



Developing Muslim Economy Through the Environmental Economy in the Perspective of *Maslaha*

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Abstract. Environmental crises resulted from economic development has become global concerns, including Indonesia, as Muslim majority country even though Islam encourages societies to take advantages maximally from their environment in the good ways and modesty. Meanwhile, Jamaah Tani Muhammadiyah experienced economic crises resulted from climate change, limited market access, poor land quality and water source. This social and normative research was conducted to find out how the Muslim peasant dealt with the problems, the advantages from their problem solving and to validate *maslaha* (public good) in the environmental economic practice of peasant economic development by interviews and observations. The results showed that there are three ways of taking advantages from land and water sources for their economic development. First, they revitalized the quality and quantity of the rice fields through organic rice cultivations. Second, they limited water exploitation to one of seven water sources to protect the quality and the quantity of mineral water. Third, they organized the plantation periods and applied updated technology to maximize harvest and stabilize rice reserve. Therefore, based on the advantages of those three methods it was concluded as *maslaha mursala* based on *maslaha* qualifications and from classification, application and theological reasons.

Keywords: *maslaha* · environment · economy

1 Introduction

Studies on Islam and the environment have been widely discussed in order to respond to environmental crises that occur in various parts of the world. Mawil Izzi Dien discussed how Islam laid the foundation of Islamic paradigm about the use of the environment, especially water, theoretically, and how countries with Muslim majority practices it in overcoming water problems in people's lives.¹ Meanwhile, Anna G Ade wrote Muslim

¹ Mawil Izzi Dien, Islam and the Environment: theory and practice, Journal of Beliefs & Values, Vol. 18, No. 1, 1997. Pp. 47–57.

environmentalism in Muslim majority countries from Islamic perspectives and practices.² Differently, Mohd Zuhdi bin Marzuki studied the Islamic ethics for sustainable forestry especially in the area of harim and hima.³ Meanwhile, Islamic and environmental studies in Indonesia were connected with economic development and environmental degradation. For example, the amount of pollution due to emissions of factories and motor vehicles⁴, manufacturing, development, and transportation.⁵ It is proven that the environmental pollution index based on data from the Ministry of Environment and Forestry in 2018 shows that the water quality index fell from 54 to 52, air from 84 to 80 and forest coverage was reduced from 60 to 59 compared to 2016.⁶ Another study from Anna G Ade shows that Indonesian Muslim society introduces and internalizes Islamic teachings regarding ethics towards the environment through proselytizing.⁷

In fact Indonesia, which has a population of over 250 million people with a Muslim majority, has its own challenges to maintain a balance between the need for access to the environment and maintaining its quality to remain as good as taught by Islam. This is because on the one hand Islam teaches to maintain the environment and make use of the environment in moderation as said in QS al A'raf verse 56 and verse 31. On the other hand, the nature of people's dependence on nature tends not to be followed by an attitude of civility and preservation of local wisdom that greatly respects the environment. If it is traced, Indonesia is very rich in narratives of myths created by indigenous elders in order to protect the environment from damage and extinction. For example, the myth of the big tree has a lot of its patrons, the dense forest is scary because some are lost or never return after entering the forest, etc. Islam also creates similar symbols by giving warnings in the form of threats and rewards for those who do good on earth, such as the reward of heaven, full of enjoyment for those who do good deeds in the QS Lukman verse 8, mercy for those who do not do mischief on earth in the QS al A'raf verse 56, as well as a form of dislike of Allah and is considered part of the shaitan for the excess in consumption contained in QS al A'raf verses 27 and 31.⁸

The purpose of the symbolization in the commandments and prohibitions in the above explanation is aimed at maintaining religious purposes (maqasid sharia) in maintaining the balance of ecosystem interactions.⁹ Maqasid sharia means to take advantages and

² Anna G, Ade, *Muslim Environmentalism: Religious and Social Foundations*, New York: Columbia University Press, 2019.

³ Mohd Zuhdi bin Marzuki, *The Practice of Islamic Environmental Ethics: A Case Study of Harim and hima*, Dissertation, Department of Theology, Religious and Islamic Studies University of Wales Lampeter, 2009.

⁴ M. Irsyam Ilham, *Economic Development and Environmental Degradation in Indonesia: Panel Data Analysis*, *Journal Economy and Studies Development*, Vol. 22 No. 2 Year 2021.

⁵ Victor Pirmana dkk, *Environmental Cost in Indonesia Spillover Effect Between Consumption and Production*, *Frontier in Sustainability*, September 2021, Vol. 2.

⁶ M. Irsyam Ilham, *Economic Development and Environmental Degradation in Indonesia: Panel Data Analysis*, *Journal Economy and Studies Development*, Vol. 22 No. 2 Year 2021.

⁷ Anna G Ade,

⁸ Sabaruddin, dkk, *Islam and Milieu Live*, Central Kalimantan: LPTQ Central Kalimantan, 2017.

⁹ Government department Milieu Live than PP Muhammad, *Theology Milieu Live*, Deputy Communication and Empowerment Ministry Society Milieu Live Work with Management Muhammadiyah Center, Jakarta: 2011.

to avoid destruction or could be called as *maslaha*.¹⁰ Studies on the maintenance of religious purposes may vary according to Islamic jurists, but in this article the author focuses only on *maslahah al Ghazali* because he is one of the leading figures in this theory. This theory requires four things for a religious practice to fall into the category of *maslahah*, namely that it must be in accordance with the purpose of *shara'*, be *qat'i* or close to *qat'i*, be *daruri* or approaching *daruri*, and be *kulli* or next to *kulli*.¹¹

In making ends meet, Gempol farmers also experienced the challenges of the economic crisis. Among the problems they were worried about are the development of the mineral water industry would threaten the springs of local communities, the ability of farmers to access markets was still limited, crop yields were unable to support the economic needs of farmers, the soil health crisis would be even worse if there was no change in attitudes in their management, and the presence of farmers or their families who suffered from several diseases that were known to be due to unhealthy consumption patterns of the community.¹²

These various issues then built awareness of the *Jamaah Tani Muhammadiyah Gempol* community which departed from his reflection on natural laws and Islamic teachings which they believed to change their life patterns in interacting with the environment, especially in increasing the production of healthy and environmentally friendly food with different methods of managing land and springs. They adopted organic farming procedures and managed springs centrally in BUMDes, a small enterprise owned and managed by village. Based on the problems faced and the awareness of farmers to make these changes, this article was aimed at discussing the way Muslim farmers in coping with their economic and environmental problems, the benefits obtained by these farmers from changes in land and water use, as well as the basis for land and water use carried out by farmers in the perspective of *maslaha*.

2 Method

This article is written based on the results of field research with a social and normative approaches where the data was obtained from interviews and observations of the *Muhammadiyah Farmer Pilgrim community-JATAM* in Gempol Village, Karanganom District, Klaten Regency, Central Java. The *JATAM* community, which is active in carrying out organic farming activities, amounts to around 35 farmers but only 3 representatives from the marketing working group, harvest working group, and fertilizer working group were interviewed. The goal is to find data according to the data needs of this study. Interviews are conducted in depth and repeatedly in different times to test the validity of the data obtained. Observational data was obtained from observations of the life of the *JATAM*

¹⁰ Ghofat Sabina, Theory Maqaid Shariah deep Islamic law, *Great Sultan*, Vol XLIV No. 118 June – August 2009.

¹¹ Al Ghazali, *Mustashfa*, Vol 1, pp 282 in Akbar Sharif and Ridzwan Ahmad Concept Maslahat and Mafsadat according to Imam al-Ghazali, *Tsaqafah: Journal Civilization Islamic*, Vol. 13, No. 2, November 2017, 353–368, and in Ali Muhtarom, Concept Ta'arud an-In The to the *maslahah al Ghazali*, *To the-Murabbi: Journal Islamic Religious Education*, Vol 4 Number 1 Year 2018.

¹² Data Interview 19 July 2019 of Gempol.

community in the process of managing agricultural land and springs for several periods of time in Gempol Village. Interview and observation data are classified into several categories according to the formulation of the problem that will be compared with the concept of *maslaha* and the condition of *maslaha*.

3 Result and Discussion

In fact, as an agricultural village with an area of agricultural land reaching 120 hectares and 90 hectares of rice farmland, Gempol needs a balance with the number of farmers who in 2018 only amounted to 600 farmers. About 44 people as organic farmers in 2015 which increased when compared to 2010 where organic farmers were only 5 people, as beginners.¹³ While the amount of organic agricultural land was only 11 hectares out of a total of 120 hectares with 37 organic farmers in 2020 and finally in 2022 organic farmers were no more than 35 farmers with a land area of less than 10 hectares. Nevertheless it is worth being grateful that the number of crops increased by the support of the weather and the latest technologies obtained from the agricultural service. This organic farmer named himself *Jamaah Tani Muhammadiyah* or known as *JATAM*.¹⁴

JATAM community conducted three ways of taking advantages from land and water for economic benefit. First, the revitalization of agricultural land was carried out in accordance with organic farming certification standards, namely restoring the health condition of the soil that was originally below pH 5 to above pH 7 so that it was ready for organic cultivation. In addition, what needs to be considered is the use of organic fertilizers made by the fertilizer working group and planting seeds from seeding carried out by the seedling working group. Then, the process of its watering was regulated by the irrigation working group. Second, the regulation of the utilization of springs that was centralized with a focus on one spring to be flowed as irrigation, flowed to the houses of gempol villagers, and sold in limited quantities. Third, the use of System of Rice Intensification (SRI) technology in growing rice was objected to increase the number of harvests and regulate the planting schedule was to avoid damage to rice due to too long storage.¹⁵

The efforts of gempol farmers in revitalizing the environment, especially in the context of improving the farmer economy, show that there is a change in the existence of the environment in Gempol village. The findings from the observations and interviews that have been carried out have obtained three main advantages or benefits. Among them are the production of healthier rice and wider agricultural land from the land revitalization program, getting better springs in terms of quality and quantity with restrictions on the use of springs and centralized management in PAMDes-a small water enterprise owned and managed by the village, as well as increasing crop yields and stability of farmers' food stocks from the use of the latest planting technology and rotating planting and harvesting programs, so that the access to post-harvest sales is fairer.

¹³ <http://repository.umi.ac.id/bitstream/handle/123456789/25766/BAB%20IV.pdf?sequence=8&isAllowed=y> Accessed date 21 September 2022.

¹⁴ Interview with Working Group Marketing 21 August 2022.

¹⁵ Interview with working group harvest 18 July 2019.

Meanwhile, the advantages of the three activities above are improving the condition of agricultural land, saving food production costs, improving water quality with high mineral content and maintaining reserves of springs in the long term, increasing crop yields and greater product marketing opportunities. For example, soil quality was further improved from below pH 5 to above pH 7 so as to be able to create a balanced cycle of ecosystem interactions in the soil and can grow healthy rice, free from pesticides. In addition, with the help of seeds, fertilizers, irrigation, crop management, and marketing jointly managed by JATAM, it was very effective in reducing production and marketing costs. JATAM Gempol farming communities also benefit from the free supply of mineral water which was directly flowed to homes by the Village Drinking Water Manager-PAMDes, where operational costs were obtained from community voluntary funds and profits from the sale of local mineral water. The advantages of mineral water from Gempol is that tasted sweet, cleared in color, and cold when sipping or when in direct contact with the skin. One of the other Gempol springs was also used as a water tourist spot for health therapy, although it was still closed during the COVID-19 pandemic. Meanwhile, after using SRI technology, the harvest also climbed which initially ranged from 4 to 5 tons per hectare to about 9–11 tons per hectare. The harvest has been widely marketed through regular sales to Muhammadiyah Yogyakarta University, supermarkets, through exhibitions and online markets. The arrangement of the planting period prevents JATAM from losses due to the accumulation of rice reserves that were not immediately sold.^{16,17}

Based on the way of utilizing land and currency sources to improve the economy of the JATAM community, it can be assumed that it has met the *maslaha* requirements set by al Ghazali as follows:

The first condition, *maslaha* must be in accordance with Shara's purpose. Looking at the postulate of QS al-Mulk verse 15 which means: "It is He who made the earth for you that is easy to explore, then explore in all its directions and eat some of His fortune. And it is only to Him that we are resurrected," and QS Al-Baqarah verse 29 says. "It was He who created everything on earth for you." QS Al anbiya verse 107, "And we did not send you, but to (be) a mercy for the universe".¹⁸ This postulate shows the existence of an order to manage land as a source of food/consumption and to be a good for the universe.

Later, the hadith postulate is narrated from Anas radiyallahu 'anhu that the Prophet sallallahu 'alaihi wasallam said, "No Muslim grows plants or grows crops, then the fruit is eaten by birds or humans or livestock, unless the eaten one will be worth alms for him." From Jabir r.a., he said, the Messenger of Allah SAW said, "Whoever has a piece of land, then he should plant it. If he cannot or is unable to plant, then it should be left to others (to be planted) and do not rent it out." (HR. Muslims).¹⁹ This hadith postulate hints at growing food that can be consumed by humans themselves and helping to meet the food

¹⁶ Observation of house citizen Gempol 21 August 2022.

¹⁷ Interview with working group harvest and marketing 18 July 2019 and 21 August 2022.

¹⁸ www.webtafsir.com, Accessed date 22 September 2022.

¹⁹ Government department of Milieu Live and PP Muhammad, *Theology Milieu Live*, Deputy Communication and Empowerment Ministry Society Milieu Live Work with Management Muhammadiyah Center, Jakarta: 2011.

needs of other creatures. In addition there is a legal maxim that “The rule that harm is eliminated,” “The rule that precedes the harm rather than the taking advantage,” “The law of origin of the prohibition is illegitimate otherwise the law of origin of the order is obligatory,” “The rule of the law of origin of all forms of muamalah is mubah/may be”. The rules of fiqhyyah explain that in fact in carrying out their economic activities although basically a Muslim is allowed or free to take advantage of his environment, but must prioritize preventing damage or avoiding harm rather than taking advantage, if there is a possibility of damage or danger.²⁰

When The Quranic postulates, hadiths, and fiqhyyah rules above were contextualized to the reality of land and water use activities by the peasant community prove that JATAM seeked to improve the economy while maintaining the environment, through soil revitalization to improve soil quality, restrictions on the use of springs to maintain water quality and quality, and the use of technology and rotating planting systems to increase the number and profitability of more accessible harvests for wider community and avoid post-harvest food damage. Thus, land and water utilization activities to improve the economy of the JATAM community meet the first requirement, which is in accordance with the purpose of shara’ because its activities carry out land management orders to produce healthy food for the community, improve soil health conditions, avoid food damage.

The second condition is that maslaha must be darury (emergency) or close to darury. Producing healthy food that is far from substances harmful to human health from soils with high ph is in the near-emergency category, especially for those who are sick, such as diabetes, people with cancer and malnutrition, or for those who are required to manage a healthy diet from a doctor. Meanwhile, the management of high-mineral springs is an emergency form of environmental protection for the lives of living beings because water is a source of life apart from its function to purify in praying, fasting, and hajj, it also prevents from damage caused by drought or water pollution.

The third condition, maslaha must be qat’i or close to qat’i (definitive). The practice of land and water management by JATAM has met this requirement because there is a Quranic postulate that clearly prohibits doing damage on earth, a hadith that clearly commands to grow crops and alms for organisms in the ecosystem, as well as legal maxims supporting the implementation of the Quranic prohibition and hadith commands by JATAM.

The fourth condition, maslaha must be kully (wholly) or close to kully. The benefits provided by JATAM’s activities in managing agricultural land and springs had an impact on the community and the environment at large. For example, healthy and multiple foods produced are not only consumed by farmers themselves but are widely marketed through direct and online sales methods, ranging from universities, supermarkets, food exhibitions, and online market customers from various regions in Indonesia. In addition, access to high-mineral water even though it is restricted is still accessible to the general public through health therapy tours at springs and the sale of mineral water from gallons of 19 L or bottles of 500 ml and 210 ml for visitors from various regions in Indonesia. The sustainability of the ecosystem is also maintained in the long term due to healthy

²⁰ *Ibid.*

soil conditions, high mineral water and reserved in 6 other springs that are deliberately not explored for the economic benefit of the community.²¹

Meanwhile, there are three reasons why *maslaha* can be applied to the above context, namely classification, practical, and religious. If examined further, the practice of revitalizing agricultural land, restrictions on water use, and the use of technology and regulation of planting systems, there is no direct argument in detail mentioning the order of practicing this, but there are almost certain postulates to indicate orders for the implementation of land management, farming/food production for living things, and the prohibition of excess is a clue to the classification of *maslaha* into *maslaha mursala*. Practically speaking, the three ways of utilizing land and water have met the four *maslaha* requirements put forward by al Ghazali. Finally, the law of *maslaha mursala* of the three practices can be referred to or translated to the postulates of the Qur'an, and hadith.

4 Conclusion

The way of managing land and water in order to improve the economy of farmers from the JATAM community is a form of environmental economy where Islamic law is included in the category of *maslaha mursala*. Its reality can be identified from the profits it generates. Its activities are clearly beneficial to the environment, effectively reducing increasingly expensive production costs, increasing crop yields, long-term healthy water reserves, and increasing opportunities for access to the wider market. Therefore, the process of internalizing Islamic ethics in the use of this environment needs to be further developed for the wider community with different cultures.

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