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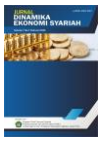

LAZ SIDOGIRI AND SOCIAL TRANSFORMATION TOWARDS ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT OF BANYUWANGI COMMUNITY BASED ON ISLAMIC VALUES

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to analyze the strategies employed by the Sidogiri Zakat Institution (LAZ) in integrating Islamic values within its community economic empowerment programs and to assess the impact of these strategies on social transformation. Utilizing a descriptive qualitative approach, data were gathered through interviews, observations, and document analysis. The findings reveal that LAZ Sidogiri applies both consumptive and productive distribution models, supported by a variety of programs focused on education, healthcare, environment, economy, and needs-based social assistance. Despite the structured nature of these initiatives, several challenges persist, including limited professional human resources, weak monitoring mechanisms, and negative public perceptions. The positive outcomes of the programs include increased access to capital and entrepreneurship training, albeit with a limited reach. This study concludes that enhancing public engagement strategies, improving human resource quality, and ensuring institutional transparency are crucial for broadening program impact and sustaining social transformation based on Islamic principles.

Keywords*: LAZ Sidogiri; Social Transformation; Economic Empowerment; Islamic Values*

INTRODUCTION

Empowerment of the community economy based on Islamic values is a strategic issue in social development in Indonesia, especially amidst increasing economic inequality and the challenges of globalization. Empowerment comes from the word (daya) in the general dictionary of the Indonesian language, meaning the ability to do something.[1] While in English from the word empowerment. As for empowering the meaning of empower. According to the Oxford English Dictionary, the word empower has two meanings, namely: to give power or authority to or give

[1] W. J. S. Poerwadarminta, Kamus Umum Bahasa Indonesia (Jakarta: Balai Pustaka, 1996)29

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power, transfer power or delegate authority to another party, second: to give ability to or enable or efforts to provide ability or empowerment.[2]

The Sidogiri Zakat Institution (LAZ), affiliated with Islamic boarding schools, plays an important role in addressing this issue through a structured Islamic philanthropic approach. However, the effectiveness of economic empowerment programs run by LAZ Sidogiri still faces various challenges, such as limited reach and lack of innovation in managing productive zakat funds. The distribution of productive zakat at LAZ Sidogiri Bangkalan branch only reaches 20% of the total ZIS funds, and most of it is directed to alumni of Islamic boarding schools without any effort to reach mustahiq outside the community. This indicates the need for evaluation and development of more inclusive and sustainable economic empowerment strategies.[3]

Economic inequality and poverty are still major challenges in Indonesia, especially in rural areas. Overcoming poverty is essentially an effort to empower poor people to be independent, both in the economic, social and cultural fields. Because poverty is a multidimensional problem, it cannot be overcome only with empowerment strategies that only focus on the economic side. So far, poverty has been more often associated with the economic dimension, because this dimension is the easiest to observe, measure and compare.[4]

One of the ways demanded by Islam from Muslims to eradicate poverty is the existence of zakat which is an inseparable part of the pillars of Islam. The description of zakat is a clear sign and does not contain ambiguity regarding the will of Allah to ensure that no one suffers from poverty, lack of means to meet their basic needs. Zakat, which literally means as a purification, growth, blessing and praise, is essentially a financial obligation of a Muslim to pay part of his net wealth or agricultural products, if it exceeds the nisab limit (a certain amount as part of a religious obligation that must be fulfilled).[5]

Zakat is a pillar of Islam that reflects the determination to purify society from the disease of poverty. Zakat also purifies the wealth of the rich and purifies society from violating Islamic teachings due to unfulfilled basic needs. Zakat is an expression of gratitude from a servant to Allah for His gifts and mercy which are manifested in the form of growth in wealth and welfare of all members of society. Zakat also guarantees short-term and long-term interests, by seeking Allah's

2 Mohammad Nadzir, "Membangun Pemberdayaan Ekonomi di Pesantren,"Jurnal Economica 1 no. 1 (2015): 39-40.

3 Choiri, M. Hammam. (2021). Model Pengembangan Zakat Produktif oleh Lembaga Amil Zakat dalam Pemberdayaan Ekonomi Masyarakat Madura. 2, 121–133.

4 Syamsuri. Ekonomi Pembangunan Islam, Sebuak Prinsip, Konsep dan Asas Falsafahnya. Ponorogo: UNIDA Gontor Press. (2018), 98.

5 Syamsuri. Ekonomi Pembangunan Islam, Sebuak Prinsip, Konsep dan Asas Falsafahnya. Ponorogo: UNIDA Gontor Press. (2018), 180-181.

pleasure for the wealth they have.[6] Islamic efforts to overcome poverty are not temporary or half-hearted efforts. Poverty alleviation for Islamic teachings is one of the unique principles with strong foundations. It is not surprising that zakat, which has been made by Allah as a source of guarantee for the rights of the poor, is determined as the third pillar of Islam.[7] Thus, poverty alleviation and efforts to bridge the gap between the rich and the poor are by increasing empowerment through zakat.[8]

The instrument of community empowerment in Islam is using zakat. Zakat is able to reduce the social gap between the rich and the poor, zakat can increase the ability to buy goods and services of the poor from being unable to buy to being able to buy goods and services. In conclusion, zakat is able to increase consumption and encourage economic growth in society.[9]

The Sidogiri Zakat Institution (LAZ), affiliated with Islamic boarding schools, plays an important role in addressing this issue through a structured Islamic philanthropic approach. The Sidogiri Community Development (SCD) program run by LAZ Sidogiri aims to improve the welfare of mustahik through the distribution of integrated Zakat, Infak, and Sedekah (ZIS) based on community empowerment. However, the effectiveness of economic empowerment programs run by LAZ Sidogiri still faces various challenges, such as limited resources and technological gaps. The main obstacles faced include limited resources, technological gaps, and program complexity. This indicates the need for evaluation and development of more inclusive and sustainable economic empowerment strategies.[10]

Previous studies have discussed the role of Islamic boarding schools in empowering the community's economy through social and spiritual approaches. For example, a study by Hendratmi and Widayanti explored the business model of Baitul Maal wat Tamwil (BMT) UGT Sidogiri which is based on Islamic values in microfinance.[11] However, there is still a gap in the literature regarding the integration of Islamic values in the economic empowerment strategy implemented by LAZ Sidogiri, especially in the context of sustainable social transformation. In addition, there has not been much research examining the impact of LAZ Sidogiri programs on improving the economic

[6] M. Umer Chapra, Islam dan Tantangan Ekonomi, Islamisasi Ekonomi Kontemporer, terj. Nur Hadi Ihsan(Surabaya: Risalah Gusti, 1999), hlm. 270-271.

[7] Yusuf Al Qardhawi, Musykilah Al-Faqr wa Kaifa 'Ilajuha fi Al-Islam (Beirut: Muassasah Ar-Risalah, 1985), hlm. 69

8 Yusuf Al Qardhawi, Musykilah Al-Faqr wa Kaifa 'Ilajuha fi Al-Islam (Beirut: Muassasah Ar-Risalah, 1985), hlm. 186

9 Ryandono dan Muhammad Nafik Hadi, Ekonomi ZISWAQ (Zakat, Infaq, Shadaqah dan Waqaf) (Surabaya: IFDI dan Cenforis, 2008), hlm. 28

10 Jamali, A., Munir, M., & Meldona, M. (2024). Tata Kelola Distribusi Zakat, Infak dan Sedekah (ZIS) dalam Meningkatkan Kesejahteraan Mustahik (Studi Pada Program Sidogiri Community Development (SCD) di LAZ Sidogiri Pasuruan Jawa Timur). Jurnal Ilmiah Ekonomi Islam, 10(2), 2269–2282

[11] Hendratmi, A., & Widayanti, M. A. (2018). "Business Model in Islamic Perspective: Practising of Baitul Maal Wattamwil (BMT) UGT Sidogiri East Java Indonesia." JMMR, 2(1)

welfare of the community empirically and comprehensively. Therefore, a more in-depth study is needed to understand how Islamic values are implemented in economic empowerment programs and how they impact social transformation. The study by Syamsuri et al explored the role of LAZ Sidogiri in empowering the economy of the Pasuruan community through Islamic philanthropy. However, there is still a gap in the literature regarding the integration of Islamic values in the economic empowerment strategy implemented by LAZ Sidogiri, especially in the context of sustainable social transformation. In addition, there are not many studies that examine the impact of LAZ Sidogiri programs on improving the economic welfare of the community empirically and comprehensively. Therefore, a more in-depth study is needed to understand how Islamic values are implemented in economic empowerment programs and how they impact the social transformation of the community.[12]

This study aims to analyze how LAZ Sidogiri integrates Islamic values in its community economic empowerment program and how the program contributes to social transformation. The main research questions include: (1) What is LAZ Sidogiri's strategy in implementing Islamic values in its economic empowerment program? (2) What are the challenges faced in implementing the program? (3) What is the impact of LAZ Sidogiri's economic empowerment program on community welfare? By answering these questions, this study is expected to contribute to the development of an effective and sustainable Islamic value-based economic empowerment model. In addition, the results of this study can be a reference for other Islamic philanthropic institutions in designing and implementing economic empowerment programs that are oriented towards social transformation.

The integration of Islamic values in the economic empowerment program by LAZ Sidogiri has great potential in creating sustainable social transformation. By prioritizing principles such as justice, togetherness, and blessings, these programs can improve community welfare and strengthen social cohesion. However, to achieve these goals, a holistic and innovative approach is needed in program planning and implementation. The study by Kutsiyah shows that strong social capital in the pesantren environment can be an important capital in supporting the success of economic empowerment programs. Therefore, this study will examine how LAZ Sidogiri utilizes social

[12] Syamsuri, S., Firdaus, D. A., & Kamaluddin, I. (2021). Peran LAZ Sidogiri Dalam Memberdayakan Ekonomi Masyarakat Pasuruan Melalui Filantropi Islam. Islamic Economics Journal, 6(2).

capital and Islamic values in developing effective economic empowerment programs, as well as their implications for social transformation in society.[13]

RESEARCH METHOD

This research adopts a qualitative descriptive method to provide an in-depth understanding of social phenomena related to the role of LAZ Sidogiri in empowering the economy of the Genteng Banyuwangi community. The study is designed to generate descriptive data in the form of written narratives rather than numerical statistics, focusing on capturing the nature, characteristics, patterns, and implications of the empowerment programs observed. The data were collected through field research, using a combination of primary and secondary sources. Primary data were obtained from interviews with the Head of the Human Resources Division and the program report administrator of LAZ Sidogiri Banyuwangi. Secondary data were sourced from official program reports, internal documents, and relevant archives detailing the implementation and achievements of empowerment activities. The data collection techniques included observation, document analysis, and in-depth interviews. A thematic analysis approach was employed to analyze the data, involving processes of categorizing, coding, and identifying core themes relevant to the study objectives. Data validity was ensured through source triangulation by comparing information from different respondents and data collection methods. The analysis was conducted iteratively, integrating empirical findings from the field with relevant theoretical frameworks on supervision and professionalism. This methodology is intended to yield a comprehensive overview of the supporting and inhibiting factors in the implementation of LAZ Sidogiri's empowerment programs and to provide strategic recommendations for enhancing the institution's effectiveness.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

1. LAZ Sidogiri's strategy in implementing Islamic values in economic empowerment programs

Economic empowerment is not only interpreted as an activity or program that merely provides economic assistance to the community, but is a dynamic process that drives collective consciousness.[14] This process aims to raise public awareness of the potential they have, so that this

[13] Kutsiyah, F. (2020). "Social Capital and Its Transformations in Sidogiri Islamic Boarding School." Karsa: Journal of Social and Islamic Culture, 28(1), 57-94.

[14] Husain, Muhammad Yusuf, Muh Rizal Zakki Habibi, Rimba Brahmana Mukti, Muslichudin Achmad, Noval Halifaziya, Muhammad Daffa Althof, and others. 2024. "Investasi Syariah: Kontribusi Terhadap Ketahanan Sosial Dan Ekonomi Umat Di Indonesia: Konsep Investasi Syariah." MUSLIMPRENEUR: Jurnal Ekonomi Dan Kajian Keislaman 4 (2): 41–52.

potential can be actualized and provide real, sustainable benefits for their lives. Thus, economic empowerment is an effort to transform community resources so that they are able to meet their economic needs independently and sustainably.[15]

According to Gunawan, in order to realize the goal of community economic empowerment, a number of strategies are needed to support the achievement of this goal:[16]

a) Providing access and opportunities to the community, especially in order to increase production capacity, income, and encourage the formation of savings that can be used as sustainable business capital.
b) Strengthening partnerships in economic activities through the support of adequate facilities and infrastructure, in order to facilitate the production process and increase business efficiency.
c) Cultivating a spirit of solidarity and a sense of togetherness among members of society, so that a sense of self-confidence arises in meeting economic needs, as well as increasing awareness, willingness, and collective responsibility in economic activities.
d) Improving the quality of services in the fields of education and health as a strategic effort in developing human resources, considering that both have an important role in determining the level of community productivity.
e) The industrial sector development policy must be directed at strengthening community industries integrated with large-scale industries. The industrialization process needs to be pushed down to the village level by utilizing available local potential.

Based on this strategy, community economic empowerment aims to mobilize human internal potential and optimize natural resources, accompanied by efforts to improve overall self-capacity.

It is known that LAZ Sidogiri implements two forms of zakat, infaq, and sedekah funds distribution, namely consumptive and productive. In its implementation, LAZ Sidogiri collaborates with several partners, both within the Sidogiri Islamic Boarding School environment and outside, such as BMT UGT Sidogiri and BMT Maslahah Sidogiri, both of which are still under the auspices of the boarding school.[17]

Ustadz Zainal Arifin explained that the fundraising was done by visiting the muzakki's residences in the Genteng Banyuwangi City area. In addition, there were also donors who submitted

[15] Euis Amalia, Keuangan Mikro Syariah (Bekasi: Gramata Publishing, 2006), hlm. 73

[16] Ismail Hasang, S E, and Muhammad Nur. 2020. Perekonomian Indonesia. Ahlimedia Book.

[17] Zainal Arifin (Kepala Divisi HRD LAZ Sidogiri), wawancara bersama penulis, Kantor Cabang LAZ Sidogiri Banyuwangi, 29 Februari, 2025.

directly to the LAZ Sidogiri office or via bank transfer. The funds collected were then distributed to the parties entitled to receive them in accordance with applicable provisions.

From the explanation above, it can be concluded that LAZ Sidogiri has a special strategy in collecting funds from donors, both permanent and non-permanent donors, including from partner institutions. All funds collected are distributed through a selection process so that they are right on target to those who are entitled to receive them. According to information from Ustadz Ahmad Asror [18] as the program report admin officer, the distribution of zakat funds at LAZ Sidogiri is carried out through two approaches, namely consumptive and productive. Until now, the distribution process has been running well and in accordance with the program that has been designed, especially in the distribution of zakat that has been given to those who are entitled to receive it based on the eight groups (asnaf) stipulated in the sharia.

Overall, LAZ Sidogiri has various fund distribution programs that cover various aspects of community life. Among them:

a) The Peduli Pendidikan Program, which is intended for students under the guidance of LAZ Sidogiri. This program is divided into four categories, namely providing scholarships for orphans and the poor, scholarships for outstanding students, improving the quality of teachers, and sending preachers or educators to various regions.
b) Health Care Program, which aims to ease the burden of medical treatment for the underprivileged. Activities in this program include free medical treatment, mass circumcision, free ambulance services, provision of milk for malnourished toddlers, assistance for pregnant women, and distribution of qurban meat.
c) Environmental Care Program, which is realized through the repair of uninhabitable houses belonging to the poor, environmental and public facility cleaning activities, rehabilitation of places of worship and schools, and greening activities such as planting trees and distributing fish seeds.

[18] A. Asror (Admin Program Report LAZ Sidogiri), wawancara bersama penulis, Kantor Cabang LAZ Sidogiri Banyuwangi, 29 Februari, 2025.

d) The Economic Care Program is divided into three main forms of activities: providing business capital assistance for underprivileged communities, training and improving the quality of human resources in the field of entrepreneurship, and support for small and medium enterprises (SMEs and MSMEs).
e) The Ceria Ramadhan program includes the distribution of takjil, Ramadhan safari activities for orphans and the poor, as well as the provision of holiday gifts to muezzins, religious teachers, and mosque administrators.
f) Disaster Victim Response Program, namely providing assistance to communities affected by natural disasters in the form of medicines, vitamins, clean water, clothing and food needs, and other basic needs.
g) Muharram Happiness Program, a special activity held every Muharram month, which focuses on providing assistance to orphans.

From the explanation above, it can be concluded that LAZ Sidogiri has various empowerment programs that cover the education, health, environment, economy, disaster relief sectors, as well as other special programs that can be run according to needs.

2. Challenges faced in implementing economic empowerment programs

Empowerment can be interpreted as a series of activities aimed at strengthening the strength or capacity of weak community groups, through encouragement, motivation, and efforts to raise awareness of the potential they have so that it can be realized in real action. More broadly, empowerment also refers to the process of building capacity by exploring and developing the potential of the community, so that they are able to improve their quality of life independently.[19]

In addition, empowerment also includes efforts to expand people's life choices through optimizing existing potential, as well as utilizing resources effectively to produce maximum benefits. This means that empowered people are those who have the ability to determine the best choices for themselves and have access to various alternatives to improve their welfare.[20] Thus, community economic empowerment is a dynamic process that aims to encourage economic independence through developing the internal potential of the community itself.

[19] Hasan, Muhammad, Hartoto Hartoto, Abdelina Abdelina, Muhammad Haris Riyaldi, Aswanto Aswanto, Taufik Akbar, Rollis Juliansyah, et al. 2022. "Ekonomi Pembangunan Sebuah Tinjauan Teori Dan Praktis.

[20] Lili Bariadi, Muhammad Zen, dan M. Hudri, Zakat dan Wirausaha (Jakarta: Pustaka Amri, 2005), hlm. 64.

In implementing the community economic empowerment program, LAZ Sidogiri seeks to optimize each activity through the beneficiary selection process, both through field surveys and monitoring systems. However, there are still a number of obstacles and shortcomings found in practice in the field.

Based on the results of interviews with program report admins, there were several problems faced, including:

a) Problems in fund distribution, especially in the management of empowerment programs after the funds are distributed. The monitoring system (controlling) has not been running optimally, which is caused by limited human resources that are not yet fully professional. In addition, the recruitment process for officers is not carried out directly by the internal party of LAZ Sidogiri, but rather based on direct appointment from the kiai of the Sidogiri Islamic Boarding School.
b) The appointment of officers is carried out directly by the LAZ Sidogiri supervisor without going through a formal selection process from the institution. Officers who are appointed are immediately assigned to certain positions even though they are still in the learning stage and do not fully understand the work system and tasks in the LAZ Sidogiri environment.
c) The obstacle of public perception, namely when officers in the field are often misunderstood as beggars by some people. This shows that there are still many people who do not understand the role and function of amil zakat. If the community has the right understanding, then this negative perception will not arise.

According to Ustadz Zainal Arifin, the responses of the surrounding community to the existence of LAZ Sidogiri are varied; some give positive appreciation, but some also judge it negatively. The negative perception arises from some people who think that LAZ Sidogiri often asks for assistance directly from residents. In fact, LAZ Sidogiri is not asking for assistance, but only offering participation in programs that are being run. If there are people who are willing to cooperate, then LAZ will provide a statement letter that establishes them as permanent donors.

Meanwhile, Ustadz Ahmad Asror added that in facing various perceptions and challenges, the strategy used is the principle of "face it, live it, and enjoy it." This principle reflects the high level of responsibility that every LAZ Sidogiri officer must have, considering that this task is a direct mandate from the leadership of the Sidogiri Islamic Boarding School. By approaching through socialization, and providing a clear understanding to the community, it is hoped that the community

can recognize and understand that LAZ Sidogiri is a professional and trusted zakat management institution.

3. The impact of the LAZ Sidogiri economic empowerment program on community welfare

LAZ Sidogiri pays close attention to the concept of zakat utilization in order to realize a more prosperous community life. The formulation of ZIS (Zakat, Infaq, and Sedekah) fund management is directed to achieve the main objective of the zakat management institution, namely to eradicate poverty. This is in line with the opinion of Yusuf Qardawi who stated that zakat is not just temporary assistance to ease the burden of the poor, but has a broader goal, namely to overcome the root of the problem of poverty and help the poor to be independent and live a sufficient life sustainably.[21] Ideally, the zakat that is distributed must be able to solve the problem of poverty by providing business opportunities, skills training, education, motivation, and real capital support. With these provisions, zakat recipients (mustahiq) are expected to be able to improve their economic conditions, even transform into muzakki in the future, namely people who are able and contribute by paying zakat from part of their wealth.

CONCLUSION

The findings of this study indicate that LAZ Sidogiri has implemented various economic empowerment programs aimed at improving community welfare. These programs include entrepreneurship training, provision of business capital for underprivileged communities, and human resource development in the field of business. While the initiatives demonstrate structured planning and a strong commitment to Islamic values, their implementation faces several constraints—most notably in fund management and post-disbursement supervision. These challenges stem from a lack of professional human resources and inadequate monitoring systems.

To address these issues, it is essential to provide capacity-building training for LAZ Sidogiri staff, enhance community outreach through strategic socialization efforts, and improve institutional transparency by publishing publicly accessible reports. Strengthening these aspects will not only improve program effectiveness but also foster sustainable social transformation rooted in Islamic values.

[21] Qardhawi, Y. (2005). Spektrum zakat dalam membangun ekonomi kerakyatan. Jakarta: Zikrul Hakim.

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