
The Empowerment of Civil Society through Optimization of Volunteers' Role (Case Study on the Volunteers of *Rumah Zakat* (RZ) in Manado City)

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ABSTRACT:

This study is back grounded by the author anxiety toward the problem occurs in society, namely natural disaster and social change with various positive-negative effects they bring. The unpredictable nature and the era challenge with its massiveness, can deceive, reduce even harm the society integrity with various values which had been maintained. The volunteer was born from this anxiety and strive for solution. In responding to the anxiety felt by society, the volunteers are expected to work maximally and professionally. This study aims to identify optimization of volunteers' role in empowering the people who are effected by natural disaster and social change. Meanwhile, data collection technique use interview, observation, and documentary study. Next, data is analyzed by using data reduction, data display, conclusion and verification.

KEYWORDS: *Empowerment of Civil Society, Optimization of Volunteers' Role*

INTRODUCTION

Various problems occur as a result of social change or a phenomena is collective obligation in manifesting expectation into reality. The problem which often occur with the demand professional performance reflect that society rely on government as actor of all problems. It pose many questions, if the government is passive or slow in overcoming a problem, then what need to be done? There is nothing than the society themselves. To eliminate social problem and to give contribution-participation to professional performance, then volunteer was born from this anxiety, The volunteer willingness is manifested into collective work so it can eliminate various social problems which so complex and varied seen from its form and handling.

The present of volunteers like pendulum that swing from one point to another point in order to give positive contribution in all pillars of citizen life. The theme about empowerment of civil society through optimization of volunteers' role is very interesting and important to be studied based on rationalization and argumentation as follow.

First, if time development and change give rise modernity then individualistic become part of contemporary human attitude. Based on research result done by Sihombing (2013, page 101) than: more than 2,000open questionnaires are distributed to respondents in four big cities in Indonesia: Jakarta, Bandung, Semarang and Surabaya. Total of 1209 questionnaires can be used to identify Indonesian values today. The result showed that mutual cooperation, democracy, religion, harmony, hospitality, religious fanatics, and individualism are Indonesian values today.

It seems that with that research result, it is undeniable that individualism become one part of Indonesian citizens life today.

Parallel with Trompenaars & Turner view (1997, page 65) that individualism often associated with the condition of modern and developed society, whereas collectivism is identical with primitive and traditional society. Similarly, the creation of civil society is modern world achievement, bearing in mind that all ideas are determined by society. It is true that civil society is performance domain in which particularity and egoism of luxurious life and immeasurable ethic are social problem (Kumar, 2001, page 145). Inevitably, in the midst of order-disorder, traditional-modern, positive-negative of technology, the nation culture dynamic is hidden.

Second, passive action and lack of participation are common things of contemporary society which are modernization reflection. Based on that, modernization which give rise individualist culture can change collective culture and set aside the norm which decorate the society life in the past. Similar with Hofstede view (In Jatmika, 2017, page 12) that individual in individualist culture more focused on personal goal than group and behave in accord with their attitude than the norm prevailed in society. It even become stronger if people are occupied with modernization which can gradually erode the important value of traditional culture.

It is true if it is said that urban society is too naïve in accepting change so culture decadence as a result of stagnation of old behavior make the existing problem become priority. Whereas, convergence of contemporary culture reflect contrast and bias of nation values.

The worsen is that value decadence of modern individualistic not only welcomed but it is digested without filtered. The fact is a phenomena created only made to become sympathy show off in social media without accompanied by action. Whereas in flashback, Indonesian country is established through collective action. In Indonesianess context, this country was born based on citizen willingness in enforcing the pillar of independent nation (Suryadi, 2016). It more assert that historically, volunteers has been present since a long time in each people heart. However, the existing values are not inculcated so the manifestation of those values are rarely even not seen in urban society.

Determination and consistency in each action done by volunteer like the sun which never leaves the day and the month which never leaves the night. The care without considering time and even risk like flower which decorate the park of each volunteer action. Natural phenomena (disaster) in the last decade had awaken people from their sleep. Volunteers has participated and consistent in creating renewal even though the risk become a necessity. The research by Halimah & Widuri (2012, page 43-44) showed that:

The volunteer who return from his/her duty experience vicarious trauma as a result of interaction with some trauma victims. There are two main factors which cause the vicarious trauma in volunteers namely internal factor and external factor. Internal factor include characteristic and endurance possessed and how the performance of that volunteer, whereas external factor include type of victim, social environment and work climate which take much time with all kinds of existing problems.

The existence of volunteers which sometimes escaped from media coverage like the wind which cannot be seen but can be felt. It is which make volunteer contribution sometimes forgotten but it

cannot reduce valuable performance. This spirit is expected can spread positive energy to society so they can participate in the form of behavior so it make volunteers become civilization mobilization.

Implication of each volunteers' action like uncharged dynamo but it is still functioned. Volunteers work without financial aid from government or payment from capitalist. Nevertheless, this do not reduce their spirit even they never think it as problem for them. Volunteer is individual or group of people who provide their time and service unpaid to achieve organization goal, with big responsibility, with or without special training, but it can be with very intensive training in certain field to work voluntarily in helping professional staff without getting reward or payment (Schoroder (Sukanto, 1992, page 241). Slamet, 2009). But in achieving their goal, volunteers join one group who has certain criteria.

Third, culture fluctuation which cause decadence in awareness, care and responsibility in social environment make status of nation with character is questioned again. Meanwhile, volunteer was born from collective awareness which manifest into humanitarian movement based on care and responsibility to build nation character in achieving autonomy (Affandi, 2007, page 100; Suryadi, 2016). Furthermore, volunteer movement had been spread to all life aspects of human with various types of organization which had generated real work. The research result by Sundeen et al (2007, page 15) classify five types of volunteer organization among others are religion, child education, community and social service, culture and art, and health.

Forth, because naturally each human is different, each individual has different motivation. It raise the question that person's tendency to be involved in an organization or an activity is not based on awareness to do something but it is based on interest in certain activity or organization. Related to society empowerment, the volunteers reveal that society is more likely to be involved in something if it is interesting for them than if it is not interesting for them (McAllum, 2014, page 84-110). Furthermore, society empowerment is enhancement of society's ability and autonomy in increasing their life.

Empowerment is a process which run continuously, it can be done through people participation who have tight relation among each other (Hasri, 2009, in Turang, et al, 2012, page 1-7). Therefore, society participation in real contribution is something which is inherent and cannot be separated from social life.

Volunteers are pieces who cannot be separated from history of human civilization and had been rooted in various culture manifestation. There are many traditions in various countries, one of them is South Korea which is familiar with *Saemaul Undong* tradition namely the tradition of development which is mobilized by society (ADB, 2012, page 1). Seeing the tradition from one country in this case is South Korea which has society movement through their development tradition, the nation and state problems can be minimized even people can develop that country. Departed from the tradition of another country, Indonesia also has the spirit of togetherness which had been rooted since a long time in solving various social problems, namely *GotongRoyong* or Mutual Cooperation.

Mutual Cooperation is one unique culture in Indonesia which is full of noble values. Therefore, it is important to maintain the existence of Mutual Cooperation in era to era. Due to the benefit which is so meaningful in each Mutual Cooperation implementation, then it is need to be

actualized. It is because the work will be easier and quicker to be finished if it is done together than if it is done alone.

Parallel with this, Kartodijo, 1987 (In Effendi, 2013, page 5) that Mutual Cooperation is the culture which grow and develop in social life of Indonesian people as cultural heritage which has been existed from generation to generation. Mutual cooperation is the form of cooperation among group of society to achieve a positive outcome from the goal which want to be achieved in collective deliberation and agreement. Mutual Cooperation emerges from the urge of awareness and spirit to do and bear the consequence of a work together, concurrently and collectively, without thinking and prioritizing the benefit for themselves, but it is for the happiness of all people, as contained in the term 'Gotong'.

Departed from Mutual Cooperation which become Indonesian culture in solving various problems, then it spreads to various regions in the country with its various reflection. Now we see Minahasa culture which reflect the nature of Mutual Cooperation. This Minahasa culture is Mapalus.

Mapalus is a cooperation system based on mutual help among some people or cooperation among some villagers for public interest regarding household work, agricultural work, death, marriage and community service (Tumenggung, 1971). Initially, mapalus is done specially in activities related to agricultural field, from opening new land to harvesting. However, with its development it also apply social activity such as in custom ceremony, make boat, marriage, death, build house, etc. Mapalus in essence has basic and activity of Minahasa people who are called by touching hearts with full of awareness and responsibility to make humans and their group as teaching mind to make each human and group become welfare in their community as transforming life. Mapalus as a working system has ethos values such as reciprocaethos, participative ethos, solidarity, responsibility, mutual cooperation, good leader, discipline, transparency, equality, and trust (Umbas, 2011). Seeing the cultures existed in Indonesia and the reflection of national culture into local culture, so since long time Indonesian people had has high social attitude in solving various social problems.

METHODOLOGY

The approach used in this study is qualitative approach with case study method. The reason why researcher use this approach is to analyze in depth and comprehensively the empowerment of civil society through optimization of volunteers' role. It means that the researcher want to analyze in depth and completely the things which become research object based on the facts obtained in field in accord with result analysis of study data.

According to Moleong (2014, page 6), qualitative research method is research which is intended to understand the phenomena about what is experienced by subject of study, for example behavior, perception, motivation, and action holistically and with description in the form of words and language in a natural special context and by utilizing various natural methods.

Creswell (2010, page 20) say that case study is research strategy in which researcher study a program, event, activity, process or a group of individual. Yin (2011, page 1) state that case study is an empirical research which investigate contemporary phenomena in real life context, particularly when the limitation between phenomena and context is not too clear.

This approach very emphasize data authentic to explain what become focus of study. This confirmation is reasonable, because researcher conduct the study about The Empowerment of Civil Society Through Optimization of Volunteers' Role (Case Study on The Volunteers of *Rumah Zakat* (RZ) in Manado City).

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Based on result study through interview, observation and documentary study, it can be analyzed that almost all informants say that natural disaster and social change is a phenomena or event occur felt by humans and it effects on humans life. Various negative effects can be felt by society because natural disaster and social change which is potentially reduce moral values which are maintained in society life.

The change occurs in society as a result of natural disaster and social change is so real, so various negative effects become part of society life not exception for Manado city people which become the region which is inflicted by natural disaster such as flood, landslide, volcano eruption, fire, etc. Not only natural disaster but also social change also such as new culture which is worried can reduce and even loss nation culture.

With so many forms of natural disaster and social change, so there are various sources or causes of natural disaster and social change. Nature and humans cannot be separated, so natural disaster is caused by nature and human action themselves. Natural disaster occurs in Manado city is also caused by geographical condition of that region, so this factor also influence natural disaster which often occur in Manado region.

Departed from awareness and moral care and heart, thinking and hand which are sensitive to surrounding condition, then natural disaster occur in society also responded by those who join volunteer organization. The volunteers' response is not detached from coordination with various related parties such as volunteer member, BMKG, etc. This coordination is continuously maintained in order to maximize the handling of situation or condition in field.

After the volunteers respond to the condition, then the next thing to do is first action, in which first action is the beginning which has influence and benefit for those who are effected by natural disaster and social change. The first action done by volunteers for example is survey in location of natural disaster, then arranging RAB or budget design which had been sent to the centre in order to obtain fund for disaster victims.

The disaster mitigation in field is not separated from existing obstacles because the disaster can occur anytime with the time and place unknown before. Therefore, certain situation and condition also has its own challenge. Similarly with the obstacles faced by the volunteers of *RumahZakat* in handling natural disaster occurs in Manado city such as the area which is hard to be reached by vehicle, time adjustment made by volunteer members to work place, psychological adjustment with people who become victims of disaster, equipment completeness, etc.

After natural disaster and social change occur with existing various obstacles, then empowerment is done by volunteers, because how hard is the challenge, the volunteers still take part in humanitarian actions. With empowerment such as financial and service aid, the save

Friday activity (Friday is the day to distribute packaged rice), buy and sharing activity, socialization, establish Al-Qur'an Kinder Garden, entertain children in location of disaster, involve society in creating and maintaining good environment, give motivations and it is expected that society will become patient in facing disaster and social change which is occurring or which will occur.

How important is the empowerment done by volunteers of *Rumah Zakat* in Manado city with various forms of empowerment done in order to make nature and humans become better. In the effort to create society who are alert to natural disaster and social change, then non government organization, namely the volunteers also take part in creating this society. As for the first thing to do to create society who are alert to natural disaster and social change is socialization, then asking the society to be involved together in green activity, then giving material related to disaster during pre, alert and post disaster in society environment and educational environment (school), trainings, simulations, etc.

Various efforts are also done by volunteers in enhancing the professionalism of their work, not exception the volunteers. The volunteers of *Rumah Zakat* in Manado city in striving for professionalism of their work by following various trainings to self and skill development, study the material deeply in pre basic education, attending seminars related to volunteerism, self habituate in prioritizing disciplinary, following each cadre program in self development among the volunteers themselves.

Self readiness in facing various risks also become the thing which should be noticed by volunteers. Bearing in mind that each job has its own risk, so the volunteers should be ready to face the risk existed in field. What should be prepared by volunteers are prepare themselves and prepare self protection equipment, prioritize the problem, safety first then go to the field, coordination with related parties, etc.

Optimization of volunteers also supported by personnel or members. Thus, in recruiting new members, the volunteers are obliged to invite society members, workers and students who want to join with them. Because with new members, the volunteers will get performance and power supply from them. It is become an important thing. Regarding new members recruitment, it can be done by socialization or invite friend or family directly, online registration, then interview selection and written selection, next is volunteers orientation, and the lastly is basic education.

In recruitment, empowerment, activity implementation, etc certainly need adequate financial in order that task and responsibility is implemented. Therefore, obtaining fund is an important thing to achieve the volunteers' goal. Fund gathering done by the volunteers of *Rumah Zakat* in Manado City is by giving direct fund from central *Rumah Zakat*, donators from local people, and contribution from volunteer members whether weekly, when disaster occur or when activity is implemented.

By seeing human resource which become main factor in volunteers, the cadre activity is done by the volunteers of *Rumah Zakat* in Manado City. Self development of a volunteer regarding knowledge and skill in field become cadre activity which should be done. The aim of this activity is to develop talent and determination of each volunteer member.

Someone who decide to join volunteer organization must has his/her motivation in his/her task and responsibility as human in the world. The participation in each activity with all limitations

and challenge or risk in work become a mature consideration for a volunteer. Therefore, determination and principle of volunteer member had been tested and proved through real work outcome. The volunteers who join *Rumah Zakat* are mostly motivated by humanitarian call. It is in accord with Prophet Muhammad SAW whose hobby is to do beneficial travelling, willing to be useful for human fellows, more grateful for what has been possessed, can practice worship, the benefit of action that the virtue we do will become the virtue for ourselves, because having social care and becoming nature lover can develop personality (hobby, interest and talent).

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