

Jaringan Aneuk Syuhada Aceh (JASA): Vulnerable Group in Times of Covid-19 and Disruption Era (A Study on Strategy of Ideology Preservation and Survival on Children and Widows of GAM Martyrs)

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ABSTRACT

This article talks about the existence Jaringan Aneuk Syuhada Aceh (Aneuk Syuhada Aceh Network – ASAN/JASA) group during OVID-19 pandemic and also era of disruption. Research is done in Nisam subdistrict, North Aceh regency with ethnography method and qualitative approach. Data were gathered with participatory observation technique, in-depth interview and study on related document. JASA is a community that are consisted of children and wives of martyrs involved in Gerakan Aceh Merdeka (Free Aceh Movement – FAM/GAM) who were deceased during political conflict that is still happening in Aceh. Not only is it dominated by children and wives of former GAM members; this group is also consisted of anyone with affiliation to the family with ties to GAM. As vulnerable group, JASA – without a doubt – has their own strategy of survival to preserve their passed down ideology. Preserving ideology and surviving so that it would continue to live amongst the society correlated with the ability to survive, economically and in socio-political aspect. From this research it was known that: firstly, JASA always promote themselves by contributing directly in various social events and utilize the development of informational technology as a form of “group campaign” to preserve existence; secondly JASA strengthen their affiliation with Komite Peralihan Aceh (Aceh Transitional Committee – ATC/KPA) and Aceh Party, two organizations with historical ties, as an effort to build up bargaining between the group of children-and-widows of these martyrs with local government in relations to peace compensation; and thirdly: JASA becomes one of the prioritized groups in every compensation distribution currently due to their status as vulnerable group.

Keywords: *Jaringan Aneuk Syuhada (JASA), Vulnerable Group, Existence, Covid-19*

1. INTRODUCTION

Aneuk Syuhada Network or usually known with their abbreviation JASA is an organization consisted of children and blood family of former GAM guerrillas

who died during the battle with Indonesia National Army (or known as Tentara Nasional Indonesia/TNI) during 32-years-long Aceh political conflict from 1974-2005. This organization first emerged in Samudra Pase area (in GAM territorial term) or Northern Aceh, as it

used to be one of GAM militants' main basis. In 2015, this idea originated from one of former-combatant of GAM in North Aceh, who currently acts as board of supervisors, M. Joni, who also acts as Commander-in-Chief D-IV in Pase area.

Central Board of Trustees (Dewan Pimpinan Pusat/DPP) of JASA is currently led by Bukhari, one of the children of former combatant of GAM Sagoe Raja Sabi D-IV, in Samudra Pase area, the late A. Gani Ben Ismail. JASA exists as a medium to gather children and wives of GAM's martyrs. Other than that, this organization also serves as a medium to unify all members to continue the fight, even if it's through other way, which is to facilitate and open the door towards prosperity for all children and families of former combatants. Their main priority is advocacy in education and economical welfare. In JASA's point-of-view, the gap in welfare is very visible even if the current, post-peace power elite is in the hands of former combatants. Not only that, recently a public protest happened in front of PT. PIM (Pupuk Iskandar Muda)'s office in Dewantara subdistrict, Northern Aceh regency are led by JASA in relation to welfare demands for victims of conflict [1]. In that context, the existence of JASA is manifested as a moral and material support towards former GAM members' children and families.

As a collective, JASA is very known and familiar in several areas in Aceh, especially in Northern Aceh, Eastern Aceh, the city of Langsa and Bireuen regency. The network expansion has been done since 2015 and has been expanding ever since through social events, which was linked with the involvement of several former elite figures of GAM to build communication network between government and non-government organizations.

As the world hit with COVID-19, the existence of JASA community is also impacted by "economy turbulence" as a domino effect of globalized pandemic. However, the knowledge accumulation and past experiences have made this community able to survive with all their might. This study is based on the effort to understand deeper about JASA community's survival strategy in an effort to preserve their ideology and to survive during pandemic. Other than as collective, JASA can also be seen as a socio-political phenomenon. They are able to socially transform in order to preserve their struggle ideology as *gareh seunambong* (conector) with different way than what their parents used to do; from armed movement into democracy movement.

2. JASA AND SOCIAL TRANSFORMATION

According to Republic of Indonesia's Law number 17 in year of 2013 in regards to Civil Organization, they are defined as organizations that are established and formed by civil society freely based on similarity of aspirations, wills, needs, interests, activities and goals to participate in development to achieve the goals of United Nation Republic of Indonesia (NKRI). Further

into the Law, it also mentions the functions of civil organization as mediums to:

1. Distribute activities with the interests of their members and/or organization.
2. Guide and develop the members to achieve the organization's goals.
3. Extend the people's aspirations
4. Empower the people
5. Fulfil social services
6. Include people's participations to maintain, guide and strengthen unity of the nation.
7. Maintain and care of norms, values and ethics of livelihood amongst people within the nation.

As a collective, civil organizations are created willingly on the basis of ideology, profession or goals similarity that function as a civil participatory medium in national development. As communal creatures, humans tend to form social organization to achieve certain goals that they cannot achieve on their own [2]. With that, in recent democracy era, the existence of JASA has a strategic function as a pioneer of change in bringing socio-political and economic transformation in Aceh as a whole.

A massive point in political and cultural transformation happened after the Helsinki Negotiation in 2005 between GAM and Indonesia government. The peace treaty changer the social, political, economic and cultural constellation in Aceh. Politically, this condition is a gateway towards political opportunity both for Acehnese to contribute as part of the state within democracy. In political participation for example, Aceh has a permit to found local parties as political vehicle. Before the political vehicles were formed, to accommodate the political rights of former GAM militants and Acehnese in general, the voting of head of the area post- Helsinki Memorandum of Understanding permit individual or independent way. Such transformation was able to resolved the sources of social and political conflicts and able to changed negative powers and war into positive socio-political power [3]. They emerged from former GAM warriors, activists and GAM diasporic leaders from outside of Aceh. If before they were thought as actors that created instability and chaos, then post Helsinki's Memorandum of Understanding, they are understood as an actor of change filling up strategic positions. [4] called them as strategic groups with their own function in political development, conflict situation, reformation or revolution in society. The existence of JASA in the context of their link with GAM group create a genealogy and ideology correlation. For that, its birth as a civil organization can also be said helped by political transformation.

The unity of children and wives of former, late combatants has been an important mark in the effort to understand and utilize the peace. They are building affiliation with former GAM members that currently exist in various structures. There is bargaining power that can be used as a strategy to continue previous ideology. Transformation creates a civilization loaded

with agendas of change, be it analytically, historically and practically [5].

3. STRATEGIES TO PRESERVE IDEOLOGY AND SURVIVE IN ERA OF DISRUPTION AND COVID-19

According to [6], era of disruption creates a lot of foundational changers, be it in economy, technology and political sectors. This also happened with the emergence of disease that currently has not cure, COVID-19. Both of these things caused JASA community to keep up for their existence survival, especially with people from lower-middle class as JASA community's base member, which cause them to innovate as a necessity to survive and preserve their organization. A good organization has to create a different organizational culture and has additional values apart from other organizations [7].

There are several things that JASA community do to survive until now. First, JASA always contribute in social events. It is done as an effort of socialization and group campaign. They created programs that support welfare of all children and descendants of former GAM members while also complying with the laws in Indonesia. Within this context, based on the motivations and the reasons behind the existence of JASA community, that are: 1) The slow growth of economic development and increase of needs especially during COVID-19 pandemic; 2) The rising consciousness through resistance movements towards ruling former GAM members; and 3) The appearance of GAM struggle's ideology reconstruction discourse that is currently slowly fading away. For this, the existence of JASA is needed as a balancer. Which means, JASA exists to remind the rulers who are mostly former GAM members to fulfill the welfare and social justice for all people within their ruling times. Other than that, JASA also has other goals and interests to differ their vision and mission with other ex-GAM organizations.

Secondly, JASA strengthen affiliation with Aceh Transitional Committee (Komite Peralihan Aceh/KPA) and Aceh Party, two organizations with historical ties, as an effort to build up bargaining between the group of children-and-widows of these martyrs with local government in relations of peace compensations so that JASA community can positioned themselves as one of the priority groups in every compensation distributions since they are still considered as vulnerable group until recently. In COVID-19 times, the wheel of JASA organization is a little bit stuck due to economic effect, where so many agendas cannot be properly maintained. So many social activities agenda are halted unlike past years.

According to reports from Organization for Economic Co-orporation and Development, COVID-19 pandemic is able to affect the economy both in supply and demand [8]. The increase of positive cases of COVID-19 and the legalization of Government Regulation number 21 in year of 2020 in regards to Large-Scaled Social Distancing (Pembatasan Sosial

Berskala Besar/PSBB) that was meant to limit the movement on people and goods. These certainly created significant effects on JASA's activities. To answer that JASA applied new habit adaptation as a survival strategy during pandemic by focusing on economic activities of its members through coordinated activities and bargaining with government for a chance to receive fun for their micro, small and medium enterprises (UMKM) from the government.

Thirdly, building communication and the ability to adapt. Communication as an effort to "the deliberate or accidental transfer of meaning" [4] becomes a bridge in building relations and expanding network. The success of adaptation, even, is directly affected by the communication scheme in that organization. It functions as a way or strategy to survive and everyone – surely – always try to adapt to their new environment [9] by involving every dimensions of ability that they have to build interaction. According to Durkheim, new social interaction will form as the number of the people increase and the connection between people and groups also increasing. This condition always increases cooperation and new ideas within a society [10] that triggers social changes.

If we were to refer to the thoughts of Sukmana [11], social changes can happen due to internal and external factors that can be summarized as several factors, which are interaction with outside culture, the increase of society's quality through educational system, open social stratification, high appreciation towards other culture, a society's social heterogeneity, dissatisfaction among society of a certain system, strong technological intervention and globalization and increasing mobility among the people.

4. CONCLUSION

JASA as a young organization must be able to carry themselves to achieve their goals. The development in their system and capacity as an organization among their members are important because of the implication towards strong solidarity system. The similarity in ideals, interests and goals becomes their main asset in the preservation and maintenance of their ideology ad organization so it would not disappear with time and their goals of economic welfare and justice would not be something so impossible to achieve. Welfare will not be "the moon "desired by the night owls if the solidarity is skin deep among members of JASA.

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