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Labour Migration, Food Expenditure, and Household Food Security in Eastern Indonesia*

ALFIAH HASANAH, SILVIA MENDOLIA and OLEG YEROKHIN

School of Accounting, Economics and Finance, Faculty of Business, University of Wollongong, Wollongong, NSW, Australia

This paper investigates the impact of migration on the food expenditure and household food security status of migrant-sending households using data from eastern Indonesia. We find that migration significantly increases food expenditure and overall household expenditure. Combining the food frequency and food consumption module of the Indonesia Family Life Survey (East), this paper shows that having at least one migrant in the family increases the composite index of Food Consumption Score, as well as the family's food security. Evaluation of food diversity also shows that migration increases expenditure on six out of ten food groups.

I Introduction

Migration has become one of the risk-reduction strategies used by households to overcome many poverty-related problems in developing countries. At the macro level, an investigation of economic outcomes of migration shows that remittances have a potential role in promoting economic growth and reducing the poverty of migrant-sending countries in the Asian region (Vargas-Silva *et al.*, 2009). Migration brings many benefits to the lives of migrants and their families (migrant-sending households (MSHs)), such as increased family income from remittances, decreased credit constraints, and investment in physical and human capital.

Poverty reduction is the welfare objective of many development programs. Many indicators are used to reflect multidimensional poverty, such as monetary poverty, food insecurity, malnutrition and other indicators of physical and economic well-being. Since the outcome of the migration is shared between migrants and MSHs (Stark & Bloom, 1985) there are studies on how migration can help MSHs to escape from poverty (Stark & Taylor, 1989; Adams, 1991; Adams & Page, 2005; Spatafora, 2005). However, there is very limited empirical evidence on the link between the poverty reduction effect of migration and food insecurity.

This paper attempts to fill this gap by extending the limited literature on migration in Indonesia in several ways. First, it investigates the impact of migration on food security using the Food Consumption Score (FCS), an indicator of household food security as suggested by the World Food Programme (WFP) and the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO). The FCS is a proxy indicator of current household food security, and it includes information on food access and food utilisation (consumption). Another indicator of food security used by World Food Programme and Food and Agriculture Organization (2012) is Household Dietary Diversity Score (HDDS). At the household level, both the FCS and HDDS are

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Correspondence: Alfiah Hasanah, School of Accounting, Economics and Finance, Faculty of Business University of Wollongong, Wollongong, NSW, Australia. Email: ah533@uowmail.edu.au