

SOCIAL NETWORK, TRUST, AND COLLECTIVE ACTION OF ACEH FARMERS IN INCREASING WELFARE

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ABSTRACT-- *This paper reviews the social capital of farmers in Aceh with a focus on three aspects, namely network, trust, and collective action. This research was conducted in Aceh Tamiang District, Central Aceh District, and Pidie Jaya District, in the Aceh Province. This study used a mixture of qualitative and quantitative methods. The data in this study were obtained through observation, interviews, documentation, and questionnaires distributed to 300 respondents. Qualitative data were analyzed using descriptive analysis with three stages, namely data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing. While quantitative data were analyzed using SPSS. The results of the study show that social capital associated with social networks is outstanding; it is characterized by high community participation in community organizations, reaching 75%. The second social capital is trust. Trust among farmers in Aceh is high, reaching 90%. Social capital associated with collective action is also high, realized by the percentage of about 60%. Therefore, in general, it could be concluded that the social capital of farmers in Aceh is substantial. However, the Aceh poverty rate is still high, which stood at about 15.97% compared to the national average poverty rate of 9.66%. It means that social capital is not always a positive influence on people's welfare.*

Keywords-- *Social Network, Trust, Norm, and Poverty Farmers.*

I. INTRODUCTION

Social capital is an increasingly intensive approach used in overcoming the problem of poverty in many countries, including in Indonesia. Bourdieu argued that in order to understand the structure and way of functioning of the social world, capital needs to be discussed in all its forms, it is not enough to discuss capital as is known in economic theory (Bourdieu, 1986). Every economic capital transaction has always been accompanied by immaterial capital in the form of cultural capital and social capital (Syahza, 2003). Social capital can also be seen as a set of associations among people that influence community productivity, which includes networks and social norms (Lesser, 2000; Cook, 2017)). Networks and norms are empirically interconnected and have significant economic consequences (Putnam and Bowling, 1995). This means that material capital and immaterial capital are needed in increasing the productivity and welfare of the community.

Aceh is a province which is rich in financial capital obtained from special autonomy funds of Rp. 56.67 trillion until 2018, but the poor population reached 15.97% in March 2018. Most of them are rural farmers who rely on

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the agricultural sector as their main livelihood. Various types of empowerment programs to increase their income have been carried out by the government. In 2018 the Aceh Government was determined to strengthen the agricultural sector through a program to increase planting area, safeguarding disturbing organisms and climate change, distributing subsidized fertilizers, providing superior seeds, production facilities, increasing farmers' capabilities, strengthening institutions and implementing the technology.

These programs are considered to increase agricultural productivity. However, in reality, most Acehnese farmers are still at a weak level. According to Faisal Ridha (Chair of the Aceh Farmers), Acehnese farmers ranked the poorest in Sumatra and ranked fourth worst at the national level. Refer to the social capital concept; it can be assumed that this occurs because the empowerment strategy undertaken by the Government ignores aspects of the Acehnese social capital as an essential element for agricultural development. The system of modernization, production patterns and the use of superior seeds that can increase agricultural productivity do not automatically affect the level of welfare of farmers (Nirzalin dan Nulwita, 2017; Li et al, 2019; Cárdenas et al, 2020). This fact means that adequate financial capital and technological sophistication cannot necessarily improve the welfare of farmers.

Therefore, social capital must be seen as a vital element besides other capitals to increase the welfare of farmers while reducing poverty in Aceh. Social capital is believed by many experts to contribute positively to the success of development that can prosper society. It can be used as energy to overcome poverty, including through increasing and utilizing networks. Appropriate use of social capital directed at one poor community can bring benefit to them. Bonding social capital and bridging farming communities can sustain their survival.

The description explains that social capital is an important matter to reduce poverty and improve people's welfare. On this basis, this study aims to explain the social capital of farmers in Aceh in managing agriculture. This study used mixed method involving 300 respondents and six informant to interview. The results of the study showed that the social capital of farmers in Aceh was substantial; this looks from the social network reaching 74%, 90% trust, and 60% collective action. This fact also showed theoretical implications that substantial social capital of farmers did not have a positive effect on improving their economic well-being.

II. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

a. Social network

Social networks are a set of special relationships formed between groups of people, the characteristics of these relationships can be used as a tool to interpret the social behavioral motives of the people involved (Lenggono, 2004; Antoniadis and Mazza, 2018). Social networks are also defined as the process of grouping a number of people (at least three people), each of which has its own identity and is linked through social relations (Suparlan, 1995).

Individual membership in a network is flexible and dynamic, because basically every individual as a social creature is always associated with a complex social network (Wang et.al, 2020). If an individual enters a number of different social networks according to their specific context or function, he will reflect on different social structures. Social structure is not only a reflection of the regularity of relationships in a social network, but also a

means to understand the boundaries of status and roles, as well as the rights and obligations of individuals involved in social relations (Cowan, 2020).

There are two types of social relations: Horizontal and Vertical Social Relations based on socio-economic status of individuals involved. Horizontal relationships occur if the individuals involved in the groups where they share the same socio-economic status. Meanwhile, vertical relationships usually involve individuals who do not have the same or equivalent socio-economic status (Granovetter, 1973). Any social network must be measured by economic and social welfare functions simultaneously. The economic function refers to high productivity, efficiency and effectiveness, while the social function refers to the participatory impact, togetherness that is obtained from an economic growth. Such social networks are referred to as social capital. Thus, networks of terrorists, drugs and robbers, even if they bring profits to those who enter the network, remain a threat to society as a whole, so that such networks are not social capital (Lawang, 2004).

b. Trust

Trust is a mutual confidence occurs between two or more people within their interaction. There are three core things correlated with trust: relationships, expectations and social interaction. Under three bases, trust can be interpreted as a relationship between two or more parties that contain expectations which benefit one or both parties through social interaction (Lawang 2004). Trust means someone has a willingness to accept all risks in social relationships based on the belief that other people will do things according to what is expected and act mutually beneficial. Belief is to accept and ignore the possibility that something will not be true (Casson and Godley 2000). Trust is the basis of moral behavior in which social capital is built. As a tool for building relationships, trust can reduce transaction costs that arise in the contact, contract and control process. Thus everyone will naturally prefer a relationship based on mutual trust rather than an opportunistic relationship.

Trust will facilitate the formation of cooperation. The stronger the trust in other people the stronger the cooperation that occurs between them. Social trust arises from relationships that originate from the norms of reciprocity and networking from the relationship of citizens. With mutual trust, there is no need to monitor the behavior of others so that the person behaves according to what we want. Trust can be built, but it can also be destroyed. Likewise trust cannot be fostered by just one source, but often grows based on friends and family relationships (Vipriyanti 2007). Trust is determined by homogeneity, population composition and level of diversity. High trust is found in areas with racial and homogeneous population composition and low diversity.

Collective action based on mutual trust will increase community participation in various forms and dimensions, especially in the context of building shared progress. Lack of mutual trust in the community will invite raise social problems. People with lack mutual trust will find it difficult to avoid various threatening social and economic situations. The spirit of collectivity and community participation to build for the benefit of a better life will be lost. Gradually it will incur high costs for development because people tend to be apathetic and only wait for provision from the government and other parties. If mutual trust is weak, what will happen, then, are attitudes that deviate from the values and norms in force, crime will increase, destructive and anarchic actions are easily sticking out, violence and mass unrest will quickly ignite. Lack of mutual trust also makes people tend to be passive, singly and eventually feelings of isolation emerge. In such a situation the community will be susceptible to various mental

illnesses such as anxiety, despair, and the possibility of fatal actions for themselves and for others (Hasbullah, 2006).

c. Collective Action

Social capital is divided into two dimensions, are: Structural dimension and Cognitive dimension. The structural dimension comes from the roles and rules in the network of a social organization and interpersonal relationships, as well as procedures and precedencies, which are driven by dynamic factors both vertically and horizontally. The cognitive dimension comes from the norms, values, attitudes and beliefs that live in civil society by encouraging trust, solidarity, cooperation and friendship (Uphoff 1999). The element of social cognitive capital influences and directs people to collective action that produces mutual benefits, while structural elements play a role in facilitating collective action. The dimensions of structural and cognitive social capital must be combined to represent the aggregate potential of collective action that brings together benefits already exist in a community (Uphoff 1999; Grootaert & Bastaeler 2002).

Unlike the structural dimension, the cognitive dimension of social capital functions in mobilizing and guiding collective action by the community in order to achieve mutual benefits. Indicator of collective action is a variable to measure the output of social capital. Collective action will only occur if there is significant social capital in an area or region.

III. RESEARCH METHOD

This study used a mixed method approach (Nauman, 2007; Sugiyono, 2013). The data were collected through, survey, depth interview with six informants, and documents study. Then, the data were analyzed with the interactive model and SPSS (Rahim, 2009). The survey involved 300 respondents in Aceh Tamiang, Aceh Tengah, and Pidie Jaya of Aceh Province. The informants interviewed were farmers, the regional governments, the private sectors. The qualitative data was analyzed by data reduction, data display, and conclusion and verification, while questioners data were analyzed by descriptive analysis using SPSS.

IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

To identifying the level of social capital of farmers in Aceh, several things related to capital have been analyzed, as explained in the previous section that generally, social capital has three main elements, namely trust, norms, and networks. However, in this study, three main elements considered to measure the level of social capital of farmers in Aceh are networks, trust, and collective action. The detail level of social capital of farmers in Aceh is described one by one in the following discussion. First, it will be explained related to the network. If the participation of farmers in community organizations is high, it can be ascertained that the network owned by the farmers is good. The conditions of farmers' participation in community organizations in Aceh are as follows:

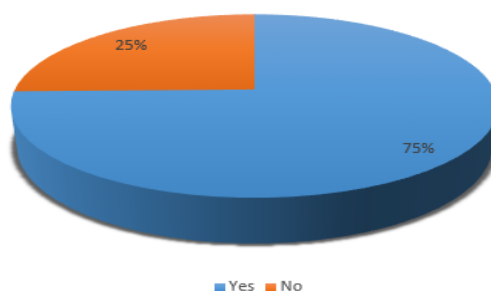


Figure 1: Participation in Community Organizations

From the data above, it can be explained that 224 respondents (75%) stated that they participated in community organizations, while 76 respondents (25%) stated they did not participate in community organizations. Thus, it can be said that farmer participation in community activities is high. The high level of community participation in community activities means that the social capital of farmers in Aceh, especially networks, is high.

Participation meaning here is, as stated by the experts, including Astuti, participation is the involvement of someone or several people in an activity. Involvement can be in the form of mental, emotional and physical involvement in using all the abilities they have (initiative) in all activities carried out and supporting the achievement of goals and responsibilities for all involvement (Astuti, 2001). Meanwhile, the organization that is followed by the community is different, such as shown in the following figure:

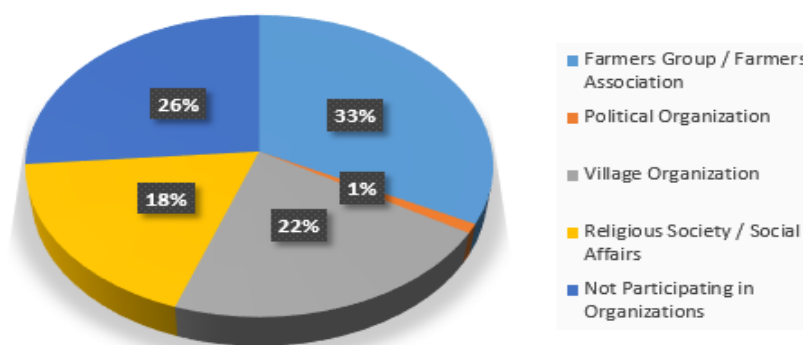


Figure 2: The Organization Associated by Farmers

The data above showed that 98 respondents (33%) joined a farmer group organization/farmer association, 65 respondents (22%) joined a village organization, 3 respondents (1%) joined a political organization, 55 people respondents (18%) joined a social-religious organization/association, while 79 respondents (26%) did not join any organizations. Therefore, it can be stated that farmer participation is mostly in the organization of farmer groups/farmer associations later in village organizations. After knowing the level of farmer participation in community organizations, the next question is how much information is obtained related to farming by joining the organization, along with reviews;

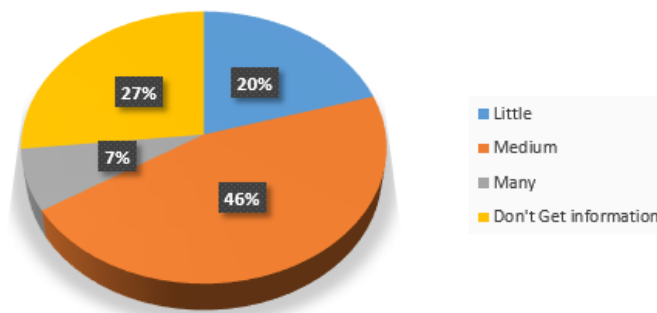


Figure 3: Information Obtained by Farmers from the Organization

The data above explains that 61 respondents (20%) stated that only a little information was obtained related to farming, 137 respondents (46%) stated that the medium scale of information was obtained related to farming, 22 respondents (7%) stated that much information was obtained related to farming, while 80 respondents (26%) stated that no information was obtained related to farming. So it can be explained that the social capital of farmers related to the network is good.

Furthermore, the second element of social capital is trust. To find out the level of trust among fellow farmers in Aceh can be seen in the following explanation:

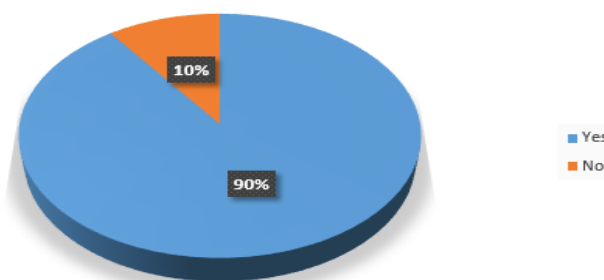


Figure 4: Farmers in Aceh Trust Each Other

From the data above, it can be explained that 270 respondents (90%) stated that farmers in Aceh trusted each other. While 30 respondents (10%) said, farmers in Aceh did not trust each other. It means that the level of trust among fellow farmers in Aceh is very high, reaching 90%. The results of Heliawaty's research stated that trust, networks, and institutions influence economic behavior, namely the production of coffee plants (Heliawaty et al, 2015). Trust increased technology adoption of robusta and pieces of arabica coffee while distrust led to rampant coffee theft. Networks affect coffee prices and institutions affect the behavior of farmers in obtaining business capital.

Therefore, when referring to the data above, the level of social capital of farmers in Aceh, primarily related to trust, is very high. Thus it is assumed that access to business capital is also increasingly easy because trust, networks, and institutions have a relationship with each other and positively affect the economic behavior of farmers. Although the level of trust is high, the level of farmer awareness is also high, reaching (96%). The rest (4%) are not vigilant in establishing relationships with fellow farmers. Another important thing related to social capital is collective action. An essential element of collective action is social interaction. To find out the conditions of social interaction between farmers in Aceh can be seen in the following explanation:

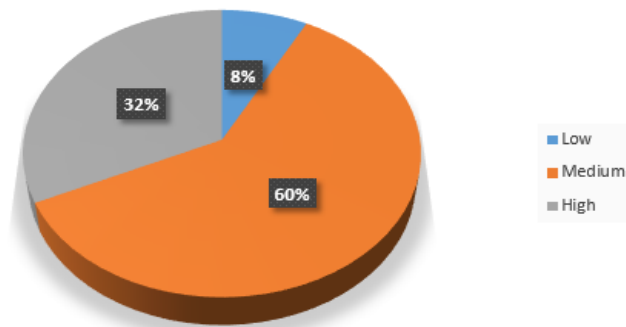


Figure 5: Level of Information in Society

The data above explained that 181 respondents (60%) stated that the level of interaction in the community was in the moderate category, 96 respondents (32%) stated that the level of interaction in the community was in the high category, while 23 respondents (8%) stated that the level of interaction in the community is in the low category. Therefore it can be stated that the majority of social interactions in the community are in the moderate category. The above data are supported by the results of interviews with the Head of the Pidie Jaya District Agriculture Service. He stated that:

The social interaction of farming communities in Aceh is excellent. It appears from the conditions of interaction between peasant communities in the villages. Usually, in the village, there are small stalls that are used by the community where they gather and exchange information both in the morning before starting the activity or in the afternoon when they return from their activities. Farmers take a break while drinking coffee and releasing the fatigue after a few hours working in the fields (Interview with Muzakkir, April 18, 2019).

One of the social interactions is through communication. The research results of Shaoling et al. revealed that shared values and communication have a significant favorable influence on the quality of performance and agricultural products (Shaoling et al, 2018). Therefore, increasing social interaction among farmers is highly recommended, especially to increase the social capital of farmers in the community further. In general, it can be said that the social capital of farmers in Aceh from the elements of the network, trust, and collective action is intense. However, the current Aceh poverty rate is still high, reaching 15.97% (Saifuddin Yunus et al, 2019). These mean that substantial capital does not affect the level of poverty in Aceh.

The description above showed that having good social capital and financial capital had not been able to reduce poverty optimally. Because there are still other aspects that affect the welfare of farmers. According to the Head of the Pidie Jaya Regency Agriculture Service, another crucial aspect is the coordination and synergy between government agencies. He further explained:

To reduce poverty in Aceh is indeed a big job, it is not enough to only involve the agricultural service and social services, but all stakeholders must sit together to think of strategic steps together between the government, academics, the private sector, and farmers. If all these elements come together, He is sure that poverty in Aceh can be reduced (Interview with Muzakkir, April 18, 2019).

From the interview above, it can be understood that the empowerment of peasant communities and the reduction of poverty cannot rely solely on economic capital and substantial social capital, but must be supported by other factors, especially the cooperation of all agricultural stakeholders and community empowerment.

V. CONCLUSION

The results of the study show that social capital associated with social networks is magnificent, which is characterized by high community participation in community organizations, which reaches 75%. Furthermore, social capital in the form of trust among farmers in Aceh is also high, reaching 90%, and farmer collective action can also be said to be high even though it is lower than the previous two social capital, which is 60%. It turns out that this level of social capital has not significantly affected the decline in poverty in Aceh. The study shows that in addition to two substantial capital, social capital and economic capital, and other aspects are strongly needed, namely cooperation between government institutions and stakeholders empowering farmers.

Nevertheless, the substantial social capital of farmers is a positive value that needs to be maintained. However, it will be less meaningful if the government, academics, private parties, and farmers do not sit together to solve the problem of farmers' poverty. The active role of all stakeholders is vital to improving people's welfare. This step is undoubtedly very much awaited and will get appreciation from all circles in Aceh.

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