

# Conquering Covid-19 Through the Local Activity of Village Communities in Central Java

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## ABSTRACT

The coronavirus disease-19 (covid-19) pandemic has changed the life order of the world community, one of which is people in Indonesia. People feel the impact of the influx of coronavirus in Indonesia from various aspects of life both economically, socially, and culturally. In Central Java, many rural communities still view the coronavirus as a type of foreign disease outside its territory, although the villagers also admit the coronavirus has a rapid and massif impact on relationships and social spaces so that it must be able to adapt to this change. This study aims to look at the knowledge system of villagers in Central Java about the coronavirus-19 and their efforts in dealing with and anticipating its spread. This research used a qualitative approach by taking 3 (three) cases in different villages. The data collection method is done by using the participant observation method, in-depth interview, and document study, while the data analysis method is done by triangulation of source and method.

**Keywords:** Covid 19, Villager, System Knowledge, Anticipation efforts.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

The coronavirus pandemic is threatening countries in the world today including Indonesia. The rapid spread of coronavirus in several countries has caused new changes and problems. Policies in dealing with Covid-19 become the new work of the government that must be immediately established and implemented by the whole community[1], [2]. Covid-19 is a single-strain RNA virus-positive, encapsulated, and untenanted. Coronavirus-19 is heat sensitive and can be activated with disinfectants. Symptoms resulting from coronavirus-19 infection can be mild, moderate, and severe symptoms. The main symptoms are fever (38°C), cough, and difficulty breathing[3], [4]. The symptoms and effects of coronavirus-19 depend on the endurance of a person's body, the most terrible thing is the fact that this virus can cause death and spread very quickly[5]. Coronavirus-19 was first detected in Depok and has now spread to various parts of Indonesia.

Central Java province became the fourth province to contribute a positive case of coronavirus in Indonesia. The first place was DKI Jakarta (84,704), East Java (46,907), West Java (27,122), Central Java (26,401), and South Sulawesi (16,738) per case calculation in October 2020[6]. The spread of coronavirus is not only in the area of major cities but has entered the district and even villages. This happened because during the

pandemic many nomads from the city returned to their hometowns. Therefore, the villagers need to act vigilantly to prevent the transmission of coronavirus-19 infection more. It has been widely reported related to the coronavirus and the attitudes that must be taken in dealing with it by the government through television broadcasts. The understanding of the villagers about coronavirus-19 is very important for the success of suppressing the spread of transmission[7]–[9]. As in Balinese people to achieve Rabies Free Bali, public knowledge becomes very important related to rabies disease. Efforts to suppress rabies cases are vaccinated and eliminated in dogs and cats, but human knowledge of rabies is very important about how awareness of attitudes will be taken when dealing with this disease[10]. Likewise, rural communities in Central Java have various ways of dealing with the spread of covid-19. One of the steps taken by the Central Java government is to implement the *Jogo Tonggo* program where people monitor each other's movements of Covid-19 in their area and help each other if someone is affected by this virus[11], [12]. However, local people also have their own way of dealing with the spread of covid-19 based on their own local habits and wisdom.

## 2. RESEARCH METHODS

This research uses qualitative methods that produce descriptive data conducted to find, develop, and prove a certain knowledge so that in turn it can be used to understand, solve, and anticipate problems. Data collection techniques used by the author are observation, interview, and documentation. The author directly jumped into the field to obtain research data. This research was conducted in three (3) different places in Java, precisely in Lebeng Village, Sumpiuh District, Banyumas Regency, Siwarak Village, Karangreja District, Purbalingga Regency, and Sindangjaya Village, Ketanggungan District, Brebes Regency. The focus of this research leads to how the villagers perceive the covid-19 outbreak, especially in central Java. The data source of this research was obtained through primary and secondary data sources. The primary data was obtained by the author through the subject and research informant. The informants in this study consisted of primary informants and supporting informants. Besides, this research also uses secondary data sources derived from literature such as journal articles, and books, and other secondary data sources such as photos.

## 3. DISCUSSION

### 3.1. Villagers' Perception of Covid-19

Siwarak Village is a village located in Purbalingga Regency. Siwarak villagers consider the presence of coronavirus is a disease that is only found in urban areas. So the coronavirus pandemic is not a scary thing. According to Stephen P. Robbins in Maropen[13], perception is a process by which individuals organize and interpret or interpret their senses in order to give meaning to their environment. Siwarak villagers think that living in the village is the safest place and avoids all kinds of disease outbreaks. Coronavirus entered Indonesia in early 2020, which then increased cases of positive patients spread to various regions in Indonesia per week even per day. The government gave an appeal to overcome the coronavirus by enacting various policies such as social distancing, physical distancing, appeals with a hashtag at home only, and maintaining cleanliness both personal, family, and the environment. Although the government's appeal has been socialized in the mass media, Siwarak villagers are still doing their usual activities. People still stay out of the house to work or do the usual activities. Siwarak village people mostly have a livelihood as farmers, traders, and others who work wandering. It is certainly necessary to educate the

public about the coronavirus intensively that the coronavirus can not be underestimated its existence.

Almost similar to the one in Siwarak Village The perception of the community in Lebeng Village, Sumpiuh district of Banyumas Regency of Central Java regarding the covid 19 outbreak, tends not to pay much attention. Based on the data found in the village youth can be concluded, basically the residents of Lebeng Village Especially Rt 05 / Rw 02 was not too "geger" (excited) about what the coronavirus is, although indeed the majority already know it through the news on television, as well as word of mouth. This is proven by the many citizens who do their usual activities. Some even don't wear masks at all when they leave the house, not many of them but there are still people who behave as if nothing happened.

Slightly different perception of covid19 in Sindangjaya village, Brebes regency. The majority of its citizens have jobs as onion farmers and some who travel to open businesses or work as employees in the City. Although working as a farmer information related to the coronavirus has been well received by the public. There are people who understand the coronavirus with the virus from China that brings difficulties to life because the work or business of relatives in the city becomes constrained. Besides, the covid19 pandemic is also the cause of the increase in the price of shallot seeds that cause farmers difficulty in gardening. Sindangjaya people pay more attention to economic risks compared to health risks that will occur due to covid19. They assume that the countryside has a remote location so that the covid19 pandemic will not enter the environment.

### 3.2. Village Community Activities during the Covid-19 Pandemic

After the positive case of corona patients in Purbalingga district, siwarak villagers have started to feel worried about the presence of the virus. As of April 26, 2020, the number of ODP reached 2498, PDP amounted to 145 people, and 25 positive cases (corona.purbalinggakab.go.id). People's concern is higher when they know that one of the villages in Purbalingga is Gunung Wuled Village, all of its communities have ODP status so that all members of the community do self-quarantine in their homes and as villages that are in total lockdown. The existence of this makes the people of Siwarak village have begun to fear the spread of the coronavirus. People have started to reduce their daily activities. People's concerns are growing when Karangreja sub-district has been declared a red zone for covid-19. The environment has been greatly deserted by the hustle and bustle of

community activities. Many people have stayed at home to keep from getting coronavirus. It has begun to realize the importance of using masks on the go, diligent hand washing, as well as the use of hand sanitizer. No wonder that since the pandemic period the public's attention in terms of cleanliness, especially hands is increasing. Public awareness to wash hands reached 85 percent (tribunnews.com).

Unlike the Siwarak villagers, Lebeng village activities are generally still running, as usual, this happens not without reason, in addition to the innate nature of the village community that can be said to be "ndableg" or "ngeyel" and "indirect believe", the precepts of the community are still in a fairly safe area (green zone) is used by the community to carry out its activities, as usual, even traditional markets are still crowded with bargaining activities.

Although there are people who know but do not have the awareness to take precautions or physical distancing. Some residents are aware and take precautions, but by being forced to do their work outside the home, because they are not civil servants, and will get nothing if they do not work. The majority of Lebeng villagers are rice farmers, be it, laborers or landowner farmers, of course in Rt 05 / Rw 02 the majority of its citizens work as farmers, also some work in plantations, civil servants, traders, tailors, and craftsmen. In the current condition, a person who works as an employee does follow the government's advice well with "stay at home" but this is not so done by residents who work like farmers, or traders. They must continue to do their jobs for the survival of their families.

Similar conditions also occur in Sindangjaya communities, they continue to do activities such as before the covid19 pandemic except for students and teachers. Farmers go to work in the garden, shop at vegetable vendors, buy food or snacks at street vendors, don't have hand sanitizer, don't wear masks when working. This activity occurs because of habits and because when working in the garden the farmers have their own gardens so that there will not be a crowd. But health awareness has been possessed by them by always wearing masks when traveling outside the village that allows them to meet strangers. Activities that are often carried out only in the rounds of houses, neighborhoods / neighbors and gardens show that the people of Sindangjaya are less likely to be infected with covid19. However, crowds that allow contagion are also inevitable. This crowd usually occurs in public places in the village, such as shops, mosques, mosques, schools, and madrasahs. Therefore, these public places

need to be sterile to be clean of the virus and can stop the spread of covid19.

### ***3.3. Efforts of Villagers in The Prevention and Handling of Covid-19 Virus***

Community activities in Siwarak Village are stalled. People are afraid of the coronavirus that has entered the subdistrict. Community activities are virtually diverted. Many members of the public lost their jobs during the pandemic. However, farmers continue to carry out their activities to go to the rice fields to see and take care of their crops. Although the time is shorter than before the establishment of Karangreja Subdistrict is a red zone. The impact that occurs during the pandemic is certainly very felt by the community both economically, socially and culturally. People now use online media more to interact with other members of the community. People are experiencing a decline in income and even lost sources of income. In an effort to overcome the impacts that occur the community is working in various ways to overcome the spread of the coronavirus. Siwarak village government conducts various preventive measures such as disinfectant spraying, the establishment of a covid task force, the creation of covid-19 emergency response posts, and preparing a place for self-quarantine for travelers who are directly ODP status. The community has also begun to comply with the government's call to carry out activities by health protocols. Siwarak village has the potential of many young people and active activities. The youth of the village unite by creating a youth group that aims to minimize community unrest. The youth conduct social activities such as fundraising, creating entertainment content, and distributing BANSOS to the villagers. This is based on the needs of people who need educational media about Covid-19 and basic needs.

On the other hand, Lebeng, whose people seem "indifferent" to the covid - 19 outbreak, has a culture of cooperation that is quite good, because indeed the sense of kinship with one another is very strong. Besides, there are quite a lot of residents aged 16-30 years and during the Covid19 outbreak, young people who had migrated, whether they were studying or working in the city, returned to their homes in the village. So that currently, the number of youth in the village is quite large, moments like this can be used if you can collect them and create a movement to socialize awareness and prevention activities of Covid-19. This can be a solution to cover previous problems.

One form of the idea, a preventive effort in collaboration with tailors in the village, namely

villagers who work as tailors produce cloth masks, by adjusting materials and rules according to the standard protocol covid-19 in the manufacture. This is done closing the current scarcity of masks. Considering the current masks are very rare and expensive.

The same thing also happened in sindangjaya village community, the majority of which are shallot farmers and have chemical drug spraying equipment that is commonly used to treat crops from annoying pests. Spraying becomes the skill of farmers that can be done to carry out activities to prevent the spread of covid-19. However, the old farmers are busy working in the garden, so that the young people become the right agent to carry out activities to prevent the spread of covid-19.

After being recorded, there were 11 youths who were willing to volunteer in the prevention of the spread of coronavirus in Sindangjaya Village. The funds used in preventing the spread of covid-19 in public facilities in Sindangjaya Village are the result of joint contributions and grants from one of the volunteers. Based on the results of identification of problems, potentials, and needs of the people of Sindangjaya Village, the activities that will be carried out by the youth are related to spraying disinfectants and distribution of handwashing soap in public places. In this study, the chosen public place is mushola because it is usually used more often for community worship. in the month of Ramadan and the time of activity is welded ahead of Ramadan.

Prevention of the spread of coronavirus is spraying disinfectants on mosques as well as the distribution of hand soap. Hand washing soap is made by young men using thinly sliced bar soap and then mixed with water and used bottles as a container. Disinfectant spraying activities and distribution of hand soap liquid in mosques carried out ba'da dzuhur around 13.00 WIB. Several mosques from three hamlets namely parenca, dayeuh, and long sand shamans in Sindangjaya Village are targeted for disinfectant spraying and hand washing soap. Each mosque gets spraying on parts that are often touched by the community such as door handles, windows, glass, and floors. Place ablution and toilet given a bottle of hand soap to clean hands after defecation or just to clean hands. The implementation starts from the north end of the village and ends at the southern end of the village.

#### **4. CONCLUSION**

Public perception of covid-19 is the decisive thing, how people think to understand covid-19, and how to

anticipate the spread of covid-19. Javanese people, especially in rural areas, understand the covid-19 pandemic as an outbreak of disease originating from China that occurs in urban areas. The villagers still feel safe and have not taken seriously the news of covid-19 that has been broadcast on various television news. Community activities are still running, as usual, many things affect it, be it demands that are economically motivated, or socio-cultural.

Those who work as farmers, tailors, and traders still do their work outdoors. Much different from government employees who are required to do work from home. The use of masks has not been done evenly and continuously by the community when doing activities outside the house.

Although the culture in each region varies, there are similarities in efforts to deal with the covid-19 outbreak, namely the role of a youth who is the dominant majority. Social activities such as fundraising, creating appeal and solicitation content, distributing BANSOS to villagers, spraying disinfectants, to various creative, innovative, and solution ideas owned by youth, making local wisdom of each region a weapon of village communities to combat Covid-19.

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