

Poverty Alleviation Strategy Through Zakat in Subang Regency: Evaluation of Program Efficiency and Sustainable Empowerment Potential

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ABSTRACT

The management of zakat as an instrument for empowering the economic conditions of poor communities in rural areas faces various challenges, particularly regarding the optimization of zakat collection and distribution. This study aims to evaluate the effectiveness of zakat management policies in Subang Regency in supporting poverty alleviation through comprehensive empowerment programs. A qualitative method is employed in this study, with data collected through in-depth interviews, observations, and document analysis involving local policies, zakat management institutions, and beneficiary communities. The results indicate that regional regulations and local government support, such as the regent's circular letter and the establishment of Zakat Collection Units (UPZ), have successfully increased zakat collection and expanded its reach. Programs such as Subang Taqwa, Subang Sehat, and Subang Cerdas demonstrate that zakat can play a role not only as an economic aid but also as an instrument for improving quality of life in areas such as education, health, and social welfare. These findings emphasize the importance of structured policies and transparency in zakat management to maintain public trust, which has a positive impact on the sustainability of poverty alleviation programs in rural areas.

Keywords: Zakat Management, Economic Empowerment, Poverty Alleviation

INTRODUCTION

Poverty remains a major challenge in many regions of Indonesia (Noviyasari, 2016) particularly in remote areas such as Subang Regency, which still faces significant economic disparities. As the urgency of poverty alleviation increases, attention is directed toward various

economic empowerment instruments, one of which is zakat (Zuardi, 2013). Zakat, as part of Islamic teachings, plays a crucial role in reducing social-economic inequality through more equitable wealth distribution. In many countries with a Muslim majority, zakat has proven to be one of the pillars of the economy that can support social welfare (Romdhoni, 2017).

However, in Subang Regency, the utilization of zakat as an effective economic empowerment instrument has not been fully optimized.

Abdul Haris Romdhoni's research states that there is a positive impact of the productive zakat program of LAZ An-Naafi' Boyolali on the income of mustahiq, with a percentage of 30.5% (Asnawi et al., n.d.). This is evident from the mustahiq's needs, which after participating in this program, can be used as capital for their businesses. Nani Hanifah states that zakat as an instrument for poverty alleviation in BAZNAS Boyolali is very solution-oriented, by intensifying zakat socialization to maximize zakat collection and distribution to mustahiq, thereby addressing poverty through business capital and advocacy efforts (Hanifah, 2017). Hermawan's research on the role of zakat in poverty alleviation in Mataram City indicates that zakat has contributed to poverty alleviation, with more than 50% of zakat distributed to mustahiq in sectors like education, economy, health, and social (Herwanti et al., 2020).

These studies show that optimizing zakat can drive sustainable social transformation, but applying appropriate strategies in the context of poverty in rural areas is often still lacking (Kurniawan, 2017). The management of zakat in Subang Regency has not reached its full potential, especially in aligning zakat goals with the economic needs of recipients who often require long-term and sustainable solutions. This issue highlights the need for more effective and measurable strategies to ensure that zakat distribution not only meets the basic needs of recipients but also strengthens the economic resilience of marginalized communities. Therefore, it is crucial to evaluate zakat implementation strategies

in Subang Regency as a poverty alleviation tool to better understand zakat's role as a potential sustainable empowerment instrument.

Although the potential of zakat as a poverty alleviation instrument is widely acknowledged, significant challenges remain in its implementation at the local level, particularly in Subang Regency. Zakat distribution often faces obstacles in achieving optimal efficiency, largely due to limited coordination between zakat management institutions and the communities receiving benefits (Zuardi, 2013). This limitation affects the long-term effectiveness of zakat programs, particularly in providing sustainable economic empowerment for vulnerable groups (Ma'mur, 2015). This study aims to identify zakat management strategies in Subang Regency, evaluate the efficiency of existing programs, and explore the potential of zakat in supporting the sustainable empowerment of the poor.

In zakat literature, much of the focus has been on theoretical aspects and general regulations, while in-depth studies on zakat program evaluations in the context of structural poverty in rural areas remain limited. This creates a gap in understanding how zakat can be effectively integrated to improve the economic resilience of communities in marginalized areas. This research seeks to fill that gap by presenting an empirical analysis that assesses the efficiency and impact of zakat programs in Subang Regency, thereby enhancing understanding of zakat distribution strategies as effective empowerment tools.

This study also introduces novelty by taking a more holistic approach to assess zakat's effectiveness as a sustainable poverty alleviation strategy. Moreover, this research is not only

valuable in academic contexts but also provides practical contributions to public policy and zakat governance, ensuring a more responsive approach to the economic needs of the poor in rural areas (Syarif & Hasyim, 2020). The primary justification for this research is that optimal zakat utilization has the potential to create long-term economic impacts, which in turn can support the creation of a more economically self-reliant society in Subang Regency.

METHODOLOGY

This study adopts a qualitative approach (Sugiyono, 2008) with a case study design to examine zakat strategies and their effectiveness in poverty alleviation in Subang Regency. This approach allows for an in-depth exploration of the local context and various factors influencing the implementation of zakat programs in rural areas. The research began by identifying zakat institutions and key informants, including zakat managers, community leaders, and beneficiaries. Data were collected through in-depth interviews, field observations, and document analysis, including annual reports from zakat institutions and poverty data, to gain a detailed understanding of zakat program implementation and challenges in the region.

Data analysis was conducted thematically to identify key patterns and themes related to the effectiveness and impact of zakat programs on economic empowerment. The analysis process involved data reduction to filter relevant information, identifying themes that reflect zakat strategies and challenges, and drawing comprehensive conclusions on zakat's contribution to empowering the poor in Subang Regency. Through this approach, the study is expected to provide

valuable insights for improving the implementation of zakat in a more effective and sustainable manner.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

This study found that local-level policies play an important role in driving the improvement of zakat management. Key policies influencing zakat collection in Subang Regency include 1) Subang Regency Regent Regulation No. 25 of 2021, which serves as a legal basis for the management of professional zakat, charity, and almsgiving, particularly among civil servants (ASN) in the local government. This regulation reflects a crucial step in integrating religious obligations with state duties, while also promoting ASN participation in poverty alleviation programs through zakat. The centralized management of zakat by BAZNAS ensures systematic collection and transparent distribution, reducing the risk of misappropriation and increasing public trust in the local government. The Subang Regent's Circular Letter No. PM.03/782/Kesra encourages the public, including non-ASN individuals, to channel their zakat through BAZNAS. This circular serves as a socialization tool to extend zakat participation across society, further enhancing BAZNAS's role as a professional and accountable zakat management institution.

The formation of the Zakat Collection Unit (UPZ) at various levels, from government agencies to mosques, facilitates more efficient zakat collection and provides wider access for the public to fulfill their zakat, charity, and almsgiving obligations. By 2021-2026, there were 21 UPZs at the district level, 30 UPZs at the sub-district level, 245 UPZs at the village level, and 669 UPZs at mosques. These units play a significant

role in educating the public about zakat and its distribution to the poor.

Regarding zakat empowerment programs, five main programs have been identified by BAZNAS Subang, each with a different focus to meet the needs of the community:

1. Subang Taqwa: Strengthens religious institutions and preserves Islamic values.
2. Subang Sehat: Provides health assistance and improves access to healthcare, particularly for the poor.
3. Subang Cerdas: Offers educational support through scholarships for underprivileged children.
4. Subang Makmur: Focuses on economic empowerment, particularly through micro-business capital for new entrepreneurs.
5. Subang Peduli: Implements community-based social programs, such as disaster response and local empowerment.

Interpretation of Findings

The findings indicate that zakat management policies in Subang Regency have successfully improved zakat collection, especially professional zakat from civil servants, which has become a major funding source. Regional regulations governing professional zakat provide a strong legal basis for optimizing zakat collection, supported by the Regent's Circular Letter, which extends zakat participation to the general public. The establishment of UPZs at various administrative levels ensures organized and targeted zakat distribution. These efforts align with previous studies suggesting that efficient community-based organizational structures improve zakat collection and distribution effectiveness (Rahman, 2016). Through these policies, the community not only receives

economic assistance but is also empowered to access education, healthcare, and skill development facilities.

The programs under BAZNAS Subang, including Subang Taqwa, Subang Sehat, Subang Cerdas, and Subang Makmur, have made significant progress in providing not only consumable but also productive aid, contributing to holistic welfare improvement. For instance, the Subang Cerdas program, which offers scholarships to children from poor families, has increased community participation in education, potentially breaking the cycle of poverty. These integrated zakat programs have a significant long-term impact on community empowerment (Rasyid & Saputra, 2020).

However, despite these positive impacts, some challenges remain. One of the primary issues is the lack of transparency and accountability in zakat management. Although zakat collection and distribution systems are well-organized, improving communication between zakat institutions and the community is crucial to prevent any mistrust that may arise. Some community members perceive that zakat management may not always align with empowerment objectives, especially regarding the accessibility of information about beneficiaries and the use of zakat funds (Murtadho, 2020). Therefore, it is important to continue improving reporting systems and transparent communication to demonstrate the tangible impacts of managed zakat. As a wealth redistribution mechanism with social and economic power, zakat functions not only as a short-term social aid instrument but also as a tool for sustainable empowerment.

As a mechanism for wealth

redistribution with social and economic power, zakat not only functions as a tool for short-term social assistance but also as an instrument for more sustainable economic empowerment (Kurniawan, 2017). In economic empowerment theory, zakat can be viewed as a resource that supports sustainable community development, in line with Islamic economic principles emphasizing justice and the equitable distribution of resources (Ismail & Sulaiman, 2021). The contribution of zakat to poverty reduction aligns with development economics theories that regard wealth distribution as key to creating inclusive welfare (Noviyasari, 2016).

Practically, the findings of this study show that well-organized zakat management policies can serve as a useful model for other regions in improving the efficiency of zakat collection and distribution. Policies regulating zakat on the salaries of civil servants and the establishment of Zakat Collection Units (UPZ) at various levels of local government have proven effective in expanding the scope of beneficiaries. Additionally, the creation of various empowerment programs focusing on education, health, and the economy can serve as best practices for utilizing zakat for community empowerment (Yuliana & Soeharno, 2020). This practice supports the argument that zakat holds significant potential in supporting socio-economic development, especially in areas with high poverty levels (Maulana & Laksamana, 2023).

On the other hand, the findings also offer new insights into the challenges faced in zakat management, particularly regarding the need for greater transparency and accountability. Although empowerment programs have been successful, there is an urgent need to

strengthen reporting systems and internal audits within zakat institutions to ensure that zakat funds are used in accordance with empowerment goals. This is crucial to maintaining public trust and ensuring that zakat is seen not only as temporary aid but as a long-term investment in sustainable human development (Widyawati & Putri, 2019).

This study has several limitations that may affect the generalizability of the results. The research only covers one region, Subang Regency, so the context of these findings may differ in other regions with different economic and social characteristics. Additionally, the limitation of data sources, which only includes interviews and observations, may constrain the depth of analysis on the long-term impact of zakat programs on community welfare. This study also faced challenges in obtaining access to quantitative data from relevant institutions, which could enrich the analysis results. These limitations need to be acknowledged so that readers can understand that, although the results show a positive impact, there is room for deeper exploration in different contexts.

Based on the findings and the limitations faced, future research is expected to expand the scope of the study to provide a broader picture of zakat implementation in various regions. The use of quantitative methods in future studies is also recommended to strengthen the findings related to the economic impact objectively, which can provide more accurate data regarding the improvement in welfare of zakat recipients (Choudhury, 2021). Moreover, other factors, such as the role of the private sector and inter-institutional collaboration, should also be explored in the context of zakat-based community empowerment to understand the various

elements that can support or hinder the effectiveness of programs.

The social and ethical implications of these findings indicate that the zakat programs initiated by BAZNAS in Subang Regency have significant potential to improve the welfare of the poor in a sustainable manner (Abdullah & Rahmat, 2021). Through well-structured programs, zakat not only plays a role in meeting basic economic needs but also strengthens overall well-being, including access to health and education services (Firdaus & Yulianto, 2018). From an ethical perspective, transparent and accountable zakat management is crucial to maintaining public trust in supporting zakat as an effective empowerment tool. This trust becomes a key factor in ensuring the sustainability of zakat programs, so they can continue to contribute to poverty alleviation in other remote areas.

CONCLUSION

This study highlights the effectiveness of zakat management policies in Subang Regency in supporting poverty alleviation through social-economic empowerment of the community. Through legal foundations in the form of regional regulations and support from local governments, such as the regent's circular, zakat collection in Subang Regency has been successfully improved, and its scope expanded to the general public. The role of institutions, particularly BAZNAS and Zakat Collection Units (UPZ), is crucial in ensuring that zakat is distributed to the right beneficiaries through programs such as Subang Taqwa, Subang Sehat, and Subang Cerdas, which cover various aspects of welfare. These findings strengthen the potential of zakat as a philanthropic instrument that not only meets basic economic needs but also improves quality

of life through support in education, health, and social stability. In conclusion, integrative policies and structured implementation can make zakat a strategic pillar in poverty alleviation programs in regions with similar economic and social characteristics.

For future research, it is recommended to expand the scope of the study to other regions in order to compare the effectiveness of zakat policies in different social and economic contexts. A quantitative approach can also complement this study's findings with more objective data on the economic impacts generated by zakat programs. Additionally, further research should explore the synergy between the private sector, government institutions, and civil society organizations in zakat management, which could enrich the community-based empowerment perspective. Given the importance of accountability in zakat management, transparency in zakat fund management should also be a primary focus to maintain public trust and ensure that zakat benefits are optimally and sustainably distributed.

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