

**The Role of NGOs in Promoting the
Rights of Indonesian Women Migrant
Workers: Activism of Migrant Labour
and Women's NGOs**

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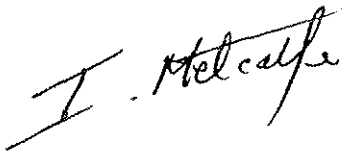
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TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

Malaysia and Singapore Society 14th Colloquium 2006
***BOUNDARIES AND SHIFTING SOVEREIGNTIES: MIGRATION, SECURITY ISSUES
AND REGIONAL COOPERATION***
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This is to confirm that Sylvia Yazid attended the above Colloquium in Armidale, Australia and delivered her presentation entitled *The Role of NGOs in Promoting the Rights of Indonesian Women Migrant Workers: Activism of Migrant Labour and Women's NGOs* at the Postgraduate Workshop.

Yours sincerely,



Ian Metcalfe

The Role of NGOs in Promoting the Rights of Indonesian Women Migrant Workers: Activism of Migrant Labour and Women's NGOs

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Paper presented in Postgraduate Workshop, 14th Colloquium, Boundaries and Shifting Sovereignties: Migration, Security Issues and Regional Cooperation, 30 November - 1 December 2006, University of New England, Armidale, Australia

Abstract

With the failure of states in managing labour migration, the activism of non-state actors in promoting the rights of migrant workers has become more crucial. Various research projects have been done on this issue, mainly on conditions in the receiving countries. Except for the Philippines, which is usually referred to as a success story in the protection of their migrant workers, research on the sending countries is still quite limited. Therefore, my research, which is just at an initial stage, aims to contribute to the existing body of research on labour migration, by examining NGO activism in sending countries, particularly Indonesia.

Women migrant workers have become a focus for activism due to their growing number, vulnerability to abuses, appalling working conditions and frequent exclusion from the protection of labour laws and policies.

In Indonesia, the issue of women migrant workers was initially embraced by women NGOs, followed later by migrant labour NGOs. This research will examine the activities of these two types of NGOs and their roles in promoting the rights of Indonesian women migrant workers. It aims to understand the approaches used and activities conducted by each type of NGO and also identify the challenges and opportunities. It is assumed that the way they frame the issue, the approaches used, their different characteristics, and the nature of their relationships with other actors involved (i.e. women migrant workers, government institutions, international organizations, agencies, and other local and international NGOs) determine their activities and roles at various levels (local, national and international).

Research Statement

This study proposes to assess the roles of Indonesian NGOs in promoting the rights of Indonesian women migrant workers. It aims to examine how the NGOs activism influences policies towards Indonesian women migrant workers.

Most research projects on the issue of labour migration focus on conditions in the receiving countries, meaning western countries or the more developed/industrialized countries in Asia. Except for the Philippines which is usually referred to as a success story in the protection of their migrant workers, research on the sending countries is still quite limited. Therefore, my research aims to contribute to the existing body of research on labour migration and NGO activism, by looking at the roles of NGOs in Indonesia as a sending country.

Women migrant workers have become a focus for activism due to their growing number, vulnerability to abuses, appalling working conditions and frequent exclusion from the protection of labour laws and policies. As a response to this condition, NGOs that are concerned with the issue of migrant workers, particularly women, started to emerge in Indonesia at the beginning of 1990s. In Indonesia, the issue of women migrant workers was initially embraced by women NGOs, followed later by migrant labour NGOs. This research will examine the activities of these two types of NGOs and their roles in promoting the rights of Indonesian women migrant workers.

Although a significant proportion of this study will look into how NGOs deal with the state, it attempts to go beyond merely discussing NGOs-state relationship. Based on the assumptions that NGOs conduct their activities within a political space framed by other actors and that NGOs could actually negotiate and expand this particular political space, the analysis of how NGOs conduct their activities and build relationships with other influential actors become a significant part of this study. It is assumed that the way they embrace and frame the issue, the approaches used, their different characteristics, and the nature of their relationships with other actors involved (i.e. women migrant workers, government institutions, international organizations, agencies, and other local and international NGOs) determine their activities and roles at various levels (local, national, regional and international).

The issue to be studied is sited in a context of Indonesia's changing political, economic, and social conditions, where democratization is seen as the main theme. In this context one of the main questions posed by this study is: to what extent do these changing conditions affect NGOs' activities and eventually their roles in promoting the rights of Indonesian women migrant workers.

Research Significance

This study is concern with three main issues. The first issue is the issue of Indonesian women migrant workers. This group of migrant labour has characteristics which differ them form other groups such as the temporary, contract based and informal nature of their work; their social status and attachment at home (in the family and society); and their vulnerability to abuses. Moreover, migration of women to work as domestic

workers has been part of the earlier organized labour migration from Indonesia and through times their number has increased significantly. Unfortunately, as also argued in other earlier studies, these characteristics are not adequately recognized in most policies on labour migration. Thus the first contribution of this study is to document how the issue of women migrant workers have been addressed in Indonesia as a sending country through government policies. This study aims to determine to what extent does the government's management of labour migrations provide protection of the rights of women migrant workers? Furthermore, this study will also document the efforts made at regional and international levels. In this context, the aim is to find out to what extent do efforts made by major regional and international institutions, such as ASEAN and ILO, specifically address the issue of women migrant workers.

The second issue is the activism of NGOs that are concern with women migrant workers in Indonesia as a sending country. This study contributes to the documentation of their efforts and activities in influencing the existing policy environment. An understanding of how they operate within the existing political space and negotiate or expand the political space will help to understand the roles they are playing in the management of women migrant workers in Indonesia. The issue of women migrant workers is embraced by various types of NGOs. However, this study will limit the analysis by using two types of NGOs as case studies, women's NGOs and migrant labour NGOs for two main reasons. Firstly, because the issue of women migrant workers were initially embraced by women's NGOs and followed later by migrant labour NGOs. Secondly, based on the assumption that there are two main considerations in analysing the issue of women migrant workers; their existence as women and as migrant workers. This study aims to understand the similar or different approaches used and activities conducted by each type of NGO and also identify the challenges and opportunities.

The third issue is the dynamics of relationships between NGOs and other actors. In conducting their activities, NGOs interacts with various actors at various levels. This study aims to document the negotiation, contestation, and/or cooperation between each type of NGO and actors such as women migrant workers themselves, recruiting agencies, the media, regional and international institutions and other NGOs in the sending and receiving countries. This will contribute to the understanding of NGOs strategies in achieving their objectives.

The three issues above are framed by the context of changing environment both inside and outside Indonesia. This study seeks to understand how the above three issues are influenced by the democratization process in Indonesia, a country which was led by an authoritarian regime and has been going through a dynamic reform period. Other main concerns of this study are: the changes of conditions and policies in receiving countries and the greater attention toward the issues of labour migration and trafficking at the regional and international levels. In this context, the contribution of this study is in understanding how NGOs have responded to national and international changes and to what extent do they utilize these changes to support their activities.

Research Background

The following sections will briefly describe the general conditions of labour migrations in Asia, focusing on the conditions of Indonesian women migrant workers. It aims to provide a background and rationales for the proposed research.

Globalization and Labour Migration

A discussion on labour migration cannot be entirely detached from discussions or debates on globalization. One of the main debates is on the role of the state. Kenichi Ohmae's work in 1995 has triggered a series of globalization literature on topics such as "the erosion of state sovereignty" and "the hollowing out of the state", and "the decline of the state". Authors like Kerr and Sweetman (2003: ix) argue that governments' ability to protect their citizens' rights from the threats of globalization and address various problems is declining. In a more positive note, Gills (2002: 26) maintains that the state, with its central role as a political actor, might be able to deal with the negative impacts of globalization. In short, although some have argued that the state's roles are declining, in many cases the state is still dominant. Thus, as argued by Young (2006: 19), the marginalization of the state's role remains a contested debate. The possible generally accepted notion is that the state has failed to perform in managing some crucial issues; one of them is the issue of women migrant workers. These failures have created loopholes that allow and provide legitimacy for a more active participation of non-state actors.

Another existing debate is on whether globalization is going to create economic or social convergence or homogenization among countries. Many have positively argued that globalization will eventually minimize the gaps between countries. However, authors like Gills (2002: 13) and Choi (2006: 149) argue that globalization does not necessarily lead to social or economic convergence. In fact, for the time being and most probably for the near future economic conditions between countries remain substantially different, thus, economic migration prevails.

Labour Migration in Asia

In the past few decades, with the increased flow of labour migration in many regions, there is an emergence of research on international and intra-regional labour migration. The features of this labour migration are that it crosses national boundaries, creates problems which are usually related to human rights issues, involves more actors (state and non-state), has high degree of complexity and sensitivity (between sending and receiving countries), and is highly feminized (particularly in the past decades), but the problems associated with it are yet to be addressed properly by actors involved.

The movements of labour can be traced quite far back in history where during colonial eras, particularly in Asia, labour was moved from one place to another to work on physical projects. After the independence of many Asian countries and during the era of economic development, the earlier bodies of research on Asian labour migration focus more on the internal migration which mainly involves labour migration from rural to urban areas. By the early 1990s, this trend shifted toward transnational labour migration with almost all countries in the region involved as sending or receiving countries, and some as both (Yamanaka and Piper 2005: 2).

Furthermore, affected by various factors and changes occurring the region, transnational migrations in Asia have also gone through transformations (Cohen 2006: 163; Ford 2004: 99-100; Yamanaka and Piper 2005: 11). The economic booms of the 1980s and 1990s, have led to the increased demand for short-term contract workers, particularly those working in the service sectors. Based on the available types of work (usually entertainment and domestic works), more women are involved, a phenomenon known as the feminization of labour migration. (Ball and Piper 2006: 214)

To some extent, labour migration offers economic benefits for both states and individuals. Inspired by the Philippine's government that established the Philippine Overseas Employment Administration to promote contract labour emigration, other sending countries have started to recognize the importance of labour migration to their states' economy (Yamanaka and Piper 2005: 4). Consequently, as observed by Iredale and Piper (2003: 15) more players are entering the international labour migration arena, providing greater supply than the demand for migrant labour. This has been disadvantaging for the migrant workers because it lowers wages and increases recruitment fees. Market pressures have meant migrants are more exploited and less protected. Rights of migrant workers are frequently sacrificed in an attempt to maintain employment competitiveness.

Significances of Conducting Study on Women Labour Migration

Common Aspects of Women Labour Migration

Most contemporary studies on labour migration include, if not focus on, the issue of female labour migration. This section will look into the aspects which have drawn the attentions toward women migrant workers in various studies. These aspects are also used as the rationales for focusing on the issue of women migrant worker in my proposed research.

The most common (used extensively in many studies) and tangible (can reasonably be measured by using statistics) aspect is the feminization of labour migration. The number of women working outside their countries has significantly increased in the past few decades. The increasing number of women migrant workers can be seen from tables in the work of Yamanaka and Piper (2005: 8-9).¹ They estimate that out of around 6.1 million migrant workers in the region, one-third or two million of them are women (Yamanaka and Piper 2005: 10).

The poor nature of their works is the next aspect. Most female migrations are for informal and service sectors and almost two-thirds of them are domestic workers. As asserted by Young (2006: 21), most of them are unskilled or semi-skilled. This has

¹ These tables show the number of unskilled female migrant workers by sending country in 1979 – 1996 and the occupation, immigration status, country of origin, and number of unskilled female migrant workers by receiving country/economy in the early 2000s.

limited their choices of work and bargaining positions in establishing working contracts. Thus, most of them are forced to do 3Ds (dirty, degrading and dangerous) works with temporary and short-term contracts basis.

It is also pointed out that although women workers' rights are frequently violated, policies on migrant labour have failed to protect their rights. With their non-permanent employment status and their lack of citizenship and political rights, they are usually not protected by labour laws in receiving countries (Young 2006: 20). Most labour migration policies are general in nature, lacking of special considerations on women migrant labour conditions. They only regulate the formal sectors, while many women migrant workers work in informal sectors. Those working as domestic workers are even more vulnerable because households are usually considered as private space, thus not covered by public policies. Since domestic work is usually considered as "an extension of unpaid 'service' naturally assigned to women according to traditional gender roles", this type of work is not considered as a "legitimate form of labour" by most national employment acts or labour standard laws (Yamanaka and Piper 2005: 16). In so doing, the workers are frequently excluded from legal protection. By this means, their employment conditions are highly based on the contracts and determined by their employers (Ball and Piper 2006: 220). It is also the view of Ford (2004: 100) that the growing number of temporary migrant workers working in the domestic service sectors has led to increased social and policy challenges, including the regulation of the informal sector, especially domestic sphere.

Women migrant workers have also become the focus of attention because of the high foreign-exchange revenues they bring for their countries of origin. For this reason, countries like the Philippines, Indonesia and Sri Lanka have been promoting female migration (Yamanaka and Piper 2005: 2). Moreover, this particular type of labour migrations are "favourable", particularly for receiving countries, because their temporary contract-based employment makes them "disposable" because they can be hired and fired at minimal cost (Ball and Piper 2006: 220; Choi 2006: 151).

Just like other types of migrations, women's decisions to migrate are highly influenced by conditions in both sending and receiving countries, also known as the "push-pull" factors. The main push factor in sending countries is usually the inability of these countries to accommodate the growing labour forces. The main pull factor in receiving countries is the labour shortages in certain occupations. As observed by Yamanaka and Piper (2005: 3) in countries like Singapore, Malaysia, Hongkong SAR, Taiwan Province of China, the Republic of Korea and Japan more well-educated women are shifting to managerial and professional occupations. In so doing, more workers are needed to do the traditional women roles such as taking care of the households, the children and the elderly. The solution is by acquiring domestic workers from neighbouring countries such as the Philippines, Indonesia, Viet Nam, Pakistan, Bangladesh.

According to Ball and Piper (2006: 220) the activities of various actors involved along the process (recruiters, transport operators, government officials, and employers) in both sending and receiving countries have also contributed to the vulnerability of women migrant workers. The same conditions actually apply to men migrant workers. But for women the condition becomes more complex because their migration inevitably involves the family and the society. When women migrate to work abroad,

they will have to leave their families for a significant period of time. Yamanaka and Piper (2005: 4) pointed out how this will most probably affect other members of their families, particularly the children, negatively. Women's affiliation and high attachment with their families and societies also influence their decision to migrate. Young (2006: 24) asserted that decisions in this context are usually made within "the context of family and communal decision-making". One of the main causes for this is the requirement to pay a significant amount of recruitment fees. This has forced women to borrow money, which in most cases the sources will be relatives.

Indonesian Women Labour Migration

The above aspects generally apply on Indonesian women labour migration. To argue for the importance of conducting a study on Indonesian women migrant workers, this section describes briefly the general condition of Indonesian women labour migration.

Authors like Ford (2002) and Iredale and Piper (2003, p. 21) sees the changes that happened in the 1980s as the triggers for Indonesian labour migration. In the mid-1980s Indonesia decided to liberalize its economy. This has changed the "structure of the labour market" and fundamentally changed "the realities and perceptions of Indonesian women's work" (Ford 2002: 90). Women from rural areas are forced to work as domestic servants in the urban areas and even abroad since their opportunities in traditional agriculture have decreased mainly due to "modernized farming technologies, population issues, and increased competition in the informal sector" (Ford 2002: 93). These explain Indonesia's decision to start developing its overseas labour contract program in the 1980s (2003: 21) which includes women working as domestic workers.

Despite the limited and unreliable records of labour migrations, particularly of the illegal ones, there are attempts to compile statistical data of Indonesian women labour migration and estimate the numbers of Indonesian women migrating to work abroad. According to Iredale and Piper (2003: 21), in the earlier years less than 100,000 workers were sent majorly to the Middle East and Malaysia as domestic workers. In the 1990s the numbers and destinations increased significantly. In Malaysia alone, by February 2000, there were close to 700,000 registered foreign workers and approximately 75 percent of them come from Indonesia (Gurowitz 2000: 865). Statistically, in the 1970s, women were outnumbered by men by a ratio of 3:1. By the early 1990s, almost twice as many women were placed overseas as men and by 2003, 70 % of Indonesian migrant workers are women. Statistics from Department of Manpower show that labour migration increased thirty-eight fold between 1974/9 and 1989/94. Within this overall increase in migration, the ratio of female labour migration increasing 116-fold from 3,817 women in 1974/9 to 442,310 women in 1989/94 (Krisnawaty 1997 quoted in Ford 2002: 96).²

² This trend continued in the late 1990s. Ford includes a table that shows the number of legal female migrants was almost double that of males between 1995 and 1998. Another table shows the overall occupational distribution of Indonesian migrant workers, with a large proportion is taken by domestic servants.

These numbers have not included those who migrate illegally. As stated by Ford (2002: 92), the “two faces” of Indonesian female labour migration are “the legal export of women's labour through authorised migrant labour programmes and the desperate attempts of women to migrate illegally in order to secure a better economic future”. If women who migrate legally and sign employment contracts still have to face various problems during their employment, those migrating illegally are more at risk. They can be repatriated or put in detention and they have no legal basis to claim their rights.

Significances on Conducting Study on NGOs Activism in Addressing the Issue of Women Migrant Workers

Management of migrant labour involves various actors in both sending and receiving countries. In each country the main actors are governments, NGOs, trade unions, recruiting agencies and employers in receiving countries. Most of the existing studies focus their analysis on macro level or in other words are state-centric. The major themes are usually: control, national security, issue of incorporation, including the impact of immigration on citizenship. However, partial analysis which focuses on government policies on the management of migrant workers will most likely lead to a conclusion that policies are exclusively made and implemented based on governments' political and economic considerations and interests. In practice, inputs and influences for policy making and implementations could come from other actors both from inside and outside the state.

As in other cases calling for greater involvement of non-state actors, particularly NGOs, the main argument for their having a bigger role is the failure of state and market (business) mechanism. Various efforts have been made by actors involved to address the issue of migrant labour. This section will briefly look into those efforts.

State and the Management of Migrant Labour

General Conditions in Sending and Receiving Countries

Although international migration has become a global phenomenon since the 1970s, migration has only started to emerge as a policy concern in many Asian receiving countries in the 1980s, when governments began to “legislate, formalize policies and collect statistics about migration” (Yamanaka and Piper 2005: 7).

The work of Yamanaka and Piper (2005) provides a quite comprehensive analysis on the various immigration policies implemented in Asian receiving and sending countries. Most receiving countries have adopted highly restrictive policies towards migrant workers usually based on the argument of protecting the balance of the society from the “mass invasion” of migration (Yamanaka and Piper 2005: 13). Protection of migrant workers' rights in receiving countries' Labour Laws is limited by the higher priority of protecting the employment of citizens. They tend to view migrants as merely a workforce that will solve their problem of labour shortages and put less emphasis on creating protective measures and gender-sensitive policies (Yamanaka and Piper 2005: iv). In the case of women migrant workers, as mentioned earlier, unlike migrant workers in formal sectors, most women working as domestic workers, with the informal and contract-based nature of their works, are usually

excluded from these laws and the conditions of their employment highly depend on the contracts they signed (Ball and Piper 2006: 219; Loveband 2006: 78).

As for the sending countries, they focus more on encouraging their women to migrate for the sake of increasing foreign revenues and less on ensuring migrant women's welfare (Yamanaka and Piper 2005: iv). According to Yamanaka and Piper (2005: 4), for governments of sending countries like Philippines, Indonesia, and Thailand and many others, receiving countries' increasing demands for contract labour are seen as a solution for their economic problems. It reduces the risk of social unrest caused by high unemployment rates. Hence, most sending countries' policies are aimed at maximizing earnings and maintaining good relationships with receiving countries, at the expense of workers' welfare and the mandate of protecting their citizen abroad (Ball and Piper 2006, p. 223). The fact that sending countries' Labour Laws can not be used to protect the migrant workers when they are working in the receiving countries does not reduce the importance of a comprehensive policy in the sending countries that regulate the management of labour migrations since problems could occur and be addressed before and after the employment abroad.

Indonesia: Policies and Legal Instruments on Women Migrant Workers

The late 1990s financial crisis has further increased the importance of labour migration for Indonesian economy (Young 2006: 18). Unfortunately, as observed by Iredale and Piper (2003: 21), the policy-making process reflects more emphasis on state interests, as opposed to migrant workers' interests. Policies on labour migration are made at the ministerial level with the main interest of reducing local unemployment. As a consequence, the policies are aimed more towards "facilitating the outflow of migrant labour" than "setting up costly protection mechanisms".

Indonesian government has failed to make appropriate responses to the issue of women migrant workers. Despite the various problems faced by Indonesian women migrant workers and the increased violence against them, Indonesian government's responses are far from adequate and appropriate since they frequently deny that problems exist or put the blame on the women migrant workers (Ford 2002, p. 97).

In terms of complying with international arrangements, Indonesia has ratified international conventions such as Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (CAT), Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) and Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (CEAFRD). However, Indonesia has yet to ratify the Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families which could be considered as a milestone in the international efforts of protecting the rights of migrant workers. Moreover, just like in any other cases, the problem for Indonesia is the implementation (Iredale and Piper 2003: 22).

Indonesia has produced Laws, Regulations and Official Statements that can be associated with the issue of Migrant Workers' Rights (can be obtained from www.menakertrans.go.id). The government has also signed some bilateral documents associated with the issue of migrant workers with several receiving countries. These documents will be consulted further in the research process. Examination of the

official documents will identify the general objectives and content of the documents while focusing on the parts that particularly address the issue of women migrant workers. Another important task is to identify NGO participation in the formulation of these official documents, their responses to the documents and their roles in the implementation process. It is crucial for this research to gain an understanding of the relationship between NGOs and the government in the processes of making and implementing policies.

International and Regional Human Rights Instruments and Agreements

Established body of literature has reviewed the existing regional and international human rights instruments that can be used to promote the rights of migrant labour. One of the major obstacles is the fact that many countries involved in labour migration practices are hesitant in adopting the international conventions and addressing this issue at the regional level.

International Arrangements

The major international instrument that aims to ensure protection and respect for the human rights of all migrants is the 1990 United Nations International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families (ICMWR) which entered into force on 1 July 2003. Although this convention is seen by many as a significant step, there are issues that prevent its full implementation. The major issue is the low ratification rate. Most countries involved in the practice of labour migration have yet to ratify this convention. The work of Iredale and Piper (2003) has investigated some sample countries to identify the obstacles for ratifying and they also provide recommendations for encouraging the ratifications. Some points of their observation are as follows (Iredale and Piper 2003: 48-55):

- In both sending and receiving countries, the Convention was introduced to the government circles through the promotion by active NGOs. Even with this, the Convention has not yet understood in details because many governments have yet to investigate the clauses and the legal implications of ratifying the Convention.
- The attention paid to the human rights of migrants is not as great as the attention to human rights in general.
- The human rights divisions at ministerial level are usually understaffed and underfunded, lacking experts on international law and human rights.
- The sending countries, since they are also employing foreign workers (usually skilled workers or expert from developed countries), fear that ratification will force them to comply with a higher standard of workers' rights, compared to the existing one for local workers. Furthermore, sending countries also fear losing markets by being "too demanding" and "rights conscious". It is also observed that neither of the labour sending countries has put in place any rights-based legislation that covers the pre-departure, working abroad and return phases.
- In the case of NGO participation, unlike the case of CEDAW and CRC, when ICMR was drafted there were only a few migrant NGOs operating globally, and they were not involved in the discussions and preparatory meetings.
- Since 11 September 2001, more priority is put on counter-terrorism efforts and national security. Consequently, anti-trafficking issues have become more important than the broader migrant worker rights.

- Ratification is hampered by lack of political will; therefore external assistance is required, including NGOs' local, regional and global campaigns.

Although ICMWR is seen as a convention that specifically addresses the issue of migrant workers, it is also argued that other human rights conventions might be more useful. As an example, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) is considered significant in addressing problems specific to female migrants, especially those working in the informal economy and private households (Yamanaka and Piper 2005: 33).

Regional Arrangements

At the regional level, governments tend to avoid discussion on the issue of migrants and their rights. As asserted by Ball and Piper (2006: 220) governments have been reluctant in discussing labour migration issues at the regional level and although these governments have individually ratified international human and labour rights conventions, there is no guarantee of "consistent or actual implementation".

The Asia Pacific region also lacks a specific human rights treaty and a region-wide mechanism. In Asia, unlike in Europe and elsewhere, there is no regional body that sets universal human rights standards and supervises and monitors international instruments (Yamanaka and Piper 2005: 13). Apart from the Philippines, none of the sending countries has a migrant worker bill that includes human rights similar to The Migrant Workers and Overseas Filipinos Act of 1995 (Iredale and Piper 2003: 16).

According to Ball and Piper (2006: 221) none of the Asia-Pacific key regional bodies - the Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN), the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) and the Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) forum - has migration as an integral element of their mandates. Thus, their attention toward migration is limited.

According to Ball and Piper (2006: 220) attention toward labour migration among ASEAN countries was triggered by the financial crisis. The Bangkok Declaration on Irregular Migration was adopted by ministers and representatives from 18 governments participating in the International Symposium *Towards Regional Cooperation on Irregular/Undocumented Migration* held in Bangkok in April 1999. They also list other regional dialogues that have been established to deal with specific aspects of migration since the Bangkok Declaration:

- The Intergovernmental Asia-Pacific Consultation on Refugees and Displaced Persons and Regional Ministerial Conference on People Smuggling, Trafficking in Persons, and Related Transnational Crime (Bali Process).
- The establishment of Global Commission in International Migration (GICM) by UN Secretary Kofi Annan in December 2003. On 17 and 18 May 2004 GICM organized its Regional Hearing for the Asia-Pacific Region in Manila.
- April 2003, a ministerial level meeting among Asian labour-sending countries was instigated by the governments of Sri Lanka and Indonesia in Colombo. The follow up meeting was in Manila, September 2004.

Ball and Piper (2006: 222) go on to argue that in the case of APEC, although there are members who are sympathetic to issues of core labour standards and workers' rights,

the narrow definition of APEC's central concerns and APEC's status as an umbrella organization for countries with various circumstances and national interests have made it difficult to bring the issue of migrant workers to the front. Also, since APEC is based on a government-private sector partnership, it is difficult for other social forces to challenge. By this means, minimum or no NGO involvement.

Labour Unions and the Issue of Migrant Workers

Several studies have shown how labour unions have focused more on local labour issues and leave migrant labour issues at the periphery. Consequently, the issue of migrant labours is generally embraced by NGOs. However, as argued by Ford (2004: 101), in general organized labour literature, non-union labour organization has not gained adequate acknowledgement, because for both practitioners and scholars in this area, unions are "the only legitimate vehicle for workers' collective action". Ford (2004: 101) continues to argue that the existing models of organized labour has been challenged by migrant labour NGOs, mainly based on the conditions of women migrant workers. Firstly, most women work in homes or informal sectors, while unions generally focus on the formal sectors. Secondly, the few unions that embrace the issue of foreign workers tend to focus more on those employed in the formal sector with long-term contracts, while women usually work on short-term contracts. With the above two realities, in Asia, "advocacy for overseas migrant worker rights" and "organization of foreign domestic workers" have mainly become the activism of non-union bodies.

In Indonesia, Ford (2004: 106) observes that Suharto's regime weakened their position especially with the banning of communist and other leftist unions and the amalgamation of unions in the mid-1980s into one, state-sanctioned, state-controlled union. This union was used to control workers domestically and build an international image for ILO and donors that Indonesia has a formal structure of labour representation. This trend is paralleled by the emergence of national and global activist NGOs in the mid 1980s, largely due to the shift toward a less oppressive national environment.

Based on her observations, Ford (2004: 111) concludes that the boundaries between trade unions, migrant worker organizations, and migrant labour NGOs in Indonesia seems to be more fluid. Indonesian trade unions such as the *Konfederasi Serikat Pekerja Seluruh Indonesia* (KSPSI, Confederation of All Indonesian Trade Unions), have formed migrant labour divisions in their bodies (Ford 2004, p. 111). Nevertheless, it can be argued that unions cannot be expected to shift their focus significantly from national labour, especially when the list of problems and workers rights violations that need to be addressed in Indonesia is still very long.

The Need for Greater NGOs Involvement in the Management of Migrant Labours

The above explanation has shown how various efforts have been made by the main actors to address the issue of migrant workers. However, at this stage, there are several challenges that can be noted about the existing management of migrant workers. Firstly, efforts made by these actors at each level are still disaggregated. A clear example is how agreement at the international or regional is not necessarily

translated to policies at the national level. Secondly, there is a degree of contestations between actors such as between governments and NGOs and between labour unions and NGOs. Thirdly, in terms of protecting the rights of migrant workers, more attention is paid to and more efforts are made in addressing conditions in receiving countries. Fourthly, although Indonesian government has formulated policies, laws and regulations to manage the labour migration, it has not been able to address the problems faced by migrant workers. One of the main criticisms toward the existing policies is it is yet to adequately consider women migrant workers' conditions and address specifically the problems they are facing. This "exclusion" of women migrant workers from labour migration related policies will be the main concern of my research. The question to be answered in this context is "how do NGOs influence policy making and implementation to significantly include the issue of women migrant workers?".

Although governments are still the main actors in term of creating policies and regulating the process of migration, as observed through many decades, the state has yet to address the problems faced by migrant labour. In fact, in many instances non state actors' efforts have brought more significant results, particularly in giving immediate assistance to migrant labour facing problems such as abuses and forced repatriations. It is also observed that there is a complex pattern of relationships among the actors which frequently includes overlapping and contesting efforts. This might raise the issues of which actor should actually be the main caretaker of this issue or in the case of establishing cooperations between state and non-state actors, what kind of relationship should exist among them.

It might be argued that in many countries, especially in a developing country like Indonesia, the roles of NGOs are debatable. Most of their success stories are from their activities at the grassroots level. The local or geographical nature of NGOs' activities has been considered as the cause for their low success rate at the national and international level. In so doing various literatures on NGOs have highlighted the need to scale up NGOs' activities and build networks to enhance their ability in shaping policies at the national and international levels. Moreover, the lack of acknowledgement of NGOs' role by state entities has created barriers for NGOs in influencing policies. However, in the past decade the number of NGOs dealing with migrant labour issues is increasing and many of them have started to make efforts at the national and international level. Gradually state and international organizations have started to involve NGOs. Partly due to the wave of democratization in developing countries, including Indonesia, there are now channels available for NGOs' involvement in the policy cycle. Hence, a significant part of my research will look into the impacts of these changes on NGOs activism and how NGOs make use of the more accommodative environment to increase their roles in promoting the rights of women migrant workers.

Literature Review

Existing studies have tried to look into the issues of labour migration from various angles and almost all of them include analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of policies used to manage migrant labour, assess the efforts made by actors involved (state and non-state) and try to provide policy recommendation to solve the problems. However, heavier focus on labour migration from developing to developed countries

and migrant labour conditions in receiving countries can be observed in works on intra-Asia labour migration. The general themes of these studies are the management of migrant labour in receiving countries, the working conditions, the violations of migrant workers' rights and the strengths and weaknesses of existing policies and international conventions. For example, Loveband (2006) discusses about the ethnicization of migrant workers in Taiwan through a term "positioning of the product", where migrant workers are discriminatorily "selected" based on "appropriateness" of their ethnic to the jobs available. Nasution (2001) focuses on the conditions of construction workers in Malaysia from specific areas in Indonesia. It may be argued that since most violations of migrant workers' rights occur in receiving countries, efforts to address the issue should be concentrated in these countries. However, a more comprehensive understanding of the issue would require analysis of the various elements involved at every stage of the migration process. It is apparent that problems are superficial even at the initial stage of labour migration (i.e. pre-departure) and they continue to exist even after the repatriation of the migrant workers.

A continuously growing number of research on labour migrations, including those happening in Asia, has highlighted the failure of states in managing labour migration. And just like in any cases with the failure of the states, the activism of non-state actors in promoting the rights of migrant workers has become more crucial. Various studies on migrant labour have included discussions of NGO activism. However, most of them are on NGO activism in the receiving countries. Several studies have looked into NGOs activism in the Philippines as a sending country, which can be considered as a success story for they have managed to put pressure on the government to establish a system at home and made agreements with the receiving countries to better manage the sending of their migrant workers and protect their rights during the process of working abroad. Unfortunately, the number of studies that specifically look into NGOs activism in Indonesia is still limited. As asserted by Ford (2004: 113), there is a need to "... systematically compares instances of activism by and on behalf of transnational migrant labour across a range of sending and receiving countries and documents common patterns across those instances..." This research intends to cover a smaller but significant portion of this agenda which is the roles of women's and migrant labour NGOs in influencing the policies on women migrant worker in Indonesia as a sending country.

In this preliminary stage of my research, several literatures have been consulted. This section reviews various studies on Indonesia that deal with the main themes of my research, which are: issues related to labour migration; women migrant workers and their rights; human rights; NGOs development and activism; and NGOs relationship with other main actors (local and international, particularly the government). The following review is divided into two major categories of literature: Labour Migration in Asia and NGOs

Literatures on Labour Migration in Asia

There is an extensive body of literature that provides general overviews of labour migrations in Asia. A historical understanding of the development of labour migration in Asia can be obtained from the work of Kaur (2004a) which focuses on the international division of labour and labour transformation in the context of

globalization. Globalization, transformation and change is also the main theme in the works of authors like Young (2006) who looks into the changing management of migrating service workers in the Asia-Pacific; Cohen (2006) who analyzes the international division of labour and the shift of migratory patterns; and Abella (2005) who identifies the emerging social issues.

The works of Piper and partners provide insights on labour migration in Asia on a range of issues such as: gender aspects of labour migration, feminization and empowerment of labour migration, NGOs involvements, the rights of migrant workers, the political aspect of labour migration and policies politics, evaluation of existing policies and trafficking (Ball and Piper 2006; Piper 2002, 2003, 2004a, 2004b, 2005a, 2005c, 2005b, 2006; Yamanaka and Piper 2005)

A general overview of Indonesian labour migration is provided in the country study written by Ford (2003) which includes political, economic and social issues; description of main migrant labour organizations (NGOs) and unions, their activities and relationships among them.

Significant number studies have also looked into NGOs activism in receiving countries. Among them are the work of Piper (2003) which looks into regional, and local nongovernmental organization responses in Asia toward violation of women migrant workers' rights based on interviews in Japan and the work of Gurowitz (2000) which identify the opportunities and constraints for activism on migrant rights in Malaysia.

Some works have also identified the push and pull factors that motivate people to migrate. In the case of labour migration the main factors are economic as reflected in the work of Abella (2004). Although some might argue that poverty is one of the main push factors for migration, the works of authors like Choi (2006), Castles (2002), Young (2006), and Abella (2002) show that labour migration today is by some means exclusive because it can only be done by those, among the poor, who have the access to the network and who can pay the fees involved such as training fees for preparing themselves to meet the employment requirements, tickets and penalties for breaching contracts. These have excluded the poorer member of the societies.

As a response to the violations of migrant workers' rights, studies have been done on the available and possible mechanisms for the protection of migrant workers' rights. Ball and Piper (2006) provide a picture of the regional dynamics of migrant workers' rights recognition in the Asia-Pacific, emphasizing the need for bilateral and multilateral cooperation and transnational activism by NGOs. International efforts to protect migrant workers' rights are also made by international institutions. Battistella (1993) has looked into Vienna Declaration in the context of migrants' rights and NGOs involvement. The work of Abella (2002) and Annequin (2002) evaluates International Labour Organizations' (ILO) efforts in protecting the rights of migrant workers through its conventions. Another evaluation of international instruments was done by Iredale and Paper (2003) who identify the obstacles to the signing and ratification of the Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers.

Another strand of literature takes security perspectives in analyzing migrant labour issues. Kaur (2004b) has looked into the issue of migrant workers in the context of

border security, explaining how mobility of migrant workers are managed at the border areas. Furthermore, the experience of migrant workers, with the violations of their rights, could be placed in a human security context. Pioneered by Ullman (1983), scholars, particularly those with feminist views like Tickner (1992) and Hansen (2000) have proposed for extension and redefinition of the concept "security" to cover more than political and military aspects. Although the work of Hadiwinata (2006) does not discuss the issue of migrant workers – he focuses of the securitization of poverty in Indonesia – his work provides a significant insights on the experience of NGOs in securitizing an issue in Indonesia and concludes that there is a need for "solutions from outside the state boundary, which focus on self-reliance and self-help activities of grassroots population without state intervention". His analysis could be employed in my research as one of the sources of general understanding on the political environment for NGOs activism in Indonesia.

Lohrmann (2000) identifies that movements of persons across borders affect security in international relations at three levels: the national security agendas of receiving and transit countries; the relations between States; individual security and dignity of migrants and refugees. One of the points that he makes is that upon their return, economic migrants could burden the home country and worsen the already unstable social and political situation. A good example in Indonesia's case is the Nunukan humanitarian tragedy. When Malaysia decided to repatriate thousands of Indonesian illegal migrant workers most of them were camped in Nunukan in a refugee like situation, creating a human security issue. It shows how the government of Indonesia was not prepared with contingency plan for a situation like this.

An interesting development in the studies on women migrant worker is the views of some scholars that see the labour migration of women as an opportunity for their empowerment. Although many have claimed that most women workers are disadvantaged throughout their migration process, some scholars believe that women migration away from their family groups can be positive and empowering for women because they see migration as a cause and a consequence of women's empowerment. Yamanaka and Piper (2005: 5) cited Hugo (2000) who claims that with migrating away from home, women's access to resources and power from which they have been systematically excluded will be improved, thus changes will occur in their identity, values and actions. They regard empowerment of migrant women as a political process in relation with the democratization process in Asia. In their view, women are seen as active and powerful players in the increasing civic activities in Asia. However, this view should be treated critically since it requires the condition where women work in formal sector occupations within a legal framework for an extended period, which is usually not the case for Asian, particularly Indonesian, women migrant workers. Yamanaka and Piper (2005, p. 6) go on to suggest that although earlier scholars tend to regard Asian migrant women as "passive victims of patriarchy and global capitalism", latest research have shown that migrant women are "developing greater individual autonomy, engaging in everyday resistance, and taking collective actions". Their activities might be still "isolated" and "fragmentary", thus yet to result in improvement of their rights. However, they observe the existence of growing possibilities for "collective actions through local and global networks". The efforts of Indonesian women migrant workers to organized themselves and fight for their rights in Hongkong and the establishment of Buruh Migran Indonesia (BMI) which consists of ex-migrant workers are examples of women migrant workers' collective actions. A

discussion on women's and migrant labour NGOs responses toward the emergence of these migrant workers' organizations will be part of this study. It is interesting to find out whether women's and migrant labour NGOs view migrant workers' organizations as potential "partners" or "competitors" for their activism.

Literatures on NGOs

Roles of NGOs

In analysing the activism of NGOs, the work of Korten (1990) is frequently referred to by other works on NGOs since it provides a general understanding of types of NGOs, their developments and the roles they are adopting. Although Korten's work is in the development context, since the issue of development and human rights are highly interrelated, his framework will be used in my research, partly to identify whether NGOs which are concern with the issue of migrant workers have similar or different experiences to those which are more development-oriented. Moreover, as argued by Korten and Quizon (1995: 142), in the early 1990s the distinctions between social development and advocacy groups have begun to blur.

Korten (1990: 2) divides the various types of NGOs into four categories:

- Voluntary Organizations (VO) that pursue a social mission driven by a commitment to shared values.
- Public Service Contractors (PSCs) that function as market-oriented nonprofit businesses serving public purposes.
- People's Organizations (POs) that represent their members' interests, have member accountable leadership, and are substantially self-reliant.
- Governmental Nongovernmental Organizations (GONGOs) that are creations of government and serve as instruments of government policy.

Korten (1990: 115-127) also argues that NGOs often go through an evolution which he identified as stages or generations of strategic orientation, "each moving further away from alleviating symptoms toward attacking ever more fundamental causes". The generations are :

- Generation One, also known as Relief and Welfare where NGOs conduct direct service deliveries. At this stage, NGOs' priority is more on responding to "immediate and visible need" rather than identifying the causes of these needs and NGOs are seen as the doer and the beneficiaries have passive role. Nevertheless Korten argues that this kind of effort is merely a "temporary alleviation of the symptoms of underdevelopment".
- Generation Two, focuses on Small-scale, Self-reliant Local Development, where NGOs develop "the capacities of the people to better meet their own needs through self-reliant local action". Its main concern is sustainability and is often referred to as *community development* strategies. By promoting local self-reliance, it is expected that benefits will be sustained by community self-help action beyond the period of NGO assistance. "Empower" is the key term of this stage and the main target is groups in the society. The community is expected to actively involve in decision making and implementation. At this stage NGOs are seen more as mobilizer and their focus is human resource development or empowerment. Korten's criticism of this generation lies on the fact that many of

the efforts tend to pay “lip service to self-reliance” and dependence on the assisting NGO continues to exist.

- Generation Three focuses on Sustainable Systems Development; looks beyond the individual community; and seeks changes in specific policies and institutions at local, national and global levels. It is based on the assumption that “Self-reliant village development initiatives are likely to be sustained only so long as they are linked into a supportive national development system”. However, since the existing systems are usually not supportive, they need to be changed and NGOs take substantial leadership roles in catalyzing them. The efforts of NGOs at this stage involve working with major national agencies to help them reorient their policies and work modes in ways that strengthen broadly-based local control over resources; creating new institutions of significant size to provide essential local services on a sustained, self-financing basis; and creating a policy and institutional setting that facilitates, rather than constraining, just, sustainable and inclusive local development action. Changes are created by “building the capacity of the people to make demands on the system” and at the same time “working to build alliances with enlightened power holders in support of action that makes the system more responsive to the people”.
- The Fourth Generation’s, Facilitating People’s Movements, goal is “energizing a critical mass of independent, decentralized initiative in support of a social vision”. The focus is on the communication of ideas and information through the mass media, newsletters, recorded media, school curricula, major media events, study groups and social networks of all types to invigorate voluntary action within and outside formal organizations for social transformation.

In line with the above generations, Korten (1990) identifies four critical roles for voluntary action within people’s development movement. The first role is Catalyzing Systems Change, where VO’s aims are “redefining policies, transforming institutions, and helping people define, internalize and actualize a people-centered development vision” (Korten 1990: 185-186). Although it might involve protest actions but Korten argues that “the focus is on advocacy-acting for-rather than on protest-acting against”. The second role is System Monitoring and Protest. Since there are risks of abuses of power that violate both the law and accepted norms of human behavior, transformation agenda requires monitoring actions with “a system of citizen surveillance that brings abusive behavior into the open for public scrutiny and action” (Korten 1990: 187). The third role is Facilitating Reconciliation with Justice where many VOs have worked to relieve the suffering of the victims of conflict. The main concern in this role is political neutrality of the VOs (Korten 1990: 188). The fourth role is Implementing Large-scale Service Programs. Although the general assumption is that government has a natural responsibility and ability to deliver essential services, it is also observed that service has not been delivered properly (Korten 1990: 191). However, many NGOs service delivery activities are considered “episodic, scattered and ad hoc”. There is no guarantee that the success of one NGO will be replicated by others.

Korten (1990) also suggests that there are competencies that NGOs should develop to play the above roles which are:

- As Advocates, Educators and Catalysts
- As Monitors and Whistle Blowers
- As Mediators, Conciliators and Bridge Builders

- As Large-scale Program Implementers

In my research, Korten's categorization of types of NGOs, generations, and roles will be used as a framework in identifying the roles of NGOs based on their main activities. As mentioned earlier, Korten's work is based on development issues and I have not come across any literatures which do similar categorization for human rights or migrant labour NGOs. Thus one of the tasks is to identify whether these categorization also applies on the NGOs I am studying. If yes, to what extent.

Linking NGOs and other Actors

Another focus of this research is on understanding the complex relationship between NGOs and other actors, particularly states and international institutions. In this context most existing studies look into the relationship between NGOs and States, or NGOs and Donors, or the more complex relationship among the three of them. The work of Hulme and Edwards (1997) belongs to the last group where they try to map out the relationship between NGOs (North and South), states and donors in the context of development, democratization, and civil society. To support their arguments, they provide diagrams and matrix which describe the complex relationships.

The relationship between NGOs, states, and international agencies is also the focus of Rumansara's (1996) work. Focusing on NGOs' advocacy activities, he uses International NGO Forum of Indonesia (INFID) as an example of network building efforts.

A focus on NGOs – state relationships is taken by Riker (Riker 1995a, 1995c, 1995b). Riker (1995a: 29-34) identifies five main modes of interaction between government and NGOs which includes: autonomous/benign neglect; facilitation/promotion; collaboration/cooperation; cooptation/absorption; and containment/sabotage/dissolution. In line with this categorization, Riker (1995c: 114-116) identifies five types of policy environment which includes coercive, cooptive, benign, conducive, and enabling policy environment. These categorizations will be used in understanding the similar or different responses of Indonesian governments from different eras toward NGOs which are concern with the issue of migrant workers. In this context the questions to be answered is "What kind of policy environment and modes of interactions exist at a particular period and how does it affect the activism of the studied NGOs?" It is believed that by answering this question, combined with the identification of existing political space (explained below), will help in determining the roles of NGOs in influencing policies toward women migrant workers.

A different focus is taken by Ford (2004), who examines the contestation between migrant labour NGOs, migrant labour associations, and trade unions, both in practice and in literatures on organized labour.

Political Space of NGOs

In understanding the activism of NGOs it is crucial to include the analysis of the arena or environment where they conduct their activities. The analysis of the context in which NGOs operate and interact with other actors, also known as political space, can

be found in the works of Riker (1995a) and Shigetomi (2002).³ Riker (1995a: 23) define political space as “the arena in which non-state actors may undertake initiatives independently vis-a-vis the state”. This political space is sensitive and ever-changing, thus all actors including NGOs generally attempt to shape it in accordance with their interests. The case is usually for NGOs to expand their space by influencing the parameters drawn by the existence and power of other actors, particularly the state (Riker 1995a; Shigetomi 2002). Riker (1995a: 124-125) explain the strategies that could be employed by NGOs in expanding their political space which include: actively support the development of an accountable NGO sector; build and strengthen NGO networks at local, national and international levels; develop indicators for assessing people-centred development which are accessible and comprehensible to the people; and continue to educate and to reorient government officials (and donors) about NGO purpose, roles and the vision of people-centred development.

NGOs Activism in Indonesia

Development of NGOs in Indonesia

Most works on NGOs in Indonesia include a brief look at the development of NGOs in this country. They tend to agree that the root of NGOs existence can be traced far back in history. Service delivery oriented NGOs had operated in Indonesia since the 1950s. In the 1980s and 1990s, a new wave of more politically focused NGOs emerged. National and international changes provided NGOs with an opportunity to move beyond the provision of basic services. The economic liberalization of the mid-to late 1980s, the end of Cold War, and the period of *keterbukaan* (political “openness”) in Indonesia enabled NGOs to change their approach. The less oppressive conditions at home and strengthening connections between international aid and trade and human rights allowed NGO activists to be more direct about their agendas and more openly confrontational. (Ford 2004: 106)

When researching on NGOs in Indonesia, especially during New Order Era, one of the more comprehensive sources to refer to is of Eldridge (1995). In this work, he discusses the three concepts that are closely associated with Indonesian NGOs: participation, democratization and self-reliance. He also states that Indonesian NGOs are commonly referred to as self-reliant community institutions (Lembaga Swadaya Masyarakat - LSM) and institutions for developing community self-reliance (Lembaga Pengembangan Swadaya Masyarakat - LPSM). Although often used interchangeably, LSMs are primary groups of poor people or local groups which work directly with them, whereas LPSMs are larger, usually city-based groups which support or assist the development of smaller groups. With the LSM/LPSM differentiation, Eldridge continues to classify Indonesian NGOs into big NGOs (BINGOs) and little NGOs (LINGOs) and explain the relationship between them.

Specifically looking at State-NGOs relationship in Indonesia, Sakai (2002) argues that under the authoritarian Suharto regime (1965-98), NGOs in Indonesia managed to grow in numbers and developed various types of activities. He believes that this is due to the inconsistencies of control which in a way can be used by the regime for its own advantage, but at the same time created room for movement for the NGOs. Sakai

³ Shigetomi goes further to include economic space and combine it with political space.

builds his argument by looking at the historical development of NGOs in Indonesia. He briefly covers the pre-independence era, Sukarno era, Suharto era, showing the dynamics of state-NGOs relationship. Sakai (2002: 165-166) identifies several features of Indonesian NGOs after Soeharto's era. An interesting feature included in his observation is that despite the increased importance of advocacy, particularly since the 1990s, NGOs dealing with social and economic development are still dominant compared to advocacy-type NGOs in fields like human rights and labour issues.

Sakai (2002: 167-169) also classifies Indonesian NGOs into three groups: from the points of view of areas of activities, attitudes towards the government, and period of activities. The first group consists of NGOs which emerged to deal with poverty issues (Bina Desa, Dian Desa, Bina Swadaya, etc.). Many NGOs that appeared in the 1970s fall into this group. The second group consists of NGOs oriented towards the empowerment of civil society that emerged in response to pressure to depoliticize. They go beyond development activities that supplement those of the government and develop activities combining advocacy and development aimed at raising the consciousness of ordinary people as well as persons related to the government. The third type consists of NGOs that emerged from the 1980s to the 1990s, with the Indonesian environmental movement as catalyst.

Labour NGOs were established by unionists and human rights activists from the early to mid 1980s as a response to the erosion of trade union rights. Labour NGOs took on one or both of two complementary roles: organizing workers into informal and semi-formal workers' organizations or conducting advocacy activities at a national and international level (Ford 2004: 107). Labour migration became a focus for middle-class NGO activists in the early 1990s, almost a decade after NGOs first began to become involved in labour organizing and advocacy in Indonesia. The establishment of NGOs concerned with labour migration was driven by two factors: the rapid rise in overseas labour migration in the 1980s and the increased feminization of labour migration and the visibility of abuses of female overseas migrant workers' rights (Ford 2004: 107).

Women NGOs in Indonesia

Since this research will look into a particular group of migrant workers, women, another body of literature consulted is the one on women NGOs in Indonesia. A description of the earlier growth of women's political role in Indonesia can be found in the work of Nadia (1996). She argues that in the 1970s, the government decided "the most suitable role" for women in the national development process by creating an organizational framework and kept that framework away from politics. This non-political movement for women is stipulated in an act issued in 1974 (Law No. 5, 1974) which stated that the suitable roles to be played by women are: (1) wife; (2) household manager; (3) child bearer; (4) educator; (5) citizen. These five roles are portrayed as obligatory and natural, and encapsulated as ideology and institutionalized by the government (Nadia 1996: 239).

Organizations for wives of civil servants and members of the armed forces, called Dharma Wanita and Dharma Pertiwi, were used to mobilize women's power to assist the government in implementing national development programs. Such organizations could help the government control citizens, notably through the family. The

institutionalization by the government of women's nature and the moving of women from the public to the household arena effectively closed women's mouths. In the rural area, women were pushed to the sidelines by new agricultural mechanisms and limited job opportunities. In order to survive, they have to leave their villages for the cities and very low paying jobs as factory workers, housemaids and prostitutes. Their rights were not protected and they could not organize to defend themselves (Nadia 1996: 240).

This condition is responded by various NGOs, both women's NGOs and other NGOs which have programs for the welfare of women, which also involves advocacy (Nadia 1996: 241). However, Nadia (1996: 242) argues that advocacy by NGOs has employed elitist methods, in that they have discussed and formulated problems faced by women without involving women in that process. This was worsened by the elitist attitudes of NGOs themselves, NGOs are not mass organizations, but generally made up of a few people from the middle class.

In line with Nadia's argument, Ford (2002: 100) states that women's NGOs emerged as a mechanism through which affluent, educated, middle-class Indonesian could become involved in political and social activism in the 1980s. Due to political and legal contexts of this era, their aims and activities were presented using the language of development. She emphasizes how women NGOs seems to cope with changes in policy and environment better compared to labour-oriented NGOs.

NGOs and the Issue of Migrant Workers

I have also consulted literatures that more specifically look into NGOs activism in relation with the issue of women migrant workers. The following section will review and categorize some of these literatures.

Coverage of Analysis (Sending, Receiving Countries, Regional, International or Multilevels)

Works on NGOs and migrant labour can be categorized based on the area or level that they cover in their analysis. A growing and quite established body of literature has looked into NGO activism in receiving countries. The work of Gurowitz (2000) reviews the convergence of two trends in Southeast Asia, an increase in "civil society" activity including action by nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) and an increase in various forms of migration, through the examination of activism on behalf of migrant workers in the largest receiving state of migrants in Asia, Malaysia. Yamanaka and Piper (2005) also focus on the policies of destination countries and the responses by grassroots forces. They include a brief discussion on some good practices from the Philippines, as a sending country. Furthermore, since they discuss NGOs' role in supporting the implementation of the Convention on Migrant Workers, they discuss more about the rise of transnational advocacy network in the region.

Other scholars like Ball and Piper (2006) focus more on NGOs' role at various levels. They conclude their work by directing attention to the role of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in promoting the protection of migrant labour in regional and global agendas.

Changing / Shift of NGOs' Activism

The literature reviewed also shows how NGOs, through time, have changed or shifted their activities in response to changes in their environment. Yamanaka and Piper (2005), for example, argue that non-governmental actors' role in protecting and advocating migrant women's rights at local, national and transnational levels has increased significantly. This shift is caused by several interrelated factors, but mainly due to the failure of the state. The lack of adequate domestic laws that protects migrants has encouraged Asian activists to employ arguments and moral standards embodied in international conventions in their efforts to enhance the rights of migrants and women. As an example, Asian national and transnational NGO, are incorporating ICRMW's normative frameworks of the rights of migrants and their families into their platforms and agendas in local languages and disseminating them through their information channels. The increased activism can also be observed among feminist groups and women's organizations in Southeast Asia, promoting migrants' rights, especially for women, as part of their political struggles for women's rights and gender equality (Yamanaka and Piper 2005: 32).

NGO activism might start by meeting the needs of migrants, especially of women, and channeling services and supports to them while avoiding political confrontation with the state in their efforts to assist migrants. However, recent developments show that some of the service providers have evolved into politically active groups, realizing that they need to address the root causes of migrants' problems which include lack of humane policies and political will to implement them.(Yamanaka and Piper 2005: 22).

Challenges for NGOs

Although the opportunities for NGOs to increase their activism are increasing, there are still challenges that need to be addressed. The first challenge comes from inside the NGOs themselves. Most of them are small in size and have limited funds, staff and expertise. Like many other NGOs, NGOs that are concerned with migrant labour issues are generally funded by external donors. The concern is, whether NGOs will be excessively influenced by donors' interests (Ford 2004: 103). Another challenge is related to the membership of these NGOs. Most of them are from middle to upper-middle class backgrounds, instead of the working class, making it difficult, in some cases, for migrants of lower class origins to relate to them (Ford 2004; Yamanaka and Piper 2005: 30).

The challenges from outside the NGOs come from the combined interests of recruitment agencies, employers, and governmental officials. According to Iredale and Piper, (2003: 50) this is a difficult force to counter by NGOs and sympathetic individuals within the government structure.

Another challenge is the lack of awareness, among many migrants, of their basic human rights (Iredale and Piper 2003: 52).

Opportunities/Possible Future Direction

Despite the above challenges, wider options of activism, in terms of form and direction, are available for NGOs. Ball and Piper (2006: 229) emphasize the importance of transnational activism. According to them, NGOs

“need to ensure that bilateral and multilateral advances in the welfare of workers do not remain at the level of rhetoric but are made concrete by the creation of internationally binding agreements based on the real recognition of the basic human rights of migrant workers, and particularly the most vulnerable: women.”

They also consider transnational activism as “the key to articulating concerns and formulating strategies in multiple political arenas” and try to draw attention to the significance of 'globalization from below' supported by transnational NGO links in the Asia-Pacific.

Based on their observation, Iredale and Piper (2003: 51) argue that although most NGOs in sending and receiving countries prefer to lobby for the implementation or amendment of national laws or bills rather than merely concentrating on promoting the UN Convention, some NGOs in the sending countries do engage in lobbying their governments to ratify the ICMWR. These NGOs perform various activities and one of the most commonly practiced is advocacy.

An interesting development, particularly in the receiving countries, faced with inequality and injustice due to their gender, nationality and class, migrants themselves have begun to organizing for their shared goals (Yamanaka and Piper 2005: 23).

The success story of the Philippines' NGOs activism in improving the conditions of their migrant workers abroad has proven the significance of NGOs activism in sending countries. As suggested by the statement of a Filipino activist, "The key to successful campaigning abroad is a strong movement 'at home'", the success of activism in receiving countries is determined by related activism at home and the linkage or networks that exist between them (Yamanaka and Piper 2005: 29). Thus, one of the urgent agendas for NGOs is to extend the scope of their activism. The People's forum of Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC), an NGO forum which was held simultaneously with APEC ministerial conferences and was concerned with issues like worker rights and immigration, is an example of an attempt to improve NGO networking. The People's Forum holds regional conferences of activists and academics conducts regional NGO meetings in preparation for major international conferences such as the Vienna World Conference on Human Rights, and generally focuses on networking among Asian NGOs (Gurowitz 2000: 869-870).

Linking NGOs with Migrant/Human Rights

For various reasons, the issue of migrants' rights is often discussed in a more general context of human rights. In practice human rights concepts are usually easier to understand and accept compared to migrants' rights. Moreover, most NGOs and their activists who are concerned about migrants' rights have their roots in human rights activism or are using human rights concepts in framing their activities. In relation to this, analysis of the promotion of migrant workers' rights could benefit from an understanding of NGOs activism in a broader context of human rights such as reflected in Bangkok NGOs declaration on human rights (Asian Cultural Forum on Development. 1993).

An example of studies that relate the issue of migrant workers with human rights, international rights instruments and NGOs is the work of Battistella (1993) where he states that "Migrants enjoy human rights as human beings, not primarily as migrants" (Battistella 1993: vi). According to him, one of the fundamental weaknesses of migrant labor is that it is disposable. Mass expulsion is not prohibited by international law, but it is against the human rights standards, which require that each case be examined individually (1993: vii). He goes on to argue that migrants fall within the domain of several branches of law. International law considers them as aliens, while labor standards, particularly as codified by the International Labour Organisation, cover their condition as workers. To provide some systematization and general framework, the human rights of migrants have been redrafted and collated in the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and their Families, adopted by the General Assembly of the United Nations in December 1990.

Battistella (1993) focuses his work on the assessment of The Vienna Declaration, which he claims never mentions the specific vulnerability of migrant women. In discussing NGOs, Battistella (1993: x) argues that the power of NGOs is usually limited to their capacity to "mobilize shame" for the government. For this reason, governments have tried to move them away from the spotlights. However, the increased participation of NGOs in conferences has offered NGOs the possibility to improve their strategy and their networking capacity. Battistella (1993: xi) also pointed out how the important role of NGOs in the promotion of all human rights was recognized by the Vienna Declaration. His concern is about the possibility that national law and the Universal Declaration do not go in the same direction. While NGO activists may invoke the Universal Declaration as the basis for their action, they can easily be restrained by national laws which reflect the interest of oppressive governments rather than human rights.

Helton (1993) has a more optimistic perception on NGOs, considering them as "key actors in the formulation and implementation of policies concerning the protection of the human rights of all persons, including migrant workers and other non-nationals". He highlights the role of NGOs in furthering international human rights where NGOs have assisted in the negotiations and drafting of human rights instruments, undertaken informal monitoring and advocacy activities in relation to human rights treaties, lobbied, they litigated and campaigned publicly. And according to him these activities are conducted at universal, regional and national levels (Helton 1993: 6).

Just like Battistella (1993), Helton (1993: 7) consider "mobilization of shame" as the main strategy for NGOs. For this they conduct fact-finding missions, prepare and distribute public reports, establish urgent-action networks to respond quickly to emergent threats, confer human rights awards to recognize and protect activists, and submissions in international, regional and domestic forums. Some NGOs also provide technical assistance and inside advocacy to governments. However, these types of activities are not highly preferable because they might compromise NGOs' independence.

As for the future, Helton (1993: 9) suggests that greater cooperation between international, regional and local NGOs will be necessary to increase effectiveness, in

which international and regional NGOs provide “prestige and political clout” while local NGOs offer “continuity and access”.

Dias (1993) look into the human rights movements in Third World Countries, underlining that different from the First World, human rights activity and organizations in the Third World, most often operate in the “nongovernmental sector”. He divided Asian human rights movements into three strands, in the context of extremely oppressive conditions and repressive regimes such as the Philippines and Korea (Dias 1993: 13). The first category of human rights NGOs is at the grassroots level, mobilizing local communities for “protracted political struggles”. A second set of NGOs is delivering basic services delivery while conducting “educational activities to develop the capacities of communities to meet their own needs”. The third strand consists of “significant sections of the educated middle classes” who are dissatisfied with “the development model adopted by their country”.

He also argues that NGOs and grassroots organizations of the rural poor are turning to human rights as a means to empower the impoverished; secure accountability of those who wield power and control resources essential to the satisfaction of basic human needs; support participation of the oppressed in key decisions affecting resource allocation or technology choice; and assert values, particularly the social values and ethical principles which should underlie the much-needed restructuring of social orders (Dias 1993: 13).

According to Dias (1993: 16), it is difficult to establish a comprehensive typology of Asian human rights organizations. Thus the typologies used are loose, based on concepts such as: organizational status, geographic scope, membership, victim-group served, function, category of human rights specialization

In the context of protection and promotion of human rights, Dias (1993: 18) observes that Asian NGOs have been conducting the following activities : monitoring and investigating; documentation; standard setting; public action appeals; voices of the people; action campaigns; regional task forces; human rights education; resurgence of constitutionalism; and Asian People Forums, Congresses and "Happenings"

Nanda (1993), approaches the issue of human rights by assessing the existing international instruments for the protection of migrant workers namely: International Labour Organisation (ILO) Instruments, The United Nations and the Protection of Migrant Workers, Pertinent International and Regional Human Rights Instruments and The Migrant Workers Convention. His focus is on the last one, showing the weaknesses and loopholes in the Convention’s document.

Research Problems

Initial observation on the relationships between state and non-state actors in Indonesia shows that state is still dominant, especially when it comes to policies and official agreements that cross national boundaries. Various changes have occurred inside and outside Indonesia in the past decade including a move toward a more democratic atmosphere in the country. Although this development could be seen as an opportunity for greater NGOs involvement, it is assumed that the impacts vary among various types of NGOs and they employ different approaches and strategies in

responding to these changes. In so doing, there is a need to understand the characteristics, aims and activities of each type of NGOs, in this study women's and migrant labour NGOs, also the existing pattern of relationship between NGOs and other actors involved. The understanding will help to analyze the roles of NGOs in promoting the rights of Indonesian women migrant workers. The analysis will include identification of the NGOs' strengths and weaknesses also the existing opportunity and challenges.

The premises underlying this research are:

- It is crucial to understand the interactions among actors (powers) involved - state and non-state, domestic and international – because they are the ones who conduct the management of migrant labour and determine the condition of migrant workers through policies, regulations and activism. A comprehensive understanding of the existing problems might be obtained by looking at the relationships from each actor's perspectives. Since this kind of study could be really extensive, the more feasible research would be to focus on one actor as a starting point and trace the relationships between the actors from there.
- The decision of an actor (i.e. NGO) to use certain approaches and channels/paths in addressing an issue is influenced by the nature and character of the particular actor. In Indonesia the issue of women migrant labour is handled by two major types of NGOs, women and migrant labour NGOs. Thus it is crucial to understand how these two types of NGOs do their activism based on their characteristics in an attempt to determine their roles.
- The status of an issue, whether it is considered crucial and urgent or not, depends on how this issue is embraced/acquired and put under the spotlight by a particular actor discussed. The question is what are the reasons for these two types of NGOs in making women migrant labour issues as one of their main concerns and how do they bring these issues into the spotlight?
- Although NGOs might have better access to women migrant workers, when talking about policies, NGOs activism is to some extent limited. In so doing, they might need to cooperate with the government and international institutions or cooperate among themselves to increase their bargaining power (some national and regional cooperation among NGOs have been established).

Hence this research will tackle the following issues :

1. The issue of Indonesian women migrant workers.
 - a. How has this issue been addressed by various actors so far?
 - b. What are the strengths and weaknesses of the existing policies in term of specifically addressing the issue of women migrant workers?
2. The relationship between NGOs and other actors.
 - a. How do NGOs interact with other actors in different contexts such as: various levels, changing policy environment, and different instances?
 - b. Which actors are preferable for NGOs to work with and why?
3. The role of Indonesian NGOs in promoting the rights of Indonesian women migrant workers.
 - a. How do each NGO embrace this issue (priority, perception, approach and orientation) and why?
 - b. How do policy environment and existence of other actors determine the role of NGOs?

- c. How do NGOs influence their environment in order to enhance their roles?
4. The opportunities and challenges for NGOs in conducting their activities.
 - a. What are the opportunities and challenges?
 - b. How do NGOs make use of the opportunities and deal with the challenges?

Research Questions

Research Question:

What roles do NGOs (women and migrant labour) play in promoting the rights of Indonesian women migrant workers?

Main Questions:

1. How do different types of NGOs (women's and migrant labour NGOs) embrace and frame the issue of women migrant workers?
2. What roles do these NGOs take in influencing the policies toward women migrant workers?
3. How do NGOs influence policy making and implementation to significantly include the issue of women migrant workers?
4. How do these NGOs engage with other actors at different levels (local, national and international) in conducting their activities?
5. What are the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and challenges of each type of NGOs.

The relationship observed will be mainly vertical (between NGOs and national and regional/international actors). However, NGO activities at the grassroots level will still be discussed but more as a part in explaining their cooperation or conflict with the governments and international institution. In general, most of the discussions will be divided into two categories since the objects are two types of NGOs, migrant labour and women NGOs. This categorization is used throughout the discussion because the assumption is that their different nature determines the differences of their activism.

Research Methodology

Research Approach

This study is aimed at understanding the roles of NGOs in promoting the rights of Indonesian women migrant workers. There are several NGOs that include promotion or protection of women migrant workers in their objectives. However based on the "women" and "migrant worker" natures this study will specifically look into two types of NGOs, women's and migrant labour NGOs. The main objective is to observe the similarities and differences between these two types of NGOs. Accordingly, my research will study preliminarily chosen NGOs, using case analysis approach. The cases described are considered as examples of similar groups. According to McNabb (2004: 358) in a case study approach, the subject is usually chosen because it shows degrees of significance, usually since it reflects underlying problem or a successful solution to a problem. In my study the significance derive from the activism and reputation of the NGOs. I will choose NGOs which shows significant degree of

activism, in terms of frequency and types of activities they are conducting and their interactions with other actors, particularly state and international actors.

Obviously, I will be using a collective/multiple case study because this type of study allows identification of similarities and differences between the cases in an attempt to better understand a larger group of cases (McNabb 2004: 358). In the context of my study the larger group of cases will be NGOs that are concern with women migrant workers.

Qualitative approach in this research relates to the attempt to create understanding, subjective interpretation, and critical analysis by using the compiled data (McNabb 2004: 341). In other words, data will not be used merely to describe the phenomena. McNabb (McNabb 2004: 343) classifies qualitative research strategies into three broad strategic classes, namely *explanatory research studies*, *interpretive research studies*, and *critical research studies*. Interpretive research studies is chosen for my research because in this study researcher interprets a phenomenon “by developing (subjective) meanings of social events or actions”, thus it goes beyond describing or explaining to “interpret” the studied phenomenon (McNabb 2004: 344). McNabb (McNabb 2004: 345) suggests that the basic assumption of interpretive research is that “humans learn about reality from the meanings they assign to social phenomena such as language, consciousness, shared experiences, publications, tools, and other artifacts”. In my research a substantial portion effort to understand the perception of NGOs role will be obtained from analyzing documents, media release and the nature of interactions between NGOs and other actors.

Flexibility will also be a significant aspect of this research. As stated by Manheim (2006: 310) qualitative researchers commonly set an initial case, observe the case, and decide from the observations what they will observe next. Since an important part of my study will be the actors (NGOs) own perception of their roles thus at the initial stage of my research, I plan to leave significant space for the respondents to express their own perception of their roles. This will then be coupled by perceptions from other actors who interact with the NGOs, such as government institutions, international organizations and other actors identified by the NGOs.

Some of the principles of interpretive research studies developed by Klein and Meyers (1999) (quoted in McNabb 2004: 345-346) will assist the organizing of my research. Based on the *hermeneutic circle* principle, understanding of a whole is gained through understanding the parts, back to the whole, and back to the parts again. This process continues in a circle form in reaching a greater understanding (McNabb 2004: 345). In my study, understanding the roles of NGOs is viewed as an attempt to understand the bigger phenomenon of management of women migrant workers. Conducting study of two types of NGOs is also considered as a way to understand and make generalization of the roles of other NGOs that are concern with the issue of migrant workers.

Another significant principle is the importance of the *contextual nature* of the studied phenomenon (McNabb 2004: 345). “Meaning” is derived out of the particular but also changing social and historical context in which the phenomenon is embedded. In other words, it is “time-and situation-specific”. One of the main objectives of my research is to understand how NGOs are affected and respond to the changing policy context and environment in Indonesia. In so doing, the analysis will be framed by the

characteristics of identified periods (for the time being the New Order and after and before and after the monetary crisis in 1997).

I am fully aware of my preconceptions and biases and those that might come from the respondents. Therefore the *multiple interpretations* (McNabb 2004: 346) will be employed to “aggressively compare” my historical and contextual interpretation of the phenomenon against perceptions of the respondents in an attempt to strengthen my analysis. The source of my preconceptions and biases might come from the fact that the source of my knowledge has been mainly literatures and the media. By this means, the information has gone through several interpretation processes. My limited practical experience with NGOs and women migrant workers could be viewed both as an advantage and disadvantage. The disadvantage might be my understanding will very much depend on the information that I obtain, instead of my own personal experience. However, since I am not associated with any of the NGOs to be studied, I might be able to conduct observations and an outsider point of view with minimum personal attachment. A degree of association exists with my status as a woman and a citizen of Indonesia, the country studied. With this, my perceptions will be influenced to a certain degree with my own experiences.

Methods of Data Collection

McNabb (2004: 354) suggests 4 major methods in collecting qualitative data: (1) *participation in the group setting or activity*, (2) *personal and group interviewing*, (3) *observation*, and (4) *document and cultural artifact analysis*. This study will employ more of the interview, observation and document analysis methods. Documents consulted will be mainly printed and electronic documents produced by the NGOs, other actors, the media and those from library research. Observation will be conducted during the fieldwork mainly on the way NGOs operate and interact with other actors and how these relationships are presented in the media.

In terms of interview, it will be semi structured. A set of preliminary open questions will be prepared prior to the fieldwork. Additional and most probably more detailed questions will be probed based on the answers to the preliminary questions.

Respondents for interviews will be chosen based on the assumption that their answers will, to a certain degree, represent the groups or organizations being studied because they represent and have extensive knowledge of the groups or organizations. Obviously, this interview will be coupled with formal document analysis. I will also use the 'snowball' or 'referral' sampling technique where interviews are started with preliminarily identified key informants and more names of key individuals will be obtained from these early informants.(Burnham 2004: 207).

Research Sites

The main research targets and sites will be:

- NGOs offices and activists (women's and migrant labour NGOs)
- Government institutions
 - a. Departemen Tenaga Kerja dan Transmigrasi
 - b. Kementerian Pemberdayaan Perempuan
 - c. Departemen Luar Negeri

- Legislative body
 - a. Commission representatives in MPR/DPR
- International and Regional Organizations Offices/Representatives
 - a. International Labour Organizations
 - b. ASEAN
 - c. Human Rights Watch
- Trade Unions
- NGO networks
- Other related NGOs
- Perusahaan Pengerah Jasa Tenaga Kerja Indonesia
- Indonesian NGOs representatives and other NGOs in receiving countries (time and fund allowing)
- Migrant workers source area (based on the studied NGOs' activities)
- Experts and academics who are concerned with migrant labour issues
- Research institutions:
 - a. LIPI
- Media (printed and electronic)

Since most of the above targets and sites are in Jakarta, my research will be mainly conducted Jakarta. However, there are possibilities for conducting research in migrant workers' source area where NGOs also conduct their activities. Time and fund allowing, my research will be enriched by the information obtained from actors in receiving countries like Malaysia. Information will also be obtained through personal communications (emails and phone) and internet research.

Research Time Frame

The timeframe of this research will be from the early 1990s to the present. This timeframe is chosen because in Indonesia, the early 1990s was marked by the emergence of NGOs that concerned with the issue of migrant workers, particularly women. The 1990s is also marked by significant changes in Indonesia such as the end of New Order Era. It is expected that by looking at the last part of New Order Era and The Reformation Era following it, this research will be able to capture the dynamic shift/change of NGOs activism in responding to what is claimed to be a more open political atmosphere.

Another significant event was the financial crisis in the late 1990s which resulted in an increased number of women seeking work overseas. Unfortunately, since receiving countries in Asia, such as Malaysia, were also affected by the financial crisis, they started to repatriate migrant workers. The mass repatriations have also created problems for sending countries like Indonesia. The Nunukan crisis shows how Indonesian government did not have a contingency strategy for this kind of situation. This repatriation move is still happening. Recently the Malaysian government started another wave of repatriation before Idul Fitri.

Since the 1990s the government has also launched several policies and laws concerning migrant workers. The government has also signed MoUs with receiving countries' governments. This research will also look into the role of NGOs in the formulation and implementation of these policies.

Conclusion

This paper has argued for the importance of conducting a research on the activism of migrant labour and women's NGO in promoting the rights of Indonesian women migrant workers. It has gone through both the practical and academic aspects of the topic. Practically, the activism on the issue of labour migration will benefit from new inputs on how the activism can be improved in terms of influencing the policy making process. Academically, this study on NGO activism on the issue of women labour migration will contribute to the existing study of civil society activism particularly the ones focusing on how NGOs as national and international actors can influence the policy making process.

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