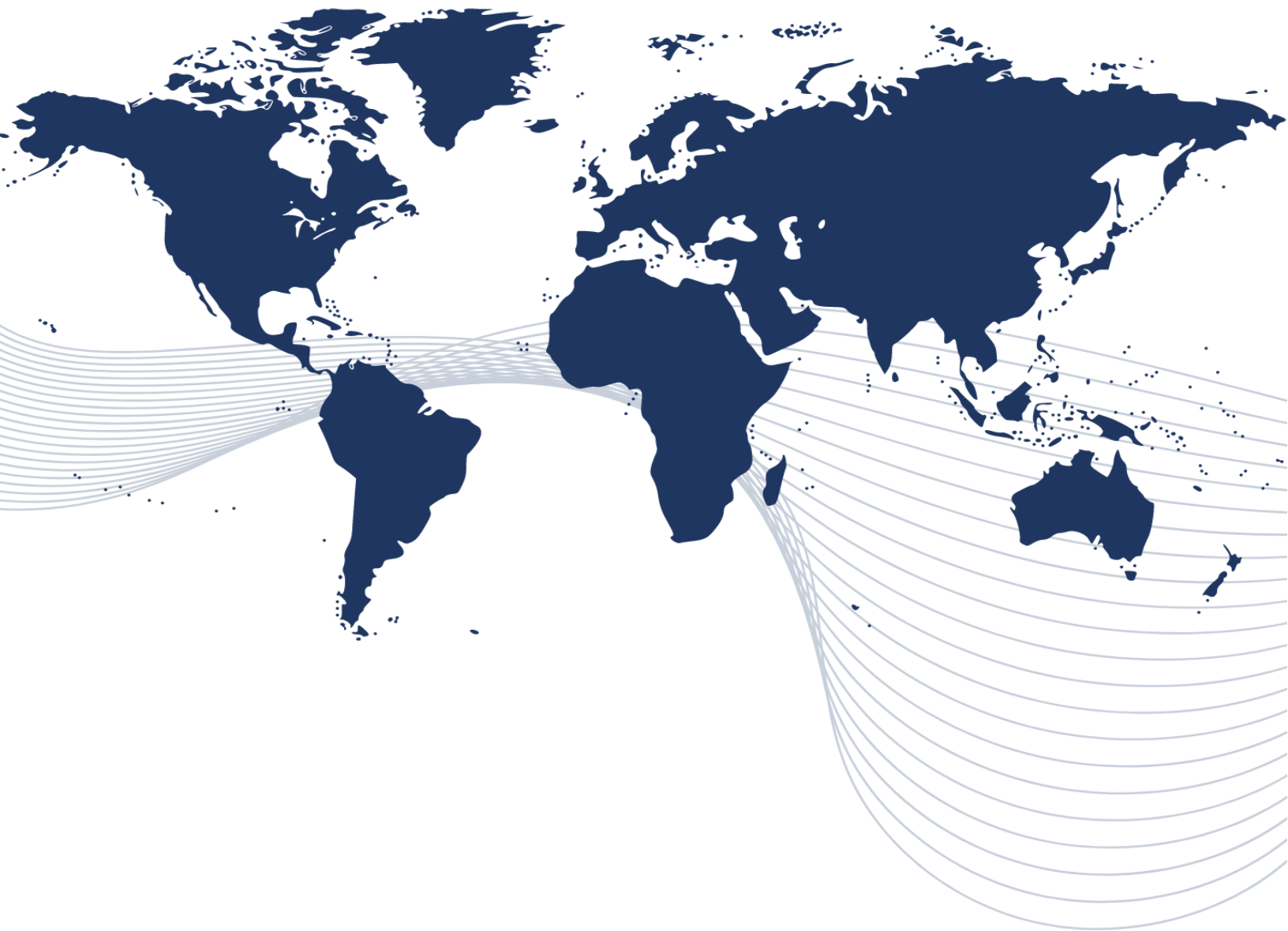


JOURNAL OF SOCIETY INNOVATION AND DEVELOPMENT



JSID

Socio-Economic Correlation of Scavenger Community in Religious Life

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Abstract

The problem in this research is about how the impact of the socio-economic life of the scavenger community on religious life, and what are the obstacles that exist in the scavenger community in religious life. To answer the above questions, the author uses a qualitative research method with a field approach method. The research location is Gampong Jawa Landfill, Kutaraja Subdistrict, Banda Aceh City, while the data sources come from direct observation, in-depth interviews with (twelve) selected respondents from all groups of waste pickers in Gampong Jawa Landfill as well as additional documentation data or archives of the waste pickers. Then the data is processed, analyzed in an easy-to-understand descriptive manner. The results of this study indicate that the socio-economic life of the scavenger community is still vulnerable to poverty, as for the income obtained to meet household needs from scavenging in the landfill has not been able to neutralize the needs of life from the sale of used goods, aqua bottles, cardboard, atoms and so on. Economic inequality in meeting household needs has an impact on religious life, including scavengers who are on landfill land when the adhan arrives are still preoccupied with collecting used goods, then attending houses that die with the Gampong community is often not well realized. So that the values that blend about worship are not well realized in every scavenger's daily life.

Keyword: Religious Life; Community; Economist; Social

Article Info: Submitted 12/01/2021 | Revised 07/02/2021 | Accepted 25/03/2021 | Online first 20/10/2021

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 <https://doi.org/10.63924/jsid.v3i1.37>

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INTRODUCTION

Particularly in emerging nations, poverty is still one of the most recurring and complicated socioeconomic problems facing metropolitan societies. It is a complex phenomenon influencing people's access to education, healthcare, and religious life in addition to a matter of financial hardship. Urban poverty in Indonesia is sometimes shown by the development of unofficial businesses like scavenging, in which people gather and market recyclable rubbish to support their living. At urban waste disposal sites like Tempat Pembuangan Akhir (TPA) Gampong Jawa in Banda Aceh, where many people and families scavenge as their main source of income, this phenomenon is very noticeable. Sociological literature has gone over poverty in detail.

Poverty, according to Suparlan (1984), is a state of material deprivation in relation to the average level of living in a society. He distinguishes between cultural poverty which is sustained by intergenerational transfer of attitudes and behaviors and structural poverty, which results from systematic disparities. Further exploring the "culture of poverty," Oscar Lewis (1966) contends that poverty is a cultural system influencing people's perspectives and actions rather than merely an economic one. Within urban Indonesia, scavengers *pemulung* represent a disenfranchised group whose economic activities are sometimes stigmatized and excluded from official economic and social structures. Research including Twikromo (1999) and Tufik (2013) have exposed the socioeconomic challenges of scavenger communities including their restricted access to social mobility, healthcare, and education as well as their poverty.

Emphasizing their resiliency and agency during hardship, several studies such as Kurniasih (2013) and Al Ghaasyah (2014) have looked at the work ethic and economic contributions of scavenger women and families. Though the social and economic aspects of scavenger communities have been much examined, knowledge of how poverty and marginalization impact their religious life still lags. Particularly in the Acehnesse setting, religion especially Islam plays a major influence on both personal and collective identities. It offers moral direction, social cohesiveness, and a goal. For underprivileged groups like scavengers, however, their socioeconomic situation could limit their capacity to engage completely in religious activities. Though the literature on urban poverty and informal work in Indonesia is mounting, little study examines the junction of socioeconomic level and religious life among scavenger populations.

With little regard to how these elements affect religious practices and spiritual well-being, most current research concentrates on economic survival tactics, social stigma, and community organization. Particularly lacking in empirical research are studies on how daily activities, surroundings, and socioeconomic limitations of scavengers influence their capacity to fulfill religious obligations including prayer (*shalat*), fasting (*puasa*), and attendance in group religious events. This disparity is particularly relevant in Aceh, an area well-known for its strong Islamic culture and Sharia legal application. Developing inclusive religious and social policy depends on an awareness of how underprivileged Muslim groups negotiate their religious lives under poverty and marginalization.

Furthermore, the body of current research usually sees religion as a static cultural feature rather than a dynamic activity shaped by economic circumstances. More complex research that takes into account how financial difficulty impacts religious behavior in terms of meaning-making and spiritual resilience as well as participation is much needed. In the

particular setting of TPA Gampong Jawa, Banda Aceh, this study aims to close this disparity by looking at the relationship between the socioeconomic situation of scavenger groups and their religious lives. Focusing on the scavengers living and working in TPA Gampong Jawa, Kecamatan Kutaraja, Kota Banda Aceh, this study seeks to investigate the relationship between the socio-economic situation of scavenger communities and their religious lives. The following aims direct the study: 1. To investigate how religious practices of scavenging societies might be influenced by socioeconomic circumstances 2. To pinpoint the particular difficulties and restrictions scavengers experience in completing their religious responsibilities. 3. To help to advance knowledge of how marginalization and poverty affect religious life in metropolitan Muslim populations. To depict the actual experiences of scavengers, the study uses a qualitative research approach combining participant observation, in-depth interviews, and document analysis.

Theoretically, the framework combines Suparlan's theory of urban poverty and marginalization with Max Weber's sociology of religion, especially his observations on the link between economic circumstances and religious activity. Based on their economic activities and living circumstances, the results of this study expose that the scavenging community at TPA Gampong Jawa suffers major obstacles to religious involvement. These comprise the geographical distance from mosques, lack of availability to clean water for ceremonial cleaning, and stigmatizing policies that prevent them from engaging in group religious activities.

Many scavengers overcome these obstacles and still have a strong feeling of religious identity and look for other means to satisfy their spiritual needs, such praying alone or attending unofficial religious events inside their neighborhood. This study highlights the intricate interaction between religious life and economic marginalization, therefore advancing the area of sociology of religion. It shows rather that religious involvement is firmly ingrained in material and structural conditions, therefore challenging the presumption that it is only a question of personal piety or cultural tradition.

Practical ramifications for religious leaders, legislators, and social workers in creating inclusive religious programs that meet the needs of underprivileged populations are also provided by the report. Moreover, by highlighting the voices of people who are usually left out of dominant religious narratives, the study enhances the debate on Islamic social justice. It advocates a more sympathetic and context-sensitive approach to religious participation that respects the dignity and spiritual ambitions of every believer, from all socioeconomic levels. Finally, this study emphasizes the need of include socioeconomic analysis into the research of religious life. Emphasizing the scavenger community in TPA Gampong Jawa gives a firm knowledge of how poverty influences religious activities and a critical viewpoint on the inclusiveness of religious institutions in metropolitan Indonesia. This study should motivate deeper investigation on the junction of poverty, marginalization, and religion as well as help to shape fairer and more inclusive religious and social policies.

METHOD

Aiming to investigate the complex connection between socioeconomic realities and religious life among scavenger communities in TPA Gampong Jawa, Banda Aceh, this study uses a qualitative research design with a case study approach. To enable a thorough knowledge of participants' life experiences, viewpoints, and social reality, the qualitative paradigm was

selected. Particularly the case study approach was judged suitable since it could reflect the complexity and contextual relevance of the sociopolitical processes of the scavenging group. Direct contacts with members of the scavenger population living and employed in the TPA Gampong Jawa area provided the main source of data for this study.

Purposive sampling allowed twelve volunteers in total to be chosen such that they represented gender, age, and length of involvement in scavenging activities. Because of their first-hand awareness of the socioeconomic issues and religious practices within the society, these people were regarded as crucial informants. Secondary data came from pertinent sources including reports from the Banda Aceh Department of Sanitation, demographic statistics from the Gampong Jawa village office, and past scholarly research on urban poverty, informal work, and religious life in marginal communities. Data collecting took use of three main instruments: Semi-structured interviews were meant to obtain from participants thorough narratives about their daily activities, financial difficulties, religious practices, and supposed obstacles to carrying out their religious responsibilities. Although the interview guide asked open-ended questions, it let participants' responses guide flexibility for probing and follow-up.

The researcher made non-intrusive observations inside the TPA area and around nearby residential zones. Especially at prayer times and communal events, this approach gave contextual understanding of the participants' living circumstances, workplaces, and religious activities. Archival resources, policy papers, and past research were examined to triangulate conclusions and place the study into more general socio-economic and religious discourses. Two months of fieldwork were spent here. Before data collecting, informed permission was acquired from every participant and ethical approval was obtained from the pertinent institutional review board. Depending on the participant's inclination, interviews were done in Bahasa Indonesia and Acehese; they were audio recorded with permission. Every interview spanned 45 to 90 minutes, and it was exactly transcribed for study. Field notes were used to document observations on participants' relationships at work, their participation with religious activities, and the spatial dynamics between the TPA and the closest mosque. To foster rapport and acquire more thorough cultural knowledge, the researcher also went to various community events and unofficial meetings. Under the direction of grounded theory, data analysis used a thematic approach.

The method started with open coding, in which field notes and transcripts were examined often to spot recurrent trends, ideas, and categories. These first codes were then arranged into more general topics reflecting the fundamental features of the research: economic hardship, religious engagement, spatial marginalization, and institutional exclusion. The researcher used constant comparison methods, looking for parallels and contrasts between instances and data sources, hence improving analytical rigor. Throughout the study, memos were created to record theoretical reflections and new ideas. The qualitative data was managed and arranged using NVivo software. Cross-verification of information from documents, observations, and interviews produced triangulation. Selected participants underwent member checking as well to confirm interpretations and guarantee that their points of view were fairly depicted.

FINDING AND DISCUSSION

Finding

Reflecting the fundamental dimensions that arose from the fieldwork, the results of this study are presented thematically: (1) socio-economic conditions of scavenger households, (2) religious practices and participation, (3) perceived barriers to religious observance, and (4) community-level religious engagement. Participants' stories and contextual notes entwine these themes with their own to provide a grounded perspective of how economic disadvantage impacts religious life in the scavenging community of TPA Gampong Jawa. Participants regularly said their financial status was unstable, with daily income varying and usually inadequate for meeting basic household necessities.

Depending on the volume and kind of recyclable goods gathered, most scavengers said they made between IDR 40,000 and 60,000 daily (around USD 2.50–4.00). On a good day, I could make about fifty thousand rupiah. Still, that is not every day. Sometimes it's less, particularly during a rainstorm or in excessive competition. (Ahmad, 54, over 15-year scavenger) Most of the responders lived next to the landfill in homemade shelters built from salvaged wood, plastic sheets, and corrugated metal. These homes lacked utilities including electricity, sanitation, and clean drinking water. Several people pointed out that their children helped with scavenging activities as well, especially during school holidays, therefore underscoring the intergenerational character of financial difficulty.

All the participants, despite their different socioeconomic backgrounds, said they were Muslims and had a strong sense of religious identification. Still, the degree to which individuals could exercise their faith differed greatly. Some tried to pray every day (shalat), but others admitted to inconsistent observance because of tiredness, time limits, or lack of access to clean facilities. "I always try to pray, but occasionally I'm too exhausted or still working when the adzan comes. Stopping costs time and can cause me to lose the excellent stuff. 50-year scavenger and father of four Zulkarnain A few people brought extra clothes to change into before prayer, but most admitted that the nature of their profession often meant they stayed in dirty clothes.

Particularly for men who would ordinarily visit mosque congregations, the lack of a close prayer facility inside the landfill region further discouraged frequent prayer. The TPA's physical and social surroundings seriously interfered with religious practice. Two kilometers or so from the dump sits Masjid Al-Muchsinin, the closest mosque. For many scavengers, this distance along with lack of transportation and the urgency of their work made it challenging to make it to congregation prayers. The mosque is way too far. I walk there too slowly, and I do not have a motorbike. Others have already stolen the recyclables of value by the time I return. (Ramadhan, 33), father of two and scavenger Furthermore, the unhygienic conditions of the landfill including contact with trash comprising najis, or religiously contaminated materials created doubt regarding ceremonial purity.

Many participants voiced worries about whether their prayers would be valid under such circumstances, which caused some of them to refrain from praying at all during working hours. "Sometimes I handle filthy objects, maybe even najis. I'm not sure whether I clean enough to pray. Not enough water here to adequately clean. 45-year-old scavenger Mustiar Beyond personal prayer, the scavenging community's involvement in more general religious life—such as Friday prayers, religious celebrations, or community grief rites was patchy. While some tried to make it to Friday prayers, others acknowledged missing them because of

job obligations or sentiments of marginalization. "I feel ashamed even though I wish to go to Friday prayers. People view me differently; I smell horrible. I thus sometimes simply stay here. (48-year-old scavenger Yunus) Scavengers were sometimes absent or arrived late in circumstances of religious celebrations or community fatalities.

Many of the attendees mentioned a lack of timely information since announcements were usually made from mosque loudspeakers inaudible from the dump area. Others said they weren't always greeted or given information by local chiefs. Still, several scavengers voiced a wish for more inclusion and recommended a small prayer area or musholla next to the TPA to enable them more regularly perform their religious responsibilities. "We might pray together should a small musholla develop here. At least we try even if we are filthy. It would bring us more near to God. (40-year-old scavenger Muhammad Rijal)

Discussion

This study aimed to investigate, among TPA Gampong Jawa, Banda Aceh, scavenger groups, the link between socioeconomic circumstances and religious life. The results expose a complex interaction between religious practice and economic marginalization molded by structural, environmental, and cultural elements. Although all of the participants reported a wish to fulfill their religious commitments and strongly identified with Islam, their capacity to do so was frequently hindered by the constraints of informal labor, spatial marginalization, and restricted access to religious infrastructure. Four main themes surfaced from the data: (1) the precarious and unstable economic conditions of scavenger households; (2) the persistence of religious identity despite material hardship; (3) structural and environmental barriers to religious observance, especially prayer; and (4) limited participation in communal religious life due of social stigma and logistical constraint. These results imply that although faith stays fundamental in the life of scavengers, the reality of poverty and marginalization often shapes and occasionally limits their religious practices.

The results of this study complement and expand body of knowledge already in publication on poverty, unofficial work, and religion. Previous studies on metropolitan Indonesia's scavenging populations (Twikromo, 1999; Tufik, 2013) have highlighted their exclusion from official economic systems and the stigmatizing they encounter in public life. This study validates previous observations, especially in connection to the spatial and social isolation faced by scavengers in Banda Aceh. But by concentrating especially on the religious life of scavengers an area of little scholarly attention this study adds a fresh perspective. Studies such Kurniasih (2013) and Al Ghaasyah (2014) have looked at the work ethic and financial contributions of scavenging women; they have not looked at how these positions interact with religious identity and practice. This study shows how religious life is negotiated within the limits of poverty, work, and social exclusion by giving the words of scavengers themselves front stage.

The results also fit Max Weber's (1905) theory on the correlation between religious practice and economic situation. Weber contended that while material circumstances might affect religious expression, religious ethics might govern economic behavior. Regarding the Gampong Jawa scavengers, economic need usually trumps religious idealism not because of a lack of faith but rather because their everyday lives provide little opportunity for official religious exercise. This backs up Weber's more general assertion that religious activity is ingrained in social and economic reality rather than only a question of belief. Moreover, the

study reflects the structural and cultural aspects of marginalization, therefore echoing Suparlan's (1984) theory of urban poverty. The restricted access to religious infrastructure, the physical distance from the mosque, and the emotions of exclusion from communal religious gatherings all indicate to a more general pattern of spatial and institutional neglect among the scavengers. These results reveal that religious exclusion is firmly ingrained in systematic inequities rather than only a result of human failing or disinterest. These results have theoretical as well as pragmatic consequences. The study, theoretically, questions oversimplified presumptions regarding religious involvement in societies with majority Muslims. It shows how greatly spatial and economic inequities can impede religious participation even in areas with strong Islamic identities, such Aceh.

This demands a more complex knowledge of religiosity that takes the material surroundings of spiritual practice into consideration. Practically, the results show how urgently inclusive social and religious policies are needed. Local governments and religious institutions have to acknowledge the particular difficulties underprivileged people experience in carrying out their religious duties. For example, the building of a tiny prayer facility (musholla) close to the TPA would greatly improve the capacity of scavengers to pray everyday. Likewise, community leaders and mosque committees ought to give outreach initiatives including scavenger families in social support systems and religious events top priority.

The study emphasizes even the need of including religious factors into initiatives aimed at reducing poverty. For many scavengers, faith still provides resilience and moral direction; thus, development projects matching their spiritual beliefs could be more efficient and sustainable. While religious education programs might be tailored to the particular requirements and schedules of scavenger families, zakat (almsgiving) programs could be more deliberately targeted to assist informal laborers. Moreover, the results have consequences for more general discussions on social fairness and urban design. Scattered scavengers from religious buildings show a larger trend of disregard in urban development. Dealing with this calls for a change in society perceptions of unofficial workers and physical infrastructure.

Creating more inclusive and fair metropolitan areas depends on first lowering stigma and encouraging empathy. This study has limits even if it provides insightful analysis. First, the sample size was somewhat small ($n=12$), hence even if attempts were taken to guarantee variety among participants, the results might not be completely generalizable to all scavenger communities in Indonesia or outside. Future studies could profit from a bigger and more varied sample including comparison studies across many locations or religious settings. Second, the study concentrated mostly on Muslim scavengers in a mostly Muslim area. Therefore, it fails to portray the experiences of religious minorities or interfaith dynamics inside scavenger communities.

Investigating how various religious traditions interact with poverty and informal work would be a good direction of research. Third, the research drew on self-reported data, which can have social desirability bias. Participants might have overstated their spiritual commitments or underrecorded failures in religious practice. Although triangulation with observation and document analysis helped reduce this risk, future research might include longitudinal approaches or ethnographic immersion to acquire more thorough understanding. At last, the study neglected to investigate gender in depth. Although both

men and women were among the scavengers, the study did not methodically investigate how gender influences religious practice in poverty. Given the prominent part women play in both religious and economic life, this offers a significant path for next studies. Based on the results and constraints of this work, various avenues of next investigation are recommended: Future studies might examine scavenger communities in several metropolitan environments, religious traditions, or sociopolitical scenarios.

This would assist in spotting trends and context-specific variances in the link between poverty and religious life. 2. Gender and Religion: By means of a targeted investigation on the gendered aspects of religious practice among informal workers, significant understanding of how men and women negotiate faith under financial restrictions may be revealed. Tracking variations in religious conduct over time especially in reaction to economic fluctuations, legislative interventions, or community development could provide a more dynamic knowledge of the sociopolitical life of underprivileged groups. Investigating how children and adolescents in scavenger communities are socialized into religious life and how this interacts with their educational and economic paths will help both sociology of religion and childhood studies.

Cooperation among experts, religious organizations, and legislators could investigate doable solutions to assist in the social and religious inclusion of underprivileged groups. In this sense, action research techniques could be especially successful. Finally, this research has highlighted the sometimes-disregarded junction between poverty and religious life in metropolitan Indonesia. It has revealed that although faith is still a fundamental component of identity for scavenging groups, institutional inequality, spatial exclusion, and social stigma shapes their capacity to practice their religion. Dealing with these issues calls not only knowledge and empathy but also specific legislative actions and inclusive religious involvement. This study advances a more complete and compassionate knowledge of religiosity in modern metropolitan settings by highlighting the voices of the underprivileged.

CONCLUSION

This study aimed to investigate in TPA Gampong Jawa, Banda Aceh, the junction between socioeconomic difficulty and religious life among scavenging people. It investigated how poverty, informal work, and spatial marginalization affect the religious practices and spiritual interaction of those living on the margins of metropolitan society using a qualitative case study method. The results show that although religious identification is still strongly ingrained among scavengers, their capacity to perform religious obligations especially daily prayers and group worship is much limited by their financial situation. Their participation in official religious life is hampered by long working hours, physical distance from religious infrastructure, lack of access to clean facilities, and social stigma taken as whole.

Many nonetheless show a strong sense of faith and a wish to remain spiritually connected in spite of these obstacles, hence they typically modify their activities to meet their surroundings. These revelations help to provide a more complex knowledge of religiosity in poverty-strata. They draw attention to the institutional and material circumstances restricting access to religious life, therefore challenging the presumption that religious disengagement is a matter of personal negligence or disinterest. The report also emphasizes the need of inclusive religious policy and community outreach recognizing and allowing the lived reality of underprivileged groups. Practically, the study begs more attention to the needs of informal

workers from religious institutions, municipal governments, and civil society. Simple actions like setting up a prayer area next to the landfill or strengthening relationships between mosque leaders and scavenger groups will greatly increase religious inclusion and social cohesiveness.

Although the study is particular for a situation, its consequences are general. It asks academics, legislators, and religious leaders to reevaluate how faith is observed and encouraged in underdeveloped areas of economy. It also creates the avenue for more investigation on the spiritual life of people sometimes disregarded in policy and scholarly debate. Ultimately, this research confirms that faith endures even in the most difficult of conditions. But that faith needs structural support, compassion, and inclusivity if it is to bloom. Acknowledging the dignity and spiritual goals of every person regardless of their socioeconomic level is not only a moral need but also a required first step toward a society fairer and more compassionate.

DECLARATION OF CONFLICTING INTEREST

The author(s) declared no potential conflicts of interest with respect to the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article.

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