

Disclosing the History from Demographic Perspectives: Javanese Women and Children in 1830-1960s

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Abstract. *Many studies of the history of South East Asian countries (particularly Indonesia) never or just pay a scant attention on the writing of the history (historiography) tries to raise the demographic issues. It is then comprehensible that inadequate understanding of the issues does not bring about a significant change in the course of the historiographic processes in South East Asian. The demographic issues may be not alien or a new for social sciences such as anthropology, sociology, and geography. Conversely, demography becomes increasingly special when the history uses it to reconstruct the past events. The existing experiences placed more emphasis on the demographic issues as set of figures from time to time having no significant roles in disclosing the historical events. The demographic issues generally represent smallest effects compared with other political issues, war, ethical conflict, and the major issues having substantive effects. The understanding and reconstruction of the history as the past events are more often interpreted as dialogical process between the state and power. The history of identification with social reality of demography is only accommodated for a small pattern of various histories issues which in general is strictly confined to romanticism of the "nation" people without demographic sense. This might be the case since the data indicate the high population growth, high birth, and high mortality in the past. In general, women and children living in several residencies such as Kedu, Surakarta, and Surabaya have lower survival rate in the course of the second half of the nineteenth century throughout twentieth century as reflected in mortality rate experienced by two groups (women and children) in several different places such as in Kedu, Surakarta, and Surabaya in 1916-1921. However, there is a serious problem in the source validity related to quantitative sources where some historians are still doubt about their consistencies. Therefore, to overcome vacancy in the sources of data in several periods, some historians use the oral sources trough interview as they do in revealing some problems in Surabaya. This method is particularly undertaken by combining quantitative and qualitative sources*

because of the very long period of the research, mainly on the Javanese women and children issues.

Keyword: history, demography, women and children, fertility, mortality, Java

1. INTRODUCTION

Some historians attempt to attain the truth or objectivity of any events by avoiding, abolishing, and keeping themselves away from documentary sources and historical facts which they consider have no any contribution to the formation of the past events, including data (tables, charts, and statistical figures). This is because those data, for the above some historians, have nothing. What has become a *normative expectation (as a rule)* among the historians so far is that how to write any history from a perspective of the ruling elite or state regime. However, some demographic issues merely represent a small part of the whole past events, even though many historical facts contain much information related to important demographic issues, such as number of people, migration, mortality rates, birth rates, and morbidity (Keyfizi and Nitisastro, 1964). Nevertheless, the Indonesian historians never take an advantage of the moment to further discover what people have experienced, such as worker mobility, family planning, abortion, and some issues of gender and sexuality. Thus, it is not surprising that the historiography in Indonesia still undergoes a *vacuum*.

Some historians in Indonesia are in general skeptic or uncertain of the theme, method and methodology of the history, and of the sources (historical facts). The tightly adherence to, or romanticism of, the above factors does not generate any significant change in historiography in Indonesia. It is considerably possible that what we have seen with respect to the historiography so far is the only reproduction of the previous historical works. In addition, they have no desire of associating and integrating one event and other events into the whole and united ones, which are not parted or separated one each other (*pragmatis*). This reality has been unwittingly still inherent or apologized and even preserved by some Indonesian historians. This was also put into existence when they tried to understand a series of the important periods in the history, or when they began explaining a relationship between *Cultuurstelsel* system (1830-1870) and liberalization policy (1879 throughout great depression in 1930), and Japanese occupation until the post-revolution periods (1940-1960s). In the same manner, the understanding of the

important periods took more emphasis on the historical events from the Dutch's point of view, particularly those related to economic, political-bureaucratic and social issues. Thus, there were no records or writing about survival rate or life expectancy of the women and children or social condition in urban areas (Surabaya town, for instance) in the course of Japanese occupation and post-revolution period (post-World War II) in Indonesian history, meanwhile many records and data (government report) show that survival rate among women and children, especially in post revolution.

The ultimately data causes many things present in the history of Indonesia to be overlooked. For example, the history does not provide an adequate room for dealing with some problems related to women and children's lives both in Javanese rural and urban areas throughout nineteenth and twentieth centuries. In fact, some evidences and historical facts show that since 1818, of the 1,000 children death is still fairly high as seen from a percentage of the ratio of the children are a live (Boomgaard, 1987). In addition, until the first half of the nineteenth century (1821-1850), the prevalence level of children death was still fairly high as seen from a percentage of the ratio of the children to adult people death (both women and men), reaching 43.2%, while for the adult women group, the mortality rate was recorded at 41.6%-42.9% and the adult men group 45.9%-47.5% (Hull, 1975). An involuntary involvement of children and women in the employment became a primary reason behind the increased mortality. Meanwhile, the women were increasingly demanded not only being engaged in production sector but also remained to carry out their reproductive function of giving and caring for their children at home. This problem may constitute a great dilemma for the women and children in Java during that time. This situation became worse when the colonial government issued new policies in the socio-economic and political fields in Java throughout 1830 up to 1960s. Specifically, this paper is aimed at disclosing and revealing other sides of Javanese women and children's live in rural and urban areas (Kedu, Surakarta, and Surabaya) in the course of the government policies application (Dutch, Japan and Indonesia post revolution period) with their accompanying changes and developments in socio-economic and political systems. It takes much time to see more deeply the lives of the women and children in Java from a distinct point of view.

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2. CITIES OF JAVA: ENVIRONMENT AND POPULATION

The end of the Javanese war in 1830s had not brought about a secure life and the improved welfare for larger parts of the Javanese people. Their suffering were even more intensified when the Dutch government introduced *Cultuurstelsel* system (1830-1870). Under the *Cultuurstelsel* system nearly all Javanese people (particularly peasant) were required to plant various cash crops such as coffee, sugarcane, and indigo in their own lands, while these agricultural commodities were seized by the colonial government (Houben, 2002). Many Javanese people, including those in Kedu, experienced great losses and indiscriminate psychological effects resulting from this new system. The fertile soils and good agriculturally environment in Kedu had much attracted the Dutch government to more actively develop and cultivate those cash crops, particularly coffee, one of the plants most commercially promising for people in Kedu district. Additionally, many rural people planted young coffee trees in their yards (*paggerkoffij*), besides tea, indigo, and tobacco (Bleeker, 1850).

Compared with commodities of the colonial (Dutch government), the rural people were able to produce much more commodities at 74,696 *picool* (1 *picool* = 61.76 kg) in 1845. Surprisingly, the 1846 witnessed great advantages for Kedu people with increased coffee commodities compared with the previous year at 105,817 *picool* of coffee (Archive van Pasar Ikan, 1862-1864). However, those great advantages in coffee commodities which Kedu people enjoyed resulted in some indirect effects, such as the limited food production and demographic problems (those related to population and workers). The government's statistics reported that throughout 1832-1836, the average rice production slightly decreased, particularly the rice planted in the not-irrigated fields. This condition was highly correlated with the continuing use of such fields for planting coffee trees as compulsory demanded by the Dutch government. This is proved by the fact that in 1845 the rice production underwent a huge decline, namely only 1,049 *picool* or equal to 28 *picool per-bau* (1 *bau* = 28,000 m²). The decline continued to occur in 1846 where 37,466 *bau* only produced 2 *picool* rice (*Statistiek Residentie Kedoe*, 1838). The decreased rice production caused the rice price to rise highly. Compared to number of population in Kedu which tended to grow up consistently, such serious decline in rice production invoked many problems, although some intentional efforts had been carried on to deal with those problems, one of which was opening the new rain water-stored fields but these could not work well as expected. The rice production ever increased twice only at the

moment, but in some further periods, the rice production reduced constantly in the course of the forced labor (*corvee*), notably in the range of 37.4-24.5 *picool* annually in 1890.

Table 1
AGRICULTURAL COMMODITIES IN RESIDENCY KEDU 1836-1890

Year	Area of the fields (<i>bau</i>)	Area of the fields (planted rice production) (<i>picool</i>)	Rice Production (<i>picool</i>)	Rice production (<i>bau</i>)	Average production (<i>picool</i>)
1836	43,622	43,622	1,337,616	30.7	4.5
1837	44,313	40,219	1,502,676	37.4	5.0
1838	44,460	43,117	1,502,676	34.9	5.0
1839	43,891	36,815	1,502,676	40.8	4.9
1840	44,902	38,110	1,843,888	48.4	6.0
1841	43,966	40,867	1,603,369	39.2	5.2
1842	42,154	39,249	1,646,607	41.9	5.4
1843	41,922	38,889	1,818,591	46.8	5.4
1844	42,180	37,535	1,616,072	30.9	2.9
1845	42,089	37,010	1,043,423	28.2	2.8
1881	136,687	117,213	2,839,860	24.2	4.0
1882	136,851	101,447	2,732,520	26.9	3.8
1883	187,306	101,663	2,521,172	24.8	3.5
1884	130,233	102,931	2,854,121	27.7	3.9
1885	130,794	108,154	3,029,480	28.0	4.2
1886	133,225	112,152	2,861,237	25.5	3.9
1887	134,743	110,062	2,626,545	23.9	3.5
1888	136,124	83,447	2,192,832	26.3	2.9
1889	-	89,703	2,106,400	23.5	2.8
1890	137,484	95,102	2,225,500	23.4	3.0

Source: Archive van Pasar Ikan 1068; Kolonial Verslaag 1880-1891.

This reality was very contrary to several areas in Java which were not subject to the forced labor (*Cultuurstelsel*) as such in Vortsendlanden (Yogyakarta-Surakarta). This is demonstrated by fact that Surakarta became the prominent rice exporting area since 1832. Additionally, some areas including Pajang, Sockawati, Klaten and Wonogiri were naturally endowed with the fertile soils and potentially produced high quality rice such as *gogo*, *genjah*, and *gadoe* varieties. About 75,000 *baus* of the wet rice fields and the 132,000 *bau* of the dry rice fields always experienced any increase in the rice production of 20-30 *picools* wet rice up to 1,275,000 *picools* dry rice (Simon, 1918; Van Kol, 1904). The increased rice production continued to take place even when the depression period (*Malaise*) happened in Java, although there

was decline in rice production about 10 *picools*, but this reduction did not significantly affect the population's life. Such a condition was at least indicated in a change in quality of rice in residency Surakarta in 1856-1868. On the whole, the rice quality was very low as occurring in 1857, 1859, 1869, and 1862. This is generally caused by pests affecting paddies in Surakarta and inter-planting interval between paddy and sugar cane (Table 2). This condition became a replacement and alternative plant which is regarded equal to paddy such as cassava which price tended to go on certain months (November, December, and January) (Memorie van Overgave Helsdingen, 1932-1933; De Locomotief). It was very different in the 1929-1932 period, the price of selling and bought of the rice was increased (Table 3).

Table 2
RICE QUALITY IN SURAKARTA 1856 – 1869

Year	Rice condition in Surakarta
1856	Good
1857	Not good
1858	Good
1859	Not good
1860	Not good
1861	-
1862	Not good
1863	Good
1864	Forward
1865	Good
1866	Very good
1867	Forward
1868	Good
1869	Good

Source: Koloniaal Verslag 1860-1870.

Table 3
COMPARISON OF THE CASH CROPS PRICES
IN WONOGIRI 1929-1932 GULDEN/KG (F/KG)

Production	1929		1930		1931		1932	
	Sale	Buy	Sale	Buy	Sale	Buy	Sale	Buy
Rice no 1	7.5-11	10-13	10-11	10-15	4.9-5	6-9.7	5	-
Rice no 2	7.5-10	9-12	7-9	8-13	5-6	5-9	3-4	-
Rice no 3	7.5-9	8-11	6-8	7-11	4-5	4-7	-	-
Corn no 1	3-5	5-8	2-3	3	12	1-2	1	1-2
Dried cassava (<i>gaplek</i>)	2	3-5	1	4-6	2	2	1	1

Source: *Memorie van Overgave* Helsdingen, pp.202.

This condition brought about an indirect impact with the rising number of population in Java throughout the first half of nineteenth century even though there was not an exact estimation about number of population in Java. Until 1815, Raffles estimated that Javanese population was amounting to 4,499,250. This number was high enough since several areas such as Vorstendlanden, Batavia, Bogor, and Surabaya had high density rates. According to Boomgaard (1991), such a difference in number of population was not only caused by the natural factor in which those areas were furnished with the fertile lands and high rainfall level, but also many plantation had been opened there that of course required workers in larger number as seen in Pasuruan, Kedu, and Vorstendlanden. The number of population continued to grow twice than before or there was an increase of 17% on annual base (Table 4).

Table 4
POPULATION IN JAVA 1826-1831

Residency	1826	1827	1828	1829	1830	1831
Bantam	230,431	245,751	270,876	298,860	337,169	337,169
Batavia	185,716	194,876	203,870	212,460	223,596	223,596
Bogor	127,423	154,380	181,790	216,840	240,812	240,812
Karawang	62,573	67,430	71,520	65,480	79,445	79,445
Priangan	341,473	370,882	406,281	471,928	471,928	471,928
Cirebon	310,780	339,898	363,785	429,576	429,576	429,576
Tegal	122,641	135,420	147,692	168,644	168,644	168,644
Pekalongan	170,863	183,767	205,998	249,897	249,897	249,897
Semarang	280,840	301,617	324,791	385,366	385,366	385,366

Continued

Continued Table 4

Residency	1826	1827	1828	1829	1830	1831
Kedu	242,590	251,431	268,370	307,339	307,339	307,339
Bagelen	280,860	302,677	329,270	379,382	379,382	379,382
Banyumas	280,671	310,842	342,790	421,554	421,554	421,554
Madiun	197,857	212,504	231,472	268,130	268,130	268,130
Kediri	111,718	126,803	138,971	167,183	167,183	167,183
Jepara	211,580	238,671	267,840	324,777	324,777	324,777
Rembang	301,670	321,580	356,471	413,334	413,334	413,334
Surabaya	438,168	470,201	503,840	528,961	528,961	528,961
Pasuruan	157,868	170,681	186,521	208,460	208,460	208,460
Besuki	245,860	261,685	272,540	206,470	206,470	206,470
Amount	4,301,552	4,661,096	4,731,898	5,387,037	5,738,446	5,738,446

Source: Statistiek Archive no 165 1832; *Tijdschrift Nederlandsch indie 1839*, pp.158.

Furthermore, Scheltema (1936) demonstrated that the birth rates were much higher than mortality and migration rates. The increased birth rates might be more caused by communalization in the farm in several Javanese areas. The improved welfare made some people increased their children number. This condition also became the main cause for the high marriage level at young age among the family members of peasant in Java and automatically led to high birth rates. Children had a high value for peasant in Java. The incorporation of children into an employment in informal sector of the agriculture did not only help increasing income in relevant household, but also they became valuable assets who were expected to keep and care their parents when reaching old age. According to White (1973), for the peasant community in Java, the economic unit was always based on family unit. Put in another way, production and reproduction units were the same. Thus, they had a higher motivation to have more children. This may be the case since the family became a source of labors used in agricultural production activity and in meeting the need for obligatory workers. The above condition indirectly correlated with the augmented population density in several areas in Java towns. This was seen in some towns in Java. The population density grew highly in the range of 2,000-3,000 person per kilometer square area in Surakarta Residency, notably in Sukowati Kulon, Sukowati Wetan, and several areas in Honggobayan district. Conversely, some areas in Gagatan, Simowalcn, Kartosuro, Hariboyo, Laroh, and Klaten districts reached less density of 1,600-1,700 person/km². It appeared that some areas with fertile lands, such as Sembuyan, Wiroko, and Keduwang districts had higher density of 1,000 people/km², besides some areas along the Bengawan Solo river, around Lawu valley and several districts in Wonogiri (Table 5).

Table 5
DISTRICT SURAKARTA 1867

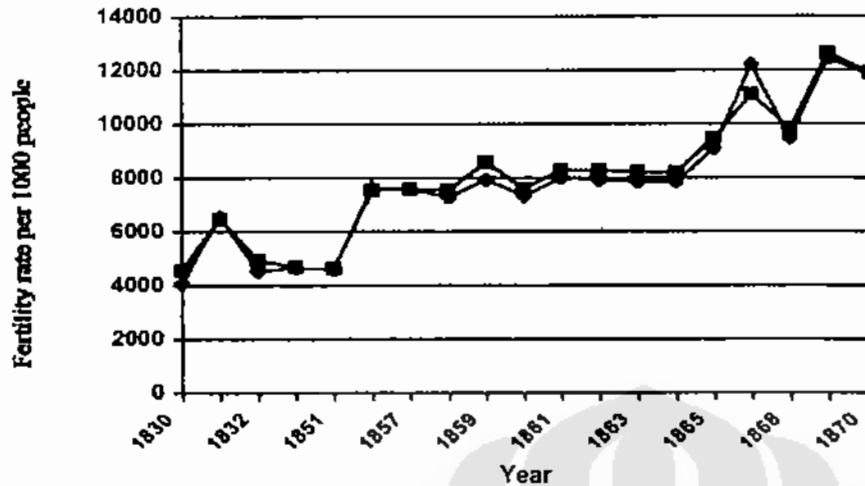
Afdeeling	District	Area (km ²)	Population	Number of Family
Pajang	Kartosuro	5	6,000	12,000
	Boyolali	7	13,800	197,000
	Klaten	10	219,000	219,000
	Laroh	14	10,000	2,500
	Sembuyan	16	12,000	750
Sukowati	Sukowati Wetan	13	38,000	2,900
	Sukowati Kulon	13	16,000	1,200
	Gagatan	3	41,000	13,600
	Simowalen	2	10,000	5,000
	Ampel	3	66,000	22,000
	Honggobayan	3	10,000	3,300
	Laban	1	57,000	57,000
	Selokraden	2	6,000	3,000
	Keduwang	17	140,000	820
	Wiroko	7,5	6,000	800
	Hariboyo	3,5	8,000	2,280

Sources: Bleeker, BKI, pp.567.

A similar condition also appeared in several areas in Residency Kedu. Although they were less density compared to Surakarta areas, because many people migrated outside resulting from the Javanese war, some areas in Remameh, Menoreh, and Magelang reached the highest density of 267/km² compared to other districts. On the contrary, 16 kilometer square areas in Bandongan, Balak, Ngasinan, Prapak, and Jetis were inhabited by 279 people (Archive van Resident Willeus, 1835). An instability in the number of population still frequently occurred in some areas in Java over the *cultuurstelsel* period. For example, in Kedu, although it always experienced the elevated growth of population from year to year, when the Javanese war erupted, at least about 200,000 people died (Archive statistiek opgave van Residentie Kedoe, 1834), while the remaining 40,000-50,000 people migrated outward. This situation indirectly made Kedu area vulnerable at the time. In addition, the population growth rate rose less than 10% annually. Even throughout 1818-1834 period the growth rate increased less than 0.5%-2.0% annually (*Algemeene Verslag van Residentie Kedoe, 1829-1870*). On the other hand, the number of women and children increased larger than the men. Until 1836, the number of the children, women, and men indicated the different growth rates of 128,481, 98,459 and 94,564, respectively. Furthermore, in two regencies,

Magelang and Temanggung, the significant growth of children and women population also happened in several districts, such as Ngasinan, Menoreh, Bandongan, Probolinggo, Remameh, Bligo, Balak, Jetis, Lempuyang, Prapak, and Soemowono (Algemeene Verslag van Residentie Kedoe 1830-1833).

Figure 1
FERTILITY RATE IN KEDU 1830-1870



Note:

□ women

○ men

In Kedu, the high growth rate of population can be seen from the increased birth rate, particularly in the forced labor (*corvee*) prevailing in Kedu. In addition, the government reports show that several districts, including Magelang, Menoreh, and Probolinggo had higher birth rates compared with other district. Annual estimation suggest that in the course of the forced labor period (1830-1879), the birth rate in Kedu was recorded at 299,247 babies per 1000 population. From this figure, the larger proportion of the births accounts for female babies, namely 151,913 babies compared with 148,704 male babies. However, according to Bleeker, fluctuation in the birth rates was still normal since Bleeker estimates that the birth rate during 1852, 1856, 1857, 1859, and 1868 in Kedu reached 84%, while for 1836, 1837, 1846, and 1847 the birth rate experience significant decline of 50% (Bleeker, 1873).

Even though quantitatively the birth rates might be larger enough, but their life expectancy or life quality was fairly low. The famine disaster and the failure of the harvest which were underwent by most people in Java during the middle decades of the nineteenth century (1840-1850) were considered as the main causes of the decreased food intake, resulting in a deficient nutrient among people there.

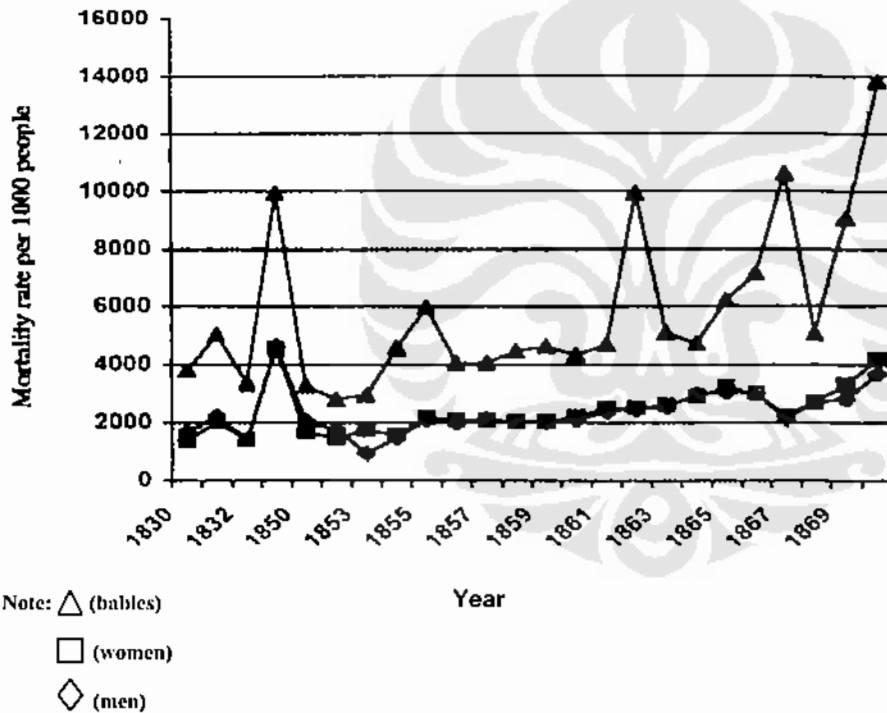
3. WOMEN AND CHILDREN: A DIFFICULT LIFE

A chaotic situation or warfare period always generates unfavorable impacts on the people's welfare. Similarly, the entrance of rural people (pre-industry period) to plantation-based agricultural activity brings about a significant impact not only on production sector, but also on the people survival. The famine disaster and failed harvest frequently occurring throughout the middle of the nineteenth century (1840-1850) became the prominent causes for an incidence of some diseases (typhus, cholera, and *oedema*) which most people experienced at the time, or representing a third million of Java people. Likewise, many people, particularly women and children, in the course of the forced labor, underwent a serious problem while they must engage in production activity. The mortality rate also increased with the heightened number of population in Kedu. The colonial government estimated that about 2,511,136 people died in 1870. This mortality rate represents an accumulated rate of deaths happening in some districts in Kedu, including Magelang, Menoreh, and Probolinggo. These three districts always certainly underwent the increased mortality rates annually where 8,036 people died over there in 1831.

The high mortality rates in Kedu and several other districts in Java mainly occurred to women and children. Therefore, the mortality rates of women and children were high in 1869. The first half of nineteenth century along with applicability of the forced labor (*Cultuurstelsel*) produced a vast alteration roles, task, and life condition among women and children since they were increasingly absorbed in agricultural sector. The women and children actively participated in coffee cultivation and planting. Thus, when the human resources in the household were really in scarcity condition, then the parents, especially the women made an economic decision which deemed rational by making an investment on children and women which allowed them to step up their incomes. In addition, a presence and involvement of the women and

children were certainly required in picking tea leaves, cutting tobacco leaves, and processing indigo plants (*Algemeene van Residentie Soerakarta, 1887*). Ironically, their needs for adequate rest, nutrients and good health care often ignored. This condition triggered a high mortality rate among women and children, namely about 1,822 and 4,572 respectively in 1820s (*Archive van Mangkunegaran*). The scarcity of the food became the main reason behind the reduced nutritional standard for people (especially women and children). It can not be imagined how the women and children with very low calories and low nutritional foods could retain their lives. This agony was still made worse by unfair distribution of foods among family members, together with the illness of malaria, cholera, and measles that they might suffer from. Of these diseases, the cholera and measles epidemic had killed the victims in largest number. Furthermore, the cholera became an extreme pandemic in Java in 1821, 1834, 1851, 1857, 1864, and 1874. These two latter diseases had caused about 66,809 people to die in Java and Madura in 1851.

Figure 2
MORTALITY RATES IN RESIDENCY KEDU 1830-1870



This condition frequently happened in Residency Kedu during the forced labor. An involvement of the women and children in production process indirectly results in the enhanced mortality rate. Women not only work more hours, they are also required to perform reproduction function, giving birth, and caring their children. The heavy workload and economic problem made women and children susceptible to high risk. Thus, their mortality was very high in the forced labor time. Most children in Kedu who died because of the excessive working loads are still under ten years beside due to the low physical endurance and nutrition deficiency.

It is not surprising that the number of death in the three districts was very high, namely 8,036 people, including babies and children. This was closely correlated with the poor care and nursing for the babies and children. In addition, the inadequate breastfeeding and food intakes also became a factor contributing to the condition. In the same manner, the relatively short interval between the births and the young age of the women giving birth also constituted the main cause of the high mortality of babies and children. The growing demand for employment had made some children and women disregarded their health and nutrient intakes during *Cultuurstelsel* period (Boomgaard, 1989).

Table 6
NUMBER OF SICKNESS AND DEATH 1860S IN RESIDENCY KEDU

Residency	Afdeeling	Disease term	Sickness	Death	Comparable	Month
Bagelen	Distrik Loano	January-July	39,000	1,650	1:2.36	7
	Afdeeling Ledok	April-October	18,000	7,880	1:2.28	7
Semarang	Distrik Selokaton	January-July	580	100	1:5.8	7
Kedu	Ternanggung	January-August	23,600	11,680	1:2.02	7.5
	Menoreh	March-July	1,620	320	1:5.06	5
Banyumas	Banjarnegara	February-December	9,500	4,860	1:1.95	11
	Juwana	June-December	1,630	970	1:1.68	2
Pekalongan	Batang and Kebumen	February-December	5,000	2,540	1:1.96	11

Sources: *Geneeskundige Tijdschrift voor Nederlansch Indie deel VI*, (Batavia: Lange & Co, 1859), pp.183.

The post-*Cultuurstelsel* (forced planting) period did not bring about a significant change in demographic issues in Java. The decline in growth rate of population was high, as showed in Surakarta. Similar to Kedu situation, the government's report in 1878-1879 indicated that only 22,010 people resided in the town. The decline was also due to the increased mortality rate in several districts, such as Klaten (0.5%), Kertasura (1%), Boyolali (2%), Sukoharjo (1%), Ampel (0.5%) and Sragen (0.5%), (*Archive van Mangkonegara*). Unlike Kedu, more mortality rates were underwent by adult men and women. The mortality rate in several districts, such as Banyudono-Boyolali reached 5.53% for the men, while the mortality rate for the women was recorded at 3.87%. The death was mostly caused by the poor health environment, making many people suffered from various diseases of cholera, bubonic plague, and smallpox. The government's annual report demonstrated that in 1887, 2,927 people died due to the smallpox disease (*Algemeene van Soerakarta*, 1887). The eating habit of the people in Surakarta was also viewed as one of causes for the decreased life quality which in turn resulted in the death. Until 1918-1919, many people in several areas in Surakarta consumed foods made from corn, *gaplek* (dried cassava), *katul*, *thiwul*, and *gogic* rice (*Algemeene van Soerakarta*). This condition was further aggravated by the epidemic developments of cholera and bubonic plague. The epidemic incidence of the bubonic plague in 1915 caused the mortality rate to rise highly, particularly in several areas in Surakarta, Klaten, Sukoharjo, Sragen, Delanggu, and Boyolali. Various efforts were made by the government to cope with those health problems, for example, by establishing hospital and polyclinics in each area. More than 26 hospitals and polyclinics were established in 1930s.

Table 7
COMPARISON OF CALORIES CONTENT AMONG SEVERAL FOODS

Years	Rice	Beans	Fish/ Meats	Total
1815	1,350	700	100	2,150
1841-1845	1,050	450	100	1,600
1873-1875	1,100	750	100	1,950

Source: Boomgaard, "Java's Agricultural production 1775-1875", in Angus Madisson Ge Prince, *Economic Growth in Indonesia, 1820-1940*, pp.114.

The second half of the twentieth century did not witness the consequential change or any improvement in social life and condition in some Javanese towns. Even some big cities such as Surabaya could not escape from

the similar problems. The sharp decline in the sugar price in some markets in the world and the tight money policy of the Dutch eliminated the glory of Surabaya as one of the cities with many sugar industries. Many people felt huge losses and advantages as well owing to the collapse of sugar industries in Surabaya, particularly Indonesian people who were deprived of the employment due to this event. For Indonesian people living in cities such as Surabaya, the great depression period was found to be financially difficult since they experienced reduction in salary and other deductions in standard of living costs (Ingelson, 2004). This period became the milestone for most women and children who seriously suffered from those difficulties in Surabaya. The majority of the women and children had to work for sustaining their families' life. The larger part of the Javanese and Chinese women experienced this difficult condition compared to women from other ethnics (Arabian). Most Arabian women were made more advantageous by the presence of school foundation (Al-Irsyad) where they could pursue education there until the beginning of Japanese colonial period (1940).

The Japanese occupation period not only brought a new atmosphere for the people in Surabaya but also elicited more severe agony, particularly for the women. This era was often described as "zaman gila" (*crazy era*) since many children were employed by the Japanese government to help them planting and harvesting *jarak* (castor oil plants). Similarly, the Chinese women were exploited to sew manually all dresses made of the rubbers which were then distributed to Japanese soldiers in villages. Many goods and things necessary for daily life disappeared in the markets over the Japanese occupation period in Surabaya. For their survival, they had to stand in a long queuing line or wait for distribution of the main foods stuffs from the village head. The children and women much engaged in the distribution process. Unfortunately, they often ate a porridge made from the soybean remnants when the foods which should be allotted to them were used up. Many people died not only due to starvation, but also because of various diseases, such as cholera (Archive van Soerabaia, 1945-1950). This condition continued to prevail although they lived in the independence era, even throughout 1950-1955 period, the mortality rate of Surabaya population was recorded at 28.3 per 1,000 people. The government had implemented several policies, for instance, by distributing the rice to the poor people in towns, namely 550 gram per people. However, this measure was not solving the actual problem because of the limited rice for many people.

4. CONCLUDING REMARKS

Many realities and historical facts can be put into use as the tool to explain and elucidate some complex and simple issues which may be still hidden and unrevealed from the social life, including those related to mortality, birth, health, environment and many others. More important, an element of locality should be taken into consideration since the element will make the history more cautious in disclosing and anticipating localities and diversity. Women and children should be given a wider room in history writing (*historiography*), where they are generally ignored in Indonesian history. Many things can be disclosed from the women and children as those unmasked in three residencies in Java (Kedu, Surakarta, and Surabaya) commencing from the forced labor up to the post-revolution period. We may find unexpected findings when investigated them, for instance, their high mortality rate. This also prevails in Surabaya city as the large city with similar problem with mortality.

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