

Legal Protection for Women Workers in Indonesia: A Critical Review of Law Application

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Article Info

Received: 2023-12-27

Revised: 2024-10-02

Accepted: 2024-11-08

Keywords:

Legal Protection,
Women Workers in
Indonesia

Abstract

When compared to their male counterparts, female workers frequently experience discrimination in labor rights concerns pertaining to their protection, particularly in areas of reproductive function, pay, and positions. The purpose of this study is to examine the laws intended to safeguard Indonesian women workers' rights. Normative legal research is the methodology used in this investigation. Law Number 6 of 2023 Article 153 and Regulation of the Minister of Women's Empowerment and Child Protection Number 1 of 2023 are the main sources of data for this study. According to the study's findings, women workers have not yet received the best protection possible under Law No. 6 of 2023 and the Ministerial Regulation of PA No. 1 of 2023. The requirement for workers to learn more about the relevant legislation is the reason for the low implementation of these policies. According to the same report, a large number of female employees need to be aware of the laws obliging businesses to offer maternity leave. Furthermore, the provision of shelter houses for female employees in the workplace is governed by the Ministerial Regulation of PPPA No. 1 of 2023. Only 72 businesses will be dedicated to offering RP3 across Indonesia in 2023. DKI Jakarta, Bogor, Bekasi, Subang, Riau Islands, South Sumatra, Banten, and East Java are among the regions that have adopted RP3. Despite the implementation of Law No. 6 of 2023 and Ministerial Regulation No. 1 of 2023, not all Indonesian women workers are aware of or able to utilize their current protection rights.

1. Introduction

Female workers have reached the working age of 18 (eighteen) years and above, regardless of marital status, and work in exchange for a salary or other compensation (Munte & Monica, 2023). Indonesia experiences an increase in the number of female workers every year. Data from research by the Central Statistics Agency (BPS) recorded a rise in female workers from 5,500 workers in 2019 to 6,000 workers in 2020 and again increased to 6,500 workers in 2021 (Badan et al., 2023). The graph of the increase in female workers in Indonesia from 2019 to 2021 can be seen as follows.

Figure 1 Work Participation Figures in Indonesia 2019-2021



Female workers often experience problems related to discrimination related to the Protection of reproductive function, wages, and position. The discrimination that occurs is aimed at unequal rights given compared to male workers. Data published by the Central Statistics Agency in August 2021 shows that the employment opportunity rate for women is only 53.34 percent compared to employment opportunity for men, which reaches 63.8 percent (Radha & Uwiyono, 2023). The same publication shows that only 32.5 percent of female workers can get job or career levels up to managerial levels in various fields. In addition, data released by the Ministry of Women's Empowerment and Child Protection in 2023 shows that there have been up to 115 (one hundred and fifteen) cases of violence against female workers in Indonesia, as well as 6 (six) cases of violence that occurred against migrant workers in the workplace abroad (Daud & Sopoyono, 2019).

The problems that occur with female workers then encourage various debates related to the implementation of the Domestic Workers Bill (Draft et al. Law), which leads to the bill not being adequate in protecting domestic workers from all forms of violence that occur in the work environment. This is also the main focus of the discussion CATAHU (Catatan et al./ End of Year Notes) 2023, wherein the drafting of the Draft Law on Domestic Workers, three points are used as the main focus, which include recognizing domestic workers as workers, providing Protection for domestic workers' rights, namely against discrimination, gender-based violence, work agreement regulations, social rights, and other rights and regulating the role of employers and job providers is to create balance and avoid cases of human trafficking. In addition, regulations regarding women's

employment in public spaces have also been the subject of several legal reform proposals in Indonesia. One of these legal reforms was manifested by the passing of Law Number 4 of 2024 concerning the welfare of mothers and children in the thousand-day phase of life, passed on July 4, 2024 (Anggraeni, 2024).

The urgency related to the Protection of female workers who are pregnant, giving birth, miscarrying, or breastfeeding is one of the critical studies, primarily driven by the number of unilateral layoffs carried out by companies. The National Labor Union (ILO) emphasizes that Maternity Protection is a human right every employer must provide. This Protection also manifests gender equality in the work environment (Effendi & Ratnasari, 2018). Support for maternal and child health is crucial in economic growth and poverty alleviation (Dyah et al., n.d.). This is part of the Decent Work Agenda (International Labor Organization 2023). As an institution that protects workers internationally through the ILO Maternity Protection Convention No. 183, the ILO provides regulations regarding the minimum maternity leave period of 14 weeks (Banjarani & Andreas, 2019). However, in practice in Indonesia, it only provides a total of 3 (three) months or 12 to 13 weeks. Apart from the shorter duration of leave compared to established regulations, female workers who apply for maternity and maternity leave also have the potential to experience unilateral termination from the workplace (Setyonaluri & Utomo, 2023).

The current reality shows that female workers often experience job termination discrimination due to natural conditions such as pregnancy, childbirth, and breastfeeding (Shalihah, 2016). This condition is in direct contrast to the provisions stated in Law Number 6 of 2023 Article 153 Paragraph 1 Letter e. Even though these laws and regulations are designed to hopefully protect the rights of women workers, their implementation in the field often needs to meet expectations (Suniaprily & Putri, 2023). One of the factors influencing the weak implementation of Law Number 6 of 2023 Article 153 is the existence of Article 154A. Article 154A is an insert article placed between Article 154 and Article 155. This article regulates that a company can terminate employment if the employer or company does not provide wages or salaries according to the agreed time within 3 (three) consecutive months. -consecutive or more (Naim et al., 2022), even though wage payments are made on time after that period. According to this article, female workers on maternity leave are at risk of being terminated based on administrative reasons related to the payment of wages. This causes the Protection that should be provided by Law Number 6 of 2023 Article 153 to be less effective (Sambuaga et al., 2023). A publication of research results from the ILO entitled "Maternity Leave in Metropolitan Indonesia" revealed that women who apply for maternity leave often experience wage cuts in the field. This research shows that termination of employment from a company can be carried out using the legal basis of Article 154A. In other words, although the law should provide Protection, its implementation is far from ideal and often does not benefit female workers.

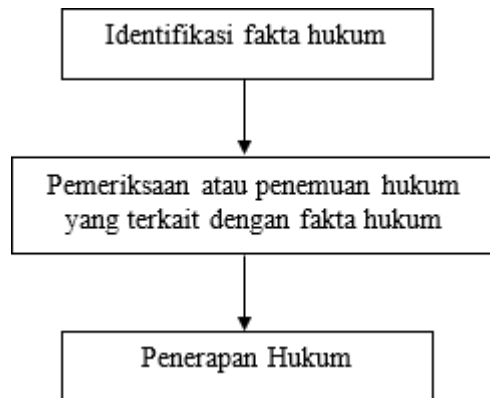
2. Research Method

The method in this research uses normative legal research methods, or what is better

known as normative legal research methods. This research method was chosen to systematically examine the implementation of legal Protection relating to female workers, focusing on compliance with the legal structure in force in Indonesia. The main approach in this research is the statutory approach or statute approach. In other words, this approach is carried out by reviewing laws and regulations relating to legal issues protecting female workers. The main focus of this review includes aspects such as termination of employment and violence in the work environment. This research aims to conduct a comprehensive, inclusive, and systematic study of legal products issued to protect female workers in Indonesia. The legal products that are the focus of the study include Law Number 6 of 2023 and Minister of Women's Empowerment and Child Protection Regulation Number 1 of 2023. With this method and approach, it is hoped that research can provide an in-depth understanding of how the law protects female workers and the extent of its implementation. by applicable regulations. This analysis also aims to evaluate the effectiveness of existing rules in providing adequate Protection. Apart from that, it is hoped that the results of this research will contribute to restoring legal policies and practices related to the Protection of female workers in Indonesia.

Normative research methods are used to systematically examine the implementation of legal Protection relating to female workers based on compliance with the legal structure in force in Indonesia. The approach then applied in this research is a statutory approach, carried out by analyzing laws and regulations related to the legal issue of protecting female workers. The primary data sources in this research are Law Number 6 of 2023 Article 153 and Regulation of the Minister of Women's Empowerment and Child Protection Number 1 of 2023. Collection of legal materials in normative legal research is carried out using library studies or document studies by conducting collecting legal regulations that have relevance to women's employment law issues, collecting legal books, legal journals containing basic principles (legal principles), as well as the perspectives of legal experts (doctrine), the results of legal research publications, dictionaries related to law and The legal encyclopedia uses the snowball method and then a classification is carried out based on sources and hierarchy using a system called a note card/diary notebook system. Then, a comprehensive study is carried out (Singer, 2009). Data analysis is carried out by identifying legal facts through reviewing news in electronic media, examining or discovering legal facts in related media, and analyzing the application of legal norms to legal facts. Data analysis can be seen in the flow diagram (Muhaimin, 2020).

Chart 1 Data Analysis



3. Results and Discussion

A. Study of Law Number 6 of 2023 regarding Women Workers in Indonesia

Law Number 6 of 2023 is a government regulation that replaces Law Number 2 concerning Job Creation. This old law was published in the State Gazette of the Republic of Indonesia of 2022, Number 238, and Supplement to the State Gazette of the Republic of Indonesia, Number 6841. With the enactment of Law Number 6 of 2023, this regulation provides more detailed rules regarding labor protection, including Protection for female workers (Bangsu et al., 2023). One of the aspects stated in this new law is Protection for the provision of leave periods, both on the first day of menstruation and maternity leave for female workers. This Protection is designed to provide better rights to female workers than previous regulations. Although this law is an improvement in prior regulations, its implementation still faces challenges (Yitawati et al., 2024). Practically, the implementation of Law No. 6 of 2023 still needs to be fully able to provide maximum Protection to female workers. Especially in the case of maternity leave, many workers still experience problems getting appropriate leave rights (Fitri & Suprihatin, 2023). This shows that even though regulations have been updated, there still needs to be a gap between policies and their implementation in the field. Efforts to improve and perfect the implementation of this law must continue to be made so that Protection for female workers can be achieved optimally.

The manifestation of the law's enactment can be seen in the provision of maternity leave by companies as employers in Indonesia. The law stipulates that female workers have the right to maternity leave for one and a half (1.5) months before giving birth and then one and a half (1.5) months after the worker gives birth. In addition to the right to such leave, female workers are entitled to receive health services during pregnancy through the national health insurance institution, namely the National Health Insurance

(JKN). With JKN, female workers can obtain necessary medical treatment without worrying about costs. During maternity leave, female workers are still entitled to total wages, ensuring they do not lose income. However, even though this regulation has been implemented, research conducted by the International Labor Organization (ILO) shows that its implementation could be improved. The study shows that more than 50% of female



Gambar 1 Grafik Pengajuan Cuti Hamil

workers report that their company does not offer maternity leave facilities. In addition, more than 20% of female workers experienced rejection of their maternity leave application. This shows that the field needs to have more existing policies and practices. These difficulties underscore the importance of more effective law enforcement and outreach regarding the rights of women workers. To ensure that all female workers can take full advantage of their rights, further efforts must be made to increase awareness of and compliance with these regulations across industry sectors.

One case example is the confession of a female worker who experienced a decline in her work position. Initially, she was a permanent team member, but after applying for maternity leave, her position changed to freelance. Apart from that, he also faced the threat of dismissal from HRD (Human et al.). A similar case was experienced by a domestic worker (domestic worker) whose employer dismissed her because she applied for maternity leave. This incident affects office workers and workers in the informal sector. Erni Nurlaeli experienced the same thing. She admitted that she received termination of employment (PHK) from the company where she worked when she reached seven months of pregnancy. The reason is that the contract has expired. However, this action violates Law Number 6 of 2023 Article 84 Paragraph (1) of the Manpower Law. This law emphasizes the right of workers to have a rest period of one and a half (1.5) months before giving birth. They are also entitled to a month and a half of rest after giving birth. This calculation is based on information from the obstetrician or midwife. These cases show

that serious violations have been committed by reducing the rights of female workers.

Apart from the leave period, female workers on maternity leave are also entitled to total wages. This right is regulated in Article 84 and Article 93, paragraph (2) letter g of Law Number 13 of 2003. Article 84 of the Manpower Law states that every worker, also known as a laborer, who uses their rights in terms of menstrual rest period has the right to receive total wages. This means that female workers have the right to maternity leave and are entitled to wages that are not deducted during that period. Apart from that, Article 93 paragraph (2) letter b also regulates that employers are obliged to pay the wages or salaries of female workers or laborers taking leave for menstrual breaks. This law provides additional Protection to female workers, ensuring they do not lose income during maternity and paternity leave. Employers are expected to comply with these rules to ensure the welfare of female workers. Unfortunately, violations of this provision still occur frequently. Many employers do not pay total wages during maternity leave, which causes disadvantages for female workers. Some workers are even afraid to apply for maternity leave because they are worried about losing income. Therefore, socialization regarding these rights needs to be increased. The government and related institutions must carry out stricter supervision. Strict action needs to be taken against entrepreneurs who violate these rules. In this way, the rights of female workers can be better protected. Increasing awareness of these rights can also help women workers feel safer and valued.

The low level of implementation of these laws and regulations is also caused by workers' need for more knowledge regarding the applicable laws. Many employees or workers still need to be made aware of rules that protect their rights. Research shows that many female workers admit they are unaware of government regulations that require employers to provide maternity leave. This ignorance directly impacts the effectiveness of the implementation of the relevant legislation. Existing rules should protect them, but lacking knowledge means these rights are often not utilized. Apart from that, insert articles such as Article 154A, which is an insert article between Article 154 and 155, also weaken the implementation of Law Number 6 of 2023 Article 153. These articles provide a loophole for entrepreneurs to avoid their obligations.

In some cases, employers can still dismiss workers unilaterally during maternity leave. This is in direct conflict with Article 153, which strictly prohibits termination of employment for workers who are pregnant, giving birth, experiencing a miscarriage, or breastfeeding. These regulations are supposed to provide vital Protection for female workers, but reality shows otherwise. Termination of employment during maternity leave shows that this law needs to be effectively implemented. The government and related institutions need to increase outreach regarding workers' rights. Better education will help workers understand their rights. With better knowledge, workers can more actively demand their rights. Apart from that, stricter law enforcement is also needed to ensure existing regulations are met. Without this effort, laws that protect workers will be meaningless writing.

Several cases of work termination that occurred involved female workers. In an ILO

publication, a female worker described her experience when her contract was terminated during maternity leave. She stated, "When my contract was terminated during maternity leave, I felt sad and disappointed. I should have finished my leave and returned to the office before my contract was terminated." The company did not inform you that taking maternity leave would result in contract termination. Suddenly, he received a letter from work stating that his contract was considered to have ended as of a specific date. At that time, there was also a significant reduction in staff. Because his contract was terminated, he focused on caring for the children at home.

The fact that many other female workers also experience this unilateral dismissal shows that, in reality. However, laws and regulations are implemented to regulate them, but their implementation in the field still needs to improve. This requires more attention from all related parties. This condition highlights the importance of synergy between the government as a policy maker, employers, and workers in understanding and implementing the applicable laws and regulations. With good cooperation, the Protection of women in the world of work can be maximized. The government needs to increase supervision and law enforcement to ensure that the rights of female workers are maintained in the sense that they can be maximally protected.

On the other hand, companies must also be more transparent and fair in implementing policies regarding maternity leave and contract termination. Women workers must also understand their rights better to fight for justice if violations occur. In this way, legal Protection for female workers can be more effective and positively impact their welfare.

The government has made various efforts to implement Law Number 6 of 2023. These efforts are strengthened by the enactment of Law Number 4 of 2024 Article 5 Number 3 concerning the Welfare of Mothers and Children in the First Thousand Days of Life Phase. In this law, the government guarantees legal assistance to parties who do not obtain their rights by applicable regulations. This legal Protection is critical to ensure that the rights of mothers and children are well maintained. This legal aid is regulated by the Central Government and implemented well by the Regional Government. This was done as a manifestation of the government's commitment to providing legal Protection for female workers. With this law implemented, it is hoped that the welfare of mothers and children during the first thousand days of life can improve. The implementation of this law also shows the government's seriousness in upholding the rights of female workers in Indonesia.

B. Review of the Minister of Women's Empowerment and Child Protection Regulation Number 1 of 2023 regarding Female Workers in Indonesia

Ministerial Regulation for Women's Empowerment and Child Protection Number 1 of 2023 is a revision and update of Ministerial Regulation Number 1 of 2020. This regulation focuses on providing special protective housing for female workers in the workplace. Women's Worker Protection House abbreviated as RP3 is a facility or service aimed at protecting the rights of women workers. This RP3 includes various facilities designed to protect and meet the needs of female workers in the work environment. The main aim of implementing this regulation is to ensure that every workplace provides RP3,

has clear procedures regarding its provision, and ensures uniformity in the management of services at RP3. This regulation also aims to make RP3 a solid basis for providing Protection and fulfilling the rights of workers, laborers, and female employees. Implementing this regulation is hoped to ensure that every workplace can provide adequate facilities to protect the rights of female workers and that services at RP3 comply with predetermined standards. The implementation of this regulation is expected to improve the welfare and Protection of female workers in the workplace so that RP3 becomes a crucial step in building a safe and fair working environment for them.

In 2023, there will only be 72 companies throughout Indonesia that have committed to providing RP3 (Rencana et al./ Violence Prevention and Handling Plan). These companies are spread across various regions and areas in Indonesia, including DKI Jakarta, Bogor, Bekasi, Subang, Riau Islands, South Sumatra, Banten, and East Java. However, the number of companies that have implemented RP3 is still relatively small compared to the total number of provinces in Indonesia, which is 38. In other words, only a small number of regions in Indonesia have implemented RP3. Data from the Central Statistics Agency (BPS) in 2022 shows 642 registered legal entity companies throughout Indonesia. Compared with existing legal entity companies, the number of companies implementing RP3 is still relatively low. This then shows that many companies still need to fulfill their obligation to provide RP3. Efforts to increase awareness and compliance with RP3 are essential to protect workers from workplace violence. Widespread implementation of RP3 will require support from various parties, including the government and industry associations. Thus, it is essential to encourage more companies to commit to providing RP3 to create a safer and fairer work environment.

The Women's Worker Protection House, or RP3, not only functions as a place to receive and handle complaints but also has a role in preventing violence against female workers and employees. This prevention is carried out through various outreach and educational activities as a preventive measure. This program is designed to increase female workers' awareness regarding their workplace rights. In addition, education about gender-based violence, including sexual harassment, is an integral part of the program. Recent research shows that prevention approaches that focus on education and training have a significant impact, especially in increasing the awareness of female workers. Apart from that, this program also strengthens their abilities and knowledge in identifying and dealing with violence in the workplace. This education provides the necessary information so that female workers can protect themselves. In this way, RP3 not only handles cases of violence that have already occurred but also plays an active role in preventing violence in the future. This preventive step is very crucial in efforts to create a work environment that is safe and free from violence.

Preventing violence in the workplace is one of the main pillars of RP3. This pillar involves an in-depth study to identify the root causes of violence in the work environment. In addition, structured program planning is needed to ensure effective and sustainable prevention efforts. This program needs to be designed by taking into account various aspects related to violence and gender in the workplace. Socializing the concept of

prevention to all stakeholders is very important so that all parties, including workers, government, and employers, understand the importance of this effort. Advocacy is also needed to ensure adequate policies can be implemented. This policy must provide maximum Protection for female workers. By increasing awareness, it is hoped that broader knowledge regarding violence and gender issues in the workplace can be achieved. This knowledge enables all parties to take appropriate steps to prevent violence. In addition, this effort is expected to reduce the risk of violence occurring in the workplace, thereby creating a safer work environment. Creating a fair and inclusive work environment for female workers can also be realized. Preventing workplace violence not only protects female workers but also increases the productivity and welfare of the entire workforce. Therefore, prevention efforts must be a top priority in planning and implementing the RP3 program. Collaboration between all parties is essential to achieve this goal. A violence-free work environment can be created with reasonable cooperation, benefiting all involved.

Receiving complaints and following up are two important aspects of overcoming violence and discrimination in the workplace. Complaints provide victims with the opportunity to report incidents of violence or discrimination to RP3. Research shows that effective complaints and handling can build trust, provide Protection for victims, and strengthen justice processes in the work environment. Complaint follow-up refers to a series of follow-up actions taken by service providers aimed at addressing reports relating to violence or discrimination against female workers. The first step in this process usually begins with an initial assessment of the incoming report, aiming to understand the reported situation in depth. After the evaluation, the service provider will identify the victim's needs and determine the next steps. This process emphasizes the importance of referral services as a core part of RP3. This referral service directs victims to institutions or resources that are more appropriate to handle the case, such as medical services, psychological counseling, or legal assistance. Each victim's needs require specific treatment that the relevant professional institution can provide.

Additionally, service providers are responsible for monitoring case progress, ensuring victims receive needed assistance on an ongoing basis. This process ensures that reports are followed up appropriately and provides ongoing support for victims. Coordination with various related institutions is essential to ensure comprehensive handling of every aspect of the case. Thus, follow-up should focus on initial treatment and long-term solutions for victims to ensure the Protection and justice they deserve. Apart from that, assistance includes various follow-up actions followed by the service provider, who is expected to assist female workers/laborers and employees in resolving their problems. This includes assistance in health, legal aid, and social rehabilitation to provide comprehensive support for victims. It is believed that this assistance can strengthen victims' resilience, facilitate the recovery process, and ensure justice for those affected by cases of violence or discrimination in the workplace.

This Ministerial Regulation is an essential form of legal support for female workers, designed to ensure that companies have their obligations to provide adequate protective

containers and facilities. With this regulation, it is hoped that companies can then encourage the creation of a work environment that is safe and free from all forms of violence. The Protection in question covers various types of violence, including physical violence, which involves bodily harm; sexual violence, which is related to sexual harassment or assault; as well as psychological violence, which includes ill-treatment and has an impact on workers' mental health. This regulation also protects female workers from violations of maternity rights, which are special rights that workers have during and after pregnancy. Companies are expected to take preventive and responsive action against violence. By providing appropriate protections, companies can help create a more inclusive and fair working atmosphere for female workers. The implementation of this regulation aims to reduce the risk of violence and ensure that female workers feel safe and respected in the workplace. The legal support provided by this regulation is a strategic step to improve workforce welfare and productivity. Effective implementation of these regulations will require commitment and cooperation from all relevant parties. In this way, the work environment is hoped to become a safer, more supportive, and fair place for all female workers.

4. Conclusion

The regulations stipulated by the Minister of Women's Empowerment and Child Protection contained in Number 1 of 2023 are a revision of Ministerial Regulation Number 1 of 2020, which regulates the provision of special shelters for female workers in the workplace. This revision shows the government's commitment to strengthening more effective legal Protection for female workers. The aim of this revision is for companies to provide adequate facilities and Protection for female workers who experience various forms of violence in the workplace, including physical, sexual, and psychological violence, as well as violations of maternity rights. It is hoped that this safe house can provide the support and Protection needed by female workers who face situations of violence so that they feel secure. A safe home is essential for providing more effective Protection in the work environment. With these facilities, female workers can feel more protected, which in turn is expected to reduce workplace violence and ensure their rights are better respected.

The existence of facilities like this means that female workers now have easier access to report cases of violence they experience. This facility simplifies the reporting process and provides a clear path for workers to get the help they need. Apart from that, the existence of this facility can give a sense of security and more Protection for female workers who previously felt they had no place to complain. This is very important because it can reduce the fear or worry that often prevents female workers from reporting the violence they experience. Increasing company awareness of the importance of creating a safe work environment is hoped to make all employees, especially female workers, feel more valued and protected. Implementing Law Number 5 of 2023 and Minister of Women's Empowerment and Child Protection Regulation Number 1 of 2023 is a significant step in this protection effort. However, even though this legal product has been implemented in Indonesia, there are still quite a lot of female workers who still need to be

fully aware of their protective rights. Broader outreach about these rights is necessary to ensure all female workers know and can take advantage of the Protection provided. With better information and easy access, women workers will be better able to demand their rights and fight back against workplace violence. This increased awareness can also encourage companies to be more proactive in creating and maintaining a work environment that is free from violence and discrimination.

Law Number 6 of 2023 is a revision of Law Number 2 concerning Job Creation, which previously regulated various aspects of labor protection, including Protection for female workers. Although this law aims to hopefully provide better Protection for female workers, especially regarding maternity leave, there are still areas for improvement in its implementation. This law mandates the right to maternity leave and health services through the National Health Insurance (JKN), but in reality, many companies still need to implement these provisions fully. One of the main obstacles is the need for more knowledge among women workers regarding their rights, which hinders the effective implementation of the law. In addition, the existence of additional articles, such as Article 154A, appears to weaken the implementation of this law, resulting in several female workers experiencing unilateral termination of employment during maternity leave. This shows a gap between legal provisions and their implementation in the field. However, there is still hope to improve this situation through solid synergy between the government, employers, and workers. By increasing understanding of workers' rights and ensuring better implementation of existing legislation, Protection for women workers in the world of work can be improved. Cooperation and joint efforts from all relevant parties are crucial to overcoming existing challenges. With strategic steps, it is hoped that female workers can enjoy better and fairer Protection in the work environment.

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