with us, especially PMI from the Central Java region. KBRI handles cases of illegal workers, which are then checked through the system to determine whether workers have legal status or not, then conveys this to the institution to be able to channel information to PMI families."

In the post-placement stage, according to Mr. Danang's account, BP3MI provides skills training programs as a form of empowerment for PMIs who have returned. Participants are given training choices according to their interests, such as food processing, bread making, and local snack products that have selling potential in their respective regions. This training also includes basic marketing aspects to support PMI's economic independence after returning home. This was conveyed by Mr. Danang Adil Luhur, who stated:

"In the post-placement stage, the institution conducts training related to entrepreneurship empowerment, such as making processed food, bread, snacks, bakery, and others, and there is training in marketing, so that post-PMI can sell them in local supermarkets."

However, it should be noted that institutional support in the form of psychological counseling for former PMI in Central Java during 2024 is still not available until now. Based on interviews with Mr. Danang, psychological assistance is still in the planning stage and is planned to begin implementation at the provincial level at the end of 2025. For Cilacap Regency itself, there is no clarity regarding implementation time or resource readiness in providing such services. This condition shows that although BP3MI has implemented protection programs in three stages of labor migration, the psychosocial dimension, which is an essential component in gender-responsive approaches, remains a weak point in the protection system, especially for handling the impact of gender-based violence experienced by female PMI. This was conveyed by Mr. Danang Adil Luhur, who stated:

"The psychological counseling program is new, providing treatment for PMI with problems, and providing psychological strengthening to PMI and their families. So in Central Java, we are still preparing it thoroughly and waiting for direction from the center."

General Overview of Cilacap Regency as a PMI Pocket Region

Cilacap Regency is one of the regions in Central Java, Indonesia, consisting of 24 sub-districts, 269 villages, and 15 urban villages with a total area of 2,253.61 km², including Nusakambangan Island with an area of 115.11 km². This area covers approximately 6.48% of the total area of Central Java Province. According to the Central Statistics Agency in 2024, the population in Cilacap Regency was recorded at 2.04 million people, dominated by the productive age group, which reached approximately 1.31 million people, or equivalent to 64.06% of the total population. Meanwhile, children contribute 20.63% or approximately 420.36 thousand people, and the remainder, 15.31% or approximately 312.07 thousand people, are elderly residents (Dwi, 2024).

Top 5 Districts/Cities				
District/City	2023	2024	% Change	Proportion
Indramayu	20,901	21,688	▲ 3.77% (787)	7.29%
Cilacap	12,406	13,274	▲ 7.00% (868)	4.46%
Cirebon (District)	11,334	11,826	▲ 4.34% (492)	3.98%
Ponorogo	10,879	11,329	▲ 4.14% (450)	3.81%
East Lombok	13,164	11,221	▼ 14.76% (1,943)	3.77%
Other Districts/Cities	228,424	228,096	▼ 0.14% (328)	76.69%

Figure 1: Development of Indonesian Migrant Worker Placement Numbers by Five Regencies with the Highest Placements in 2023-2024 (BP2MI, 2025)

Data from BP2MI in 2024 states that 13,274 residents of Cilacap Regency of productive age were officially recorded as being dispatched abroad as Indonesian Migrant Workers through placement mechanisms facilitated by the government. The term "placement" in this context refers to the official departure process of PMI in the current year, and not to the total number of migrant workers still in destination countries. Of this number, 69.78% are women. The majority of them work in occupations such as domestic assistants, elderly caregivers, and plantation workers. Meanwhile, male PMIs numbering 30.22% are predominantly in work sectors as Domestic Workers and Workers in various industries. Taiwan, Malaysia, Hong Kong, and Saudi Arabia are the four main destination countries for PMI from Cilacap Regency. Based on data from the Central Statistics Agency (BPS) of Central Java Province, cited from indoraya. news, Cilacap Regency has consistently occupied the top position in the number of PMI placements in Central Java until 2024 (Athok Mahfud, 2025). This subsequently makes Cilacap Regency one of the main PMI pocket regions in Central Java, with a significant contribution to sending workers abroad.

Table 1 Number of PMI placement data from Cilacap Regency from 2022 to 2024, based on Indonesian Migrant Worker Placement and Complaint Data during 2024.

No	Year	Number of Migrant Workers
1	2022	8.681
2	2023	12.406
3	2024	13.274

The high interest of Cilacap Regency residents in working abroad is influenced by several main factors. One of them is the hope of obtaining a higher income to meet their and their family's living needs. Domestic conditions clearly show that there are still many workers with low income, even below minimum living standards, which drives them to seek job opportunities abroad. In addition, the limited job opportunities in Indonesia, especially for individuals with low education levels, make migration abroad an alternative to improve their

quality of life. This statement is supported by research conducted by Cindiana, Supriadi, and Sambodo, which reveals that economic motives, such as significant wage differences between the country of origin and the destination country, are the main reasons for migrant workers in Cilacap Regency to make decisions to work abroad (Cindiana et al., 2022).

The high number of Indonesian Migrant Worker (PMI) placements in Cilacap Regency is in line with the ongoing reports of complaints from migrant workers. Throughout 2024, Cilacap occupied the 9th position nationally and first place in Central Java with a total of 27 recorded complaint cases (Agusmidah et al., 2021). This finding confirms that, as one of the main sources of PMI, Cilacap Regency still faces various challenges in the labor migration process. This condition reflects that the basic protection and its series that should be provided to migrant workers have not been fully optimal, thus still leaving gaps for potential risks and violations of their rights.

Table 2: Number of complaint data for PMI originating from Cilacap Regency from 2022 to 2024, based on Indonesian Migrant Worker Placement and Complaint Data during 2024

No	Tahun	Number of Migrant Workers
1	2022	45
2	2023	36
3	2024	27

Gender-Responsive Pre-Departure Orientation (OPP)

As the technical implementer of migrant protection policies at the provincial level, BP3MI Central Java plays an important role in conducting Pre-Departure Orientation (OPP). OPP is part of crucial pre-placement protection efforts and serves as a foundation for preventing the vulnerability of Indonesian Migrant Workers (PMI), especially women. This program applies to various departure schemes and aims to equip Prospective Indonesian Migrant Workers (CPMI) with basic knowledge and understanding before working abroad. OPP is designed to provide a comprehensive understanding and in-depth analysis of immigration regulations, labor laws, and criminal provisions applicable in the destination countries. Additionally, CPMIs are also given an understanding of the content and implications of work contracts as well as additional contextual materials, such as policies or information deemed necessary by institutions at the regency/city level, delivered to adapt to the specific needs of the CPMI's region of origin.

Only CPMIs who have met administrative and procedural requirements are entitled to participate in the OPP series. This is done to ensure that the materials delivered in the training are truly relevant to the final stage before placement, while ensuring that participants are ready to be deployed legally and formally. OPP implementation is free of charge, with funding sourced from the Directorate of Domestic Labor Placement of the Ministry of Manpower of the Republic of Indonesia. BP3MI institutions are obligated to facilitate departure and inform CPMI of departure schedules, and institutions must submit reports of each CPMI departure to Labor Attachés or designated foreign service officials in destination countries. OPP activities in Cilacap Regency are generally conducted at the village level on a rotating basis, considering that villages are the starting point for administrative processing for CPMI. Village-level implementation facilitates access and ensures optimal participation from prospective migrant workers. The duration of OPP implementation for CPMI in Cilacap Regency in 2024 varies between 3 to 5 days, depending on the placement scheme and training needs. CPMI attendance on the first day of OPP activities is mandatory. Unexplained absence on the first day may be considered as withdrawal from the overseas work placement program.

In implementing OPP activities, CPMI will receive various briefing materials. OPP materials are nationally regulated through BP2MI Regulation Number 4 of 2023, which is the latest regulation replacing and improving previous, more general arrangements regarding pre-work processes (Yuliastuti & Susetyo, 2024). Briefing materials in OPP activities are generally uniform throughout Indonesia, including in Cilacap Regency, as they are compiled based on national curriculum standards established by BP2MI. Nevertheless, technical implementation in the field can be adapted to local contexts and specific needs of placement schemes applicable in each region.

OPP materials cover topics such as work contracts, destination country laws and regulations, occupational health and safety, protection from Human Trafficking (TPPO), drug dangers, and strengthening national values. However, to date, the general implementation of OPP confirmed in 2024 has not explicitly differentiated materials based on specific needs between male and female migrant workers. Yet, in the context of labor migration, men and women often face different types of work, risks, and forms of vulnerability. For example, women are more often placed in closed domestic sectors prone to violence, while men dominate construction or manufacturing sectors with high physical risks.

The implementation of OPP in Cilacap Regency in 2024 still uses a uniform approach referring to national standards without material substance adaptation based on specific gender needs. The absence of differentiated approaches between female and male participants is reflected in several aspects: (1) generic training content, (2) delivery methods that do not consider gender characteristics, and (3) materials that have not accommodated vulnerabilities and special needs based on participants' gender identity. This condition indicates that the integration of gender-responsive approaches in OPP implementation has not been optimal at the regional implementation level, particularly in Cilacap Regency during the 2024 period. Despite Cilacap Regency being one of the largest PMI sources in Central Java, with migration characteristics dominated by women in the informal sector, and while the regional government has shown commitment to this issue through the ratification of Regional Regulation on Gender Mainstreaming in 2023, its application in migration training programs such as OPP has not been aligned.

The implementation of OPP conducted by BP3MI Central Java becomes a crucial part of pre-placement protection for PMI, especially women. OPP provides a briefing on immigration regulations, labor laws, work contracts, and additional materials adapted by each region. Implementation conducted by Cilacap regional institutions is carried out at the village level to facilitate access for prospective migrant workers, with duration depending on national standards. Although OPP materials are comprehensively provided, during 2024, there has been no specific material adjustment based on gender, even though male and female workers face different risks according to their respective work sectors. This condition shows that gender-responsive integration in OPP implementation at the regional level, particularly in the Cilacap region, is still not optimal. This becomes an important concern considering Cilacap is one of the largest PMI-sending regions in Central Java, with a dominance of female workers in the informal sector.

Gender-Responsive Protection During Placement: BP3MI Collaboration with Indonesian Embassy

The concept of gender-responsive protection in the context of labor migration refers to an approach that integrates gender perspectives in all aspects of the protection system. Based on interview results with Mr. Danang Adil Luhur, Head of the Protection and Empowerment Team of BP3MI Central Java, the placement stage of PMI shows significant strategic collaboration. This collaboration is established between BP3MI Central Java and the Embassy of the Republic of Indonesia (KBRI) in destination countries in protecting PMI, including PMI from Cilacap Regency. KBRI serves as the spearhead of protection for Indonesian citizens, including PMI, who experience legal, social, or administrative difficulties in destination countries. Solid collaboration between BP3MI and KBRI becomes the main foundation for comprehensive protection, especially in emergency cases. Meanwhile, strengthening placement systems, supervision, and public education must continue to be carried out as part of preventive efforts. Given the demographic characteristics of PMI from Cilacap Regency, dominated by women working in the domestic sector, this collaboration enables the creation of a layered protection system that is responsive to specific needs based on gender. This system is designed to enable rapid response through direct communication channels between PMI from Cilacap, KBRI, and BP3MI.

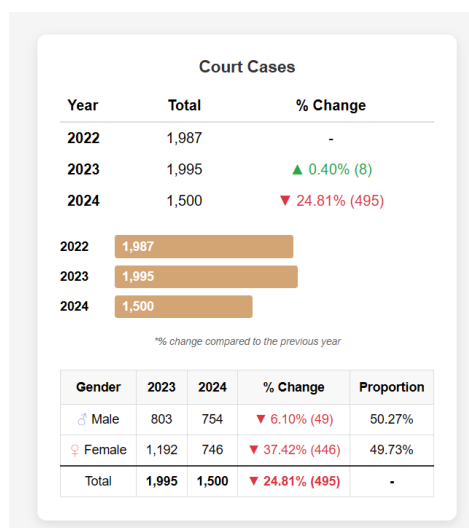


Figure 2: Number of Indonesian Migrant Worker Complaints in 2024 (BP2MI, 2025)

The reporting system developed through collaboration between BP3MI and the Indonesian Embassy (KBRI) includes a complaint mechanism accessible to migrant workers from Cilacap through the Service and Protection Portal for Indonesian Citizens Abroad, available at each Indonesian Embassy representation, as well as through various channels, including dedicated hotlines on the official KBRI website. This system is designed to facilitate Cilacap migrant workers in reporting various forms of violations, ranging from delayed wage payments to physical and sexual violence. The implementation of this system is crucial given that data from BP2MI's Data and Information Center shows 1,500 complaint cases in 2024 with an almost balanced distribution between men (754 cases) and women (746 cases), where the contribution of cases from Cilacap migrant workers also requires special attention.

Furthermore, the collaboration between BP3MI and KBRI enables continuous monitoring of working conditions for migrant workers from Cilacap Regency through regular visits and situation evaluations that are responsive to gender dynamics in the workplace. The existence of an early warning system enables early identification of potential gender-based violence (GBV) cases, especially for female migrant workers from Cilacap working in the domestic sector, which tends to be closed off. The early warning system is developed with a systematic approach aimed at early detection of potential risks such as violence, rights violations, or hazardous working conditions. Generally, this system resembles early detection systems used in various industries to anticipate possibilities such as damage, leaks, or infiltration that could harm operations. The system consists of components including interconnected communication networks, sensors or reporting mechanisms, incident detection, and decision-making processes. All components work synergistically to identify risks from the beginning, enabling rapid responses that can minimize the negative impact of events (Rahayu et al., 2024).

The Cilacap Regency Government, through the Department of Manpower, has also developed a migrant worker database that includes gender-based risk profiles for each departing migrant worker. This database contains information regarding job types, destination countries, and specific risk factors that enable the early warning system to provide special alerts for female migrant workers from Cilacap working in countries with high GBV risk levels, such as Hong Kong, Malaysia, and Singapore. Based on the author's interview with the Head of Protection and Empowerment Team of BP3MI Central Java, this system began to be integrated gradually since 2023 and was strengthened in 2024 following the increasing cases of GBV.

The implementation of a gender-responsive protection system through BP3MI-KBRI collaboration demonstrates the transformation of BP3MI's role from merely a facilitator institution to a strategic coordinator in the gender-based migrant worker protection ecosystem. The success of the early warning system and risk profile database developed by Cilacap also demonstrates how BP3MI can optimize its protection function through collaborative and data-driven approaches. Although this system shows significant progress in gender responsiveness, its long-term effectiveness still requires comprehensive evaluation,

particularly regarding the speed of case handling response, the rate of GBV case resolution, and the sustainability of inter-institutional coordination.

The collaboration between BP3MI Central Java and KBRI aims to provide comprehensive protection to migrant workers, especially women from the Cilacap area. This collaboration includes an easily accessible complaint reporting system through KBRI portals and hotlines, as well as regular monitoring and an early warning system to anticipate gender-based violence (GBV) cases. The Cilacap Regency Government also developed a gender-based risk database containing migrant worker profiles to support the early warning system. Since 2023-2024, the integration of this system has been increasingly strengthened as a gender-responsive effort in migrant worker protection. The collaboration between BP3MI and KBRI transforms BP3MI's role into a strategic coordinator in optimizing data-based protection and collaborative approaches. Despite significant progress, further evaluation is needed to measure the effectiveness of case handling and the sustainability of inter-institutional coordination.

Gender-Responsive Empowerment Strategies in Post-Placement Programs

The post-placement stage in the context of migrant workers refers to the period after migrant workers complete their working period abroad and return to their homeland. At this stage, BP3MI still plays a significant role in providing information services, assistance, and guidance to support the reintegration process of migrant workers into their original environment. The post-placement stage is a critical phase that determines the long-term success of migrant worker protection programs, given the complexity of problems faced by post-placement migrant workers, ranging from economic reintegration difficulties to social stigma. In efforts to address these challenges, the most common form of empowerment carried out by BP3MI overall is economic empowerment, such as entrepreneurship training, access to business capital, and facilitation of local work networks, aimed at increasing independence and economic empowerment of former migrant workers, especially women.

In Cilacap Regency itself, according to Mr. Danang's account, BP3MI Central Java has organized skills training programs as part of empowerment efforts for migrant workers who have returned to their homeland. Participants are given choices of training types according to their interests and regional potential, such as food processing training, bread making, and local snack production that have selling value. This training is also equipped with basic marketing materials to support the economic independence of former migrant workers. However, these empowerment efforts are insufficient without considering gender sensitivity in designing programs that can address the specific needs of male and female migrant workers from Cilacap Regency. A gender-responsive approach is crucial given that the reintegration challenges faced by male and female migrant workers have different characteristics, ranging from socio-cultural, economic, to psychological aspects.

Gender-responsive empowerment strategies in migrant worker protection programs require comprehensive and multi-dimensional approaches. This approach not only includes economic empowerment through skills training and capital access but must also integrate psychosocial support services, social reintegration support, and protection mechanisms that are sensitive to different gender needs. The integration of various empowerment dimensions is key to ensuring the long-term success of migrant worker protection programs that are truly responsive to the specific needs of men and women.

Migrant workers who have returned to their homeland (former migrant workers) often face various serious problems, such as physical violence, unpaid wages, and lack of access to health insurance. These problems not only impact physical conditions but also affect the mental-psychological health of former migrant workers. The threat of stress and psychological disorders can trigger actions that lead to suicide attempts. Therefore, it is important to conduct comprehensive monitoring and assistance, especially in mental-psychological health aspects.

Mental-psychological health assistance needs to include treatment and rehabilitation processes, both physical and mental, so that former migrant workers can recover and have the spirit to live a decent life again. This effort requires active involvement from medical personnel and professional psychology personnel to provide appropriate assistance and support. This foundation is outlined in Article 24 paragraph (1) of Law Number 18 of 2017 concerning Protection of Indonesian Migrant Workers, which regulates post-work protection, including facilities for returning to the area of origin, settlement of unfulfilled migrant worker rights, facilities for handling sick and deceased migrant workers, social

rehabilitation and social reintegration, and empowerment of migrant workers and their families.

However, it should be noted that institutional support in the form of psychological counseling for former migrant workers in Central Java during 2024 is still not available until now. Based on interviews with Mr. Danang, psychological assistance is still in the planning stage and is planned to begin implementation at the provincial level at the end of 2025. For the Cilacap Regency area itself, there is no clarity regarding implementation time or resource readiness in providing these services. This condition shows that although BP3MI has implemented protection programs in three stages of labor migration, the psychosocial dimension, which is an essential component in gender-responsive approaches, is still a weak point in the protection system, especially for handling the impact of gender-based violence experienced by female migrant workers.

The post-placement stage becomes an important phase to support social and economic reintegration after returning to the homeland for migrant workers. BP3MI's role is important to participate in ensuring the provision of information services, assistance, and skills training that can increase economic independence for migrant workers, especially women. In Cilacap Regency, skills training programs are adapted to the local potential of each village area with the provision of marketing-related materials. In addition to economic empowerment, adequate psychosocial support services are greatly needed for migrant workers to address psychological and social impacts, including the risks of gender-based violence experienced by migrant workers. Although there is a legal foundation regulated by law, the implementation of psychological services, especially in Central Java, has not been optimal and is planned to begin in 2025. This shows that psychosocial aspects in migrant worker protection, especially for female migrant workers, remain a serious and significant challenge that needs to be improved in the post-placement protection system.

5. Conclusions

Based on research results and discussion, this study reveals that BP3MI Central Java's role in protecting migrant workers from Cilacap Regency demonstrates systematic efforts through three protection stages: pre-placement, placement, and post-placement. However, the implementation of gender-responsive approaches faces significant limitations across all stages. The pre-placement stage lacks gender-differentiated Pre-Departure Orientation (OPP) materials despite male and female workers facing distinct sectoral risks. The placement stage shows progress through early warning systems and gender-based risk profile databases, yet requires comprehensive long-term evaluation. The post-placement stage focuses primarily on economic empowerment through skills training while neglecting essential psychosocial support services, particularly psychological counseling for gender-based violence victims. The findings directly address this study's objective to evaluate BP3MI's gender-responsive protection mechanisms and identify improvement areas. The evidence supports the hypothesis that despite systematic protection frameworks, gender-responsive implementation remains suboptimal. The persistence of 27 complaint cases from Cilacap in 2024, despite being Central Java's largest PMI hub with 13,274 placements (69.78% female), validates the gap between protection infrastructure and gender-responsive service delivery. The disconnect between Cilacap's Regional Regulation on Gender Mainstreaming (2023) and actual migrant worker protection practices further confirms the need for enhanced policy alignment and implementation mechanisms.

This research contributes significantly to migrant worker protection literature by providing empirical evidence of gender-responsive protection gaps in Indonesia's decentralized protection system. The findings offer practical policy recommendations for improving protection services: (1) revision of OPP curriculum with gender-responsive material integration; (2) strengthening gender-based early warning systems; (3) implementation of psychological counseling services; (4) development of gender-responsive protection evaluation mechanisms; and (5) improvement of inter-institutional coordination. These contributions extend beyond academic discourse to inform policy development at both provincial and national levels, potentially influencing BP3MI's operational guidelines and enhancing protection outcomes for Indonesia's 4.8 million migrant workers globally.

This study acknowledges several limitations that warrant consideration. First, the research focused exclusively on Cilacap Regency, limiting generalizability to other regions with different socio-economic contexts. Second, data collection relied primarily on institutional perspectives through BP3MI officials, potentially overlooking migrant workers'

direct experiences and perspectives. Third, the study's timeframe (2024) may not capture long-term protection outcomes or policy implementation effects. Future research should address these limitations through: (1) comparative studies across multiple regencies to identify regional variations in gender-responsive protection implementation; (2) longitudinal research examining protection outcomes over extended periods; (3) participatory research incorporating migrant workers' voices and experiences; (4) quantitative studies measuring the effectiveness of gender-responsive interventions; and (5) cross-national comparative analysis of gender-responsive migrant worker protection systems. Additionally, future studies should explore the intersection of gender with other identity factors such as age, education level, and rural-urban origin to develop more nuanced protection approaches.

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