

THE SOCIAL REALITY AND LIVELIHOODS OF BEGGAR COMMUNITY IN KAMPUNG BARU PASURUAN EAST JAVA

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Abstract—Beggar is a social phenomenon concern by Indonesian people today. In Indonesia there is some areas where many of their citizens survive as beggars. This area famously known as the *Kampung Pengemis* or Beggar hamlet. One of *Kampung Pengemis* in East Java Province named “Kampung Baru” located in Sidowayah subdistrict, Beji, Pasuruan, East Java. The purpose of this study is to describe the social reality and history of *Kampung Baru*, the characteristics of beggar in Kampung Baru, the reasons why many Kampung Baru people use begging for the main livelihood, and the impact of begging for Kampung Baru people. The research was conducted with qualitative methods using a social construction approach. The results showed that the reason of begging by Kampung Baru residents due the limitations of natural and human resources. Kampung Baru formerly is an area for relocated homeless people from town which all having low education and skills. Kampung Baru natural condition also poor, this area have minimal water resources so the residents cannot operate a farming and plantation business. This all make the beggar activity is better to do than become jobless. Associated with social construction theory, it is known that people of Kampung Baru continue to be beggars due to the absence of social sanctions from the community. Begging is seen by the community as a reasonable activity so that it can inherited to the child and offspring. The begging activities carry by Kampung Baru citizen turned out have a negative impact for the society. The citizens tend to have a lazy tendency, enjoying practical things, and can not able to form a good social bonds. Begging activity that do every day up to night causing the majority of residents in Kampung Baru rarely interact with neighbors. This in turn raises the individualist attitude of this society.

Keywords—*beggar hamlet, interaction, and social construction.*

I. INTRODUCTION

One of phenomenon often encountered in the Indonesian society is beggar. Beggars are a person who to find income by asking alms in public place or housing area [1]. The things that beggars often ask are money, staple food and cloth. Beggar in Indonesia can easily be found in the city centers, housing, up to rural areas. The existence of these beggars is often troubling the public, because many of them use unfavorable ways to get mercy. For example, pretending to be sick, disabled, carrying baby or involving young children to beg.

Society considers the practice of begging contrary to the norm and values such as hard work and being independent. This make begging considered a form of a social pathology. Reference [2] found that now beggars are no longer social phenomenon of a poor. Poverty is no longer the main reason to become beggar because beggar have become a livelihood for some.

There are several regions in Indonesia which majority of its citizens lives as beggar. This area is known as the *kampung pengemis* or beggar village. One of the *kampung pengemis* in East Java is Kampung Baru, located in Sidowayah Village, Beji District, Pasuruan Regency, East Java. Activity of begging by Kampung Baru citizens is considered as livelihood and also passed down to their offspring.

There are many government efforts to improve the economy of the Kampung Baru community. One of the effort is giving empowerment to the society. Unfortunately, many of the empowerment activities failed because were ignored by Kampung Baru people. This indicates that begging carried out by the Kampung Baru is strengthen by social construction in the community .

This study done to reveal the social reality of beggar activity of Kampung Baru people. The focus of the research is to investigate the history of Kampung Baru, the characteristics of the Kampung Baru people who lives as beggars, the reason of begging activities carried as the main livelihoods, and the impact begging activities for the Kampung Baru social lives.

II. THEORETICAL REVIEW

The phenomenological thought of social construction by Peter L. Berger and Thomas Luckman used to analyze beggar phenomenon in Kampung Baru. By social construction theory, Berger and Luckman redefine the concepts of 'reality' and 'knowledge' in a social context. In this case the theory of sociology must be able to provide an understanding that the life of society is continuously constructed.

According to Reference [3], social reality in people's lives basically cannot stand alone without the presence of individuals inside or outside the reality. Social reality has

meaning when social reality is constructed and interpreted subjectively by other individuals, so as to stabilize that reality objectively. Inspired by the opinion of Berger and Luckman, social reality is a social construction made by society in its historical journey from the past, to the present, and towards the future [4].

Activities begging conducted repeatedly by people in Kampung Baru further will become a habit. In this case all human activity is essentially undergoing a process of habituation. Every action which is repeated will become a pattern of life that then can be reproduced in the future.

Beggars are people who earn a living by begging in public places through a variety of ways to obtain mercy [5]. Reference [6] and [1] also define beggars as a person or group of people who earn income by asking for money on the street, in public places, or in homes for various reasons to expect mercy from others. Furthermore people who called beggars are asking for alms or charity given out of sympathy to the poor and it is a street level resource for the poor and powerless and the solicits of receivers to sustainable livelihoods [7].

According to Reference [8], beggar or *pengemis* (Indonesian language) was originally used to designate people who wished for blessings from the king. Previously king in Java usually give blessings and alms for the people in form of money and daily necessities. This charity is done every Thursday or in the Java word called *Kemis*. People wish to get blessing on Thursday is then referred as *ngemis*. This Java term of *ngemis* then absorbed in *Bahasa Indonesia* (Indonesian language), the basic word 'emis' and plus the prefix 'peng' become term "pengemis", which means beggar or people who beg for charity.

In Indonesia there is people who gather at the same place and have the same job of being beggars. This community named as 'Kampung Pengemis' or beggar hamlet. The beggar hamlet is a hamlet where most of the population has low demographic characteristics, low literacy rates and works as beggars [9].

III. METHOD

This research is a qualitative research. The approach used in this study is the social construction and aims to understand the meanings that are constructed by individuals behavior, incidence, symptoms and interactions in certain conditions of everyday life [10]. The location of this study is in Kampung Baru hamlet, Sidowayah Village, Beji District, Pasuruan Regency, East Java Indonesia. The informants in this study were grouped into two, namely key informants and supporting informants. The key informants is the Kampung Baru people who lives as beggars, while supporting informants are village heads and their apparatus.

Data collected through techniques of observation, interviews and documentation. After the data is collected, the data is processed by Miles & Huberman's interactive data analysis technique. Data checking and validation using three method, that is source triangulation, technical triangulation and time triangulation.

IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

A. Kampung Baru Hamlet History

Based on the profile of Sidowayah Village, Kampung Baru is located in Sidowayah Village, Beji District, Pasuruan Regency, East Java Province. The north side of Sidowayah Village is bordered by Pogar Village, Bangil Subdistrict, to the south by Kenep Village, Beji Subdistrict, to the east by Kolursari Village in Bangil Subdistrict, and to the west by Gajahbendo Village, Beji District. Sidowayah village has an area of 178.57 ha/m² which is divided into 3 hamlets, namely Hamlet of Sidowayah, Hamlet of Mindi and Hamlet of Mojorejo [11].

Kampung Baru is part of Sidowayah Hamlet. Sidowayah Hamlet is divided into 3 regions, namely South Sidowayah, West Sidowayah and Kampung Baru. The population of Kampung Baru only consists of one RT, namely RT II RW II with 43 Family Heads (KK). The area of Kampung Baru is only 300 x 12 m².

The biggest sector in sustaining the economic activities of Kampung Baru people is the many independent efforts carried out by the population. Most of them set up their own businesses even though the capital spent was not too large. These businesses include workshops, shoe soles, watch repair, selling fried rice, and so on.

In addition, the community also seeks to maximize the existing potential by utilizing vacant land for planting banana trees. Some bananas that are already fruiting will be sold in the market and some will be processed into various processed banana dishes such as banana nuggets, fried bananas, chocolate bananas, and banana cheese which will also be sold on the market. The government always encourages and motivates the residents of Kampung Baru to create productive activities to meet their household needs.

Through research it was found that in formerly Kampung Baru is a land used for transporting sugarcane to the factory by railroad in Dutch colonial era. When the rail track stop to be operated, Pasuruan Social Department using the land to build a shelter for the homeless.

Previously homeless residents of Pasuruan were accommodated in temporary shelter called Dharma Bhakti which was located next to the Bangil City Detention House. When the Bangil Detention House was extended, Dharma Bhakti homeless shelter then disassembled and relocated to Kampung Baru. Government construct a *kelentengan* shelters which build in half brick and half of woven bamboo.

As the time pass, the *kelentengan* shelter housing grew and form a hamlet. The people who live here is not only the ex-Dharma Bhakti temporary shelter, but also many immigrants. Increasing population dominated by migrants causes the area to be densely populated.

The large number of migrants who are interested in living in the area is because the population is free from tax collection. This is because the land they occupy is not theirs, but the land of PJK. Migrants who live in the area, may build houses as long as they have become residents of Sidowayah Village. Therefore, residents living there do not have land rights but only building rights. Therefore the area is then called Kampung Baru (in english *baru* is new), new

hamlet which were included in administration of Sidowayah Village.

B. Characteristics of Communities Working as Beggars

Beggars in Kampung Baru have several characteristics. First, the sex of the majority of beggars is women. This condition occurs due to the fact that female beggars are able to attract the generosity from people better than male beggars. These findings are similar to Reference [12], who say that female beggars are more capable of causing compassion from the people when compared to male beggars.

Second, the majority of beggars are married. As result of the family poor income, the wives go to the street for begging. To increase family income, many wives and children are forced to work as beggars, while family heads and parents stay at home [13]. In addition, the beggars in Kampung Baru still have kinship.

Thirdly, the villagers of Kampung Baru have ages between 18-54 years. This make them are included in the productive age group [14]. The findings were similar to the results of Reference [15] which found that nearly 90% of beggars in the city of Malang classified at their productive age. When entering productive age, individuals begin to recognize the prohibition and social sanctions of the community concerned to begging activities. This makes some individuals decide to stop begging so they can put themselves in a good position in society [16]. This condition does not happen to the people of Kampung Baru who still do begging even though they are already in the productive age.

Another characteristics of beggars in Kampung Baru is have certain areas of operation. Found that the beggars of Kampung Baru operate in the area around Pasuruan, namely Pandaan, Bangil, and Sidoarjo. They operate individually because they want the earned from begging can be their own, not shared with other beggar. Most beggars choose to operate individually because they can freely choose when to go to work, the area of operations and the allocation of earning. Besides, beggars in carrying out their activities have different working hours. The difference is based on the destination area [17].

TABLE 1. BEGGAR OF KAMPUNG BARU OPERATIONAL AREA

No	Area	Place Description	Beggar's Total	Operational Hour
1	Pandaan	- Taman Dayu intersection	3	7 Hours
		- Pandaan Market	2	7 Hours
2	Bangil	- Bangil Square	2	7 Hours
		- Bangil Market	1	3 Hours
3	Sidoarjo	- Around the Sidoarjo Railway Station	2	12 Hours
		- Sidoarjo Square	4	6 Hours
		- Lemah Putro Area	4	7 Hours

Sources: Observation Results and Private Interviews, January 2018

The last characteristic of begging for Kampung Baru is the appearance. When doing begging activities, the beggars of Kampung Baru used a dirty and shabby clothes. They also put on a pity face and always raised their hands. The reason of beggar's using a pity face is because many people judge a person's condition from his face [8]. A pity face is indicate that the person is experiencing distress and needs help. The dirty and shabby clothes is also a strategy to attract compassion so people going to voluntarily give part of his property to the beggars. Reference [17], found that there are five main strategies that do by beggars. The strategy was dressed in rags, carrying a child, wearing a *koko* (moslem clothes) and ask for donations, carrying charity boxes and showing their physical disabilities.

C. The Reason of the Kampung Baru Residents use Begging for Livelihoods

Geographically, the location of Kampung Baru is not far from the city center, so to get all kinds of basic needs is not too difficult. However, Kampung Baru is a residential area that stands on land owned by PJKA. This means that residents living in the area do not have rights to the land they live in. Therefore, they cannot use vacant land as agricultural and plantation land. The absence of income in terms of agriculture and plantations makes the majority of the people of Kampung Baru depend on others.

Then the fulfillment of the need for clean water for residents of Kampung Baru is still lacking. This is seen from the fact that there are still many people queuing to get water in front of wells, which only two wells and are used in turns. Therefore, many of the residents chose to buy mineral water instead of having to queue for water.

The condition of Kampung Baru people who do not have land for agriculture and plantations makes them not have income to meet their family needs. The people of Kampung Baru have difficulties in obtaining water that can be used for drinking water and other household needs. That's what make Kampung Baru residents attempt to seek alternative jobs that do not require education, qualifications or capital that is become a beggar. Most people become beggar because they do not have accessibility and ownership of capital [18].

Such conditions are supported by the low level of knowledge possessed by the population. The low level of knowledge can be seen from the education level of the population. For residents with a low educational background, begging is an alternative job when they cannot be absorbed in employment. Estimated 88.7% of beggars are primary school graduates [19]. Reference [20] also said that "poor people with low education often use informal sector such as beggars for survive."

The level of education influences the level of skills possessed by beggars in Kampung Baru. Have a low education level, causing their skill levels to be low too. This can be seen from the absence of productive efforts carried out by most of the people of Kampung Baru. The Government of Sidowayah Village in collaboration with the Social Service Office of Pasuruan Regency once held a workshop on making handicrafts for residents of Kampung

Baru. The training aims to improve their skills, so that later they can earn income without having to depend on others. However, the training did not last long, due to the lack of interest.

Other than that, according to the residents of Kampung Baru, looking job is very difficult. Begging is considered better than being unemployed. The income obtained from begging also considered promising, where the daily income is around Rp 125,000,- to Rp 175,000,-. This relatively large incomes makes people continue to beg. This finding proves the premise of Reference [21] which explains that the most underlying factor of a becoming beggars is the attraction of a good income.

D. Beggar Community and Social Construction

The practice of begging is cannot detached from the social construction formed by community [22]. Regarding the social construction theory, the people of Kampung Baru have a reason to stay with their livelihood as beggars. The first reason is that begging is better than unemployment. This reason is often spoken by beggars [8]. Because currently looking for a job is very difficult, so instead of unemployed it is better to beg. Unemployment in Indonesia is still relatively high due to low human resources and lack of available employment. So that many people decide to beg to be able to fulfill their needs [23].

The second reason is promising income. According to Reference [21], the most underlying factor for someone to survive as a beggar is the amount of money produced. Because with not so much energy, they can reap quite a lot of money.

The next reason is the absence of social sanctions from the surrounding community. So that the majority of beggars in Kampung Baru continue to work as beggars. The loss of social sanction from community for beggar activities made Kampung Baru people still continue work as beggars. Social sanctions are a tool to regulate people's behavior. Without social sanctions beggars then considered as one of the promising jobs because it can make money without having to spend a capital. Becoming beggar, who formerly despised and shameful now turned into a life choice some people [24]. Begging activities are considered as work if the social surrounding can adapt with this activities.

One form of culture is the process of habituation [10]. At first, the Kampung Baru People use begging as a means of getting income for surviving. In the next phase this activity became a habit and became part of his daily life. When the social surrounding accept this habit, it even consciously passed on to their grandchildren and neighbors by allure them to beg or telling good experiences of being beggars. The socialization process can done in two ways, namely the primary and secondary socialization [25]. At the primary socialization, beggars invite their family, take them on the streets for begging. The secondary socialization is the socialization this activity to the other. Here beggars telling good experiences of being beggars to their neighbor, so that the person is interested in following his foot steps.

E. Bad Impacts of Begging for the Life of New Villagers

The number of people living as beggars turned out have a negative impact on social life of Kampung Baru. The first impact was the laziness in the residents of Kampung Baru. The habit of begging and asking alms from others caused the residents of Kampung Baru to refuse to work hard for earn income. The lazy nature of the beggars is due a trait that only capable of thinking simple, avoid attitude of trying and just take easiest way for getting money [26].

The second bad impact is that beggars of Kampung Baru enjoy practical things. Reference [27] said that, "a practical life is a life where all activities are carried out in a fast and instant way." In the life of beggars in Kampung Baru, the majority choose to buy food from a food stall instead of cooking. Residents also prefer to buy water instead of queuing at public water facilities. The people prefer to spend their time for begging and earning money rather than working hard for cooking or queuing water.

Another bad impact is the beggars of Kampung Baru tend use their income wastefully to have fun. Waste is an act of squandering wealth that not beneficial [28]. The beggars feel that begging can obtained easy money so that they tend to fool the money away.

Begging activities that carried by almost all of Kampung Baru also makes them rarely be around the house. This cause minimal interaction between people and tend to make the people individualistic. Individualistic is an attitude of not caring about the fellow citizen and neighborhood environment [29]. According to village government officials, the residents of Kampung Baru is very individualistic because very difficult to ask for donation for village development project.

V. CONCLUSION

Based on the research, it is known that beggar in Kampung Baru have several characteristics, that is 1) female, 2) married, 3) at productive age, 4) operating in the Pandaan, Bangil and Sidoarjo regions individually, and 5) using shabby clothing at work. When they beg, they put on a pleasing face and raise their hands to attract people's compassion.

The main actors causes people Kampung Baru work as beggars cannot be separated from the history of Kampung Baru and the natural limitation. Formerly Kampung Baru used to be a place to relocate homeless people with low educational background and skills from the city. The lack of water resources in Kampung Baru also make people cannot be form agricultural and plantation businesses. Kampung Baru people that cannot able to develop productive businesses then chose to become a beggar as a means of survival.

Associated with the theory of social construction, it turns out that the community of Kampung Baru has a reason to remain a beggar. Firstly, begging is a more productive activity than unemployment. Secondly residents also remain as beggars due to lack of social sanctions. The absence of social sanctions in Kampung Baru makes the population not

ashamed if they work as beggars. The begging activity even then passed on to their descendant.

Large number of people working as beggars turned out to have a negative impact on the social life of Kampung Baru community. The negative effects are, 1) the population is lazy, 2) people likes practical things, and 3) often uses income for unproductive reason. Work as beggar in everyday up to the afternoon makes the majority of Kampung Baru residents rarely found at home. The little interaction among citizens then bring out individualist attitude among Kampung Baru people. By this individualist attitude, residents of Kampung Baru are very difficult to ask for contributions for mutual interests.

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