

The Resource Management Strategy of Nazir and Religious Instructors in Empowering Waqf Potential at the Religious Affairs Office (KUA) of East Binjai District

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This study discusses the role of nazhir and religious instructors and strategies for strengthening both in empowering the potential of waqf at the Office of Religious Affairs (KUA) of East Binjai District. Waqf is an Islamic economic instrument that has great potential in improving community welfare if managed professionally and productively. However, waqf management in East Binjai District still faces various obstacles, such as low public understanding of productive waqf, suboptimal management of waqf assets, and limited human resource competency in waqf management. This study aims to determine the role of nazhir in waqf management, the role of religious instructors in raising public awareness about waqf, and strategies for strengthening the role of nazhir and religious instructors in empowering the potential of waqf at the KUA of East Binjai District. The research method used is a qualitative method with a descriptive approach. Research data were obtained through observation, interviews, documentation, and literature studies related to waqf and its empowerment. The results show that nazhir has an important role in the administration, management, development, and protection of waqf assets so that they can be used productively for the benefit of the community. Meanwhile, religious instructors act as educators, motivators, facilitators, and community mentors to increase public understanding and participation in productive waqf. Strengthening strategies include improving the quality of human resources through training and coaching, public outreach on productive waqf, improving the administration and legality of waqf assets, strengthening inter-institutional cooperation, and utilizing information technology in waqf management.

Keywords: Strategy, Nazir, Extension Worker, Waqf Potential, Community Empowerment

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1. Introduction

Waqf is a classic issue in Islam that remains relevant in society today. Waqf has evolved into a broader concept, particularly as an alternative solution to the economic problems of the people, while also serving as a hope for improving the welfare of society amidst economic downturn.[1] As a religious institution, waqf has a dual function: a worship function (ubudiyah), a social function, and an economic function that can be developed for the benefit of society. Waqf not only serves as a form of human connection with God (hablun min Allah), but also as a form of human connection between humans (hablun min an-nas)[2].

Although the waqf system continues to evolve, current waqf practices have not fully contributed to the development and socio-economic empowerment of communities. The concept of empowerment is not limited to meeting basic community needs, such as food, clothing, shelter, education, and health services, but is also directed at efforts to improve community capacity to access economic and social resources independently.[3]

A common problem in waqf management in Indonesia is the lack of professionalism of nazhir (Islamic trustees) in managing waqf assets, particularly land waqf. Most nazhir still treat waqf management as a

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side job, resulting in suboptimal waqf management. In practice, unproductive waqf land, uncertified waqf assets, and waqf management that does not maximize economic value are still found.[4]

Another issue in waqf development relates to the quality of human resources, including the nazhir. Nazhir play a crucial role in developing and empowering waqf assets, as they are a key element in increasing the productivity of waqf management. The development of a waqf institution is greatly influenced by the quality of the human resources who manage it. Some waqf institutions are able to develop productively because they are managed by professional nazhir with adequate competence.[5]

The suboptimal human resource conditions of nazhir have resulted in the failure to manage waqf assets productively, resulting in waqf not being able to carry out its primary function as a provider of social services and public goods for the Muslim community. Waqf management problems that are still frequently encountered include waqf management that has not been directed towards being a productive waqf, limited operational costs, and a lack of innovation in waqf asset management, resulting in many waqf assets being neglected[6].

In Indonesia, the government established the Indonesian Waqf Agency in 2004 as an independent institution tasked with managing and developing waqf to provide benefits to the community in the social, economic, and infrastructure sectors. In 2022, the Indonesian Waqf Agency, through the Center for Digital Transformation Studies (PKTD), launched the National Waqf Index Report (IWN), the first national waqf management performance report in Indonesia.[7]

In addition to the Indonesian Waqf Board, people can also donate their assets through the local Office of Religious Affairs. The Office of Religious Affairs is an agency under the Ministry of Religious Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia, tasked with carrying out some of the Ministry's duties in the field of Islamic religious affairs at the sub-district level. The Office of Religious Affairs not only provides marriage registration services but also manages other religious administration, including zakat, waqf, mosque construction, and social and religious services.[8]

Within the Office of Religious Affairs, there are nazhirs (Islamic trustees) tasked with managing waqf assets. In addition, there are religious instructors who provide counseling, guidance, motivation, and religious education to the community. Nazhirs and religious instructors play interrelated roles in empowering waqf potential. Nazhirs focus on waqf asset management, while religious instructors play a role in raising public awareness and understanding of the importance of productive waqf. The synergy between the two is expected to encourage more professional, productive, and beneficial waqf management for the community's well-being.

2. Literature Review and Problem Statement

Concept of Waqf

Waqf is an Islamic economic instrument aimed at achieving the welfare of the community through the sustainable utilization of valuable assets. Terminologically, waqf is defined as the act of retaining assets with a fixed principal value, the benefits of which are used for public interest or religious purposes.[1] In practice, waqf is understood not only as a form of worship but also as a social and economic instrument that can help improve community welfare.

The development of waqf in Indonesia demonstrates a paradigm shift from consumptive waqf to productive waqf. While previously waqf was primarily used for the construction of mosques, graves, and educational institutions, it is now being directed toward productive activities with economic value, such as business

development, agriculture, and community empowerment.[2] With professional management, waqf can become a sustainable source of funding to support the socio-economic development of the community.

However, waqf management in Indonesia still faces various obstacles, such as low public understanding of productive waqf, weak waqf administration, and suboptimal waqf asset management. These problems mean that the vast potential of waqf cannot be optimally utilized for the benefit of the community.[3]

The Role of Nazir in Waqf Management

A nazhir is a person entrusted with the management and development of waqf assets in accordance with the established waqf objectives. Law Number 41 of 2004 concerning Waqf stipulates that a nazhir is responsible for administering, managing, developing, supervising, and protecting waqf assets.[4] Therefore, the presence of a nazhir is crucial to the success of waqf management.

Good waqf management requires professional, trustworthy, and competent nazhir human resources in the field of waqf management. Nazir are not only tasked with safeguarding waqf assets, but are also required to be able to develop them so they have productive value and provide economic benefits to the community.[5] In practice, many nazhir still carry out their duties in a traditional manner, resulting in suboptimal waqf management.

The lack of competence and professionalism of nazhir is a major factor in the low productivity of waqf assets in Indonesia. Many waqf assets are uncertified, neglected, and even lack clear management. This situation indicates that improving the quality of nazhir human resources is a crucial need for the development of productive waqf.[6]

The Role of Religious Counselors in Empowering Waqf

Religious instructors play a crucial role in providing education, guidance, and understanding to the community regarding the importance of waqf. Religious instructors are tasked with conveying religious values while encouraging community participation in socio-religious activities, including waqf[7].

In the context of waqf empowerment, religious instructors function as educators, motivators, facilitators, and mediators between the community and waqf management institutions. Religious instructors can provide the community with an understanding of the concept of productive waqf and its benefits for improving the welfare of the community.[8] With ongoing outreach, it is hoped that the community will develop an awareness of the need to participate in waqf development.

In addition, religious instructors also play a strategic role in building synergy between the community, the nazhir (Islamic trustee), and the waqf management institution. Through outreach activities, the community can obtain information on waqf procedures, the legality of waqf, and the productive use of waqf assets.[9] Therefore, the presence of religious instructors is essential to support waqf development at the community level.

Strategy for Empowering Waqf Potential

Empowering waqf potential requires a planned and sustainable strategy so that waqf assets can provide optimal benefits to the community. One strategy that can be implemented is improving the quality of nazhir human resources through training, coaching, and strengthening managerial competencies.[10] With qualified human resources, waqf management can be carried out more professionally and productively.

In addition to improving the quality of nazhir (Islamic trustees), waqf empowerment strategies can also be implemented through community outreach on productive waqf. This outreach aims to increase public

understanding that waqf is not limited to building places of worship but can also be developed into productive assets with economic value.[11]

Another strategy is to strengthen the administration and legality of waqf assets, such as through waqf land certification and digital waqf asset registration. This step is crucial for providing legal protection for waqf assets and streamlining their management.[12] The use of information technology is also one way to support transparency and effectiveness in waqf management in the modern era.

Research Problems

Although waqf has great potential to improve community welfare, waqf management in East Binjai District still faces various problems. Low public understanding of productive waqf results in limited community participation in waqf development. Furthermore, suboptimal waqf asset management and a lack of competent human resources among nazhir (Islamic trustees) are obstacles to waqf empowerment.[13]

On the other hand, religious instructors, who play a crucial role in educating the public, have not been able to fully maximize their outreach efforts regarding productive waqf. The lack of synergy between nazhir (Islamic administrators) and religious instructors is also a contributing factor to the ineffective development of waqf.[14] Therefore, a resource management strategy for nazhir and religious instructors is needed to optimally utilize the waqf potential at the KUA (Office of Religious Affairs) of East Binjai District to improve community welfare.

3. Method

This research is a social research because it was conducted to observe social phenomena and facts occurring in society, particularly related to the management of waqf by nazhir and religious instructors. The research method used is a qualitative research method, namely a research approach whose discovery procedures do not use statistical calculations or quantification. Qualitative research is used to understand social phenomena related to the life, behavior, activities, and functions of an organization and social relations within society. In this study, the author seeks to describe in depth the role and performance of nazhir and religious instructors in empowering the potential of waqf at the KUA (Office of Religious Affairs) of East Binjai District.

The approach used in this research is an empirical or sociological one, focusing on the practices and behaviors of society in carrying out Islamic teachings, particularly those related to the management of waqf assets. The data sources in this study consist of primary and secondary data. Primary data were obtained through direct interviews with parties related to the research, while secondary data were obtained from books, journals, and other supporting documents. The data collection techniques used included interviews, observation, and documentation to obtain comprehensive data that meets the research needs.

4. Results and Discussion

Definition of Waqf

The word "waqf" or "waqf" comes from the Arabic word waqafa, which means to hold, stop, remain in place, or remain standing. Therefore, a parking lot is called mauqif because it is a place where vehicles stop. Likewise, the plains of Arafah are called mauqif because they are a place where pilgrims stop to perform wukuf (standing still). The word waqafa also means "al-habs," meaning to withhold. Terminologically, waqf is defined as something withheld for the sake of Allah.

According to Abdurrahman Ar-Rajhi, waqf is the retention of assets that can be utilized while maintaining the integrity of the assets and severing private management rights for use in ways permitted by sharia. From this definition, it can be understood that waqf is the act of retaining assets whose benefits can be utilized for the public interest without removing or damaging the assets themselves. Thus, waqf has both a religious purpose and a social purpose in order to achieve community welfare.

Islamic jurisprudence scholars differ in their definition of waqf. These differences are influenced by views regarding the ownership status of waqf assets and their management practices. Abu Hanifah argues that waqf is the withholding of assets from the waqif's ownership and the donation of their benefits for charitable purposes, thus retaining the waqif's rights to the waqf assets. The Maliki school of thought holds that waqf does not remove the waqif's ownership, but the waqif is not permitted to take any action that could transfer ownership to another party. Meanwhile, Imam Shafi'i and Ahmad ibn Hanbal argue that waqf assets are completely separated from the waqif's ownership once the waqf contract is validly executed.

The majority of scholars define waqf as holding assets that can be utilized while maintaining the integrity of the object and utilizing the results or benefits for the purpose of virtue and drawing closer to Allah. This definition is in line with the provisions in the Compilation of Islamic Law Article 215 paragraph (1) which states that waqf is a legal act of a person or legal entity that separates part of their property for the purposes of worship or public interest in accordance with Islamic teachings. In addition, Law Number 41 of 2004 concerning Waqf explains that waqf is a legal act of a waqif to separate and/or hand over part of his property to be used forever or for a certain period of time in accordance with Islamic law for the purposes of worship and public welfare.

The Role of Nazhir in Empowering Waqf Potential at the KUA, East Binjai District

The nazhir plays a crucial role in empowering the potential of waqf, particularly within the East Binjai District Religious Affairs Office. In the Indonesian waqf system, the nazhir is the party entrusted by the waqif to manage, safeguard, develop, and distribute the benefits of waqf assets in accordance with the objectives of Islamic law and statutory provisions. Under Law Number 41 of 2004 concerning Waqf, the nazhir is responsible for administering waqf assets, managing and developing waqf assets, supervising and protecting waqf assets, and reporting on their management to the Indonesian Waqf Board.

In East Binjai District, the presence of nazhir (Islamic trustee) is a key factor in optimizing waqf potential, ensuring that it is not merely consumptive but also productive and improves community welfare. The potential for waqf in this region is quite substantial, particularly in the form of waqf land used for mosques, prayer rooms (mushalla), madrasahs (Islamic schools), cemeteries, and Islamic educational facilities. However, in practice, various obstacles remain, such as a lack of public understanding of productive waqf, weak waqf asset administration, and limited managerial skills of nazhir (Islamic trustees) in developing waqf assets professionally.

The role of the nazhir in the East Binjai District Office of Religious Affairs (KUA) can be seen through several important aspects. First, the nazhir plays a role in the administration of waqf land. This administration includes registration, processing of the Waqf Pledge Deed (AIW), waqf land certification, and waqf asset data collection to ensure legal certainty. Good administration will protect waqf assets from disputes and misuse.

Second, the nazhir plays a role in the management and development of productive waqf. Waqf is not only used for the construction of places of worship but can also be developed into productive assets such as agricultural land, shophouses, sharia cooperatives, or community economic enterprises whose proceeds are used for social and religious purposes. In this context, the nazhir is required to possess management,

entrepreneurial, and innovative skills so that waqf assets can provide long-term economic benefits to the community.

Third, the nazhir plays an educational and social role in the community. Together with religious instructors, the nazhir can conduct outreach on the importance of productive waqf, the procedures for waqf, and the economic and social benefits of waqf. This education is crucial because many people still understand waqf only as a means of providing burial land or building mosques. Furthermore, the nazhir also serves as a supervisor and protector of waqf assets to prevent misuse or loss of ownership of their intended purpose.

However, empowering waqf potential in East Binjai District still faces several obstacles, such as the low quality of human resources for nazhir (Islamic waqf administrators), limited funding for productive waqf development, lack of digitization of waqf asset data, and weak coordination between relevant institutions. Therefore, a strategy is needed to strengthen nazhir capacity through waqf management training, ongoing development, and the use of information technology in waqf asset management.

The Role of Religious Counselors in Empowering Waqf Potential at the KUA, East Binjai District

Religious instructors play a strategic role in empowering the potential of waqf within the East Binjai District Religious Affairs Office. Religious instructors are not only tasked with providing religious guidance but also as agents of social empowerment, encouraging the community to understand and utilize waqf productively. The presence of religious instructors is crucial because many people still understand waqf only as a form of worship, such as building mosques, prayer rooms, or cemeteries.

Based on Decree of the Minister of Religious Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia Number 79 of 1985 concerning Guidelines for Religious Counseling, religious instructors are tasked with providing information, guidance, and counseling to the community regarding Islamic teachings, including in the field of waqf. In its implementation at the East Binjai District Office of Religious Affairs, religious instructors act as communicators, educators, motivators, and facilitators in raising public awareness of the importance of waqf.

One of the primary roles of religious instructors is to provide education and outreach about waqf. Religious instructors explain to the community the laws of waqf, the requirements and pillars of waqf, the procedures for implementing waqf, and the social and economic benefits of productive waqf. This education is delivered through religious studies, sermons, religious study groups, religious lectures, and other community development activities. The goal is to change the public's mindset so that they understand that waqf is not limited to land for places of worship but can also be a productive asset that provides long-term economic benefits.

In addition to serving as educators, religious instructors also serve as motivators, encouraging the community to actively participate in waqf activities. Religious instructors emphasize that waqf is a continuous charity whose rewards continue to flow as long as the waqf assets are used for good. This motivation can increase the community's spiritual awareness to donate a portion of their wealth for the benefit of the community.

Religious instructors also serve as facilitators between the community, the nazhir (Islamic administrator), and the Office of Religious Affairs (KUA) in the waqf administration process. Many people lack understanding of waqf legal procedures, such as the preparation of a Waqf Pledge Deed (AIW), certification of waqf land, and the mechanisms for managing productive waqf. Therefore, religious instructors assist the community by providing information and guidance regarding the waqf administration process to ensure it complies with Islamic law and statutory regulations.

In efforts to empower waqf, religious instructors also play a role in developing nazhir (preceptors). Religious instructors collaborate with the Head of the Religious Affairs Office (KUA) and the Indonesian Waqf Board (BWI) to provide guidance on professional, transparent, and productive waqf management. However, the implementation of the role of religious instructors still faces several obstacles, such as low public literacy about productive waqf, a limited number of religious instructors, and a lack of supporting facilities for counseling. Therefore, it is necessary to increase the capacity of religious instructors through education, training, and strengthening inter-institutional cooperation.

Strategy for Strengthening the Role of Nazhir and Religious Counselors in Empowering Waqf Potential at the KUA of East Binjai District

The strategy of strengthening the role of nazhir (Islamic administrators) and religious instructors in empowering waqf potential at the East Binjai District Office of Religious Affairs (KUA) is a crucial step in enhancing the function of waqf as an instrument for community economic and social empowerment. Waqf is understood not only as a spiritual act of worship but also has a socioeconomic dimension that can improve the welfare of the community if managed professionally and productively.

The first strategy is to improve the quality of human resources through education and training. Many nazhir (Islamic administrators) still carry out their duties traditionally and lack adequate managerial skills to manage productive waqf. Therefore, the East Binjai District Office of Religious Affairs (KUA) needs to conduct training on waqf management, waqf administration, productive asset management, sharia economics, and entrepreneurship. Furthermore, religious instructors also need to be trained in da'wah strategies, community communication, and sharia economic literacy to deliver waqf materials more effectively.

The second strategy is to increase public awareness and education about the importance of productive waqf. This outreach is carried out through religious studies, sermons, religious study groups, and other community development activities. The goal is to raise public awareness that waqf is not limited to building places of worship but can also be developed into productive assets with economic value.

The third strategy is improving the administration and legality of waqf assets. Many waqf assets lack certificates or are not officially registered, making them vulnerable to future disputes. Therefore, systematic data collection, recording, and certification of waqf land are necessary to provide legal certainty for waqf assets.

The next strategy is to build cooperation and synergy between institutions. Waqf development cannot be carried out solely by nazhirs and religious instructors, but requires support from various parties, such as the Indonesian Waqf Board, local governments, Islamic financial institutions, Islamic community organizations, and community leaders. This collaboration can take the form of training, mentoring for productive waqf businesses, capital assistance, and oversight of waqf asset management.

Furthermore, developing productive waqf based on community economic empowerment is also a crucial strategy. Waqf assets, which have been passive, need to be developed into productive enterprises capable of generating sustainable economic returns, such as productive agriculture, shops, rental housing, or Islamic micro-enterprise centers. The proceeds from these management efforts are then used to support education, healthcare, social assistance, and community religious activities. Thus, waqf can develop into an economic and social force capable of sustainably improving community welfare.

5. Conclusion

Based on the research results, it can be concluded that nazhir and religious instructors play a crucial role in empowering the potential of waqf at the East Binjai District Religious Affairs Office. Nazhir play a role in the administration, management, development, and supervision of waqf assets so that they can be utilized productively and provide benefits to the community. Meanwhile, religious instructors act as educators, motivators, facilitators, and community mentors in increasing public understanding and awareness of the importance of productive waqf. The synergy between nazhir and religious instructors is a crucial factor in encouraging more professional, transparent, and beneficial waqf management for the welfare of the community.

However, various obstacles remain in its implementation, such as the low quality of human resources for nazhir (Islamic trustees), a lack of public understanding of productive waqf, weak waqf asset administration, and limited supporting facilities for waqf management. Therefore, a strengthening strategy is needed through improving the competence of nazhir and religious instructors, socializing productive waqf to the community, improving the administration and legality of waqf assets, strengthening inter-institutional cooperation, and utilizing information technology in waqf management. With this strategy, the potential of waqf in East Binjai District is expected to develop optimally and make a real contribution to improving community welfare and socio-religious development.

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