

# Local Wisdom of Economic Behavior: An Ethnographic Study of Samin Community in Blora

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**Abstract.** This study explores the local wisdom of Samin Blora's economic behavior. This qualitative research is located in Karangpace Hamlet, Klopoduwur Village, Banjarejo District, Blora Regency, Central Java. The informants of this research were 10 people consisting of traditional elders, representatives of elders, 6 residents and 2 teenagers Samin Blora. Data were collected by observation and in-depth interviews with Snow balling technique. The data were analyzed using the interactive model of Miles and Huberman (1994), namely data reduction, data display, and drawing conclusions. The results showed that the local wisdom of Samin Blora's economic behavior, namely (1) the behavior of rice agricultural production was carried out on the principle of reciprocity between Samin residents, (2) rice production was not intended for sale and was more aimed at fulfilling the necessities of life, (3) the application of the principle of what's mine is yours, what's yours is mine, so that the necessities of life are met, (4) the behavior is not pursuing economics for welfare, but adhering to the principle of accepting all gifts as they are without demanding more than that.

**Keywords:** Local Wisdom, Economic Behavior, Samin

## 1 Introduction

Every human being will try to meet the needs of his life, by making various efforts. Moreover, the currents of globalization and cultural changes have penetrated all levels of society, including in Indonesia. As a result, there is a very fierce competition to meet the needs of each. This also occurs in the lives of farmers in Indonesia, which can be said to be still traditional and the pattern of their agricultural activities is still simple. The findings of Masihin, Girsang and Thenu [1] that due to the modernization of agricultural technology have slowly changed the form of mutual cooperation from cooperation and collective action to a form of wage-based individual work. A similar finding was also found by Susilowati [2] that the splice system gradually disappeared and was replaced by a paid work system. Based on the research findings, it provides evidence that there has been a shift in the behavior of the Indonesian people, especially those who work as farmers, from what was originally based on the splice principle to a wage system. However, this did not happen to the people of Samin Blora.

The Samin Blora community is a handful of traditional communities who are still very strong in maintaining local wisdom handed down from their ancestors in all aspects of life, so that they are able to survive the onslaught of modernization. This is because the Samin people have their own uniqueness in carrying out their lives. Therefore, many researchers reveal the

unique side of the Samin community, both those in Central Java and those in East Java. Mujib [3] found that the uniqueness of the Samin community, among others, is in religion (Islam), the procedures they create themselves, their own daily language, they also have their own codes of behavior and traditions. This is because the teachings of Saminism are believed to still provide meaning and guidance on the path of goodness [4]. Rosyid's findings [5] show that there is a conflict between Samin's customary marriage and state law. Meanwhile, Ceprudin [6] also found that as a result of invalidating marriage documents, this community did not get basic rights such as access to education, access to economics and access to health. Meanwhile, Nurdin's findings [7] find that Samin's rejection of Islamic marriage has the potential to become a religion-based conflict in the future. Another study from an ethnoecological perspective was carried out by Jumari et al. [8] found that in managing the environment, the Samin community prioritizes local wisdom. Meanwhile, research on Samin's social interaction was conducted by Lestari [9] who found that differences in language and values affect the occurrence of conflicts in social interactions.

Based on the findings of previous researchers, it can be seen that no one has revealed the unique wisdom of the economic behavior of the Samin people so that they are able to maintain their existence. In fact, the Samin Blora community only lives on land owned by Perhutani, namely the teak forest area in Klopoduwur Village, Banjarejo District, Blora Regency. They become sharecroppers or farm laborers and some of the land they cultivate is land owned by the government. In very limited conditions, however, the Samin community can exist to fulfill all their needs. It becomes very interesting to explore the existence of the unique economic behavior wisdom of the Samin Blora community so that they are able to survive the brunt of cultural change and modernization. Therefore, this study is very different from previous research, because this study will explore the wisdom of the economic behavior of the Samin community, because the pulse of a life and the ability of the community to exist are strongly influenced by economic behavior. In addition, this research becomes more interesting because the Samin people do not have private land but live in the property of Perhutani and work as farmers or farm laborers and some are cattle breeders but until now still exist between the exposure of modernization and cultural change.

The purpose of this study is to explore the local wisdom of Samin Blora's economic behavior so that it can maintain its existence.

## **2 Method**

The type of research used is qualitative with an ethnographic approach. The research location was in Karangpace Hamlet, Klopoduwur Village, Banjarejo District, Blora Regency, and research informants were taken from traditional elders, RT heads, Samin people with a total of 10 people using the Snow balling technique. Data were taken by observation, in-depth interviews, and documentation. The data were analyzed by using the Miles and Huberman [10] model triangulation, namely data reduction, data display, and drawing conclusions.

## **3 Result and Discussion**

The Samin community is a community that still uses traditional thinking and is principled in the teachings of *narimo ing pandum* (accepting what is, which is given by nature), without

wanting to develop themselves to achieve prosperity like the people around them. The results showed that the local wisdom of Samin Blora's economic behavior, namely (1) the behavior of rice agricultural production was carried out on the principle of reciprocity between Samin residents, (2) rice production was not intended for sale and was more aimed at fulfilling the necessities of life, (3) the application of the principle of what's mine is yours, what's yours is mine, so that the necessities of life are met, (4) the behavior is not pursuing economics for welfare, but adhering to the principle of accepting all gifts as they are without demanding more than that.

### **3.1 Local Wisdom Agricultural Production Behavior Samin Blora**

Traditional agricultural production activities basically include activities to prepare seeds, prepare land, plant rice and maintain and harvest rice. Sikep Samin Blora's brother community can be grouped as a traditional society. Therefore, agricultural production activities are still carried out traditionally based on local wisdom inherited from their ancestors long ago.

In agricultural production activities such as cultivating land, planting rice, caring for rice to harvesting rice, it is still carried out with fellow Samin community neighbors on the principle of reciprocity without being paid. The illustration is When Mr. J cultivates agricultural land assisted by Mr. K and Mr. L, then when Mr. K cultivates his agricultural land, Mr. J has an obligation to help cultivate Mr. K's agricultural land, as well as when Mr. L manages agricultural land, Mr. J has an obligation to help cultivate Mr. L's farmland, without being paid. The behavior of helping agricultural production without being paid is one of the very rare local wisdoms. This is in accordance with the opinion of DiMaggio [11] that in traditional societies, economic behavior is influenced by the prevailing culture [12]. This is reinforced by the opinion of Suharno [13] and Yudiarini [14] that in traditional societies, business management is based on prevailing traditions. That is, local wisdom does not pay neighbors who help in agricultural production activities is a prevailing tradition in the Samin Blora community.

This principle of reciprocity applies from cultivating land to harvesting rice even in other daily life, such as celebrations and so on. This reciprocal behavior in agricultural production activities is a local wisdom that is maintained from generation to generation of the Samin Blora community. Reciprocal behavior is not always related to economic interests [15], but because of social interests [16].

However, if it is related to economic interests, this reciprocal local wisdom in agricultural production in the Samin community has an impact on quite large agricultural cost savings, namely in cultivating land, planting and caring for rice and harvesting rice. This is in accordance with the opinion of Polanyi [17] that one of the motives for the exchange of reciprocity is to obtain economic needs. The findings of Jaelani et al., [18], Amrullah and Hadi [19] that the cost of cultivating the land is Rp. 1,200,000/ha, while the findings of Rifiana [20] that the cost of planting rice is quite high at Rp. 600,000 – Rp. 900,000. Amrullah and Hadi [19] found that the cost of rice maintenance reaches Rp. 500,000 – Rp. 800,000/ha and the cost of harvesting rice is very high, reaching millions of rupiah per hectare [20][19][21]. That is, local wisdom of reciprocal behavior in agricultural production is economically able to save very high expenditures in agricultural production.

The findings of this study corroborate previous findings that the exchange of labor in unpaid rice production will reduce the very high costs of agriculture [22][23][24][25][21]. However, there are differences between indigenous peoples in carrying out their local wisdom. In the Samin community, for example, when Mrs. J planted rice on her land with the help of Mrs. K and Mrs. L, then Mrs. J gave food to the families of Mrs. K and Mrs. L who were in

their respective homes. This is different from the local wisdom of the Kampung Naga indigenous people who only feed their neighbors who help plant rice, not by feeding their neighbors' family members [26].

### **3.2 The behavior of producing rice is only for fulfilling the necessities of life**

The condition of Klopoduwur Hamlet, Karangpace Village, Banjarejo Blora District is a rainfed rice field area and partly teak forest. Therefore, most of the people of Samin Klopoduwur Blora work as farmers and some as farm laborers. Rice fields can only be planted during the rainy season with not too much rice yield. This means that the Samin community only gets rice once a year. This rice yield will be used to meet the needs of life for a year. Therefore, they rarely want to sell their harvested rice and they prefer to save their harvest for food needs in a year. If the harvested rice is not sufficient, they will eat rice mixed with corn or even sell the cattle they have to just make a living.

The behavior of rice production as a livelihood carried out by the Samin Blora community makes the Samin Blora community a Peasant. They farm more only to meet subsistence needs, not for the purpose of selling, even if they are sold only to meet daily needs, so that the Samin people can be categorized as subsistence farmers or what Wolf [27] and Scott [28] call with the term peasant (which contrasts with farmers). Peasants are village people who grow crops and raise livestock to meet their daily needs, and if there is a surplus (not consumed, and for social and ritual surplus) then it is sold but the proceeds are still only used to meet their basic needs such as buying salt, side dishes, and does not aim to seek the highest profit, which is certainly different from the farmer (agricultural entrepreneur) who carries out agricultural activities as an economic activity with the aim of seeking profit [27][28][29].

This finding is in line with the findings of Santoso [26], Heidhues and Bruntrup [30]; Sumarno and Subagyono [31]; Yudiarini [14] that subsistence agriculture is the processing of agricultural land that is prioritized to meet family needs and is not intended for sale. They prefer to store rice than to sell it.

### **3.3 There is an application of the principle of mine is yours, yours is mine**

One of the local wisdoms embraced and applied by the people of Samin Blora is the principle that mine is yours, what is yours is mine, this principle applies to goods owned. This means that if there are Samin residents who have goods such as vehicles, money and others, then there are neighbors who will use these goods, then those who have these goods cannot prohibit their neighbors from using these goods, and vice versa. In the application of this principle, private property is still recognized, but if there are fellow Samin residents who want to use their personal property, they must give it up. But when he needs it, he will not charge the user the money first, but he will use the property of another Samin citizen if the previous user does not have money. However, among them there is a feeling of reluctance to use things that do not belong to them. They also have the principle that if you owe it, you return it.

This local wisdom is based on the principle of the Samin community that the possessions are only a deposit from Allah SWT. Therefore, the people of Samin do not count the number of ownership of their goods. The application of the principles of mine is yours, yours is mine to fulfill the life needs of the Samin community. The local wisdom that makes economic needs fulfilled is not found in other communities, even in indigenous peoples. In the Kampung Naga community there is no principle as applied to the Samin community, namely the principle of mine is yours, yours is mine [26].

### **3.4 The existence of local wisdom, the principle of welfare is not measured by economic adequacy**

The Samin Blora community is a very simple society both in economic and social life. In addition, they have the principle of accepting what is without trying more. Therefore, according to Samin Blora, welfare is not measured by economic adequacy but from the generosity of accepting what is given by Allah SWT. This local wisdom has the implication that the people of Samin Blora do not pursue more economic needs. What is received from nature is enough for them and they do not want to add more. In other words, they apply the principle of *nrimo ing pandum* (accepting what is without trying more).

This local wisdom can be seen from their economic behavior during the dry season. They only try to spend the rest of the rainy season harvest and if it's lacking just mix their food with corn. In addition, if it is still lacking, they will only look for sweet potatoes in the forest or sell teak leaves and twigs. They have no desire to work outside the village to improve their economic capacity.

The economic behavior of the Samin community is clearly different from society in general, which always wants to get more income and a lot of wealth. Therefore, the economic system run by the Samin community can be classified as a traditional economic system, where all production, distribution and consumption activities are carried out in accordance with the habits inherited by their ancestors, with simple production technology, so that economic activities are aimed at maintaining existing ones, not to create new ones Ritonga and Firdaus [32]. This is also consistent with the findings of Clifford Geertz that Javanese farmers are not commercial farmers, but farmers who work on their agriculture to make a living [33].

In addition, the welfare measure adopted by the Samin community in accordance with anthropological studies sees that economic actions taken by individuals (farmers) are always decided based on moral values [34]. In the Samin community who adheres to welfare, it is measured by the breadth of heart in accepting the existing situation, these are moral values that apply in their community.

## **4 Conclusion**

The conclusions of this study are (1) the behavior of rice agricultural production is carried out on the principle of reciprocity between Samin residents, (2) rice production is not intended for sale and is more aimed at meeting the necessities of life, (3) the application of the principle of mine is mine, mine is mine, so that the needs of life are met, (4) the behavior of pursuing the economy for welfare, but adhering to the principle of accepting all gifts as they are without demanding more than that.

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