Zakat-Based and Community-Based Society Empowerment

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Abstract. The existence of zakat institutions as one of the society empowerment institutions plays an important role in maintaining social stability to minimize disparity in the society. LAZ Harfa is one of the zakat institutions which are currently conducting empowerment in Pandeglang Regency through the improvement of quality of life of the society by changing people's behaviour to live healthier lives. In addition, LAZ Harfa also conducts economic empowerment to meet the daily needs of the society. Therefore, this research tries to describe an empowerment process carried out by LAZ Harfa as a zakat institution in improving the quality of life through zakat-based and community-based society empowerment activities in Pandeglang Regency. The method used in this study was a qualitative research method by using NVivo 11 software for analysing the data.

1. Introduction

The poor performance of public sector has prompted the decision to implement another strategy in order to improve the quality of life of citizens. The strategy has a different pattern, in which by encouraging zakat-based and community-based society empowerment. Then, in this context, Beik illustrated that the concept of zakat, infaq and alms is believed to have a very extraordinary impact. Even in the Western society itself, has emerged in recent years, a concept that encourages the development of sharing economy or gift economy, where the economy must be based on the spirit of sharing and giving. YochaiBenkler, a professor at the Yale University School of Law USA stated that the concept of sharing is a very important capital to spur and increase production, in terms of economy. He even stated that a company that develops the concept of sharing in the interaction between its components will be more efficient than a company that does not want to implement it. For example, the motivation of company employees who get a bonus will be much better when compared to employees who never got it [1].

Furthermore, from the results of literature review, there are several research models relating to society empowerment to improve the quality of life of citizens, namely: First, a research conducted by [2] on strategies to improve the quality of life of societies through community-based participatory development in Nigeria; Second, a research conducted by [3] concerning the significant influence of the amount of channelled funds on the income of mustahiqs in LAZ Yayasan Solo Peduli (Solo Peduli Foundation), Surakarta. The higher the amount of funds (zakat) that had been channelled, the more significant the impact on the income of mustahiqs; Third, a research conducted [4] on the process of society empowerment through ‘village surgical’ program in Surakarta, Indonesia for sustainable housing development; and Fourth, a research conducted [5] on capital assistance program to the community by zakat institutions to help the poor.
Meanwhile, this study emphasizes the role and process of LAZ Harfa as one of the amil zakat institutions that conducts zakat-based and community-based society empowerment process, through a process of behaviour change to improve the quality of life and economy of the people in Pandeglang Regency, Banten Province using NVivo 11 software for analysing the data.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Poverty

Darwin defined that poverty can be interpreted broadly and simply. Poverty in the simplest sense is lack of material ownership or inadequate income to meet basic needs. Meanwhile, in the broadest sense, it means another inadequacy. Such as, low employment and business opportunities, weak capacity of human resources, vulnerable situations that make people easily impoverished, weak institutional support, or weak access to articulate voices and interests in the political process [6].

Then the National Development Planning Agency (BAPPENAS) explained that poverty is a situation of inadequacy which occurs not because it is desired by the poor, but because it cannot be avoided by using their own power. According to Chambers there are five disadvantages that surround the lives of the poor, namely: (1) Poverty, having the following signs: a rickety house made from low-quality building materials, very minimal equipment, a family economy characterized by relying on debts to sustain their life and uncertain income; (2) Vulnerability problems, this vulnerability can be seen from the inability of poor families to face emergency situations. Economic improvements that were painstakingly achieved could disappear at any time when their family member(s) is sick, thus causing them to need a large amount of money for medical expenses; (3) Problems of powerlessness. The form of powerlessness of the poor is reflected in their inability to face elites and the bureaucracy in deciding decisions concerning their fate, without giving them the opportunity to actualize themselves; (4) Physical weakness due to the low consumption of food both in terms of quality and quantity so that their nutritional consumption is very low which results in their low productivity and (5) Problems of isolation, physical isolation reflected in the case when the groups of poor people live in area which difficult to be reached, while social isolation is reflected in the case when the poor is isolated from the integration with the wider society [7]. In addition, poverty can also be identified as a lack of capabilities of a person, family and community or society in meeting the minimum needs. These basic needs include: food, clothing, housing, health, education, water supply and sanitation [8].

2.2 Zakat-Based and Community-Based Society Developments

Estimologically, empowerment comes from the basic word “power” which means strength or ability. Starting from this understanding, empowerment can be interpreted as a process towards empowering, or a process to obtain power or strength or ability, and/or the process of giving power or strength or ability, and/or the process of giving power or strength or ability from those who have power to those who are lacking or not yet empowered. Winanri revealed that the core of empowerment is covering three matters, namely development, strengthening the potential or power, and creating independence. Therefore, empowerment is the creation of an atmosphere or climate that enables the potential of the community or society to develop [9].

Meanwhile, Kasmel, Andersen, and Pernille illustrated that society empowerment has proven to be a strong approach to solve many society problems. The emphasis of many society development programs is creating people’s mindsets in an effort to develop the society. Empowerment must be the ultimate goal of every society development project. While development is often interpreted as the flow of resources from the outside into the community, empowerment encourages and attracts the full participation of all members of the society to change their own world, from the inside out. Speer and Hughey concluded that community organization is an important way to achieve empowerment [10].

Furthermore, this study will link society empowerment with the benefits of zakat. In terms of language, the word ‘zakat’ is the basic word of ‘zaka’ which means holy, blessing, growing and commendable. Whereas in terms of fiqh, zakat means a certain amount of property that is required by Allah to be given to the person who has the right to receive it, besides also means giving a certain
amount itself. Meanwhile, in terms of shari’a etymology, zakat is the name for a number of certain assets that have reached certain conditions that are required by Allah to be spent and given to those who have the right to receive it. Zakat is also one of the pillars of Islam that has the dimension of community social justice, because zakat can also mean holy, good, growing, clean and developing. And terminologically, zakat is a number of assets that are required by Allah SWT taken from the property of certain people (aghniyyā’) to be given to people who have the right to receive it with certain conditions [7].

Under the aforementioned conditions, it is expected that the society empowerment process carried out by the amil zakat institution can contribute to create prosperity for the people, namely people who can fully enjoy prosperity, not poor, do not starve, enjoy proper education services, are able to implement gender equality, and utilize health facilities evenly. Prosperous life is also characterized by the reduction of dangerous and contagious diseases, people live in a more environmentally friendly and green environment, people have healthy environmental facilities and housing, and people that always have partners in maintaining sustainability [11].

3. Methods
Methodology used in this research was qualitative method by using NVivo 11 software for analyzing the data. The data were collected from primary and secondary sources.

4. Results and Discussions
4.1 Poverty and The Role of LAZ Harfa in Pandeglang Regency
Pandeglang Regency is geographically located between 6o21’- 7o10’ S and 104o48–106o11’ E with an area of 2,747 km² or 29.98 percent of the Banten area. The regency which located at the western end of Banten Province has the following administrative boundaries: Serang Regency in the north, Indian Ocean in the south, Sunda Strait in the west, and Lebak Regency in the east.

Furthermore, based on data from the Ministry of Finance of the Republic of Indonesia, it shows that there are two regencies in Banten Province that fall into the category of underdeveloped regency, namely Lebak Regency and Pandeglang Regency [12]. This condition is confirmed by Banten Province Central Bureau of Statistics (BPS) data which released poverty percentage figures in eight cities and regencies in Banten Province in 2017. The results, BPS put Pandeglang Regency as the poorest region. Even the graph has increased compared to the previous year. Based on data collection conducted by BPS, the percentage of poverty in Pandeglang in 2017 was 9.74 percent. This figure increased by 0.07 percent from 2016. Following Pandeglang Regency, the regency with the second highest poverty rate in Banten is Lebak Regency.

Seeing the aforementioned conditions, it is clear that poverty in Pandeglang Regency is still a serious problem. Therefore, more serious solutions and collaboration with other stakeholders, namely the private sector and NGOs, are urgently needed. This condition is very important because poverty will reduce the quality of life of the people, so that it will result in high socio-economic burdens of the community, low quality and productivity of human resources, and a decline in public order. In addition, poverty can also be identified as a lack of capabilities of a person, family and community in meeting the minimum needs. These basic needs include: food, clothing, housing, health, education, water supply and sanitation [8].

One of the problems of poverty is the provision of clean water and sanitation. At present, the understanding of sanitation is still quite low. In several regions in Pandeglang, Banten, the people still carry out unhealthy habits, such as haphazard defecation or open defecation (Buang Air BesarSembarangan/BABS). This triggered LAZ HarapanDhuafa (LAZ Harfa), one of the institutions engaged in community empowerment program in Banten, to reduce poverty, especially in fulfilling basic needs, for example in terms of health, education, water supply and sanitation. LAZ Harfa is a Non-Profit Institution that concentrates on empowering the poor from 2004 through the management of Zakat, Infaq, Shodaqoh or Alms, Endowments, and other Social Funds. LAZ Harfa has a vision to become a trusted institution in empowering the poor and has the following missions: (1) Building
community participation and concern for the poor or dhuafa; (2) Managing ziswaf and other halal funds for improving welfare; and (3) Developing community potential through partnership programs with companies, governments and NGOs. Furthermore, the strategies put forward by LAZ Harfa are to provide ease of service, accuracy of the target of funds channelled, clarity, and accountability of reporting.

4.2 The Process of Society Development through the Improvement of Quality of Life

The aim of this society empowerment program carried out by LAZ Harfa is to improve the health and welfare of vulnerable people in order to achieve SDGs (Sustainable Development Goals). LAZ wants to change the mind set of the people so as not to defecate haphazardly and start to realize and apply healthy sanitation behaviour by educating and advocating them, so that they can gradually understand the importance of clean sanitation.

In an effort to change the behaviour of citizens, LAZ Harfa run a toilet empowerment program using the CLTS triggering method based on community-based economic and health development project. The change from unhealthy to healthy behaviour of thousands of residents was a result of LAZ Harfa program for 10 years (2007-2017). In an effort to change people's behaviour, LAZ Harfa run a toilet development program using the CLTS (Community Led Total Sanitation) triggering method. Through the program, there are currently 9,347 latrines built in Pandeglang’s poor community environment without any subsidy. This condition was due to the increasing awareness of the people on the importance of maintaining sanitation through the provision of defecation means for personal and environmental health.

One of the ways to make people aware of the importance of latrines was by giving or sprinkling colored ash to where they defecate. As the results, the ashes were spread in several parts of their village. This triggered their awareness about the needs for defecation means. Even now, LAZ Harfa has collaborated with Caritas Australia and around 50 thousand Pandeglang residents who used to defecate haphazardly or in the garden (dolbon) have changed their behavior to defecate in the toilet. The change from unhealthy to healthy behaviour of thousands of citizens is a result of empowerment. Then the program carried out by LAZ Harfa has now reached as many as 10,000 toilets. It is the results achieved by LAZ Harfa in the Pandeglang through the CLTS education model. This was revealed by Indah:

"The 10,000th house that has its own toilet. Many women who have been defecating haphazardly, now are no longer doing that. They also no longer have to wake their husbands for midnight defecation at the back of their house. " (https://www.kabar-banten.com/laz-harfa-terapkan-pemberdayaan-jamban-50-ribu-warga-pandeglang-hulir-kebamaan-dolbon/ downloaded on 29 November 2018)

This was confirmed by Caritas (Australia) CEO Paul O'Callaghan who described this program as one of the best programs he had ever seen, because it showed a group of mothers who worked very well with the support of LAZ Harfa and Caritas to make a big change for the lives of children and their descendants. The following is an excerpt of an interview with the CEO of Caritas, Paul O’Callaghan

"It is a very good thing for us to be able to visit the people in this village because we have heard directly from the mothers about the big changes in their lives, the results of direct assistance from LAZ Harfa and the support of Caritas. And this is a very inspiring thing to see how people work together in improving their lives, not only for their families but also for the whole community. (https://www.kabar-banten.com/laz-harfa-terapkan-pemberdayaan-jamban-50-ribu-warga-pandeglang-hulir-kebamaan-dolbon/ downloaded on 29 November 2018)

In addition, the empowerment process is not just about sanitation. LAZ Harfa also empowered the economy sector by making vegetable gardens in the front yard of the residents' houses, which aims to minimize the expenditure for daily household needs. This condition is clearly very helpful for the Government to be able to reduce poverty in Pandeglang Regency through the contribution of programs conducted by LAZ Harfa as an amil zakat institution.
5. Conclusions
Poverty is the powerlessness of someone to be able to meet their minimum needs, such as the fulfilment of food, clothing, housing, health, education, water supply and sanitation. In addition, the poor performance of public sector has also prompted the decision to implement another strategy in order to improve the quality of life of citizens. The strategy has a different pattern, in which by encouraging zakat-based and community-based society empowerment. While empowerment is a process to obtain power or strength or ability from parties which have power to those who are lacking or not yet empowered. LAZ Harfa is a non-profit institution that doing empowerment through toilet empowerment program using the CLTS triggering method based on community-based economic and health development project.

References