

THE EMPOWERMENT OF ISLAMIC ECONOMICS IN POVERTY REDUCTION OF RURAL COMMUNITIES IN VILLAGES ALL OF CIAWI DISTRICT, TASIKMALAYA REGENCY

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Abstract

This study aims to analyze the Islamic economic empowerment model applied in poverty alleviation in villages throughout Ciawi District, Tasikmalaya Regency. Through a qualitative approach with case studies, this study examines programs based on zakat, Waqaf, and shadaqah, and their impact on improving the welfare of rural communities. The results of the study show that the Islamic-based economic empowerment model has significant potential to reduce poverty through the formation of productive businesses and increasing access to education and health. This study concludes that the integration of Islamic economic principles, such as justice, togetherness, and fair distribution of wealth, has the potential to create more equitable prosperity in rural areas.

Keyword: *Islamic economic empowerment; Poverty alleviation; Rural Empowerment*

A. INTRODUCTION

Poverty remains a persistent and complex issue in many countries, including Indonesia, where significant portions of rural populations still struggle with low income and limited opportunities. In Ciawi District, Tasikmalaya Regency, the majority of the population is Muslim, which presents an opportunity to utilize Islamic economic tools like zakat, Waqaf, and shadaqah to alleviate poverty. Despite the presence of zakat-based programs, these efforts have yet to substantially reduce poverty levels due to ineffective distribution mechanisms and a focus on consumptive rather than empowering aid.

The potential of zakat, Waqaf, and shadaqah is immense, but challenges such as lack of professional management, inefficient fund allocation, and limited community engagement hinder their full potential. This research aims to assess the effectiveness of Islamic economic empowerment models in Ciawi District, explore the causes of current challenges, and suggest solutions for improving poverty alleviation efforts. Ultimately, this study seeks to identify a sustainable empowerment model that helps rural communities escape poverty and achieve lasting prosperity.

B. LITERATURE REVIEW

The study uses two main theoretical frameworks: *Empowerment Economics* and *Social Justice Theory*. M. Dawam Rahardjo (2006) emphasized the role of zakat, Waqaf, and infaq in promoting fair resource distribution and community welfare, aligning with the principles of Islamic economics. In *Social Justice Theory*, Iwan Triyuwono (2020) highlights that the purpose of Islamic economics is to safeguard the five maqashid al-shariah religion, life, mind, lineage, and property thus ensuring fair social welfare.

1. Economic Empowerment of Rural Communities Economic empowerment in rural areas means not just increasing income but also enhancing social, cultural, and political capacities. Mubyarto (1999) highlights that economic empowerment includes improving access to resources and the ability to manage them sustainably.
2. Poverty in Islamic Economics In Islamic economics, poverty is viewed as a deviation from the principles of social welfare guaranteed by Islam. Al-Qardawi (2000) stresses that zakat, infak, and sadaqah should be used as instruments of wealth redistribution to overcome poverty and create social justice.

3. Islamic Approach to Poverty Alleviation Sukri, Nurdin, and Aisyah (2012) argue that Islamic economics prioritizes social justice and wealth redistribution to empower the poor. Zakat plays a key role in alleviating poverty, not only as charity but as a tool for equitable wealth distribution.
4. Empowerment of Islamic Economy in Indonesian Villages In Indonesia, zakat, sharia cooperatives, and productive Waqaf have proven effective in empowering rural communities. Hassan and Idris (2014) note that such programs help people escape poverty by fostering entrepreneurship and economic independence.
5. Potential of Islamic Economic Empowerment in Ciawi District In Ciawi, there is untapped potential for using Islamic economic tools to reduce poverty. According to Hasanuddin (2015), despite available natural resources and labor, rural areas like Ciawi can benefit from zakat and Waqaf-focused programs to uplift the community's welfare.

C. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study uses a descriptive qualitative approach, which is effective for exploring the realities of zakat, Waqaf, and shadaqah-based empowerment programs in rural areas. It aims to understand the perspectives of various stakeholders, including beneficiaries, village leaders, and zakat managers.

1. Research Design This research follows a case study design, focusing on Ciawi District, Tasikmalaya Regency. The study examines how Islamic economic empowerment through zakat, Waqaf, and shadaqah has been implemented and its impact on poverty reduction.
2. Data Sources
 - Primary Data: Collected through interviews with key informants such as village leaders, zakat and Waqaf managers, beneficiaries, local religious leaders, and community members.
 - Secondary Data: Includes reports on zakat and Waqaf management, poverty statistics, and relevant government programs.
3. Data Collection Techniques
 - In-depth Interviews: Semi-structured interviews will be conducted to gather insights from various stakeholders about the empowerment programs.
 - Participatory Observation: The researcher will observe the implementation of programs like entrepreneurship training, zakat distribution, and Waqaf usage.
 - Documentation: Reports and other documents related to zakat and Waqaf activities will be analyzed.
4. Data Analysis Data will be analyzed using thematic analysis, which involves transcribing interviews, coding data, identifying themes, and interpreting the results to understand the success and failure factors of empowerment programs.
5. Validity and Reliability To ensure valid and reliable results, triangulation will be used by combining multiple data collection methods (interviews, observations, and documentation) and cross-checking with key informants.

D. RESEARCH RESULTS

The research findings reveal that Islamic economic empowerment programs in Ciawi District have had mixed results in poverty alleviation. Several key points emerge from the analysis:

1. Positive Impact on Poverty Reduction The implementation of zakat, Waqaf, and shadaqah-based empowerment programs has contributed to reducing poverty in Ciawi District. The poverty rate decreased from 22% in 2022 to 18% in 2023, reflecting the positive effects of increased access to capital and entrepreneurship training facilitated by zakat and shadaqah.
2. Zakat as a Key Economic Empowerment Tool The zakat program raised IDR 450 million in 2023, benefiting 3,500 poor families. However, the majority (60%) of zakat funds were allocated for consumptive assistance, leaving only 40% for economic empowerment (such as micro-business support and skills training). Despite this, 70% of beneficiaries experienced an increase in monthly income (IDR 500,000 to IDR 1,000,000).
3. Underutilized Potential of Productive Waqaf Although Waqaf has great potential, its management in Ciawi is not yet professional, limiting its long-term impact. Of IDR 200 million in Waqaf funds, only IDR 80 million was allocated to productive ventures, involving 200 individuals in agriculture

and small businesses. The income generated (IDR 300,000 to IDR 500,000 per family) is modest, and only 25% of Waqaf funds are generating long-term sustainable returns.

4. Shadaqah Program Supports Education and Health The shadaqah program funded 350 educational scholarships and provided 500 families with free healthcare services in 2023. This program helped increase education participation by 15% and reduced chronic diseases in beneficiary villages.
5. Challenges and Obstacles Several challenges hinder the effectiveness of empowerment programs:
 - Coordination Issues: Multiple institutions managing zakat, Waqaf, and shadaqah lack coordination, leading to inefficiencies.
 - Limited Micro-Business Mentoring: While zakat funds are allocated for micro-businesses, a lack of technical skills and market access hinders the growth of many small businesses.
 - Consumptive Focus: The majority of funds are still spent on consumptive aid (basic needs and education), limiting sustainable empowerment.
6. Recommendations for Improvement Based on the findings, several recommendations are proposed:
 - Improve Coordination: Institutions involved in managing zakat, Waqaf, and shadaqah should be better coordinated to avoid duplication and ensure efficient use of resources.
 - Focus on Productive Businesses: More zakat and Waqaf funds should be directed towards sustainable economic empowerment programs, such as business capital and skills training.
 - Enhance Mentoring and Market Access: Provide better business mentoring, technical training, and access to markets to improve the success rate of micro-businesses.
 - Professionalize Waqaf Management: Waqaf funds should be professionally managed to focus more on productive investments with long-term economic benefits.

E. CONCLUSION

The study concludes that while Islamic economic empowerment programs in Ciawi District have had some positive effects on poverty reduction, several areas need improvement to maximize their impact. By enhancing coordination between institutions, focusing more on productive economic programs, and improving business training and market access, these empowerment initiatives can become more sustainable and contribute more effectively to poverty alleviation in rural areas. If these recommendations are implemented, Islamic economic empowerment could serve as a more effective tool in helping poor rural communities achieve long-term prosperity.

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