

## “Dream” and Poverty Alleviation

PAJAR HATMA INDRA JAYA

Sociologist at Islamic Community Development Department, the Faculty of Da'wah and Communication, Sunan Kalijaga State Islamic University, Jl. Marsda Adisucipto, Yogyakarta, 55281.  
email: [pajar.jaya@uin-suka.ac.id](mailto:pajar.jaya@uin-suka.ac.id)

**Abstract.** This research is motivated by the failure of Indonesian government in implementing its poverty alleviation. Poverty rate in Indonesia does not decrease although the government has implemented a complete strategy to address the problem. It is right that the poor household has got a lot of help from the government, but their welfare does not increase. The program seems merely to serve as a temporary safety valve. This study attempts to find the causes of the failure of the program. The research has found that unchanged consciousness of the beneficiaries becomes the main factor of the failure. In their consciousness, the beneficiaries do not find a true dream about the ideal of what will be achieved in the future. If they have such a dream, it is more on meeting the current needs and is not followed by reasoning instrument in the form of guidelines for their goal achievement.

*Keywords:* poverty reduction, consciousness, dream, reasoning instrument

### Introduction

Poverty is a family powerlessness to fulfill basic needs, either food or non-food, to maintain and develop a dignified life. Although the poverty marked by the economic deprivation is an unpleasant situation, only few families are able to escape from such status. The poverty rate in Indonesia has not shifted much, but remained in the number of 28 million people (Central Bureau of Statistics/Badan Pusat Statistik, 2016: 9-10, 26).

In the reign of Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono, there was a complete mechanism to overcome poverty. Through the National Team to Accelerate Poverty Alleviation (TNP2K), appear three formulations to accelerate poverty reduction program, namely: social protection, community development, and provision of micro credit. In the community development program, particularly the PNPM Mandiri program, poor families who do not have the expertise are directed to take business training and given venture capital loan assistance. Philosophically, the efforts of poverty alleviation can be analogized through a variety of ways, ranging from

giving fish, teaching how to catch fish, giving a hook, even keeping the pool so that the fish can be taken fairly if necessary (<http://www.tnp2k.go.id/id/kebijakan-percepatan/program-penanggulangan-kemiskinan/klaster>, downloaded on September 4, 2015).

The funds released by the government for poverty alleviation is quite adequate. Data from the Directorate General of Budget of the Ministry of Finance show that the total budget for programs addressing poverty in 2011 amounted to Rp 50 trillion, and increased to Rp 54.23 trillion in 2012 (Hermawan, 2012: 140). In 2013, the government even issued 106.8 trillion to alleviate poverty, but the result is that the poverty rate increased by 0.11 million in 2014 (Central Bureau of Statistics/Badan Pusat Statistik, News Release No. 52/07 / th. XVII, July 1, 2014; <http://kominfonewscenter.com>, *Anggaran Penanggulangan Kemiskinan 2013 Rp106,8 Triliun, Tanggap Darurat Bencana Rp 4 Triliun*, accessed on August 29, 2012; <http://ekbis.rmol.co/read/2013>, *Anggaran Rp 92 Triliun Kok Cuma Kurangi Kemiskinan 0,97 Persen*). This is strengthened by National Poverty Alleviation Agency (Bapenas) which

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exposed that the alleviation of poverty in the last 15 years was failed (Suyono, Kompas, November 21, 2015: 7). The former studies were to evaluate poverty alleviation programs, such as those performed by Nisak (2014) who examined the effectiveness of implementing of policy of rice for the poor, Lubis (2005) who evaluated the program implementing direct cash assistance (BLT) in Medan Johor Medan, Setiawan (2006) who evaluated the implementation of the Sub-district Development Program (PPK) in Karangmojo Sub-district of Gunung Kidul, and Sanadjihitu Sangadji, et al (2015) who analyzed the poverty alleviation in Sidoarjo. If the poverty alleviation fund were used to buy "cars for people" with the price of Rp 100 million for each unit, it would get as many as 1,068,000 cars could be given to poor families, so that at least one million families could escape from poverty because they had a new car. Thus, there is something wrong with the implementation of poverty reduction programs in Indonesia.

McClalund in 1961 said the progress or backwardness of a society was influenced by Virus N-Ach. N-Ach stands for the Need of Achievement or achievement motivation. McClalund observed that in an advanced civilized society, the achievement motivation is always spread in the form of a story or a fairy tale on the struggle and success that affect the "dream" or the determination of society. N-Ach which is revealed in the dream of a society becomes a guide line for their action (McClalund, 1987). The assumption emerges in the context of poverty alleviation is that when the government has provided training and business loans, the poor families who received the program has no achievement motivation. It is reflected in the absence of the "dream" in their consciousness, and therefore poor families are not moved to free themselves from poverty. Thus, examining the "dream" of poor families is important before social intervention is undertaken.

Based on the description above, this research tries to give answers to the questions of: How is the "dream" of poor families associated with the determination to escape from poverty? What are the difficulties for poor families to achieve their "dream" that made them remain as poor families? The formulation of new strategies on poverty alleviation is needed to solve the problem, so that the government assistance program for poor families can be applied effectively and efficiently.

## Methodology of Research

This research employed the qualitative descriptive method. It was conducted in Mulyodadi Village, Bambanglipuro, Bantul. The samples were determined by using the purposive sampling technique combined with the random one. The samples of the research consisted of 15 respondents of the poor families, with the informants' criteria of those who have ever received the Poverty Alleviation Assistance Program from the government, such as Joint Business Group Program of the Ministry of Social Affairs, Community Development Program for Poverty Alleviation of the Government of Bantul Regency, and PNPM Mandiri Urban Program Members.

The data of the research were collected through in-depth interview, observation, and documentation. They were then analyzed by using the interactive model of analysis proposed by Milles dan Huberman, which comprising three components, namely: data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing (Muhajir, 1990: 104). To avoid excessive subjectivity, a data source triangulation was used to validate the data by testing the consistency of answers given by respondents during the interview sessions to those given by their neighbors (Moleong, 2000: 178; Hendriasyah, 2013: 9, 66).

## Without the Phase of "Dream" Development, Program Would Fail

"*Mimpi*" in Indonesian is a translation of "dream" in the theory of four phases of Community Development according to the Appreciative Inquiry approach. The approach in Indonesia is best known as the ABCD (*Asset Base Community Development*) approach. The development phases according to the theory, including discovery, dream, design, and destiny. "*Mimpi*" or "dream" can be defined as ideals or desires (will) which are always in the mind to be achieved and performed (Cooperrider dan Whitney, 2005: 25-26).

ABCD theory puts dreams (builds dream) as an important step in the development of society. Once people have found out and known the potential he has (discovery), the next step is to build a dream (Cooperrider and Whitney, 2005: 25-26; Australia Indonesia Partnership, no year). A dream is a target, which is some view that will be achieved in the future. Dreams can be a general direction that must be followed by the community.

The stronger the dream they build, the more powerful motivation needed to make it happen so that the efforts can be focused on how to reach it.

Chambers (1997) analyzed that one failure of community development programs is due the bias from outsiders. The outsiders think they know everything about empowerment, but in fact the ones who know best about the causes of underdevelopment are local people themselves. Based on this assumption, Chambers (1996) offers a perspective of Participatory Appraisal to see the needs of society. Thus, it should include the participation of poor families to alleviate poverty. One important element to be examined from a poor family is a "dream".

McClelland in his Achievement Motivation Theory suggests that individuals have a reserve of potential energy and how this energy is released and developed depends on the strength or encouragement of the individual, the available situations, and opportunities. Achievement is a term introduced by McClelland in the field of psychology that indicates the willingness of an individual to get achievement, to master a skill, and to take a control. A person who has a high N-Ach tends to have the characteristics to look for challenges and to have a high degree of independence (Hadiwinata, 2002: 102-106).

In the former failed programs based on the observation, however, the researcher did not find any poverty alleviation activity beginning with a portfolio to build a dream. Some respondents even got help without first being asked whether they had a dream or not. They just got the money to buy a chicken, or they were just invited to participate in batik training without being asked whether they wanted to be a batik painter or not. In addition, some respondents just participated in activities that had been designed by the board of program. One of the respondents, Yi (25 years old) said,:

"It is good to be assisted by the government. I was involved in carpentry training. Then, I was also given a complete set of carpentry tools. Actually, I wanted to breed a lot of goats. Therefore, the tools were then bought by my friend, and I used the money to buy some goats"

Similarly, the other respondent, Ay (39 years old) claimed,:

"I participated in the CDMK Program, and the

Management Board of CDMK Program directly gave me four goats even though I had not prepared a goat pen yet."

Respondents were not asked to build a dream, and they responded willingly when they got free help from the state. No poor families responded other than by restoring help which they did not know what it would be used for. However, with the absence of a dream in the course of empowering poor families, the development went to unclear direction; as if it walked on the same spot and have not moved forward. Even some programs experienced "guremisasi". "Guremisasi" which is so called involution is a term proposed by Clifford Geertz in his research on agriculture in Java. According to Geertz, agriculture in Java is not just walking on the spot, but declining more and more. One characteristic of involution is "growing inside", not bloom or flourish. This involution exists not only in agriculture, but also in other areas (Geertz, 1983: xxvii, 130).

The business venture of some respondents who received capital help got smaller and smaller. The number of cattle was also dwindling. Even programs of skill training led to the same thing. Since it was not practiced, the skill gradually went off. Thus the help granting without a dream building would not give a proper result.

All respondents found it difficult to mention their dream. Most of them had no idea of what they would achieve by the program assistance. If any, the dream was usually for a short term. Therefore, the assistant have a task to help and facilitate them to build their dream. To achieve the dream, they should be assisted by breaking it down into a work plan.

Weber had a concept called reasoning instrument action. It is an action of clear objective and instrument to achieve the goal (Johnson, 1988: 220). In community activities, it often happens that there is no connection between a goal and the way to achieve it or even there is a goal but no effort to achieve it. In this study, the researcher found a respondent who wanted to have his own goats, but did not save money to be able to buy them. He spent most of his wages to buy cigarettes, instead.

If analyzed, the process of poverty alleviation program has not been proportional all this time at it did not provide an adequate portion for the planning of the program but gave more emphasis on the implementation

aspect. It has been widely admitted that the planning phase determines the successful of the program in the following phases as said the old proverb that *If we fail to plan, we plant to fail*. In addition, the planning phase should contain the process of seeking-potentials (*discovery*), that of developing "dreams" (dream) and that of design formation (design). If a comparison is made between an ideal poverty alleviation model and frequently used poverty alleviation phases, the following figure will be present in Figure 1.

**Characteristics that Don't Support Poverty Alleviation: the Absence of Long Term "Dream"**

Neils Mulders (1981: 89) found that the Javanese people are human group. Javanese people find it is very important to carry out social obligations in an effort to maintain harmony with the society. Social obligations often appear in the form of "donating" and "helping" when there is a neighbor who has a celebration. Many of the findings in the field show that fulfilling social obligations is to fulfill the most important orientaion. "Being normal" is the reason of many answers when I asked the respondents why they "desperately" tied to fulfill social obligations, although in fact they just had a little money. "Being normal" is a pattern of adaptation in the society to carry out the social obligations in order to be considered common by the system that exists in the society. According to Durkheim "being normal" can be classified in term of organic solidarity. The mechanism of action in organic

solidarity is the reciprocal element; if you help others, they will also help you when you are in need of help. This reciprocal pattern is an important element in many ancient societies (Mauss, 1992).

Some respondents explained that they often did not go to work because they had to help their neighbor when they had a funeral or a wedding. Some others were willing not to eat as long as they could donate to their neighbor. Even I met families who were willing to debt to donate to a neighbor who had a celebration. Whatever would be done in order to be considered "being normal". "Ngumumi" is actually a form of orientation of rural communities in the long term. In the long term they expect that if some day they have a celebration event, they will get the same help from their neighbors. This orientation is traditional and is passed from generation to generation. This activity is a reciprocal action.

Although Javanese people usually have a long term orientation as an excuse to carry out reciprocal social obligations, it is found in the study that several respondents had a short-term orientation about their small family needs. Unless it was about social obligations to the community, the action a respondent did in this study showed a short-term orientation, a principle of meeting today's need as a priority.

The researcher found many respondents who live their lives without having a long term orientation. Poor families took advantage of helping fund to solve their today's problems,

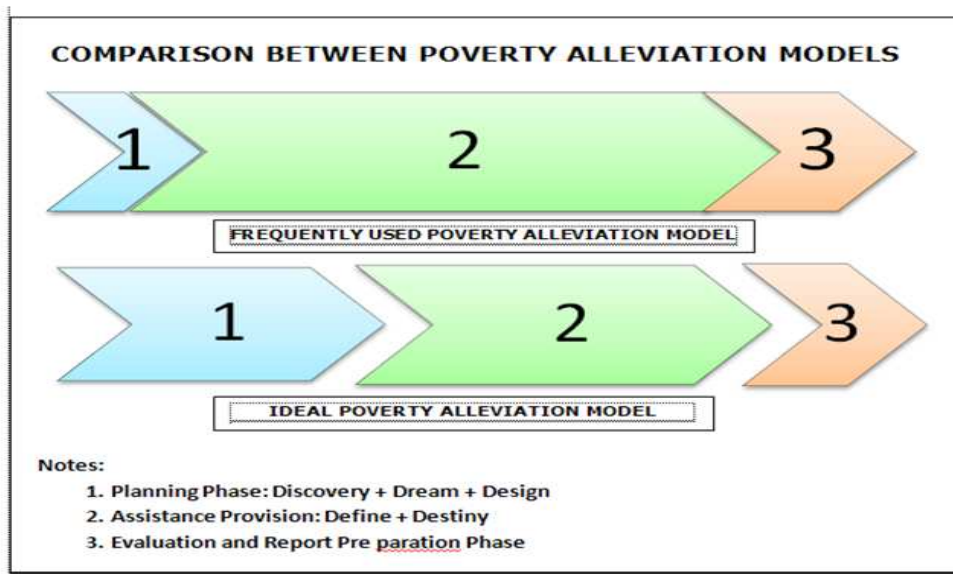


Figure 1. Comparison Between Poverty Alleviation Models

a short term orientation. Therefore many actions were taken without considering a future plan. Most of them had no imagination on the long future. The most important for them was that current needs were fulfilled properly. This happened with one of the respondents named Yi (25 years old). He was a "victim" of his grand father's knowledge without a long-term orientation. He said,:

"I did not complete my Primary School. I had lived with my grandparents since I was a boy because my father got married again. My grandfather told me to quit studying at the school and asked to raise his cows. He promised me if the cows bred, he would buy new clothes for me".

When Yi (25 years old) was in the second grade of his Primary School, his grand father told him to quit studying at school. It was considered unimportant because his grand father had never studied at school. Yi's father had also not completed his Primary School. His father who was Yi's grandfather told him to quit studying at school and help their two cows graze. He just thought that if the cows were well fed, they would be fat and could be sold in a high price. He did not think that studying would be important for his grandchildren's future. This way of thinking shows that he was quite isolated by his little experience. It shows that there were parents who still did not have a long-term plan on their children's future.

Some of the respondents who received the poverty alleviation programs I interviewed also did not have a systematic plan of what target they wanted to achieve in the future. Some of them already had businesses, but did not make a progress. One of them was Ng (65 years old). She was a tempeh seller who had been doing the business for about 20 years. She said,:

"I have been selling tempeh for more than 20 years. Thank God, my tempehs are selling good. In the past, I was assisted with additional capital. Yet, I think that this business has been sufficient to fulfill (my family's) daily needs so that (I) do not need "to force" my self to get money"

Everyday she made about five kilos tempeh which she sold in the stalls surrounding the village. In addition to selling tempeh, she also worked as a farm laborer and had a little farmland. She apparently never thought there was a problem with her business so that for 20 years she still underwent her routine

activities. In her opinion, her tempeh business was significant that she could feed her family and paid her children's school fees. Although her tempehs were always sold out, she did not have an idea to increase the amount of production. Her way of thinking resulted in the stagnation of her business because she already felt comfortable with what she had and thought that there would be no problems with it that she did not need to develop the market.

The absence of long-term orientation and the orientation of just to meet today's needs is a distinctive characteristic of subsistence economy of Javanese farmers. Wolf (1983: 2) distinguishes subsistent farmers peasant (rural farmers) whose farm is just to meet daily needs and oriented-business farmers. Economic business of poor family respondents in the study was also characterized by subsistence focusing on meeting current needs as the priority.

### **Preferring Being in Debt to Saving Money**

Sherraden (2006: 188) describes the relationship between family income and money saving as the relationship between a wellspring and a pond in which the income is the wellspring and the money saving is the pond (the storage pond). This pond is an important element to meet human needs in the future. If people drink from a wellspring without having a storage pond for any time in the future, then when the dry season comes and the wellspring stops, they would find that living is difficult for them. Similarly, it will be so if they suddenly need so much water that a storage pond is very much needed.

Money saving is not only done by those who have a big income. Money saving ability is not always directly proportional to the amount of the income. In fact, there are people with small incomes who can save their money. Some proofs show pedicab drivers or parking attendants can go pilgrimage and some scavengers provide sacrificial animals in Idhul Adha's celebration, but many civil servants who have a fixed income cannot provide sacrificial animals nor can they pilgrimage. Money saving does not depend only on the amount of income, but also on a strong motivation to reach a dream. The stronger your dream, the harder you try to reach it.

All respondents I interviewed do not have a bank account. The government is

kind enough to make affirmations with Temporary Direct Cash Assistance for People (BLSM) program in the form of savings. The government has also been encouraging banks to issue banking products for students and lower economic class people in which the banks do not charge an administration fee for its products. These products include Branch Savings. But when the government provides assistance in the form of saving, still it cannot create the habit of money saving.

One difficulty presented by several respondents is that saving money in a bank is quite complicated. A lot of time is wasted to get to the bank which is located in other village and to queue even if you want to save just a little amount of money. One respondent could set aside IDR 100,000 a week but he did not want to save the money in a bank. Instead, he preferred using his money to buy gold whose value is stable. Another difficulty is a matter of time. You have to go to the bank to save your money in the working hours so that when you manage to go to the bank, you lose a day's wage. Some banks already have ATM machines but they do not have such facility for students and lower economic class accounts, and there is a limitation of cash amount withdrawn in a day. Although this type of saving is an affirmative form with free administrative costs, in practice, it is quite difficult to use due to the reduction in saving facilities. Thus, saving activity that seems to be positive turns out to be negative that many people would prefer the less formal saving. YI was one of the respondents who chose to save his money informally. However, more other respondents did not save their money either formally or informally. He said,:

"Thank God, compared to my friends, I can save my money. My friends spend their money on cigarettes. Actually, I want to save my money in a bank. But, If I went to the bank, I would be absent from my work, and if I was absent from my work, I would not have money."

The absence of these saving shows that there is no serious effort to reach their dreams. Although there is a goal, but the effort to achieve that goal is not so serious. Thus the goal is meant to be a desire and not to be the need which is immediate and urgent to be fulfilled.

Some of the respondents said that they once had a business. One of them was Ng (59 years old). He told that he was a peddler. He sold chicken noodles. At first, he received an initial capital from his son who

works in Sidoharjo. His business had run for a long enough time, but sometimes he was not disciplined in spending the money he had earned. The income he had got from selling the chicken noodles was used for "donation" in his friends' or relatives' celebration parties such as wedding party. Sometimes, he also spent some of the income for buying lottos (lottery). Buying lottos was one of his activities to get additional income instantly if he won. In practice, he frequently lost, but surprisingly he kept buying the lottos because he had borne in his mind that he had a chance to win although the percentage was small. The wife of Ng (59 years) said,:

"Actually selling chicken noddles is quite profitable. But, my husband is frequently "indiffererent". The income from selling the chicken noodles frequently did not match the portions of chicken noodles he could sell. I often caught him buying lottos. As a result, the capital from our child and even the capital assistance from the government also run out. Eventually, my husband owed some money to run this business".

When he had no more money because he had used the capital of his business for other usage, all he could do was owing money. Owing money was one of the most practical ways to meet his daily needs. First he owed from a family or a neighbor, but when there was no family or neighbor who lends him money, then the only way was to apply for credit in a financial institution. The respondent did not care how much interest he had to pay for the loan, even if his profit was not sufficient to cover the loan interest. The important thing in the borrower's mind was that he could quickly get the money and it seemed to be easily paid due to the bi-weekly installment.

For example, one respondent borrowed IDR 1.5 million to start a business of selling chicken noodle. He admitted that he spent the money was not only for his business but also for covering his daily needs. He had to repay the loan by IDR 78,000 for 25 times (about 6 months) every two weeks. Thus, he had to repay by 1.95 million for a loan of IDR 1.5 million. In other words, to obtain a loan of IDR 1.5 million he should be charged IDR 450 thousand for six months. During six months he had to bear an interest of 30%, 60% for a year or 5% per month. This calculation did not make any sense because if you borrow in the local bank (BPD), it bears an interest at no more than 1.5%. But strangely, respondents did not care about it. It did not matter whether the loan was deadly or profitable for

their business. What they saw was just that they could get cash money quickly without complicated procedures. This situation leads to "guremisasi" (poor poverty).

The easy access to credit and the obedience of the high interest on the loan show there was no careful planning in poor families. To borrow a loan from a mobile financial institution, you just have to submit copies of your ID card and your family card (KK) and within two weeks you will get your cash money. To keep customers paying their loans, similar to a microcredit institution, the "mobile banks" imposed a system of joint responsibility. It formed a group consisting of ten people. If one member of the group had financial difficulties, other members took responsibility on the installment so that it would always run smoothly.

The way of thinking motivated by the desire to get cash money instantly created a poverty trap. If a respondent wanted to save money to fulfill his dream, he should not have to pay high interests. It was a heavy burden for him. More strangely, there were many, not just one or two, participants in one village. The financial institution had five groups or fifty participants.

## Conclusions

Although the government has already executed a complete strategy to deal with poverty, the poverty rate has not declined significantly. The failure of the poverty alleviation programs is due to two factors, namely: system factor and human factor. The former is related to the program staging which neglects the importance of planning. As a result, the wills or desires of the program's recipients are neglected. Meanwhile, the latter is related to the absence of a strong vision to get out of the poverty. The poverty, which indicated by economic deprivation, has made people miserable and raises the determination to get out of that poverty. The chronic poverty brings a consequence, namely internalization of poverty culture. The culture is related to the absence of achievement motivation (N-Ach), which indicated by the absence of a clear dream of what is to achieve in the future. The existing dream, if available, is merely to fulfill the current needs, and it is not followed by instrumental reasons, namely guidelines in the form of phases to achieve the "dreams" and saving culture.

Thus, the recipients of the poverty alleviation programs should be encouraged to

participate in channelling their dreams because the strong dreams will become a potential energy which can be developed to encourage ones to act better. The government is recommended to make phases of developing dreams prior to the execution of the skill improvement programs or the allocation of business capital for them. The dreams, especially those visualized in the forms of pictures, will encourage one to always think of and act so that his or her dream can be materialized. If the dreams have already existed, the next phase is encouraging the dreams to be derived in the guidelines or phases of planning.

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