

Knowledge-Based Economy Development of Jamaah

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Abstract—This article is intended to analyze the knowledge-based economy development of mosque jamaah, by conducting counseling activity to improve their knowledge, as an effort to develop economy of jamaah. Knowledge is one of the most important factors of society economy development effort, especially for the targeted jamaah in this activity. The objects of this research are 30 farmers, which also act as jamaah in a number of mosques in Karamatwangi Village, Cisurupan District, Garut Regency. Counseling activity was conducted through lecture and discussion. Analysis tool utilized in this research to measure the impact of this activity was pre-test and post-test. Based on this activity, we revealed that the main weakness of these farmers who are also part of jamaah in the effort to build their economy is the lack of knowledge on their farming activity on a narrow scope or agribusiness on a broader scope. We also revealed that before the counseling activity, the farmers level of knowledge was needed to be improved. After the counseling activity was conducted by providing these farmers, which also act as part of jamaah, with related and required theories, there is a significant improvement, which is expected to transform into vital force in building the economy of jamaah.

Keywords—farmers, counseling, knowledge, economy of jamaah

I. INTRODUCTION

Rural economy development is an interesting topic to be researched further and should receive world's attention. This also applies on Indonesian rural economy as an agricultural country rich with resources either natural, human, and man-made resources. Rural economy problems on a narrow scope are also interesting to be researched [1], as presented in Indonesian rural areas such as Karamatwangi Village in Garut Regency.

People in Karamatwangi village are mostly work as farmers, which is in correlation with the abundant natural resources' availability. In this village, there are 13 Jami' mosques and most of these farmers are registered as the mosques' jamaah. The farmers are regularly meet in mosque during praying times.

Economic problems regularly faced by the farmers in this village are related with the necessity of knowledge improvement, especially the ones related with their daily

profession, namely knowledge on farm and agribusiness managements [2]. Based on that, this study is intended to analyze the effort to develop knowledge-based economy of jamaah through counseling. Therefore, knowledge has become one of the most important keys in the development of rural society economy, also for the jamaah as target audience in this activity.

II. RESEARCH METHODS

This community service activity is conducted by providing counsels towards the targeted audiences. The targeted audiences in this activity are 30 farmers, which are also act as jamaah of a number of Jami' mosques in Karamatwangi Village, Cisurupan Subdistrict, Garut Regency. Counseling activity was conducted by lecture and discussion, in order to improve knowledge of jamaah regarding farm management, capital, finance, and agribusiness management. The analysis tool utilized to measure the impact of this counseling activity is pre-test questionnaire to analyze the initial knowledge of the farmers, and post-test questionnaire to measure knowledge level of the farmers after the activity was conducted.

III. KNOWLEDGE AS THE KEY TO ECONOMIC SUCCESS

Farmers response regarding increased risks on farm sector by applying technology innovation [3,4] surely shows knowledge development and advance. However, for small farmers with lower economy level, these innovations are quite difficult to be achieved that they are forced to maintain traditional ways to survive. These farmers are really close to minimum consumption requirements (MCR), which shows minimum food consumption availability determined by nature (these group of farmers are further mentioned as Farmer A). On the other side, there are farmers that are more open to various innovation and changes suggestions than Farmer A. The consequence is that Farmer A will always be inside poverty cycle or economic hardships. Farmer B which is closer to minimum desirable consumption level (MDCL) shows that they are more open to innovation and changes suggestion than Farmer A.

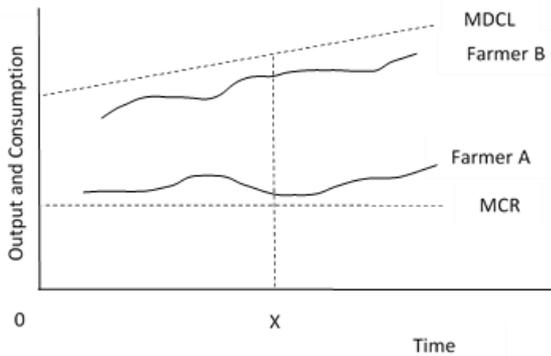


Fig. 1. Small Farmer Responses on Risk: Why Innovation and Change Should Be Avoided Sometimes [5]

Knowledge improvement is one of the key factors that can improve farmers success to develop their economic level, especially when they are faced with rapid technological advance and development that require higher level of knowledge. One way to improve the farmers' level of knowledge is by conducting counseling activity [6], especially regarding specific farming knowledge. Based on that, to optimize the result of the activity, the subjects that provide counseling for the farmers should possess adequate and suitable knowledge that is required by these farmers. Counseling can be conducted by the government, academics, and other relevant personnel. Based on that, universities as one of related stakeholders should provide the required knowledge and attention.

The effectiveness of trainings on farmers to improve their capabilities on a number of aspects has been reported by several researchers and counselors. For example, a counseling activity practiced by Angela et al. [7] and Mitchell et al. [8] which mentioned that the effectiveness of training activities on farmers regarding plant diseases. By providing the necessary knowledge, the farmers are able to perform better, to produce more, and to improve their own prosperity. However, the activity does not mention any marketing and distribution aspects in the process and the content. Another example of counseling activities on farmers is the one performed by Zhou [9] that emphasized on the improvement of cultural capital to increase or optimize farmers capacity both capital and ability. This example is also lack of operational aspects.

Counseling materials should be highly related and passed by relevant counselors with great understanding on the materials. With this counseling activity for the farmers which also act as jamaah of mosques in the area, we expect to be able to improve their knowledge and enhance their economy development level. Trainings or counseling regarding technological capabilities is emphasized in this activity as novelty provided towards the approach of similar community service concepts. The lack of counseling program that points on the importance of operational aspects such as distribution and marketing, will surely put this activity in the frontline of

the counseling efforts conducted to improve farmers capabilities.

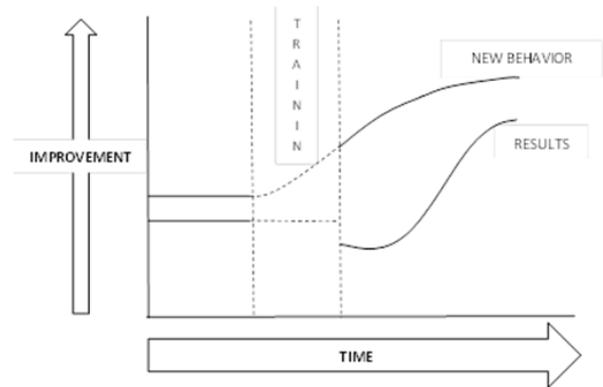


Fig. 2. Rockham model (results/ Impact), Skill Training: What Should Happen. Source: Reprinted from N. Rockham, Training and Development Journal, American Society for Training and Development, 1979. Reprinted with permission. All rights reserved. [10]

This counseling activity is an important mean to provide knowledge improvement towards the farmers, so that they are able to utilize the provided knowledge to response changes and innovation development [11,12] and finally produce a significant contribution towards the farmers economy development effort.

IV. DISCUSSION

The people in rural areas are mostly work as farmers [13]. However, there is a similar problem faced by farmers which is the necessity of knowledge improvement regarding farming business, not only the ones related with farming production, but also on the post-production aspect related with distribution and marketing [14].

Based on the field preliminary observation, there are a number of problems related with farmers that are also jamaah in mosques in Karamatwangi Village. The problems are as follows; (1) the necessity to improve knowledge on farming business; (2) the needs to enhance capital strength; and (3) bargaining power improvement.

These three problems should be solved immediately to improve the farmers' condition. Related with these problems, improvement efforts on a number of aspects has been conducted, namely (1) farming business knowledge [15], which in this case, Unisba conducted counseling activity for the farmers which are also act as mosque jamaah in Karamatwangi village, especially in the field of farming business management, capital, finance, and agribusiness management; (2) capital enhancement [16], which actually have been implemented by the government with the issuance of Mesra (Masyarakat Ekonomi Sejahtera) program that enables farmers to access capital assistance through mosques, and (3) bargaining power improvement [17] that can be enabled by the

society through the formation of mosque cooperative both on the on-farm and off-farm aspects of farming business, and also by enhancing their professionalism in conducting their business. Through cooperative, these farmers can develop a better bargaining power including the ones with the market.

The targeted audience in this activity is the farmers in Karamatwangi village which also act as members of mosque prosperity boards in a number of mosques in this village. the effectiveness of this activity will be measured based on post-activity questionnaire and open discussion with the targeted audience. Based on field study conducted by academics, we acknowledged that the farmers' knowledge on farm management, capital, and agribusiness management in this village needs to be improved. Based on that, through counseling we indicated that the main weakness of these farmers in building their economy is knowledge [18] regarding farming activity on a narrow scope and agribusiness knowledge on a broader scope.

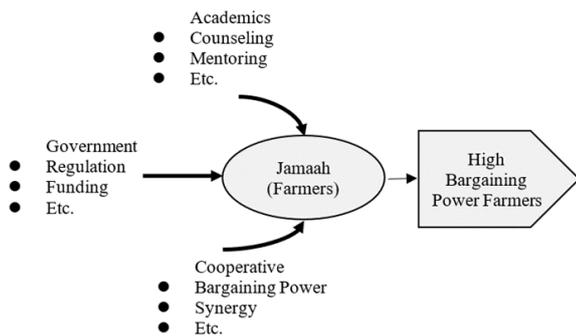


Fig. 3. The role of government, academics, and cooperative in farmer empowerment effort.

Knowledge is an important key to drive jamaah economy, which also farmers in Karamatwangi village. Based on the result of this counseling activity, we acknowledged that before the activity was conducted towards 30 farmers, based on pre-test questionnaires, their knowledge regarding business management, capital, and finance is at 35 at the lowest and 65 at the highest with the average of 60 (medium). Based on that, an improvement of knowledge is imperative. After the conduction of counseling activity, through post-test questionnaire we acknowledged that the lowest score is at 55 and the highest is at 85, with average scoring at 75 (decent). Farmers' knowledge improvement is vital because to ensure their successes, both on on-farm and off-farm aspects, are determined by how far great the level of knowledge owned by these farmers to support their daily economic activities.

V. CONCLUSION

There is one main problem faced by the farmers which also act as jamaah to build their economy, which is the urgency of knowledge improvement, both farming knowledge on a narrow scope and agribusiness management on a broader scope that includes business capitalization. Based on that, a counseling is required to improve the farmers' knowledge. Based on the

comparison of pre and post activity results, we indicate an improvement of knowledge that can be made as meaningful knowledge provision to enhance economy development of jamaah. Based on our counseling activity, we indicated that the activity was able to improve knowledge on farming business, the importance of capital strength and bargaining power enhancement. However, we are still unable to practically prove this finding, that is why further activity to measure practical capability is suggested in future counseling activities with similar audience.

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