

Housing for the Poor Widow in Urban Area

A Study of Housing for Widow in Bangil, East Java, Indonesia



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Introduction

Low income groups in urban area mostly live in a condition where they do not have proper liveability, with substandard infrastructure, services and facilities. This condition worsens if the people did not have enough resources in improving their life, such as employment, capital, or human resources (family). This group of community include the widow.

Housing for all has been an important issue in sustainable development – as stated in Habitat Agenda – especially in developing country like Indonesia. Houses built by the government are still unaffordable for some groups such as widow, since they usually lack the financial and legal resources. Therefore it needed special scheme in assuring the housing delivered to this particular group of community. This proposal elaborates the possibility in housing provision for widow by the surrounding community. The proposal for change and improvement will be to promote awareness and importance of housing issues, especially for widow in urban area, through lectures and also formulation of design criteria

1. Shelter Situation Analysis

1.1. Basic General Data

Geography and Administration

Indonesia consists of five main islands, situated between 6° north latitude and 11° south latitude, spreading from 97 degrees to 141 degrees eastern longitude, that makes its climate hot and humid. It has 17,508 islands, with only 35% of them inhabited. The total population is 219.852.000 people in 2005. The most populated island is Java which has 60% of the total population with 134.160.000 inhabitants (BPS –Central Statistic Bureau- data, March 2009) occupying area of 132.187 sq.km Thus the average gross density in Java is 1015 inhabitant/sq.km. The annual population growth is around 1,3%.

Java is divided into 6 provinces: DKI Jakarta (where the capital of Indonesia is located), Banten, West Java, Central Java, DI Yogyakarta, and East Java. East Java's capital city, Surabaya, is the second largest city in Indonesia after Jakarta. It is an important city due to its location in the eastern position, which links the less developed city in the eastern part of Indonesia with Java.

The administrative hierarchy in Indonesia from the highest to the lowest is province, regency/municipality, sub district, and village. Bangil is a sub district, located about 45 km in the south east of Surabaya. It is part of Pasuruan regency. Bangil is located in the main access route from Surabaya and other main cities in the east such as Probolinggo, Banyuwangi, and Bali. The area of Bangil is 4,460 ha, with land use of 7% for agriculture, 43% for housing and settlement, and 50% for roads, public facilities and services. From the land use, we can conclude that this region has undergone an urbanization process, which the agrarian economy and culture are being replaced by dynamic society with a diversified economy based on industrialized production, specialized services, communication and international trade (Tannerfeldt:2006)

Demography and Health

Total population in East Java province is 37.794.003 with 10.121.200 households (average family size in is 3,7), while the average family size in Indonesia is 4.

The number of men and woman is slightly the same, about 48,7% men comprise of 18.439.200 people and 51, 3% women (19.354.803 people) (BPS – Central Statistic Bureau- data,2008).The tendency of having more women than men population is also happened in most of the province in Indonesia.

Life expectancy for people in general is 70,76 years. Men have 68,26 years and women are 73,38 years (CIA:august 2009). There have been no scientific reasons yet why most men have less life expectancy than women like what happened in Indonesia and most of the countries in the world. But, according to the researcher at National Women's Health Information Centre (2009), some of the reasons are as follows:

- Men prefer extreme activities or sports that have higher risks.
- Men tend to have unhealthy lifestyle (smoking, drinking alcohol, etc)
- Men are more likely not to go to the hospital when they are ill, feeling that they are strong and in a normal condition.
- Men tend to work hard, which increase the stress level, and have little time to enjoy life within himself or the family.

Economy

Indonesia's GDP is 3.900 US dollars, with the composition by sector of 14,4% on agriculture, 48,1% on industry, and 37,5% on services. The growth rate is around 6,1% in 2008. Indonesia has made significant economic advances under the current government administration. Unemployment rate is 8,4% in 2008, drop from 9,1% in 2007 (CIA,2009). In Bangil, most of the people work in private sector, especially in agriculture and handicraft (embroidery). Some also work in the pharmaceutical plant and food industry.

Number of household below poverty line at national level is 17,8%(CIA,2009). Of the poor, women are the poorest, and along with children they are suffer the most from the hazard of poverty.

1.2 Shelter Related Fact and Figures

Access to Shelter

Housing in Indonesia basically divided into 3 kinds as follows (Kemenpera – Ministry of Housing data,2009):

- Formal housing, which are housing built by private developers (real estate) or government, including rental apartment for specific groups (workers, low income household, etc). The amount of this housing is about 20% of the total housing stock.
- Self-help housing, which are built by the individual or community itself. This type of housing is the most common type, comprises about 80% of the total housing stock. People built their own houses mostly because it is the most affordable way of providing housing. They can choose materials, technique, and other possibilities that meet their capability at the moment to later be developed as their capacity increases.
- Informal housing, which are around 3% of the housing stock of the self help housing. It shapes in slums and squatter, housing with minimum or lack of basic services (water, power, sanitation). This type is mostly related to condition of urban poverty.



Fig. 1 Typical Housing condition from left: formal housing, self help housing, slums & squatter

The situation of the urban poor, especially in larger cities, is different from that of the rural poor. It is important to understand the particular features of urban poverty. The first and perhaps most significant feature is that the urban poor depend on cash income for survival. Most food – as well as cooking fuel and water – has to be bought. Building materials, even for the simplest shack, are expensive. Many of the urban poor live on the outskirts of cities. To earn money they often have to travel long distances and transportation is a major expenses.(Tannerfeldt,2006)

From the above quotation we may conclude that the condition of urban poor will mostly resulted to the slum and squatter in the urban area.

Access to and cost of Basic Services/Infrastructure

Infrastructure includes services from (World Development Report, 1994):

- Public utilities – power, telecommunications, piped water supply, sanitation and sewerage, solid waste collection and disposal, and piped gas.
- Public works – roads and major dam and canal works irrigation and drainage.
- Other transport sectors – urban and inter urban railways, urban transport, ports and waterways, and airports.

In housing infrastructure the major services needed are the public utilities and roads. The adequacy of infrastructure helps determine one settlement's success and another's failure. It has to expand fast enough to accommodate growth.

Proportion of population with sustainable access to an improved water source in urban area is 81,8% and rural area is 60,0%(Bappenas : 2007). The overall responsibility of providing safe water is held by the local Government through district drinking water companies (PDAM) who delivers water either piped to households or to the general population through hydrants.

In 1990 the proportion of households with safe sanitation was around 30%. By 2006 the average was increased to 69.3% (the MDGs target for 2015 would be 65%.) In 2006, 52.1% of the population had access to safe drinking water, and are on track to reach the MDGs 67% target. But in terms of quality, water is not safe to drink, it only fulfill the criteria of clean water. For sanitation it already appears to have exceeded the 65% target, though much of this is of low quality.

1.3 Housing Policy

The commitment of Indonesian Government in housing scheme has begun since the independence era, by having a Healthy Housing Congress (August 1950) in Bandung, Indonesia. The congress led to several outcomes:

- Propose the government to establish a housing development enterprise in every province and encourage their activities
- Formulate a minimum technical standards and requirements for healthy housing
- Propose the government to establish a housing agency which its funding was guaranteed by the government.

These outcomes were becoming a starting point for the implementation of housing programs in Indonesia.

Housing policy was under regulation of Law number 4, 1992. The law dictates that the development of housing and settlements aims to meet the needs of the home as one of the basic human needs, in order to increase people's welfare and equity. Policy of housing nowadays still based on the thinking of housing as a need that should be provided completely by the government. What is happening now is the government built thousands of new houses -instead of improving ones- that leads to minimum occupancy. The approach now should be housing as demand, where government plays role as enabler. If this role can be implemented – considering the big potential the community have in providing their own houses-the improvement of the living condition will be accelerated.

1.4 Actors in Shelter Delivery and Their Roles

Despite many programs conducted by the government to improve the quality of housing, there still are many people who provide housing by themselves, including the provision of the urban infrastructure. These people built their houses based on what they really need and commonly use their houses not only to live in but also for economic purpose (home based enterprises). This housing delivery system is known as the informal or owner-occupant construction. About 85% of housing provision in Indonesia is done this way (Government of Indonesia, State Ministry of Environment, 1997). The other system of housing delivery is formal housing (done by the government and real estate agents). NGO's and university also play an important role, especially for capacity building within the informal settlers or community.

1.5 Shelter Design

The provision of infrastructure and regulation in Indonesia is administered by Human Settlement and Infrastructure Department. The guidance consists of minimal standard service (Standar Pelayanan Minimal - SPM). It includes local infrastructure (road network, waste water, flood control, sewage disposal), environment facilities (commerce, education, health, public services, social-cultural facilities, parks and cemetery) and public utility (clean water, fire fighter).

Common material used in constructing a permanent house are bricks for walls, plastered cement and ceramic for floors, and corrugated asbestos sheets or clay roof. Traditional houses still use wood plank as walls and floors, and clay roof.

2 Organisation

Institute of Technology Sepuluh Nopember Surabaya (ITS) established in 1957, is a public institute with the vision determined to become a university of international recognition in science, technology, and arts that supports industrial and marine developments under environmental perspectives. The history of ITS dates back to 1954 when The Indonesian Engineers' Association held a national conference in Bogor. On 17th August 1957, the Surabaya-Branch Association established a Foundation of Technical College. It has now five faculties which are Faculty of Mathematic & Natural Science, Faculty of Civil Engineering & Planning, Faculty of Marine Engineering, and Faculty of Information Technology.

Department of Architecture in the faculty of Civil Engineering and Planning has 48 lecturers with at least 480 pupils for undergraduate program, 100 graduates and 24 PhD students. The writer works as lecturer and responsible for the teaching and assisting in courses of Housing and Human Settlement, Design Studio, and Architecture Theories.

The Laboratory of Housing and Human Settlement is part of the Department of Architecture, and has become one of the most highlighted laboratories due to the national and international activities. Some of the works of the laboratory includes housing for Tsunami disaster in Aceh and rental walk-up flats in Surabaya. The ongoing research is about the assessment of housing queue working with The Ministry of Housing, Indonesia and the revision of the housing law working with The Coordinate Ministry of Economics, Indonesia (www.mukimits.com).

3 Shelter Problem

Women and men have different needs for spaces in their physical surroundings in their everyday life, needs that are interpreted as practical gender needs in human settlements (Grundström,2005). These special needs will be more important in the case where the woman acts as the head of the family. She will have specific needs

in order to support her role as the person who earns money for the family while at the same time caters the family. Housing in this case should be able to protect the family from conditions that threaten life and health, physically and mentally.

Poverty in urban area affects population in a different ways. It strongly affects women and children. For example, urban poor women and children often has to work in informal sector or even on the street just to earn more money for the family income, while the men works in more safety environment, in formal sectors. As a result, they are the most vulnerable groups in the society. To support poor women in urban areas, there is a need for gender-sensitive urban development and housing policy to take into account the facts that; women need independent access to adequate housing, adequate infrastructure for income generating activities, adequate infrastructure for reproductive work, safety and security in private and public space (Becker,2003). This also closely related to the triple role Caroline Moser (1993) identified the triple role of women in developing countries as : Reproductive work – childbearing, care, maintenance of the family member, Productive work – income earnings, and Community managing work – undertaken to ensure the provision of scarce resources. This challenges women more than men in life activities.

Poor women often have to earn their income through ‘survival activities’ such as petty trading, prostitution and small-scale agriculture. Women also run micro-enterprises involving market trading, restaurant, bars, shops, bakeries, sewing and mending clothes. In many countries, the informal economy, especially the ‘bottom end’ with lowest returns, is a female economy (Tannerfeldt,2006).

Many natural disasters happened in the last ten years also made the problem of housing provision more complex. The number of wife losing their beloved husband arise, made more widow needs to be taken care of.

Despite the vulnerable condition, widow still have to face another obstacle in society, facing the negative stigmata of a woman. They often considered a mistress or a burden to society due to the minimum capacity they had. This will end up in more difficult living condition.

The 1971 population census of Indonesia recorded 3.97 million households headed by women, with 86.6% located in rural areas and 13.7% in urban areas. Of the 20.6 million rural households, 16.6% were headed by women. It was

suggested that female headship was a product of a number of demographic factors relating to the age structure of the rural female population and male migration from rural areas with families left behind, and to cultural factors including the acceptability of divorced women heading their own households, low widow remarriage at older ages, that such widows tend to head their own households in greater numbers than women from other marital statuses, and that possibly older women are being reported as head of households although they may depend on others for economic support. Estimates of economic dependency indicate that the number of dependents increases with household size.(Heller,1983).

Susenas (National Economics Census) Data of Indonesia 2007 pointed out that number of household who is headed by a woman has achieved 13.60 % or approximately 6 million households which covered more than 30 million citizens. If it was compared with Data 2001 was less than 13 %, this data pointed out a trend of woman headed household progress was average at 0.1 % per year.

Starting in 1999, Indonesian government with the support of World Bank engaged a program for widow empowerment (PEKKA-indonesia's acronym for Program for Woman Headed Household)that supports about 6,500 rural widows in over 300 villages, 38 sub districts and across 8 provinces. The program focuses on village level capacity building and microfinance activities, and social and economic empowerment. It has a special program for widows of the tsunami victims in Aceh. By empowering women in rural area, it is hoped that the number of urban poor widow will decrease.

In urban area, supports had been made- in housing provision- by individual sector, housing called Rumah Arba'in, which provide temporary housing for widow. The widow came not only from the area of Bangil, but also from other regency. The construction of the house has met the minimum requirement of healthy house. The land was formal. The size of the house is approximately 40 sqm, with average occupancy of 4 people. The widow and her family were allowed to stay for 5 (five) years and they only have the obligation for paying the electricity and clean water supply's bill. After 5 years, they were given an evaluation. If the widow has able to support her family then she must move out. But if she hasn't, then she was allowed to stay again until she has a proper job to support her family. In term of the physical condition and the security, Arba'in

housing has successfully improved the quality of life of its occupants. In the other hand, more efforts should be made in order to improve the economic aspects of the occupants.

After knowing the importance of housing to some groups – especially widow- then it must be focused on how the delivery of those kind of housing can be possible. What are the main factors involved? Who are the actors involved? By answering these questions, it is hoped that some criteria or guidelines in housing provision for widows could be developed. Housing for widow is important because it helps women fulfil their triple task in productive, reproductive, and community managing work.

4 Proposal for Change and Improvement

The proposal for change and improvement will be based on the shelter problem analysis. The initial proposal is to promote awareness and importance of housing issues, especially for widow in urban area, through lectures and also formulation of design criteria. The injection of the topic will be done to the courses of Housing and Human Settlement subjects which are optional courses for undergraduate student and a compulsory subject in master degree student for Housing and Human Settlement program in the institute.

The methodology of the action plan will be through preparation of series of lectures, and also scientific writings. By doing this, the transfer of knowledge of housing issues to the future generation will be acquired.

The strength, weakness, opportunities, and threats of the proposal – the importance of housing for widow in urban area - can be described briefly:

- **Strength** : ensure security both physically and mentally, also maintain the self esteem of the widows to become a self sustained individual.
- **Weakness** : more likely to be a short term solution – immediate answer to immediate problem. However, immediate action must be carried out in order to minimize more widows prone to misfortune such as human trafficking and prostitution.
- **Opportunity** : more accessible for other party to access the community in terms of giving support, training, etc.

- Threat : tends to be isolated, exclusive. Design criteria must be made to prevent the widow housing from being a segregated community, instead of a part of the community itself.

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