

## **INFORMATION SEEKING BEHAVIOUR OF WOMAN IN SLUM AREA IN KAMPUNG PONCOL, SOUTH JAKARTA, INDONESIA**

### **PERILAKU PENCARIAN INFORMASI WANITA YANG TINGGAL DI DAERAH KUMUH DI KAMPUNG PONCOL, JAKARTA SELATAN, INDONESIA**

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**Kata kunci:** Perilaku pencarian informasi, wanita di daerah kumuh, peran reproduksi perempuan, peran produktif perempuan, peran sosial perempuan

**Abstract.** This research identifies the information seeking behavior of women who reside in the slum area of Kampung Poncol, Jakarta, Indonesia in the fulfillment of the triple role; those are reproductive, productive, and social. A qualitative approach with phenomenology method is used in this research while the data are collected by non-participant observation and in-depth interview with six participants. The results of this research show that the steps of information seeking behavior of those women are the initiation, selection, formulation, collection, and presentation; while the exploration step does not appear at all. Based on the role of reproduction needed by the informants in relation to their role as housewives, the information needed by the women are about the price of basic commodities, family healthcare and well-being, children education, as well as information about the flood. On the productive role, the information needed are vary among the informants depends on their occupations. While for the social role, the information needed by the informants are related to personal health, fashion, entertainment, and politics. The primary source of information is informal source those are relatives and neighbors.

**Keywords:** Information seeking behavior, woman in slum area, reproductive role of woman, productive role of woman, social role of woman

## A. Introduction

Information becomes a very important commodity because essentially it is useful for daily life. Information is useful to make a decision, solve a problem, answer a question and reduce uncertainty (Kaniki, 1992: 10). Women in a slum area have roles in running the daily lives. While in other places, women often considered unimportant in the life of urban slum societies (Moser, 1992, cited in Risinda, 2013: 1). According to Moser, women in the slum area have triple roles; those are the reproductive, productive, and social role (1993: 27-36). Those roles appear because the slum area is a place to find a job and to escape from life problem such as a family problem that becomes a foundation for them to migrate (COHRE, 2008: 10-11). Davis (2006) defines a slum area as an informal residence of the poor, located dispersed, has a high population density, has less access to clean water and sanitation, as well as the lack of the sense of security to the ownership of the house and the land. The research among housewives in Depok, Indonesia regarding health information literacy shows that they concern and aware of health information, but it is not a priority if compared to other living needs (Laksmi, 2007).

On the reproductive role, women have to take care of their home and family, while on the productive role, they become breadwinners (either as the primary source or secondary source), and then on the social role in society. Women in slum area become interesting because those triple roles are faced with every economic limitation and poor environmental condition. They have to face the patriarchy system in their families as well, where the men (in this case the husbands) said to have domination over women activities.

Based on Article 28F of the 1945 Constitution of Indonesia; it states that every person shall have the right to communicate and to obtain information for the purpose of the development of his/her self and social environment, and shall have the right to seek, obtain, possess, store, process and convey information by employing all available types of channel. This article informs us that men and women have the same rights to access information they need without exception. What make it interesting is, do those women who live in the slum area have the right to access sufficient information they need with all the limitation?

They have to face the patriarchy system in their family structure, where the men (in this case the husbands) said to have great domination over women activities. Sometimes it triggers internal conflicts for the women to perform their triple roles. That conflicts are often encountered with various challenges either from nature i.e. flood and human i.e. forced eviction.

Those roles make precise and accurate information seeking as a must for women to solve their problems. Information seeking can be understood as a process where human consciously and purposively involved change a situation from their own personal knowledge that is closely related to problem learning and solving (Marchionini, 1995 in Case, 2012: 90). In the other words, information seeking is an effort a human do to fulfill their information need. This statement is strengthened by the definition of information seeking according to Wilson (1999) that is as a deliberate information seeking as a consequence in fulfilling a need for a purpose (Wilson, 2000: 1)

Information seeking that is not related to work is called by everyday life information seeking (ELIS). The concept of everyday in-

formation seeking is related to the effort of procurement of various informative elements in nature, both cognitive and expressive, used by individuals to orient themselves in the daily life or to solve a problem that is not directly related to their works (Savolainen, 1995: 266-267). This concept is more focused on the information related to individual rights such as hobby and health.

According to Kuhlthau in Rivi (2011), the need of information comes from the discrepancy between human so it pushes them to seek information to know their problem. Moreover, Kuhlthau says that the need of information is influenced by environments, such as experiences, knowledge, passion, information availability, problem, and time. As it is content related to the information retrieval. Kuhlthau (1991: 361-367) also says that there are six processes in information search process:

1. Initiation. This is a step where an individual starts to aware of the need of a particular information. An individual feels that the knowledge one has is insufficient and as a result one tries to connect the situation one faces with the information one possesses from the past that is related to the information search.
2. Selection. In this step, an individual feels optimistic after choosing a topic and ready to perform research. An individual mindset starts to lean to the effort to consider information one has found with various criteria such as personal interests, job requirements, availability of information resources, and time left. The selection process is marked when an individual starts to communicate one problem with one colleague and starts to choose information more systematically.
3. Exploration. After the selection process, the next step is exploration. This step is usually a difficult step for an information user. An information user experiences confusion and uncertain feelings because of a doubt. It is because one unable to express one problem precisely. To cope this problem, one mindset starts to lean on the effort to find the orientation point

that will help one to locate suitable to one interests.

4. Formulation. In this step, the feeling of uncertainty starts to disappear, the personal confidence begins to rise. The mindset focuses on choosing the idea of information they retrieve to create a topic perspective they learn.
5. Collection. This is an interaction process between users with the most effective and efficient system functions. In this step, an individual connects information one retrieved and select information relevant to one interest.
6. Presentation. In this step, the information search is already performed. The feeling of satisfaction or disappointment will appear among individuals. Satisfy when the information search run smoothly and answering one question and contrarily disappoint when it did not run as expected.

At the end, those women will shape different behaviors as a reaction to adapt in fulfilling their information needs. Based on that, the question for this research is how are the information seeking behaviors of the women who live in the slum area in fulfilling their triple role, i.e. reproductive, productive and social role? This research is focusing on the experiences of the women who live in the slum area in the process of information seeking and how they interpret those activities. Things related to the information seeking of those women are what information they need, what source of information they use, what effort have they done and what obstacles they encounter.

### *Purpose of the Study*

The purpose of this research is to identify the pattern of information seeking behavior of women in fulfilling their roles in the slum area of RT 11 and 15, Kelurahan (Village) Bukit Duri, Kecamatan (District) Tebet, South Jakarta or commonly called Kampung Poncol. This place is chosen because this slum area is located on the Ciliwung Riverbank and often hit by

the flood. This place of research has also been matching with the definition and characteristics of slum area and mirroring the condition of urban slum condition in Indonesia. Indonesia is one of developing countries that has the fourth largest population in the world and poverty is one characteristic of the slum area.

Previous research about the information seeking behavior of women who live in the slum area had been done in some countries. Bakar (2011) citing the result of Momudu (2002) observed that the lack of information in the right quantity and format is the cause for 70 percent of rural dwellers in Nigeria living in crushing poverty. Su and Conway (1995) studied on the information seeking behaviours of the immigrant rural dwellers. Other studies have focused on rural women as the areas of research. Mooko (2005) investigated the information needs and information-seeking behavior of rural women residing in three non-urban villages in Botswana. Davies and Bath (2001) studied the use of information on antenatal and post natal care by minority ethnic women. However, the research about women in slum area of Indonesia has never been conducted.

## B. Methodology

The research method used in this research is phenomenology with a qualitative approach. The data are collected in-depth interview and non-participant observation. Purposive sampling is the method used in selecting the informants. Women who are chosen as the informants are those who have been married (reproductive role) and those who own business or job (productive). For the social role, researchers assume that social interaction is a natural aspect so that possessed by every informant.

**Tabel 1 Informant's data**

Name	Age	Working Sector	Job	Education
Yati	46	A housewife who work in an informal sector	Laundry worker	Elementary School
Sri	44	A housewife who work in an informal sector	Laundry worker	Did not pass Elementary
Emi	39	A housewife who work in an informal sector	Fries and drink merchant at home	Elementary School
Mulia	54	A housewife who work in an informal sector	Karedok seller at home	Elementary School
Upi	45	A housewife who work in a formal sector	Head of RT 11	High School
Lia	38	A housewife who work in a formal sector	Cleaning service officer at shopping center	Junior High School

The determination of two informants in each job category is intended so that the intra-subject comparison may appear and hoped will produce more in-depth and accurate result.

Raw data collected during the research is the result of in-depth interviews with the informants as well as observation result that is transcribed field note, these raw data are then analysed. The raw data are analysed with Miles and Huberman model, those are data reduction, data presentation, conclusion and verification (Sugiyono, 2009: 246)

## Findings

Based on the analysed data, the information seeking behavior of women who live in slum area in Kampung Poncol is found. The steps of information seeking behavior based on this research is more dominant to the initiation and selection process. It is because of the characteristics of the informants who come from the lower middle class families with low education exposure. It makes the informant difficult to be aware of their need of a particular information.

## 1. Initiation

The first question asked in the process to obtain data is about informants' reproductive role. It is because the reproductive role is a role that will appear naturally in adult women. In line with Moser (1993: 29) who states that reproductive role i.e. raising children and taking care of husband and the household is domestic in nature. When the researchers asked about the difficulty encountered when taking care of the household, the answers are various but the same difficulty appears in some informants. It proves that the information needed by each person will be different depending on the problem and difficulty they encounter.

Women who play roles as housewives will be positioned as the household financial managers especially in relation to the expenses for grocery. In this case, the housewives will need information about the prices of basic kitchen need e.g. paddy rice, sugar, salt, and so on. Remembering that the informants are of those who come from the middle to lower income class with the average income below the minimum wage of Jakarta; the informants must be careful in budgeting the expenses. With the nowadays economic condition, the price fluctuation is something that cannot be avoided. The price of basic kitchen needs often rises unpredictably. So that the information on the price of basic kitchen need is very important.

The next is the information need about their families' health. This initiation phase departs from the role of the informants as the housewives who take responsibility in taking care of their husbands and children. So that in their daily lives, the information regarding the families' health becomes important, especially for those informants whose husband and children still live in the same house with them.

Information about children education is surely needed by the informants because in the patriarchy system in the Indonesian families, the responsibility to educate children is on the shoulder of the women. Some informants state that they need more information on how to educate children. Those answers mainly appear on the informants who have school-aged children. One of the effects from living in the slum area is the change how someone think. In slum area, especially Kampung Poncol, Jakarta, many school-aged children terminate their education and play during school hours. One informant said that she want to know more about how to educate children religiously so that her children will be smart at chanting the holy verses, morally good and religious.

The last information need on the informants' reproductive role is about how to handle the flood. On the description of the reproductive role, it has been stated that the activity is domestic in nature, i.e. taking care of children, husbands, and household. Therefore, the activity of handling the house when the flood hit their home become their biggest responsibility. Information about the flood becomes very important for them to obtain and possess.

The next role that becomes the focus of this research is the reproductive role. As we know, the productive role is a role where the informants become the breadwinners. In the patriarchy system, this role will usually be run by the women but the informants' economic condition make them involved to find income for their family indirectly playing the productive role to help their husbands. After deciding to work, the first thing they do is looking for where they can find the vacancy. The information on job vacancy is important to them to fulfill their productive role. This is in line with the research

performed by Spink (2001) which states that the lower to middle-income families, information about job vacancy will usually not distributed properly.

An informant tells that the difficulty she faced when looking for a job as a laundry worker is the prejudice they got from their prospective employers. The fear that the workers from slum area that is related to poverty will steal and rob their houses causing mistrust among the prospective employers. They hold a view that there is a possibility the workers will steal their valuable to fulfill their financial needs.

Another category that is used to see the information need of the women who live in the slum area is entrepreneurship. In this research, entrepreneurship means those who run their own small business. In running their business, the two informants need information. The kind of business they run are grocery shops and food business, they sell daily stuff needs and local food i.e. karedok and fries. Therefore, the information they need is how to cook the food or the recipe. One of the informants who holds position in formal sector work as the head of RT (Rukun Tetangga, an Indonesian neighborhood association). As the head of RT, she needs information regarding the government bureaucracy especially the steps in the making of residents' documentation.

Their last role in the slum area is the social role. A social role is a role where an individual interacts with other individuals in a neighborhood. This role will be seen in their internal need as women and individuals. This role is directed to information need that will be communicated to another individual outside the information on the fulfillment of the previous two roles. The process of communication of the information need will usually be done when the

informants have spare time. The information needed is more about personal health, gossip, politics, religious gathering, and entertainment.

## 2. Selection

On the selection phase, individual will be optimistic after deciding the topic and feel ready to seek information. Selection phase is marked by the time an individual starts to communicate their problem to their counterparts and starts to select information systematically.

Some informants in this phase start to communicate their information need to their counterparts. This happens in Kampung Poncol, Jakarta where the residents often gather in a group because of their proximity. As a result, neighbors are the first option in communicating informants' information needs.

On the selection phase, it is seen that some informants begin to communicate their information needs and find to some information resources such as friends and neighbors. When they have heavy troubles and they cannot solve it by themselves, the informants will usually start to find information by asking and discussing with someone considered older or experienced. This kind of information seeking is more preferred because according to them this way is more practical and time efficient.

The primary source of information of the informants is the informal source of information, i.e. friends and neighbors. The informants believe that the information they get from their friends and neighbors is more reliable than the formal information source such as TV news. They said it is because the information they get from their friends and neighbors has real examples. It may happen because the informants use this informal source of information and their problem is solved through that most of the

time so there is no desire to seek for another information resources. Most of the informants will ask their friends and neighbors first before looking the answer from the formal source of information. Some factors that become informants' consideration for making their friends and neighbors as the primary source of information are easy to access and time savvy.

The formal source of information is the secondary source used by the informants when their problems cannot be solved by the primary source of information. The formal source of information that they usually access is television because on average all informants own televisions. Another formal source such as a newspaper is only accessed by two informants that have educational backgrounds above other four informants. They were graduated from junior school and high school while the other informants were elementary school graduates.

### 3. Exploration

Known that not all informants will go through this exploration phase. From the data gathered from the field, it is seen that the problems encountered by the informants is daily in nature and can be solved in the selection phase. The more complex problems that cannot be solved in the selection phase will be solved in this exploration phase just like one informant that needs information about her child with a mental disorder.

### 4. Formulation

In this formulation phase, doubts will start to disappear and self-esteem will start to appear and grow. In this phase, only one informant whose problem has not been solved because of its complexity. This informant possesses information from the previous phase and begin to

believe and apply the information to solve her problem. She feels confident because the information she got from the selection phase cannot solve her problem.

### 5. Collection

Individuals will start to connect the information they gathered and select relevant information with their need in this collection phase. Obtained information are then fitted and applied so that they get the expected result. Some other informants do not go through this phase because their problems are not so complex and can be solved in the selection phase.

### 6. Presentation

The task to complete the information seeking has finished in this phase. In this phase, the feeling of contentment or the feeling of disappointment will appear. Contented when the search goes well and answering the questions, disappointed when the search goes unwell and not answering the questions.

On the information need problems encountered by most of the informants, usually, they will be contented because their problem can be solved in only three phases. This may happen because their problems are mostly daily in nature. On the other hand, the problem faced by one informant about her child well-being must go through all phase of information seeking as stated by Kuhltau.

When an informant can solve her problem in less than six phases, it means her problem can be considered small and simple so that the information seeking run fastly because her problem can be solved easily.

### Obstacle in Information Seeking

Wilson (1994) states that there are three ob-

stacle categories in information seeking, those are the personal, interpersonal, and environmental obstacle. Based on the findings in the field, it can be seen that the informants only undergo two obstacle categories, those are personal and environmental obstacles. Low education level is a personal obstacle faced by most of the informants, besides that, the middle to low-income financial condition becomes an obstacle for the informants in accessing the paid source of information, i.e. books and the Internet.

Another obstacle category is the environmental obstacle. The slum and easily hit by flood environment of Kampung Poncol, Jakarta complicate the informants in accessing the source of information. In Kampung Poncol proper, there is no library. Moreover, the location of Kampung Poncol is far from the nearest public library. It adds the difficulties for the informants to obtain a formal source of information.

### C. Conclusion

This research shows the information seeking behaviors of women in the slum area of Kampung Poncol, Jakarta. The information seeking behaviors are then associated with the women's triple roles, those are the reproductive, productive and social role. Therefore, the information they need is to solve their daily problems. On the reproductive role, the information they need is usually about their role as housewives such as information about basic kitchen need, families' health, children education, and flood.

On the productive role, information the informants need is different one to another, depends on their occupations. For those who work as laundry workers and janitors, information about job vacancy is the information they need remembering that they work for other people.

While for informants who own a small business i.e. small grocery shop, the information they need is about the prices of goods they sell. One of the informants who works as the head of RT need information about government bureaucracy to support her job. For the social role, the information the informants' need is about personal health, news and politics, as well as some information about religious gatherings.

The formal source of information they usually use are television, newspaper/magazine, and the Internet. While the informal source of information they usually access are parents, friends, neighbors, RT, religious gatherings, kelurahan (village) office, puskesmas (community health centre), and schools. In this process shown that the informants are more likely to access the informal source of information. This situation happens because the informants believe that the informal information is time efficient and easier to access. In the process of information seeking, there are also obstacle encountered by the informants such as individual obstacle those are education background and financial condition. Environment also becomes an obstacle for the informants to obtain information because there is no sufficient source of information i.e. library.

At the end, the pattern of information seeking behavior of those women can be figured by seeing how they or the method they use to seek information they need.

**Figure 1. Information seeking pattern scheme**

Personal knowledge → Informal source → Formal source

When the informants are having problems in their lives, they will usually use their own personal knowledge first to solve it. Should they think their personal knowledge cannot solve the problem they will begin to ask their

surroundings i.e. parents, neighbors, or friends. If their surrounding cannot answer their questions, they will seek information on the formal source of information.

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