



The Role of the Nurul Hayat Gresik Amil Zakat Institute (Laz) in Empowering Rural Communities During the Covid-19 Pandemic

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Abstrak

Menyebarnya pandemi covid-19 mengakibatkan jumlah penduduk miskin di Kabupaten Gresik dan Provinsi Jawa Timur mengalami peningkatan, sampai hitungan per akhir tahun 2021 (gresikkab.bps.go.id dan jatim.bps.go.id). Melihat besarnya dampak covid-19 terhadap segala aspek, terutama dari aspek sosial ekonomi, maka diperlukanlah upaya konkrit yang dapat menyelesaikan permasalahan tersebut dalam bentuk pemberdayaan masyarakat desa (Aprilianto, dkk, 2021). Permasalahan itu membutuhkan dukungan dari lembaga terkait, salah satu lembaga yang dimaksud adalah Lembaga Amil Zakat (LAZ) Yayasan Nurul Hayat (Rohmah, 2021). Lembaga tersebut merupakan lembaga yang menghimpun dana Zakat, Infaq, dan Shadaqah (ZIS) dari masyarakat (muzakki) dan akan didistribusikan kembali pada masyarakat (mustahiq) sesuai syariat islam. Tujuan penelitian ini untuk mengetahui peranan LAZ Nurul Hayat Gresik dalam pemberdayaan masyarakat desa selama pandemi covid-19. Penelitian ini merupakan penelitian kualitatif deskriptif. Teknik pengambilan subjek menggunakan purposive sampling. Teknik pengumpulan data dari wawancara, observasi, dan dokumentasi. Hasil penelitian ini menunjukkan bahwa adanya program pemberdayaan LAZ Nurul Hayat Gresik menjadikan masyarakat maju dan berkembang dalam bidang sosial ekonominya, masyarakat mendapat pengetahuan yang lebih terkait praktik berwirausaha. Program pemberdayaan LAZ Nurul Hayat: pengembangan Ternak Desa Sejahtera (TDS), dan pengembangan Usaha Mikro, Kecil, Menengah (UMKM).

Kata Kunci: LAZ Nurul Hayat, Pemberdayaan Masyarakat, Program Ternak Desa Sejahtera, Program Usaha Mikro, Kecil, Menengah

Abstract

The spread of the pandemic-19 has resulted in the increasing of poor residents in Gresik Regency and East Java Province, up to 2021 (gresikkab.bps.go.id and jatim.bps.go.id). seeing the magnitude impact of the Covid-19 in all aspect, efforts are needed concrete solutions that can solve these problems in the form of empowerment village community (Aprilianto, et al, 2021). This problem requires support from institutions referred to Lembaga Amil Zakat (LAZ) Nurul Hayat (Rohmah, 2021). This institution is an that collect Zakat, Infaq, and Shadaqah (SIZ) funds f from the community (muzakki) and redistributed to the community (mustahiq) according to islamic law. The purpose of this research is to find out of the role of Lembaga Amil Zakat Nurul Hayat Gresik institution in empowering village communities during the pandemic covid-19. This research is a descriptive qualitative techniques of taking the subject using purposive sampling. Data collection techniques from interviews, observations, and documentations. The results of this study indicate that the existance of LAZ Nurul Hayat Gresik empowerment program has made the community more advanced and developed in their socio-economic field, the village community feels that they have gained more scientific insight related to entrepreneurship practices. The empowerment program from LAZ Nurul Hayat: namely Ternak Desa Sejahtera (TDS) program, and Micro, Small, Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) program.

Keywords: LAZ Nurul Hayat, Community Empowerment, Livestock Prosperous Village (TDS) Program, Micro, Small, Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) Program.

Introduction

At the end of 2019, the world was shocked by the emergence of a virus originating from Wuhan-China, namely the COVID-19 virus. The emergence of this outbreak puts great pressure on the supply side in the economy so that it can result in a decrease in production as well as a decrease in people's income (Iskandar et al., 2020). In addition, the existence of physical distancing activities also has an impact on many sides, especially in terms of socio-economic activities of the community because they only stay at home so they do not get income, and affect the high poverty rate in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic (Odeku, 2021)

Data Table on the Number and Percentage of Poor People in Gresik Regency and East Java Province in 2019–2021

Indicators	Year	Gresik	East Java
Number of Poor People (Thousand People)	2019	148,61	4.112,25
	2020	164,05	4.419,10
	2021	166,35	4.572,73
Percentage of Poor People (Percent)	2019	11,35	10,37
	2020	12,40	11,09
	2021	12,42	11,40

Source:(B and East Java Statistics Center)
(Band Gresik Statistics Center)

Based on the data above, it can be calculated that the emergence of the COVID-19 pandemic can cause the number of poor people and the percentage of poor people in Gresik Regency and East Java Province to increase from year to year until the count as of the end of 2021. Seeing the magnitude of the impact of the Covid-19 outbreak on socio-economic aspects, concrete efforts are needed that can solve these various problems in the form of village community empowerment (Aprilianto & Widiastuti, 2021). One form of village community empowerment that is believed according to Islam to solve these problems is zakat (Isman, 2021). In addition to the nuances of obedience, zakat is also considered to have a significant social impact as a distribution of wealth and actualization of the concept of justice in Islamic teachings (Jasman, 2020). The problems that occur certainly require support from several related

institutions, one of the institutions in question is the Amil Zakat Institute (LAZ) Nurul Hayat Foundation (Rohmah, 2021). Where the institution is an institution that collects Zakat, Infaq, and Shadaqah (ZIS) funds from muzakki and is distributed to mustahiq in accordance with criteria of Islamic law. In addition, this zakat obligation aims to reduce poverty, because the main target of zakat is to meet the needs of the poor and poor. So that with the proper distribution of ZIS funds, it is hoped that the economic welfare of the community can be realized, especially during difficult conditions in the midst of the Covid-19 outbreak.

One of the impacts of the existence of zakat to alleviate poverty is because the main target of zakat is to meet the needs of the poor or eight other mustahiq groups (Ubaidillah et al., 2021). Meanwhile, the objectives of zakat management according to Law Number 23 of 2011 are: (1) to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of zakat services and management, (2) and increase the benefits of zakat to realize the economic welfare of the community and to overcome poverty. From some of these statements, it can be interpreted that when viewed from an economic and social point of view, zakat is intended to achieve social justice. The essence of zakat management through zakat institutions is related to how to streamline various zakat distribution fund programs that have a positive impact on the welfare of mustahiq, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic which has caused everything to decline (Nuzila, 2021). The COVID-19 pandemic has an impact on all aspects of life, especially in terms of the economy which has experienced a drastic decline from the previous period (BPS, 2021). The efforts made by Islam are very consistent because Islam has a measurable and detailed concept in arranging various programs for the welfare of its ummah. The concept of the Qur'an Surah Al-Maidah (5) Verse 2 "Ta'awanu 'alal birri wat taqwa" (please help in goodness) is used as the basis for the Muslim ummah to do good by setting aside a small part of his property for the eight asnaf. This effort shows that Islam is very concerned about the welfare of the poor and strives to alleviate poverty (Zubaedi, 201: 3).

The economic welfare of the community during the pandemic cannot be resolved only relying

on government policies, but solid cooperation between the government, the community, and zakat management institutions is needed (Rohmah, 2021). The concept of welfare is a measuring point for a society that has been in a state of prosperity. This welfare can be measured from the state of the economy, happiness and quality of life of the people. The existence of the amil zakat institution can improve community welfare, because the purpose of zakat itself is to equate the economy between the rich and the poor (Ramadhanti, 2020).

Meanwhile, it can also be interpreted that the high percentage of poverty in Indonesia that is difficult to solve is not due to generations from families, but can be caused by the lack of skills possessed by the community, especially rural communities who still rely on their activities from nature (Sari, 2018). The skills possessed by rural communities who live below the poverty line make it difficult for them to work anywhere or become entrepreneurs (Jasman, 2020). Therefore, the existence of LAZ managed independently by private parties or by the government is expected to provide training for business ventures. Several empowerment programs from the LAZ fund, it is hoped that these funds will not only be consumptive, but can develop into businesses (Rohmah, 2021). Nurul Hayat Gresik's economic empowerment programs include the development of MSMEs such as blessing stalls, blessing vests, and prosperous village livestock. So that from the existence of this program, it can make mustahiq no longer dependent on zakat funds but gradually they can change to become muzakki. This is in accordance with the principles of Nurul Hayat's economic empowerment program which states that "This economic empowerment program hopes to change the degree of poor who were originally mustahik can become muzakki" (NurulHayat, 2020).

Based on some of the problems above, the author feels interested in conducting research related to the role of the Amil Zakat Nurul Hayat Gresik Institute in empowering rural communities during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Method

The type of research used is qualitative research, so in this study, researchers are directly in the middle of the subject under study, namely internal and external parties of the Amil Zakat

Institute (LAZ) Nurul Hayat Gresik. The research method used in this study is Descriptive Qualitative, with the aim to illustrate how the role of LAZ Nurul Hayat Gresik in empowering rural communities.

Data sources from this study are primary data and sekunder data. The primary data obtained from this study is in the form of interviews from villagers receiving community empowerment funds from Nurul Hayat. While the secondary data from this study is the result of data classification based on research formulas or the results of citing previously existing references. So that these two data sources will be analyzed to find out how the role of the Amil Zakat Nurul Hayat Gresik Institute in community empowerment during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Subjek research using *purposive sampling* techniques, by selecting certain characteristics as respondents. In this study, the subjects of the study were village communities receiving economic empowerment funds (based on information data from the Nurul Hayat Foundation). There is consideration of taking the subject of this research with the hope that the data / information obtained can present how the role of the Amil Zakat Nurul Hayat Gresik Institute in empowering rural communities, so that the information / data obtained is more detailed and accurate.

Research data collection techniques use techniques 1) interviews, the process of obtaining information for research purposes with questions and answers and face-to-face between authors and informants. 2) observation, observation to find out something that happens in the field in accordance with actual conditions. 3) documentation, to produce more accurate data, obtained from various sources related secondary data. Test the validity of data or check the validity of research data using test 1) triangulation of sources, to check the data that has been obtained during interviews and observations in the field with several villagers receiving funds from Nurul Hayat in community empowerment programs. 2) Triangulation techniques, to determine the role of zakat institutions in empowering rural communities, with observations made by researchers to obtain valid information.

This research data analysis technique is a process of systematically searching and compiling data obtained from interviews, observations, and documentation. So that it can be easily understood, and the findings can be informed to others. In this analysis model, there are three components of

analysis, namely data reduction, data presentation, and conclusions.

Results and Discussion

Community Empowerment Program

Empowerment of rural communities can be interpreted as an effort to improve the dignity and dignity of groups of people who are in a condition of economic deprivation, so that they can escape from the trap of poverty and backwardness. Nurul Hayat Gresik's empowerment program includes two programs, namely Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) Development, and the Prosperous Village Livestock (TDS) program.

Based on the explanation during an interview with the Head of LAZ NH Gresik Branch (Mr. Robby Amrizal), which was held at the LAZ NH Gresik work office, on August 6, 2022 at 11.00 WIB – finished, he stated that *"This empowerment program is expected to support the economy of rural communities, especially people who are still below the poverty line, by providing social funds that are not only productive, But it provides social fund capital which can later be developed into a business field"*. An interview was also conducted with the head of empowerment (Mr. Amin), he explained that *"this empowerment program is also expected to motivate beneficiaries to not only act as mustahiq, but in the future after receiving productive financial assistance, it can increase the degree of mustahiq to muzakki"*.

The statement from the branch head and head of the empowerment division of LAZ NH Gresik is in line with what was conveyed in the research (Rohmah, 2021) entitled Community Economic Empowerment through Zakat, Infaq, and Alms (ZIS) Distribution Case Study of LAZ NH Yogyakarta Branch. The conclusion drawn from this study explains that Nurul Hayat's economic empowerment program in general can provide capital assistance in the form of material and knowledge, to be further developed by the beneficiaries.

Empowerment of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) Program

MSME empowerment is one of the social empowerment programs run by LAZ NH Gresik. MSMEs can be interpreted as businesses run by individuals or individuals, households, and small-sized business entities. The LAZ NH Gresik social assistance / fund program for MSMEs can be in the form of cash

of Rp. 2,000,000.00 as initial capital to buy sales materials, and carts are given for traveling traders, rombongs and stalls for traders whose sales place lives in front of the house, or others.

The requirement to obtain assistance from LAZ NH does not burden the community, so they can be motivated to build and develop their business. The flow before the distribution of social funds from LAZ NH Gresik, by selecting administrative files first, followed by surveys/observations to the residential addresses of prospective beneficiaries, and interviews at the final stage.

There is an agreement that needs to be agreed between LAZ NH Gresik and the program beneficiaries. The results of interviews related to the procedure for distributing social funds and the handover contract of funds/social capital, to beneficiaries, were conducted at several points of residence of the beneficiaries, right on September 17, 2022, at 10.00 WIB. The first informant Ibu Endang Sulihah explained that *"The contract is simple. In the initial agreement, LAZ NH gave me a Blessing Rombong for me to sell martabak, LAZ NH gave me the freedom to modify or repair the vest, but the cost of the modification was borne by myself. Also, if later I don't sell anymore, I have to return the car to LAZ NH Gresik, so it cannot be transferred to someone else without NH's knowledge."* The statement from Mrs. Endang Sulihah is also in accordance with what was stated by the second and third informants, namely Mrs. Vonny Hayati and Mrs. Nik Astutik who also explained that the requirements and agreements between LAZ NH Gresik and the beneficiaries are indeed very simple, so that with this simplicity it can motivate the community to participate in NH empowerment programs.

In addition to providing material support, LAZ NH Gresik also provides support for the development of entrepreneurial skills to all beneficiaries. Which includes regular assistance and supervision every three months related to the business he has run. NH Gresik also provides monitoring/evaluation through business bookkeeping reports attached to the beneficiaries. With the bookkeeping report, it can be easily seen how much net profit it has generated over the next few months.

Empowerment of the Prosperous Village Livestock Program (TDS)

TDS empowerment is the second type of social program that has been run by LAZ NH Gresik. The purpose of this program is to provide social benefits to farmers, especially goat farmers in the village. This empowerment program can increase the income of small farmers in the village, so that this program can have an effect on the economic welfare of village farmers and national economic growth. LAZ NH Gresik provides several goats as initial capital for farmers, and is accompanied and taught how to take good and correct care for goats.

The requirements for prospective beneficiaries of TDS empowerment are also simple and not burdensome, as are the requirements for MSME programs. Recruitment of prospective recipients of TDS program funds has several stages, namely the file selection stage, survey / observation to the area of residence, and also interviews. In addition, there is an agreement agreed between LAZ NH and the beneficiaries. Initially, NH gave 4 breeding goats, the breeding goat in question was a female goat that was already pregnant. After 3 years, this breeding goat will be recalled by the NH. So for the goat children it is entirely the property of the beneficiaries. In addition, beneficiaries are given the freedom to sell the goats, or want to be bred again, want to be sold during the celebration of Eid al-Adha, or even given the right to offer livestock from this TDS program to the NH to be used as slaughter animals for their aqiqoh bureau, so that after this TDS program ends there will forever be a sustainable cooperation between NH Gresik and the beneficiaries. Thus, the existence of this social program is able to have a very positive impact in the economic sector on the families of small farmers in assisted villages.

In addition, the monitoring and evaluation of the program by NH Gresik makes village farmers motivated to learn to explore information related to how to raise the right livestock. This is because village farmers still lack insight into animal care procedures in accordance with animal health science, TDS supervision is carried out every 4 or 5 months. The results of an interview with Mr. Djamal at his residence, Dukun Gresik Regency, on September 24, 2022 at 10.00 WIB. He stated that "*The monitoring and evaluation from LAZ NH makes village farmers*

more advanced in their scientific fields to add insight in the field of cage management, healthy feeding for their livestock". It can be interpreted that the more developed and developed village breeders are, the more advanced and developed the economic condition of Indonesia. Village farmers can also feel the growth and development of the business they run.

Discussion

The distribution of social service program funds from LAZ NH Gresik is one way to help encourage the realization of prosperous rural communities through various empowerment programs, especially for rural communities who are included in the middle to lower economic groups. LAZ NH Gresik collects funds from donors and will then be distributed to eight asnaf in accordance with the provisions of Islamic law. Some of these groups are entitled to be given funds, especially from the surrounding LAZ, this is in accordance with what is stated in QS. At-Tawbah Verse 60 which states that the poor and poor are the class of people who are entitled to receive zakat, which reads,

إِنَّمَا الصَّدَقَتُ لِلْفُقَرَاءِ وَالْمَسْكِينِ وَالْعَمِلِينَ عَلَيْهَا وَالْمَوْلَاةِ قُلُوبُهُمْ وَفِي الرِّقَابِ وَالْغُرَمِينَ وَفِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ وَأَبْنِ السَّبِيلِ فَرِيضَةً مِّنَ اللَّهِ وَاللَّهُ عَلِيمٌ حَكِيمٌ ٦٠

"Indeed, zakat is only for the poor, the poor, the amil zakat, who are softened in heart (converts), for (free) sahaya servants, for (free) debtors, for the way of Allah, and for people who are on the way, as an obligation from Allah". (QS. At-Tawbah 9: Verse 60).

The translation of the Qur'an can be interpreted how Allah greatly elevates the status of the poor, one of Allah's efforts is to call on his servants to give some of their zakat to be distributed to the poor. The distribution of zakat that is right on target can reduce the poverty rate in a country. In line with an empirical study (Hakim et al., 2020) entitled Zakat and Mustahik Economic Empowerment: A Study at the Amil Zakat, Infaq, and Shodaqoh Muhammadiyah Institute (LAZISMU) Malang, where the results of the study show that the utilization of zakat at LAZISMU Malang Regency is able to increase mustahiq economic empowerment, one of which is as a forum for generating people from poverty, and increasing the value of community welfare. This program aims to help the wheels of economic mobility from mustahiq, through social funding

assistance from LAZ NH Gresik. So that with the assistance of social funds, it is hoped that the condition of the community will experience positive changes. In accordance with what is stated in QS Ar-Ra'd Verse 11, which reads,

إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يُغَيِّرُ مَا بِقَوْمٍ حَتَّىٰ يُغَيِّرُوا مَا بِأَنْفُسِهِمْ وَإِذَا أَرَادَ اللَّهُ بِقَوْمٍ سُوءًا
فَلَا مَرَدَّ لَهُ وَمَا لَهُمْ مِّن دُونِهِ مِن وَالٍ ۝ ١١

"Surely God will not change the condition of a people until they change the condition of themselves. And if God wills evil against a people, then no one can resist it and there is no protector for them but Him." (QS. Ar-Ra'd 13: Verse 11).

The translation of the above verse of the Qur'an can be interpreted to mean that Allah affirms that he will not change the state and dignity of a society, unless they are willing to change their own circumstances. Humans are asked to try to improve their respective competencies and work hard to change their respective destinies. The above verse also encourages people to be more independent in any case. The main purpose of this community empowerment is to make the community in general, and the recipients of social funds in particular to be able to better improve their welfare and standard of living by participating in various economic empowerment programs, so that the knowledge, skills, and experience of the community will also grow.

This statement is in line with research (Rohmah, 2021) entitled Community Economic Empowerment through Zakat, Infaq, and Shodaqoh (ZIS) Distribution Case Study at LAZ NH Yogyakarta Branch, which explains that, the economic empowerment program run by LAZ Nurul Hayat Gresik is believed not only to help mustahiq from the material side, but they can also be helped from the mental side and mindset.

The existence of two community economic empowerment programs from LAZ Nurul Hayat Gresik such as MSME development, and TDS coaching has a positive effect on changing a positive mindset for rural communities, where village communities are given socialization, training, and assistance related to how to manage their businesses. So that with the assistance and guidance from Nurul Hayat Gresik, it makes the village community motivated to run their business. With the positive effects of the village community in accordance with the theory proposed by Zubaedi (2013) which states that the benefits of community empowerment include: providing participation and increasing capacity, providing

action initiation, small group development, offering problem solving, and influencing program implementation.

The initial training and coaching from LAZ Nurul Hayat is expected to make villagers become independent individuals and can solve certain problems related to the economic activities they run. So that each individual can achieve their own goals without having to rely on help or relationships with other external parties. From the financial assistance of this social empowerment program over time, it can make mustahiq no longer dependent on zakat funds, but gradually they can change to become muzakki. This is in accordance with the principles of the economic empowerment program designed by Nurul Hayat Gresik, which states that "this economic empowerment program is expected to change the degree of the poor who originally had mustahiq to become muzakki"

Conclusion

Based on the description of research data and discussions conducted by the author, related to the role of the Amil Zakat Nurul Hayat Institute (LAZ NH) in empowering rural communities during the COVID-19 pandemic, it can be concluded as follows. Overall, the positive impact of the financial assistance for this economic social empowerment program is the help of several mustahiq economically and also the wheels of business as the main source of income for their families. In addition, the beneficiaries were also given motivation by Nurul Hayat Gresik as well as assistance for MSME businesses as well as TDS. Thus, mustahiq who are the beneficiaries of this empowerment program have sufficient foundation or knowledge provision for the future independently without interference from other parties.

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