

## Socio-cultural Study of the Unattended Urban Poor (Study of the Poor in the City of Kendari)

Hasan Aedy

Faculty of Business and Economics, Halu Oleo University, Southeast Sulawesi of Indonesia.

### ABSTRACT

*This study was conducted in capital city of Kendari, Southeast Sulawesi, Indonesia. The study objectives were to find out factors that cause the poverty of the unattended poor in urban areas as well as to determine the most appropriate form of intervention suiting their condition. The research method was case study with qualitative approach through in-depth interview. Sampling was done through snowball sampling technique. The number of sample saturated after the informant reached 10 persons. The research population was the urban poor working as beggars, scavengers, and casual laborers. They live and earn a living in the city of Kendari. To obtain reliable data the research used sources triangulation, time triangulation, and techniques triangulation. The results of the study were as follows: (1) The unattended urban poor in this region are poor people, most of whom are poor of property, poor of knowledge, poor of morals and poor of faith (religion). They are poor of faith for not performing the command of God and performing activities prohibited by Allah instead; (2) The unattended urban poor in this region are those who suffer structural poverty as they have no access to decent work, receive no attention from the government and rich people nearby as well as often beyond the reach of formal assistance structure. In addition, they accept zakah (alms-giving) or social aid as sympathy to survive; (3) The unattended urban poor in this area are commonly coming migrants who do not possess production factors of land unless their workforce only; (4) A few of the unattended urban poor in this region is culturally poor since they do not want to be regulated, be lazy and disobedient and it accounts for why some of them survive by expecting the mercy of others, even stealing and taking away the rights of others; (5) The unattended urban poor in this region are those who are in need of both psychological and social empowerment in terms of knowledge, mental and faith.*

**Keywords** - Poor, Urban, Displaced, Empowered, Social, Cultural

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### I. INTRODUCTION

Poverty has become a development issue in many developing countries including in Indonesia. The government and non-governmental organizations that are concerned about poverty have been trying to alleviate poverty in many countries. However, poverty looks like a chronic disease which is very difficult to heal completely. At one time, the number of the poor is decreased, but another time it is suddenly increased again only due to inflation or economic crisis that hit the country. In this regard, there are a wide range of factors that drive poverty in addition to cultural factors, such as natural factor, global factor and ideological factor. Thus poverty is a complex matter that must be overcome through formula that could best address its causes and involve many interdisciplinary expertise's.

This study specifically raises the issue of urban poverty that is the poor whom are marginalized most and unattended. Furthermore, this research is to find the best formula to strengthen the poor, especially those who still have the potential to be empowered. Meanwhile those who could not be empowered will be given assistance throughout lifetime and thereby even if they remain poor, they will not become a source of crime that may be impacted by poverty.

Based on national data in 2014, people living in poverty make up around 10.5 percent of the Indonesian total population. Poor individuals in the research site are still about 7 percent of the total population of 331.013 inhabitants. In other words, the number of poor people in the region of the research is over 20.000, an amount that can be alert for the whole society if it is not handled appropriately. Therefore, this study intends to find a pathway out of the urban poverty occurred especially to group who are extremely poor and neglected in the capital city of Kendari.

## II. LITERATURE REVIEW

### 2.1 Philosophy of Poverty

The world with its all phenomena is created in pairs. There are earth and sky, day and night, moon and star as natural phenomena. There are also destitution and welfare, success and failure, rich and poor and so on as social phenomena. The secret concealed in such a circumstance is definitely not something contemptible and useless. Everything has wisdom and virtue to the mankind of the entire world. One of the problems includes within undesired condition by human in general is poverty. In a broad sense poor means insufficiency, it may be in terms of knowledge, energy and possession. Therefore, there are poor in science, poor in effort and poor in properties. If all the three are not owned by someone, then it is a perfect poverty. However, it is commonly found in the universe that God has provided sustenance for human to carry on living. Such a symptom does not only occur to human being, but also to other creatures (Hasan Aedy, 2011).

The potential for life is a gift from God that should be understood by humans and the life itself is natural phenomenon that relates to social phenomenon in all lines the human go through. One of the lines mostly gone through by human is that of poverty. Lots of human are forcibly placed within poverty line, or even below. Poor in knowledge, poor in possession and poor in power are an interrelated set of three. It could be that poor in possession is a result of poor in knowledge, or poor in power. In contrast, poor in knowledge could be a result of poor in possessions and poor in power. Therefore to reduce poverty, there should be an accurate investigation first or a direct examination in the field to see what drives or the root of poverty that afflict human. Based on the results of the expert studies on poverty throughout the history, Hasan Aedy (2014) summarizes at least five different points of view among one another as follows:

1. **Functional point of view**, this viewpoint comes from theory of evolution which states that the main cause of underdevelopment is the habit or tradition (traditionalism). So it is human itself who occupies a key position in the case of backwardness or poverty. Although this view originates from F. Hegel's thought, but the most famous figure developing this view is A. Comte (1798-1857), a famous French sociologist who suggests formula to change the mindset of the traditional society. Thus, the capability of the changer (change agent) is essentially required to perform social engineering as accurately as possible.
2. **Modernism point of view**, this viewpoint stems from functional thought, which according to sociological jargon is known as paradigm of modernization. According to this view, backwardness or poverty occurs due to the malfunction of the internal components, which is resulted from human stupidity, low level of education, poor culture and poor quality of health. According to this view is the people themselves who cause poverty, not because of external factors. Therefore, the recipe to deal with poverty is to improve the adverse conditions they experience by means of enhancing quality of human resources through education and appropriate illumination by which they are introduced to the advancement of the outside world in the hope that they are not shackled by stupidity. While McLelland, in his psychological view, notices poverty as a highly individual factor namely the poor as a result of the inability of an individual in actualizing the entrepreneurial spirit that exists or the individual itself does not have the entrepreneurial spirit and thus he is poor.
3. **Optimistic point of view**, optimistic viewpoint is a perspective to see the world as a field of struggle and fight to improve the fate. This view holds that poverty is not a twist of fate. Therefore poverty can be overcome and eradicated from earth. The noteworthy is what the background of the poverty is. It is not uncommon that within the struggle of human life there is a close relationship among each other although the relationship could be beneficial or detrimental. Hence poverty caused by human mistake both individually and collectively can definitely alleviated by means of correcting that mistake. This is the optimistic view that willingly sacrifices mind, effort and money no matter how much, to improve the life of people who are trapped by poverty. This view has encouraged many countries around the world to eradicate poverty suffered by the mankind.
4. **Fatalistic point of view**, this viewpoint is a perspective which states that poverty is destiny or twist of fate that must be passed by a part of some people as a social phenomenon that cannot be avoided. This view is based on the natural phenomenon created by the Creator in pairs. On the natural phenomena there are day and night, earth and sky, mountain and valley and so on. All the phenomena created by the Creator is not vain or without purpose, but for the sake of human itself. Similarly, on social phenomena in which the poor living around the rich is not something strange and useless, but has a very significant meaning for human life to complement each other in meeting the needs of each. The rich people have financial capability as they possess brilliant brain and or professional skills that can provide them a much higher income compared to those around. Even so, the rich however, do not have plenty of time and energy to perform manual labor or dirty. For this reason, the rich people need the poor people to supplement or help carry out tasks that are

also important for the life of the rich, and the rich are in partnership with the poor to meet their needs through the provision of adequate income for a life. This is what is meant by social phenomena that pairs not collide. Such a view tends to let the poverty run naturally, not to be eradicated completely.

5. **Convergence of optimistic and fatalistic point of view**, another viewpoint is a view that is a combination or synthesis of optimistic and fatalistic outlook. This view is neither entirely optimistic nor fatalistic though. According to this view poverty is an adverse condition experienced by human in life that must be taken seriously by all parties, including the poor themselves since the poverty that people experience should be solved with existing capabilities. If an individual has made a maximum effort, but has not managed to overcome his poverty a hundred percent, then his poverty must be accepted as twist of fate. Such poverty is not a lot. The individuals with such poverty encounter barriers to have them repaired to repair on their own. They could be those who are physically or mentally weak, disabled and powerless. Also, they could be among those who do not care about economic interest (worldly). They seek out sustenance simply to survive. They are the remaining poor who are the pair of the rich people as part of an inevitable social phenomenon that will give wisdom for human life.

## **2.2 Theory and conventional causes of poverty**

### ***Cultural poverty***

This kind of poverty stems from culture of poor owned by a group of people who are still static-traditional. The main figure who had studied the cultural poverty is Oscar Lewis (1966 in Jamaluddin, 1995). Lewis stated that poverty is a culture that occurs because of the economy suffering (economic deprivation) which lasts longer. Such mental attitudes as unwilling to work, lazy, apathetic, fatalistic and pampered by the grace of nature are parts of the culture of poor.

Furthermore Ancok (1995) added that people who grow up in a culture of poverty have personality traits such as feeling themselves useless, being fully desperate, feeling inferior, and becoming heavily dependent upon others. In addition, such people do not have a strong personality (ego strength), are less able to control themselves, easily impulsive and highly oriented in the present without thinking about the future. All these traits make the poor difficult to plan for the future.

### ***Structural poverty***

This kind of poverty is directly related to the behavior of people both government and non-government agencies, and individuals and groups including all the rules and law products made by human that perpetuating poverty. Actions which either oppress and exploit the poor for personal interest or fulfill the greed of those possessing power, assets and intelligence are among attitudes that preserve poverty. Similarly, the rules and laws that do not favor the poor people is a fetter for them to remain poor. This is where the role of government and all state agencies representing the state make rules and policies that benefit the poor with honest implementation in the field.

Sayogio (1993 in Mubyarto, 1995) who argued about the inequality mentioned that in broad outline inequality is mostly driven by two main things: (1) market failure and (2) Political failure. Market failure is directly related to inability of market to access the poor because of their low purchasing power due to low wages and other income they receive as part of the exploitation of people who are more dominant in terms of power and wealth. While political failure directly related to the political will and government policies that fail to raise the dignity of the poor. In line with the above-mentioned opinion, Heru Nugroho (1995), raised about the dimensions of poverty that poverty is not simply to do with economic issues but is multi-dimensional since in fact it is also related to non-economic issues (socio-cultural and political).

### ***Natural poverty***

It is poverty that occurs due to natural disasters or disability, either physical or mental disability. Disability may be because of an accident or natural disaster, but can also occur without any known reason, for instance congenital disorder or disease. Commonly the poor resulted from disaster raises serious concerns of government and community, especially when it happens massively. Rather contrast, the poor because of disability or physical barriers has not received people's attention.

From all levels of poverty that fall into this category, poverty due to physical or mental disability is the hardest to resolve. There is virtually no way for those who are weak mentally to be independent. Thus, they are indeed the ones who are targeted by charity such as *zakat* (alms-giving), *infaq*, and *sadaqah* which are permanent (Aedy, 2011). Related to the causes of poverty, Chambers (2003) describes that poverty especially in rural areas has five characteristics; they are material poverty, physical weakness, isolation and remoteness, vulnerability, and powerlessness. The most noteworthy is vulnerability and powerlessness. Vulnerability according to Chamber is inability to deal with emergency situations, such as crop failure or sudden illness

strikes. It can also be said that vulnerability is state of being unprepared both mentally and materially in the face of difficult situations they experience.

### **2.3 Causes of poverty in perspective of Islamic economics**

#### **The error of distribution system**

Islam strongly protects the property rights of individual such as laws of inheritance, but at the same time it gives priority to the needs of people. As a proof, the word *zakat* is mentioned by the Lord many times in the Qur'an after the word prayers, and also there are many *hadith* talking about it. *Zakat* is a form of social security insurance in Islam for the need of many people (distribution system). If the distribution system is not going well then there is inequality and poverty. A joint research conducted by Islamic Bank, University of Indonesia, and Bogor Institute of Agriculture in 2011 can account for one form of distribution error. The data of the research mentioned that the *zakat* potential in Indonesia is 217 trillion rupiah, the realization however, only 1.5 trillion rupiah ([www.bmh.or.id](http://www.bmh.or.id)).

#### **Sufism**

Many Muslims were misled by Sufism and view the world as carcass which is unnecessary to be contested since fighting over the carcass is an act of hungry animal. This understanding is obviously exhaled by the enemies of Islam and oriental's in order for Muslim to get weakened. They make up fake *hadith* to justify that sustenance will surely come simply by *dhikr* (remembrance). In fact remembrance should be parallel with the effort made.

#### **Secularism**

Lack of knowledge about business among Muslims that causes them left behind non-Muslims. This is the result of secularism in Indonesia. Separation of religious practice from life affairs is a part of a system that occurs in this country. It is often found graduates of religious schools are rich with knowledge of *fiqh* (Islamic jurisprudence) but less familiar with *muamalat* jurisprudence (Islamic commercial and civil acts). Such a circumstance leaves them incompetent to deal with business matter which makes them hard to get chance to work and thus become poor. In contrast, a public school graduate is more likely to be skilled in business world but lacking of knowledge in *fiqh* of prayer, fasting or hajj. They eventually spiritually split and dry and even behave very badly.

#### **Solely a test from Allah**

Lots of people have birth defects, are physically weak, feeble-minded, paralyzed, childless, or left dead by spouse. Some do not have parent and relatives or have tried hard but still poor. These are those who are tested by Allah. Differences in shape, appearance, sustenance, skin color, or clever and stupid, strong and weak, indeed are the will of Allah. In accordance with His word "And Allah has favored some of you over others in provision (QS [16]: 71) (Gusfahmi, 2009).

According to Zen-Zen Zainal (2014), poverty in the view of Islam cannot be separated from God's destiny or decree, so that the difference in way of viewing poverty is in accordance with the difference in dealing with destiny or decision of Allah. Islam's view on poverty is not similar to that of *Jabariah* faith adherent who believe that what happens to human is purely a decision of Allah, nor as believed by adherents of *Qadariah* faith that whatever they undergo is purely their own choice which means that being poor is their own fault. Thus, the Islamic point of view stands between the two faiths, which views poverty as a part of the human's effort on one hand and also merely because of what God's decision on the other hand. This viewpoint has been in line with the word of God in the glorious Koran that explains that he who extends and restricts provision to whom he will (refer to surah Az-zumar verse 52 and surah Ar-Raaf verse 26). Meanwhile, there are a great deal of verses telling human to make efforts for instance in surah Al Qasash verse 77 and surah Ar-Rad verse 11 (a result of interview with Zen-Zen Zaenal on August 22, 2014).

### **III. RESEARCH METHODS**

The research was conducted in the city of Kendari, Southeast Sulawesi province. The object of study was the factors that cause poverty specifically the most marginalized and unattended poor throughout city of Kendari. The research employed case study with qualitative approach using snowball sampling. So the number of samples chosen terminated after information saturated.

To obtain the reliable and valid data, this study did triangulation as follows:

1. Source triangulation, which is approaching different source of informants
2. Time triangulation, the same informants were approached in different point of time
3. Techniques triangulation, by which the informants were approached in different ways.

While the data processing was done gradually through following phases:

1. Identification and coding, by giving a code on the information or data that corresponded to the research needs.
2. Reduction, which is the removal of the unnecessary information
3. Grouping, where the information or data was grouped based on theme code that has been done.
4. Sorting, in which the grouped data was sorted in sequence according to a predetermined pattern of analysis.
5. Interpretation and conclusion, where the sorted data was interpreted in accordance with empirical phenomena, and afterwards conclusion was made.
6. Synthesis, it was carried out in accordance with the concepts and empirical phenomena.

#### **IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

This research has succeeded collecting the data or information required. Using the case study method and qualitative approach, this study took the informants through snowball sampling. By this technique, the research selected 10 persons as sample.

The research results achieved were as follows:

1. Revealing the condition of the urban poor group whom are marginalized most and unattended. They are not only poor in possessions, but also poor in knowledge, poor mentally and poor in faith as well. They are generally experiencing structural poverty as they cannot access the government and the rich people nearby. They claim to have not been involved in any empowerment program, despite their potential still exist to change their fate.
2. Revealing the condition of the most marginalized and unattended urban poor groups, which in fact are driven by multi-causes of poverty. For this reason, their empowerment requires more solid cooperation between the government and all parties concerned with the poor.
3. Revealing the conditions of urban poor groups which are marginalized most and neglected that in general are migrants coming from other parts of Indonesia, so they do not possess land factor of production as indigenous people do and it accounts for why they earn a living in urban relying only on labor factors of production which is they themselves.
4. Revealing the condition of the most marginalized and neglected urban poor groups that they are chained with bad habits such as smoking and drinking alcohol, begging or liking a low productive work, even stealing or robbing other people's rights.
5. Revealing the form of attention and empowerment required by urban poor groups whom are marginalized most and unattended by involving various parties concerned with poverty. They also require public advocacy of non-governmental organizations that care about them.
6. Revealing the conditions of the unattended urban poor who have been living with a very low productivity or leading a miserable existence by asking for the mercy of others or stealing by taking away others' right. They lose guidance and do not get any supervision from anybody and therefore their life is getting more and more destitute.
7. The best solution to strengthen them is through empowerment that suit best their potential and condition, while those who could not be empowered because of socio-cultural barriers and physical barriers should be given charity throughout lifetime in order to prevent them from doing crime that harm people.

#### **V. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION**

Based on the analysis of this study, the researcher took conclusion as follows:

1. The most marginalized and unattended urban poor in this area are those who experience dual poverty (multi poverty) as they are not only poor in possessions, but also poor in knowledge, poor in morals (mental), and poor in faith.
2. The most marginalized and unattended urban poor in this region experience poverty of faith because they do not observe God's commandments and do what is prohibited instead. In addition, in average they experience poverty due to being very low educated and unskilled
3. The most marginalized and unattended urban poor in this region are also mentally poor mental because most of them do not have good relationships with other people around, even some have bad habits such as smoking and drinking alcohol.

4. The most marginalized and unattended urban poor in this area are mostly incoming migrants who do not own land factor of production, except for their own labor. Therefore they are forced to willingly do work with low productivity plus expect the mercy of others and commit crime such as stealing or taking the rights of others away.
5. A vast majority of the most marginalized and unattended urban poor in this region, undergo structural poverty since most of them do not get the attention of governments and of the rich people, even they do not have access to pay visit and extend relationship with the rich people and the ruler throughout his life. Thus they live in urban areas without guidance and coaching suiting their needs
6. Some of the most marginalized and unattended urban poor in this area are people who are culturally poor as they are naughty, unwanted to be regulated and even potentially to commit crime

The analysis and conclusions of this study, it is recommended as follows:

1. Since the poverty occurs to the most marginalized and unattended group of poor in the region is mostly dual (multi poverty), then it is not enough to simply empower them economically, but it is also important to empower them mentally as well as in terms of science and knowledge and faith.
2. Since the unattended urban poor in this region cannot access or extend relationship with the rich and the ruler, then there should be non-governmental organizations advocating them to be able to express their aspirations or stay in touch with the rich and the ruler of the region.
3. Since the government's efforts to alleviate poverty over the years have mostly failed, then it is the right time for the government to cooperate with the *ulema* or Islamic economic experts, to leverage *sharia* financial resources such as *zakat*, grants, donations and *sadaqah* in their empowerment.
4. Since the most marginalized and unattended urban poor living in this region do not own land, then it is the time for the government to provide them with very simple, in order for them to be easily guided and empower in accordance with their potentials. Meanwhile, those who cannot be empowered because of physical and socio-cultural barriers should be given income support for lifetime. Doing so, other people are not potentially threatened by the crime that they may commit at any time for simply meeting their basic needs, or for re-venging to the rich who do not pay attention to them.

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