

Arisan Padi: The Life Strategy of Priangan Rural Community

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Abstract—This study revealed *arisan padi* carried out by rural communities in Ciamis District, West Java. *Arisan padi* which is filled by local wisdom needs to be studied more deeply, because it is basically a rural economic tradition that is closely related to village institutions, namely food security institutions for peasant families. The study was carried out using historical methods to analyze the changing meaning of *arisan*. Meanwhile, to explore the values of local wisdom from the *arisan* is carried out using an anthropological approach. In the beginning, *arisan padi* of the rural community was social in nature, where *arisan* built by the farmer and peasant was aimed at the food security of the peasant. Today, the idea of *arisan padi* is no longer social, but changes to become more economic. *Arisan padi* is no longer just for consumption purposes, but now it tends to change for economic and production. This change needs to be studied because rural communities have changed their economic behavior patterns, especially in understanding *arisan padi*.

Keywords—*Arisan padi*, rural community, life strategy.

I. INTRODUCTION

Arisan is a form of association where members have a commitment to collect some money or goods, then *arisan* participants will get money or goods in the future. This study will discuss *arisan* of goods in the form of *arisan padi* in *Dusun* Kersikan, Rancabodas, and Jambudipa, Handapherang Village, Cijeungjing District. The three hamlets were included in the area of Ciamis Regency, which was a part of the former Priangan Residency during the Dutch Colonial period.

Arisan padi is estimated to start around the 1970s, after several residents who migrated to the city returned to their hometowns and were inspired to hold *arisan* like in the city. The idea was welcomed by villagers, both in the form of money and rice. *Arisan* in the form of money went smoothly, while the *arisan padi* experienced several obstacles because it was considered impractical. Nevertheless, in the end, this *arisan padi* can change the pattern of economic behaviors of the community due to various innovations in *arisan*. This *arisan padi* is a way of adaptation of the village community in aligning cultural patterns with the pattern of commercial economy.

What patterns of village institutions support the sustainability of *arisan padi*, and what benefits are felt by rural communities with the existence of *arisan padi* need

to be explored. This connection needs to be studied, so that it can be developed towards a more rational institution or firm while maintaining the harmony of rural life. Thus, this *arisan padi* still exists and grows as a village economic institution that supports food security while motivating people to have responsibility in modern economic patterns with balanced traditional values.

Geertz (1987) described the *arisan* of Javanese society and other parts of the world as a form of social gathering which was originally a form of reciprocal exchange economy that developed towards an international economy. The definition of rolling credit in Geertz's study is a form of *arisan* in the sense of rural society [1]. Another study of credit was written by Nugroho (2002), which describes the impact of the credit economic system for the people of Bantul. He argued that lending activities among the communities had driven the economic wheel of society [2]. While Handayani's (2012) study of the dynamics of credit in Priangan in 1900-1942 showed the dynamics of the economy with the growth of the entrepreneurial spirit of the Priangan community [3].

From these studies, the researchers were inspired to study *arisan padi* (although not in the form of credit) which still takes place in the former Priangan Residency. The problems that will be studied are, what the reasons for the community to form *arisan padi* are, what factors support the sustainability of *arisan padi*, why there is a change in the mechanism of *arisan padi*, and what the benefits for members of *arisan* are.

II. RESEARCH METHODS

This research is a qualitative research that seeks to describe people's lives. The purpose of which is to explore the meaning of people's daily lives naturally [4]. Data sources were collected in the form of primary and secondary sources. Primary sources were obtained through participant observation with interview techniques [5] [6]. Respondents interviewed were members of *arisan padi*, community leaders, and economic actors related to *arisan padi*, while secondary data sources were references to support research, which was useful for interpreting and analyzing data [5].

The historical and anthropological approaches were used in this study, in the hope that this study can be diachronic, that is, explain the changes chronologically. While the anthropological approach was used to analyze

and to explain people's views on what they do, and the meaning behind what they do in everyday life [4]. Data obtained from the field was processed, analyzed, and expressed in the form of paper.

III. DISCUSSION

A. Cooperation and Model of Arisan in Village Communities

The people under study still describe the lives of rural people with the nature of the agrarian economy. This can be seen where the people have not invested much with the possibility of providing benefits to the accumulation of capital in the world of exchange of objects and services that are demanded by the market economy.

The economic activities of rural communities are still parts of the overall social activities. Community economic activities are bound to normative integration patterns. There are functional interdependencies from economic activities with other social activities, and there are causal interactions between economic activities and other social activities. However, in subsequent developments, there will gradually be an influence on the use of new economic patterns, and this will bring people closer to the national economic network.

Changes in economic activity begin with the awareness of the people to interpret life and to survive in the several of economic uncertainty. In increasing production, rural communities are faced with various problems, such as land, work, capital, cash, and credit being important in production.

The existence of rural communities not only involves the relationship between farmers and non-farmers, but also rather how to adapt an attitude, communication, and activities aimed at supporting farmers in balancing the social order and survival of rural communities. *Arisan padi* is one of the local wisdoms of rural communities that the majority of farmers in the framework of sustaining the economy while strengthening the social relations of rural communities between peasants, farmers, entrepreneurs, and traders.

B. Model of Arisan Padi

In general, rural communities tend to equate understanding between credit and *arisan*, even though credit and *arisan* are different. Credit is made to get capital whether it's money or goods, which must be returned. Credit must be understood as today's price with a different future, so that there is a difference in price to pay for what is called interest as an advantage. In *arisan*, a group of people collects capital then returns without thinking of interest.

Arisan padi in the research area is formed by the community. Informant said *arisan padi* was build around the 1970s. The initial purpose was only to familiarize the landowners with peasants who cultivators of rice fields. *Arisan padi*, is an adaptation of money *arisan* that has been running in urban areas, but the village capital is more in the form of goods (rice) than money, so that on some

initiatives of people in the village, money is replaced with rice.

Arisan padi is created based on a mutual agreement, both regarding the amounts of rice that must be deposited each harvest, who is the winner of the *arisan*, and how to manage the *arisan*. Additionally, this was discussed in the event of a disaster, for example in the event of crop failure. How to deal with it, and this is usually discussed together. In one case, participants can be considered indebted to the *arisan* winners at that time. In other cases, the *arisan* winner's turn was postponed to the next harvest because harvest failure was experienced by most of the *arisan* participants.

In one group of *arisan padi*, there are 10-20 people (not too much or little effort, with the reason that one *arisan* period is not too long or too short). One person pays 1 quintal of dried rice grain, so that if there are 20 *arisan* participants, it will be 10-20 quintals. However, now the participants are 20 people, then the winner in one harvest is 2 people, so the *arisan* time is short.

The *arisan* process is very simple, when the harvest is usually people gathered in the rice fields, and then it is agreed who will be the *arisan* participants, how many kilograms of rice will be deposited for *arisan*. After being agreed upon, immediately shaken, so that the *arisan* participants know the order of rice withdrawal. Hence, *arisan padi* does not provide consumption such as money *arisan* held at home.

Initially, *arisan padi* was only used for family food security, some were used for food security during famine, or only used to meet daily consumption, and *arisan padi* was still a lot of social characteristics. The reason for the large landowners joining *arisan* is to help the *panyawah* (the people who work on their rice fields), while *panyawah* immediately sells rice because there are no small houses to store rice. Thus, the social gathering is more social than the economy.

Arisan padi still relies on family, and family structure. Their economic activities are one aspect of the social aspect. This form of investment is based on the use of sources that support the growth of social forms. The principle of reciprocity as expressed by Polanyi (1957) is still valid.

Arisan padi began to change form when Indonesia experienced a monetary crisis around 1997-1998, because the basic prices of foods increased drastically, and villagers had little choice in finding work, their welfare declined. In the condition of the monetary crisis, the price of rice grain soared, and this was considered very profitable. *Arisan padi* has been changed its pattern, which was only to meet basic needs, and was changed to benefit *arisan* participants.

Changes to the mechanism for harvesting rice for the *arisan* winner were changed. The winner did not take the rice immediately after the harvest, but the rice was stored in each participant's house in dry conditions. If the winner needs it, then he contacts one of the participants who is considered as the manager and is responsible for the *arisan*. The person in charge will contact the rice trader or rice mill to collect rice at the *arisan* participants.

Thus, *arisan* winners feel more practical because they do not spend the cost of carrying rice to the seller and storing rice in the house that requires maintenance costs. In general, participants sell their rice at high rice prices. In fact, the *arisan* winners can directly contact rice traders or rice millers to take rice in other *arisan* participants. Hence, participants, *arisan* management, rice traders, rice mill owners already have cooperation and mutual trust.

Arisan padi is increasingly in demand because it is considered efficient and beneficial for *arisan* participants. According to Geertz (1987), *arisan* in the countryside still follows the traditional pattern of rural cooperation. Forms of economic cooperation that relate to traditional labor in the villages studied, such as *bawon*, *nyoblak*, *mertelu*, and *maro* are almost gone because they are considered to be unprofitable to landowners. Now, the form of cooperation has shifted to the form of a rental system.

In the form of a rental system there is a profit sharing for the landowner of the rice field of 2.5 kg of rice per bata (1 bata = 14 m²), if the harvest fails, then the rental price can be discussed again. The form of social cooperation is still very strong, especially cooperation and reciprocity. Cooperation is aimed at the interests of the village, while reciprocity for family relationships.

How participants interpret the *arisan padi*. From the results, the participants felt that they had benefited, among others:

1. The results of *arisan* can be used as capital for replanting, or venture capital, even for the school of their children
2. As savings when the family wants to hold a wedding, circumcision, even for death events.
3. To cover other economic needs, or to repair a house or to buy furniture.
4. Participants assume that *arisan padi* can be used as a kind of guarantee when they need money suddenly or become savings when they do not need to spend much. They feel the effective way to save after attending the latest *arisan padi*, because they do not spend various costs to transport and to store rice at home.

The form of *arisan padi* that is examined is the most basic form of *arisan*, and there is no cost to gather every month. There is no additional cost for the *arisan* winner when picking up rice, the winner is drawn, but is flexible because it can negotiate between the winner and the person who suddenly requires capital. There is no special staff in the *arisan*. There tends to be no bookkeeping, only a simple note to record participants and an interesting sequence of *arisan*.

The social authority in the *arisan padi* system is still ongoing, such as asking for the winning part of the rice that has been determined by reason of an urgent need. The participants keep the winning rice before taking it, without

considering the storage cost factor. In addition, among participants, if there is a celebration event (salvation), the other participants will contribute in kind, such as raw materials for cooking, sugar, coffee, noodles, cooking oil, and so on.

Indirectly, *arisan padi* has increased the sense of personal responsibility in the management of family finances, as well as experiences that are educational because they begin to think clearly to spend some money. A method that is very economically beneficial. In addition, it still strengthens the sense of kinship and tolerance between rice field owners, land tenants, traders, *tengkulak*, *balantik*, and owners of rice mills.

IV. CONCLUSION

At the beginning of the formation of *arisan padi* which was still taking place in several village in Ciamis Regency, it reflected as an economic as well as social institution, which aimed to strengthen the kinship among the community, especially the *arisan padi* participants. *Arisan* appeals in the form of harmony, *gotong royong*, cooperation, and mutual help. In line with the occurrence of the monetary crisis that hit Indonesia around the late 1990s, the *arisan padi* arose towards a more meaningful social gathering, even though it did not leave its social aspect.

This form of social gathering needs to be further investigated, because it is relevant to the economic resilience of rural communities in overcoming various crises that hit their economic life, besides that it is an economic institution that can be adapted to the market economy without abandoning the concepts of their local wisdom.

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