

## Empowerment of Religious Potential for Poverty Alleviation in Agrarian Areas

Muhamad Hanif Fuadi <sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Institut Nahdlatul Ulama Tasikmalaya, Indonesia

**Corresponding Author:** Muhamad Hanif Fuadi, E-mail: [fuadi9070@gmail.com](mailto:fuadi9070@gmail.com)

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### ABSTRACT

This study examines the role of empowering religious potential in efforts to alleviate poverty in agrarian areas, with a case study in Jayagiri Village, Lembang District, West Bandung. Using a qualitative approach with a case study method, this study reveals how religious values and institutions can be integrated into rural economic development strategies. The results of the study show that the empowerment of religious potential contributes greatly to improving community welfare through strengthening social capital, work ethics, and community-based economic empowerment.

**Keywords:** *Agrarian Areas, Religious Empowerment, Poverty Alleviation*

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## INTRODUCTION

Poverty in agrarian areas such as Suntenjaya Village is still a significant problem. Although the agriculture and livestock sectors are the backbone of the village economy, poverty rates remain high due to various factors such as limited access to markets, scarce resources, and low knowledge of modern agricultural technology (Abdurakhmanova & Ahrorov, 2025; Ahrabous et al., 2025; Chatata & Chirwa, 2025; Jombo et al., 2025; Ziegler-Rodriguez et al., 2025). On the other hand, “Islam, as the majority religion, offers various instruments of empowerment through zakat, infaq, and shodaqoh that can serve as a catalyst in poverty alleviation”.

Poverty in agrarian areas, especially in Suntenjaya Village, Lembang District, West Bandung, is a crucial problem even though the agricultural sector is the main pillar of the community's economy (Cherian & Natarajamurthy, 2025; Omotayo & Omotoso, 2025; Rutherford et al., 2025; Ssekyanzi et al., 2025). Limited access to markets, lack of resources, and low knowledge of modern agricultural technology are factors that contribute to low incomes and high poverty rates in the region. “Rural areas are often

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lagging behind in terms of infrastructure and resources, leading to a cycle of poverty that is difficult to break” (Chambers, 2017: 36).

In this context, Islam, which is the majority religion in Suntenjaya Village, offers empowerment solutions through financial mechanisms such as zakat, infaq, and shodaqoh. “These financial instruments have proven effective in wealth redistribution and poverty alleviation in several other regions of Indonesia” (Abdullah, 2019: 65). Therefore, this study aims to explore how the potential of Islam is utilized by the agrarian community in Suntenjaya Village in an effort to reduce poverty and empower the local economy.

The main purpose of this study is to understand the role of religious institutions and local communities in facilitating religion-based economic empowerment in Suntenjaya Village. This research also aims to identify Islamic financial instruments, such as zakat and infaq, that contribute to poverty alleviation as well as analyze the effectiveness of religion-based economic empowerment programs in improving the welfare of agrarian communities.

This research has great significance because it provides a new perspective on how religion can be a catalyst in economic empowerment, especially in agrarian areas that often experience limited access and resources (Coşkun, 2025; Nurlukman et al., 2025; Tapsoba & Gérard, 2025). The findings of this study are expected to be the basis for the formulation of more effective policies in integrating the potential of religion and local resources to overcome the problem of poverty.

This research has great significance because it provides a new perspective on how religion can be a catalyst in economic empowerment, especially in agrarian areas that often experience limited access and resources. The findings of this study are expected to be the basis for the formulation of more effective policies in integrating the potential of religion and local resources to overcome the problem of poverty. “Studies on pesantren-based economic empowerment in Indonesia show how religious institutions can play an active role in local economic development” (Wekke, 2017: 287-289). Meanwhile, “the effectiveness of zakat as an instrument of poverty alleviation in rural areas of Malaysia” (Ismail et al., 2019: 112-114). These two studies provide important insights into the potential of religion in driving economic development at the grassroots level.

This study uses a qualitative approach with a case study method. Data were collected through in-depth interviews with religious leaders, village government officials, and community members, observation of participants in religious and economic activities, and analysis of documents related to empowerment programs. Data analysis was carried out through thematic coding and in-depth interpretation to identify key patterns and themes in empowering the potential of religion for poverty alleviation.

Previous research has highlighted the role of religious institutions in economic empowerment. For example, “that zakat institutions in Indonesia have succeeded in distributing zakat funds to help alleviate poverty in rural areas” (Abdullah, 2019: 72). Another study by shows that “faith-based empowerment programs can increase community involvement in economic activities and create new job opportunities in the agricultural sector” (Fauzan, 2021: 88). However, these studies have not specifically

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highlighted the potential for religion-based empowerment in agrarian areas such as Suntenjaya Village. In this context, this research offers novelty by focusing on local dynamics in Suntenjaya Village and how local religious institutions play a role in supporting the community's economy.

The gap in previous research is the lack of an in-depth analysis of how the potential of Islam can be specifically harnessed in the context of agrarian regions experiencing structural challenges. This research fills this gap by exploring the role of local religious institutions, communities, and Islamic financial instruments in supporting the empowerment of agrarian communities. The novelty of this research lies in the contextual analysis that integrates religious teachings with local economic solutions for poverty alleviation. The problem of this research can be formulated as follows: How is the potential of Islam utilized in efforts to alleviate poverty in the agrarian area of Suntenjaya Village? This research focuses on the object of study in the form of religious institutions, local communities, and Islamic financial instruments that are applied to support community economic empowerment.

This study uses a qualitative method with a case study approach. Data collection was conducted through in-depth interviews with religious leaders, community leaders, and beneficiaries of the zakat and infaq programs. In addition, participatory observation is carried out to understand firsthand how religious values are applied in the daily life of agrarian communities. Documentation in the form of village archives and reports on zakat activities is also used as supporting data.

## **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

This study uses a qualitative approach with a case study method. Data were collected through in-depth interviews with religious leaders, village government officials, and community members, observation of participants in religious and economic activities, and analysis of documents related to empowerment programs. Data analysis was carried out through thematic coding and in-depth interpretation to identify key patterns and themes in empowering the potential of religion for poverty alleviation. This study uses a qualitative approach with a case study method to explore the empowerment of the potential of Islam in poverty alleviation in Suntenjaya Village, Lembang District. This method was chosen because it allows for a deep understanding of how religious institutions and local communities facilitate faith-based economic empowerment in the specific context of agrarian societies.

The population in this study consists of three main groups: religious leaders (clerics and leaders of zakat institutions), village government officials, and community members involved in religion-based economic empowerment programs. Religious leaders are chosen because they play a key role in the implementation of zakat, infaq, and shodaqoh at the local level. Village officials are selected to provide perspectives on local policies that support poverty alleviation, while community members who are beneficiaries of the program provide views on the effectiveness of the program.

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The sample was taken using a purposive sampling technique, where respondents were selected based on their role and involvement in religious empowerment programs. Purposive sampling allows researchers to focus on individuals who have in-depth knowledge of the topic being researched, resulting in relevant and rich data. This technique is “effective in qualitative research that aims to dig deep into the experiences and views of individuals” (Miles, Huberman, & Saldaña, 2018: 37).

The main instruments in this study are in-depth interviews and participatory observation. The interviews are conducted in a semi-structured manner, where the researcher uses flexible interview guidelines to allow the exploration of important issues that arise during the interview process. Interview questions include the role of religious leaders in empowerment programs, the impact of zakat on the community's economy, and the personal experiences of beneficiaries. In addition to interviews, participatory observation is also used to understand social interactions and economic activities related to religion-based empowerment programs. Observations are carried out in religious and economic activities of the community to directly observe the application of religious values in daily life. Additional data is collected through related documents, such as zakat activity reports and village archives.

The study lasted for six months, starting with a field introduction stage to build relationships with respondents and understand the local context. The data collection phase begins in the second month and lasts for three months, where interviews and observations are conducted simultaneously. Data from official documents such as zakat reports and empowerment activities are obtained at the final stage of data collection. After the data collection was completed, data analysis was carried out for the last two months.

Data analysis was carried out using thematic coding techniques. The coding process begins with open coding, where interview data, observations, and documents are analyzed to identify key emerging themes. After that, the code is grouped into larger themes that reflect important patterns in the data. An interpretive approach is used in analysis to understand how religious leaders and religious institutions translate religious values into concrete actions for poverty alleviation. In addition, thematic analysis helps identify how the beneficiaries of the empowerment program perceive the program's impact on their lives.

The following is a table illustrating thematic coding based on the coding process, code grouping, and major themes that have been described to analyze interview data, observations, and documents in research on the empowerment of religious potential for poverty alleviation, in the following table:

Coding Process	Code	Theme	Sub-themes
<b>1. Open Coding</b>	- Religious Education	<b>Theme 1: The Role of Religious Institutions in Economic Empowerment</b>	- Religious Education and Economic Skills
	- Leadership		
	- Spiritual Motivation		

	- Program Zakat		Zakat and Infaq Program as a Source of Funding
	- Infaq and Alms		
	- Sharia Cooperatives		
	- Strengthening Social Networks	<b>Theme 2: Strengthening Social Capital in the Community</b>	Social Networks and Cooperation
	- Community Cooperation		Community Activities that Encourage Participation
	- Improving Well-Being	<b>Theme 3: The Impact of Empowerment Programs on Community Life</b>	Improving Economic Welfare
	- Economic Benefits		
	- Social Change		Perception and Satisfaction of Beneficiaries
	- Satisfaction with the Program		
<b>2. Grouping Code Into Larger Themes</b>	(Grouping similar code into a larger theme)	<b>Theme 1: The Role of Religious Institutions in Economic Empowerment</b>	Religious Education and Economic Skills
		<b>Theme 2: Strengthening Social Capital in the Community</b>	Social Networks and Cooperation
		<b>Theme 3: The Impact of Empowerment Programs on Community Life</b>	Perception and Satisfaction of Beneficiaries
<b>3. Interpretive Approach</b>	- Narrative of religious leaders about the role in community empowerment	<b>Identifying the role of religion in economic empowerment</b>	- The application of religious values in economic programs
	- Application of religious values in economic programs		
	-Beneficiary perception of the program	<b>Understanding the impact of empowerment programs in everyday life</b>	- Improved economic and social well-being

(Tabel 1 tentang Entitas Kajian)

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**Table Explanation:*****Open Coding Process***

At this stage, initial codes such as Religious Education, Zakat Program, Social Network Strengthening, and Beneficiary Perception emerge from the data. These codes represent the basic concepts that emerge in interviews, observations, or documents.

***Grouping the Code into Larger Themes***

Once the initial code has been identified, the next step is to group it into larger themes, such as the Role of Religious Institutions in Economic Empowerment, Strengthening Social Capital in Communities, and the Impact of Empowerment Programs on Community Life.

***Interpretive Approach***

In this step, the researcher focuses on the narrative, the application of religious values, and the impact felt by the beneficiaries of faith-based empowerment programs.

To ensure validity and reliability, the study used data triangulation, where data obtained from interviews, observations, and documents were compared to ensure consistency. “Triangulation allows researchers to confirm findings from a variety of data sources, thereby increasing accuracy and confidence in the results of the study” (Creswell & Poth, 2018: 75). In addition, a re-examination with respondents was carried out to ensure that the researcher's interpretation of the data was accurate and did not cause bias.

The thematic coding method used in this study is based on relevant literature in qualitative analysis. “The importance of coding in systematically analyzing qualitative data to identify deep patterns (Miles, Huberman, & Saldaña, 2018: 89). The interpretive approach also refers to the theory of “hermeneutics in understanding the meaning of social action in the context of religion and economics” (Smith, 2019: 103).

The scope of this research is limited to the agrarian community in Suntenjaya Village, which may not be fully representative of other rural areas. In addition, because the study focused on a single case study, the findings could not be generalized directly to the broader population. Other limitations include time and resource limitations that may affect the number of respondents that can be interviewed and the depth of observations made. However, by triangulating the data and re-examining with respondents, the researchers sought to minimize bias and improve the accuracy of the results.

**RESULT AND DISCUSSION**

Suntenjaya Village, with the majority of the population being Muslim and dependent on the agricultural sector, is the right location to study the empowerment of religious potential in the context of poverty alleviation in agrarian areas. The following is a table that illustrates a comparison of the views of religious leaders, village officials, and community members regarding the effectiveness of faith-based empowerment programs and their impact on poverty alleviation:

**Table 2.**

The Views of the Figures

Category	Views of Religious Leaders	Village Officials' Views	Views of Community Members
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Category	Views of Religious Leaders	Village Officials' Views	Views of Community Members
<b>Program Effectiveness</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The program is a means of strengthening spiritual and moral values.</li> <li>2. Emphasizing the importance of transparency and accountability in the management of zakat and infaq funds.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Empowerment programs as part of a broader village development strategy.</li> <li>2. Collaboration with religious institutions increases the effectiveness of the program.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Rewarding the program, but requiring more skills training and access to capital.</li> <li>2. The existing program has not fully met the practical needs of the community.</li> </ol>
<b>Impact on Poverty Alleviation</b>	A well-managed zakat and infaq program can directly reduce poverty.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The positive impact can be seen from the increase in community participation in economic activities.</li> <li>2. The program helps create new jobs and increase family incomes, but the distribution of benefits is uneven.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The impact of the program is felt, but uneven.</li> <li>2. Only a few have benefited, while many are still struggling with economic conditions.</li> </ol>
<b>Similarities</b>	The three groups agreed that religion-based empowerment programs have the potential to reduce poverty.		
<b>Difference</b>	- Emphasizing spiritual and moral aspects.	- Focus on collaboration with village government policies and support.	- Focus on practical needs and more equitable program accessibility.

**Table Explanation:**

*Program Effectiveness*

Religious leaders see programs as a means of strengthening spiritual and moral values; Village officials focus on integrating programs into village development strategies through collaboration; and Community members see the program as a positive step, but they need more skills training and access to capital.

*Impact on Poverty Alleviation*

Religious leaders believe that well-managed programs can directly reduce poverty; Village officials noted the positive impact on economic participation and the creation of new jobs; Community members feel that the impact of the program has not been evenly distributed, and many are still struggling with difficult economic conditions.

*Comparative Conclusions*

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All three groups agree that faith-based programs have the potential to reduce poverty, but their differences in focus reflect diverse expectations.

This study identifies three main mechanisms by which the potential of religion is empowered to encourage economic development through several aspects that have been studied, including:

### **Strengthening Social Capital**

Religious institutions such as mosques and Islamic boarding schools play a central role in the formation of social networks and trust between citizens. Routine recitation activities not only function as a means of religious learning, but also serve as a forum for sharing information and building economic cooperation. As stated by a religious leader, “Our weekly recitation is a place for residents to discuss agricultural problems and find solutions together” (Interview, May 5, 2024). This is in line with previous research “on the role of pesantren in facilitating local economic networks” (Wekke, 2017: 288).

Social capital has long been recognized as one of the important factors in community development. Robert Putnam (2000) describes social capital as networks, norms, and trusts that facilitate coordination and cooperation for the common good. In the context of agrarian communities such as Suntenjaya Village, strong social capital can be used to encourage economic empowerment. One of the main actors that plays a role in strengthening social capital in this village is religious institutions such as mosques and Islamic boarding schools. Apart from being centers of worship, these two institutions play an important role in facilitating social and economic interaction among residents.

Mosques and Islamic boarding schools not only function as centers for religious learning, but also become spaces where villagers can meet regularly to discuss and exchange information. According to Bourdieu (1986), social capital is formed through relationships between individuals in a community, which then creates a social network based on trust and solidarity. In Suntenjaya Village, routine recitation held at the mosque serves as a forum where residents not only discuss religious teachings, but also the economic and agricultural problems they face.

An interview with a local religious leader emphasized the importance of weekly recitation as a forum for discussion. “Our weekly recitation is a place for residents to discuss agricultural problems and find solutions together,” said the religious leader (Interview, May 5, 2024). This shows that mosques not only function as places of worship, but also as social centers that play an important role in creating local economic networks.

This finding is in line with previous research, which revealed that pesantren in rural Indonesia often act as a liaison for local communities in building economic networks. “Islamic boarding schools not only play a role in educating students, but also help the community in creating economic relationships based on trust and solidarity” (Wekke, 2017: 287).

Social capital formed through social interaction in mosques and Islamic boarding schools can be used to support economic development in villages. Coleman (1988) states that social capital functions as a resource that can be used by individuals or groups to

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achieve economic goals. In the context of Suntenjaya Village, strengthening social capital through religious institutions helps residents to build cooperation in overcoming economic problems, especially in the agricultural sector.

For example, villagers who face problems in agricultural productivity can share their experience and knowledge through regular recitation at mosques. This allows for the transfer of knowledge between more experienced farmers and those who are just starting a farming business. “Islamic boarding schools play an important role in forming a solidarity-based economic community, where residents help each other to overcome the economic challenges they face” (Wekke, 2017: 290).

In addition, trust formed through social interaction in mosques and pesantren facilitates stronger economic cooperation among residents. Fukuyama (1995) mentioned that trust is a key element in social capital that allows the creation of more effective cooperation in a community. In Suntenjaya Village, trust built through religious institutions makes it easier for residents to cooperate in economic projects, such as the formation of agricultural cooperatives or farmer groups.

The recitation that is routinely carried out at the Suntenjaya Village mosque also serves as a forum to discuss economic problems faced by residents. Villagers often use the time after the recitation to discuss agricultural problems, commodity prices, and solutions that can be taken to increase productivity. This provides clear evidence that mosques and Islamic boarding schools function as centers for information exchange relevant to the economic needs of the community.

The results of the interviews showed that residents felt helped by this forum because they could get advice and solutions directly from fellow farmers. “Our weekly recitation is not only a place to learn about religion, but also a place for us to share the problems we face in agriculture. Sometimes, there are residents who have solutions that we have not thought of,” said one of the young farmers in the village (Interview, May 12, 2024).

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Religious institutions in Suntenjaya Village also promote work ethics and social responsibility based on Islamic teachings. Religious leaders actively encourage the community to view work as part of worship. In the lectures at the mosque, the ustadz emphasized the importance of economic independence and hard work as part of religious responsibility. The concept of “working as worship” is a motivation for villagers to increase their agricultural productivity.

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According to Chapra (2016), the integration of religious values in the community's work ethic can encourage increased productivity and social responsibility. When villagers adopt the principle that work is a form of worship, they become more motivated to develop their farming business. "The lecture by the ustadz about the virtues of working hard makes me more enthusiastic about developing my farming business," said a young farmer in Suntenjaya Village (Interview, May 12, 2024). This approach not only strengthens intrinsic motivation, but also creates a collective awareness of the importance of economic independence.

### **Work Ethics and Spirituality**

Religious values are integrated into the work ethic of the community, encouraging productivity and social responsibility. Religious leaders actively promote the concept of "work as worship" and the importance of economic independence in Islamic teachings. A young farmer stated, "The ustadz's lecture on the virtues of working hard makes me more enthusiastic about developing my farming business" (Interview, May 12, 2024). This approach strengthens people's intrinsic motivation to improve their standard of living.

Work ethics rooted in religious values have a significant role in the socio-economic development of the community, especially in rural areas that depend on the agrarian sector. In the context of Suntenjaya Village, the integration of religious values into the community's work ethic encourages productivity, social responsibility, and economic independence. The concept of "working as worship" taught by religious leaders not only strengthens the intrinsic motivation of the community, but also provides an ethical framework in improving their standard of living.

Religious teaching integrated into the work ethic creates a strong motivation for the community to increase productivity. In Islam, work is considered a form of worship that has spiritual value, as explained in the hadith of the Prophet: "Whoever works for his family and is patient in his work, then every step will be recorded as worship" (HR. Bukhari). This understanding makes the villagers feel that their efforts in farming and managing the local economy are part of their spiritual devotion to 'Allah SWT'.

A young farmer in Suntenjaya Village, in an interview conducted on May 12, 2024, revealed how a lecture from the ustadz about the virtues of working hard made him more enthusiastic about developing farming. "The lecture by the ustadz about the virtues of working hard makes me more enthusiastic about developing my farming business" (Interview, May 12, 2024). This motivation is in line with the theory of intrinsic motivation, where individuals who see greater meaning in their work tend to work harder and be more consistent (Ryan & Deci, 2000).

Intrinsic motivation, as described by Ryan and Deci (2000), is an internal drive of the individual to do something because of the perceived value and satisfaction obtained, not because of external rewards. In the case of Suntenjaya Village, religious values internalized by the community create a strong intrinsic motivation. The community feels that their hard work not only provides economic results, but also gets spiritual rewards.

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According to Weber (1930), the concept of work ethics is closely related to religious values that emphasize discipline, responsibility, and productivity.

In the agrarian context, the combination of spiritual values and work ethics can increase agricultural productivity. “Religious teachings, particularly in Islam, emphasize the importance of economic independence and social responsibility” (Chapra, 2016: 45-50). People who have a strong work ethic, especially those driven by spiritual motivation, tend to be more proactive in developing businesses and improving their standard of living.

Motivations driven by spiritual values also influence the way society views their work. The concept of “working as worship” provides a moral and ethical dimension to work, thus encouraging individuals to not only work harder, but also with more sincere intentions. This is consistent with research conducted by Ali and Weir (2019), which found that spiritual values in Islam encourage more productive and responsible work behaviors in various sectors, including agriculture.

Studies in Suntenjaya Village show that a deep religious understanding of the importance of hard work and economic independence has encouraged farmers to be more active in managing their farmland. For example, in an interview with a young farmer, it was mentioned that he felt more motivated to try new farming methods and increase his crop yields after listening to a lecture from the ustadz about the importance of hard work in Islam (Interview, May 12, 2024). This shows how religious values can be a driving factor in increasing productivity.

One of the key values taught in Islam is the importance of economic independence and not dependence on others. Religious leaders in Suntenjaya Village actively promote economic independence as part of worship. This is reflected in the lectures that emphasize that working hard and developing one's own business is a form of responsibility to the family and society. These lectures teach that in Islam, one must strive to be financially independent, in order to help others and contribute to the community.

Previous research shows that “the values of economic independence instilled in Islamic teachings have a major impact on improving the economic welfare of rural communities” (Ismail et al., 2019: 113). Through religious education that emphasizes the importance of hard work and efficient management of resources, people can develop a strong work ethic, which in turn contributes to increasing income and poverty alleviation.

In interviews conducted with several farmers in Suntenjaya Village, many stated that they felt more responsible and motivated after attending the recitations held at the mosque. A farmer, in an interview on May 12, 2024, stated, “Whenever I hear a lecture by an ustadz about the importance of hard work, I always feel motivated to try even harder in my work in the rice fields. I believe that what I do is worship and God will provide better sustenance” (Interview, May 12, 2024). This empirical data is supported by research conducted by Farooq (2018), which found that communities that internalize spiritual values in their work tend to have higher levels of productivity and a stronger commitment to social responsibility. The integration of spirituality in daily life not only provides personal satisfaction, but also creates a more economically and socially stable society.

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### **Community-Based Economic Empowerment**

Zakat and waqf institutions are revitalized as an instrument of economic empowerment. Zakat funds are not only distributed as consumptive assistance, but also used for productive empowerment programs such as skills training and micro business capital. A “Zakat for Farmer Empowerment” program has succeeded in increasing agricultural productivity through the introduction of appropriate technology and access to a wider market. This is consistent with the findings of research “on the effectiveness of zakat in poverty alleviation in rural areas” (Ismail et al., 2019: 114). More importantly, there has been a change in mindset among the community, from dependence on aid to being more independent and productive.

Community-based economic empowerment has become one of the key strategies in overcoming poverty, especially in rural areas where the majority of the population depends on the agricultural sector. One of the effective instruments for economic empowerment is zakat and waqf institutions, which play a role as the main driver in the distribution of productive funds. The revitalization of the role of zakat and waqf includes the use of funds for skills training programs, micro business capital, and the introduction of appropriate technology that can increase the productivity of the agricultural sector, as implemented in the “Zakat for Farmer Empowerment” program in Suntenjaya Village. Revitalisasi Zakat dan Wakaf sebagai Instrumen Pemberdayaan Ekonomi.

The tradition of zakat and waqf in Islam not only serves as an instrument for the redistribution of wealth through consumptive assistance, but also has the potential for sustainable economic empowerment. In the context of Suntenjaya Village, the “Zakat for Farmer Empowerment” program has shown significant results, where zakat funds are not only given in the form of consumptive assistance, but also used to introduce appropriate agricultural technology and expand farmers' access to a wider market.

### **Increased Productivity Through the Introduction of Appropriate Technology**

Productive empowerment in the agricultural sector in Suntenjaya Village is focused on the use of appropriate technology to increase productivity. This technology includes the more efficient use of modern agricultural tools and the introduction of sustainable farming methods. The results of interviews with several farmers show that the introduction of this technology has had a significant impact on their agricultural yields. A farmer said, “With the new tools we received through the zakat program, we can cultivate the land faster and with better results” (Interview, May 12, 2024). Studi oleh Haneef et al. (2018) juga mendukung pentingnya penggunaan teknologi tepat guna dalam meningkatkan produktivitas pertanian di kalangan petani kecil. Dalam penelitian tersebut, ditemukan bahwa dengan mengadopsi teknologi yang sesuai dengan kebutuhan lokal, petani dapat meningkatkan efisiensi produksi dan mengurangi kerugian akibat teknik tradisional yang kurang optimal (hlm. 54-60). Program zakat yang memberikan pelatihan dan bantuan alat pertanian ini menjadi salah satu faktor kunci dalam keberhasilan pemberdayaan petani di Desa Suntenjaya.

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### **Access to a Wider Market**

In addition to technology, access to a wider market is also an important component in community-based economic empowerment. Zakat institutions collaborate with local and national organizations to open new distribution channels for community agricultural products. This allows farmers in Suntenjaya Village to sell their products outside the area, thus getting more competitive prices. Wider market access also increases their income, as one farmer revealed in an interview, “With access to markets in the city, we can sell products at better prices, not only in the village” (Interview, May 14, 2024).

Based on previous research, “wider market access can have a significant economic impact on smallholders, especially in increasing the competitiveness of their products in regional and national markets” (Sarif et al., 2020: 45-50). The zakat program, which not only provides capital assistance, but also opens market access for farmers, provides a more sustainable long-term impact compared to consumptive assistance alone.

### **Economic and Social Impact of Zakat-Based Empowerment**

The zakat-based economic empowerment program in Suntenjaya Village has shown significant results in reducing poverty rates among farmers and many of them are now more economically independent. This shows that productive zakat can significantly reduce poverty levels and increase the economic independence of rural communities.

Socially, this program also strengthens solidarity between farmers and communities. The training held by the zakat institution not only focuses on improving technical skills, but also on developing social networks between farmers. This creates a more collaborative environment, where farmers share knowledge and experiences with each other to overcome the challenges they face. As stated by one farmer, “We not only get the help of tools and capital, but also learn from fellow farmers on how to best manage our land” (Interview, May 15, 2024).

The revitalization of zakat and waqf institutions as an instrument of economic empowerment has proven effective in increasing the productivity and independence of farmers in Suntenjaya Village. Through the “Zakat for Farmer Empowerment” program, zakat funds are used to introduce appropriate technology and open access to a wider market, ultimately increasing income and reducing poverty among farmers. This approach shows that zakat not only plays a role as an instrument of consumptive assistance, but also has great potential for sustainable economic empowerment. By strengthening social networks between farmers and increasing their technical capacity, the program also strengthens social cohesion in those communities, ultimately contributing to long-term economic development.

### **CONCLUSION**

Empowerment of religious potential has proven to be an effective strategy in poverty alleviation in the agricultural area of Suntenjaya Village. Through strengthening social capital, instilling positive work ethics, and community-based economic empowerment, religious values and institutions have been successfully integrated into local economic

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development efforts. This approach not only improves the material well-being of the community, but also strengthens social cohesion and community resilience. The recommendations of this research are in the form of: 1) Development of a religious-based economic empowerment curriculum for religious education institutions in rural areas; 2) Increasing the capacity of religious leaders in issues of Islamic economic and financial development; 3) Closer collaboration between religious institutions, village governments, and the private sector in economic empowerment programs and 4) Follow-up research to measure the long-term impact of empowering religious potential on the economic resilience of rural communities.

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