Covid-19 Pandemic: Struggle to Scavenge Sustenance from Recycling Economy in Serang City, Indonesia

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Abstract- The purpose of this study is to: a) describe a portrait of the lives of junk seekers in housing during the covid-19 pandemic, b) facilitate analysis through various perspectives of the strategies of recycling seekers in housing to survive the covid-19 pandemic. The method used in this study is descriptive qualitative research with a qualitative approach in June 2021. The locus of this study is in a housing complex in the area of Serang City, Banten Province, Indonesia.

This research informant includes 10 scavengers and various parties relevant and related to the research theme. The technique of retrieving informants in this study was determined intentionally (Purposive). The determination of informants is temporary and will develop after researchers in the field. Informants in the early stages enter the field are selected by people who have power and authority on a system of objects studied, so as to open the door wherever researchers will collect data. Data retrieval methods use interviews, observations and documentation. Data is analyzed through qualitative analysis techniques by reviewing data that begins by studying all the collected data, studying data, studying, compiling in one unit, which is then categorized at the next stage and examining the validity of the data and defining it with the analysis in accordance with the ability of the researcher's power to make research conclusions.

Keywords: recycling economy, covid-19, scavenge sustenance.

GJMBR-A Classification: JEL Code: O49, O50

Strictly as per the compliance and regulations of:
Covid-19 Pandemic: Struggle to Scavenge Sustenance from Recycling Economy in Serang City, Indonesia

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I. Introduction

Poverty is a problem facing the world today. Along with the financial constraints that some people face. For a long time, this has been the case in almost all human cultures. Human level and living conditions are divided into two categories in different parts of the world: conglomerate and poor. Poverty became a major epidemic as a result of the never-ending socioeconomic attacks. The above issues are depictions of poverty that have grown into a major and complex problem as it is influenced by various factors such as income level, education, access to products and services, geographic location, gender, and environmental circumstances. Poverty is defined as the failure to provide a person or group of people with basic rights and treatment so that they can live a dignified life. Food, health, employment, housing, safe drinking water, soil, natural resources, and the environment, as well as a sense of security from treatment or threats of violence, are all considered essential.

Although Indonesia is a large country with a large population, not all societies are prosperous and peaceful. Indonesia's population is currently estimated at 237.6 million people, placing it among the top ten countries by population. Due to the large population, the government has difficulty meeting the demands of the community and carrying out community service projects. (Adiningsih et al., 2008, p. 160.)

In fact, different events and images of the lives of the poor and poor can still be found in the suburbs. A bad struggle to make ends meet, raising as much money as they can to stay afloat. Survival is all that matters to them. However, due to economic challenges and the inability to compete individually, these were never solved and continued to be resolved, causing poverty to increase.

Today, many mass media outlets report increasing numbers of difficulties in Indonesia's major cities. The following issues arise: an increase in the number of people living in poverty, increased unemployment, depletion of drinking water sources, an increase in the number of fires in the dry season, an increase in the number of inundated areas in the rainy season, an increase in the number of street children and beggars, an increase in robberies, and so on. These issues are often associated with a significant population of underprivileged people in Indonesia.

According to BPS (https://www.bps.go.id) data, the percentage of urban poor people was 6.56 percent in September 2019 and 7.38 percent in March 2020.
While the number of poor individuals in rural areas increased by 12.60 percent in September 2019, rising to 12.82 percent in March 2020. As of March 2020, Indonesia's average poor household has 4.66 individuals. As a result, the average size of the Poverty Line per poor house each month is Rp2,118,678.

Poverty has become an intractable spiral of demons, requiring focused and complete effort. The success of poverty alleviation in agriculture and rural areas is Indonesia's main difficulty in dealing with poverty. The number of poor people in the hamlet is significantly higher than the number of poor people in the metropolis. Since agriculture is the economic foundation of the village, poverty alleviation in agricultural households is considered the key to achieving national poverty reduction (Taran & et al. 2019). Disasters or disease outbreaks are one of the rarely recognized causes of poverty. Since late 2019, the world has been devastated by the coronavirus outbreak known as the Covid-19 pandemic. This pandemic affected a large geographical area around the world. Covid-19 reached Indonesia in early March 2020, with an increasing number of infected and a wide distribution area, declaring a non-natural national disaster.

Many economic operations are contracted and even stopped production as a result of the spread of various initiatives to address or break the chain of spread of Covid-19. This resulted in increased unemployment, decreased individual and corporate productivity, and encouraged the emergence of additional poor people, increasing the total number of poor people (Izzati 2020; Suryahadi et al. 2020). In this case, the government must work to reduce poverty in the short, medium, and long term (Yusuf, 2020).

The Covid-19 pandemic has wiped out the economy of Serang City, Banten, which relies on a large amount of natural resources and the development of all possibilities. Even the informal sector, such as scavengers, is affected. A group of scavengers who rely on taking waste for their livelihoods is one informal sector that has been hit hard by viral virulence. These scavengers were unable to complete their customary work due to government restrictions on outdoor activities and Community Activity Restrictions (PKM) that had been implemented in Serang City. In addition, when the economic activity of Serang City decreases, the volume of waste produced decreases, affecting their income. They have to find time by going around the local housing complex hunting for old stuff. Since there is little citizen activity, the amount of waste produced decreases, implying that the amount of used products received is also decreasing.

Scrap metal, used bottles, mineral water glasses, cardboard, paper, and used plastic are just some of the items scavengers are willing to fight to find something that can still be sold to secondhand buyers (recycling entrepreneurs) (Parmonangan, 2013). According to Jhones, he was a scavenger. (in Silva: 2014), is someone who picks up and collects scraps from city trash cans. Plastic, paper, cardboard, cans, broken glass, scrap metal, and other old items were among the commodities collected. Scavengers are low-status individuals who are usually poor and migratory (Medina, 2001 in Wiyatna, 2015). Scavengers, according to Shalih (2003: 29 in Suhendri 2015) are individuals or groups who take, take, collect, and search for waste. As a market commission, scavengers collect and process garbage from streets, rivers, garbage cans, and landfills. Scavengers are social groups whose work involves the collection or sorting of valuable objects from waste, both inside and outside landfills (PPSML, 2000: 36; Joseph, 2015; Suseno and Dwiatmadja, 2016).

Despite its poor status, scavengers are usually not what people think of when they think of scavengers. Even if scavengers don't realize it, they are essentially environmental heroes (Suseno, et al. 2021). Its existence is very important for everyone; With scavengers, large amounts of waste can be reused and reproduced, ensuring that no accumulation of waste can cause environmental problems.

Some people underestimate the social side of the scavenger's life because they are considered dirty, prone to disease, and provide a minimal salary. Despite this, some people continue to work as scavengers, either forced or willing (Lestari Sukarniati et al., 2017). As a scavenger, activities such as picking up garbage and collecting it can make the body dirty and embarrassing (Ali & Hasan, 2019 & Suseno, et al. 2020). Its existence, which is inseparable from dirty things and discarded things, qualifies them as dirty, dirty, and lives an unhealthy lifestyle.

Despite the fact that the world has been hit by the Covid-19 pandemic, scavengers, operating in the informal sector, continue to scavenge waste from house to house or in landfills, albeit on a limited basis. According to Laksono (2015:153) who claims that scavengers are stereotyped as thieves because of a sign that reads "Scavengers Are Prohibited from Entering" that can be found in urban settlements, scavenger calls usually receive a bad reputation from the communityt Suseno et al. 2020). This misconception has pushed women who work as scavengers to the periphery of the household economy. This marginalization was exacerbated by the mistrust of different publics in their profession after Covid-19.

Scavengers or bag men should be of concern to all parties, given the history mentioned above. Although the coronavirus is spreading rapidly nowadays, that doesn't stop scavengers from scouring residential complexes in search of household waste (Suseno, 2015). They had to devise a strategy that included arriving at the trash can at the housing complex in the morning (around 4:00 a.m.m) when humans were sleeping or before sunrise. Despite the
fact that the cost of acquiring plastic waste scavenging products and other items is relatively low. Before dawn, they were fighters, plundering windfalls as worshippers prayed toward mosques and mosques.

II. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Scavengers, often known as bag people, are a group of people who have experienced prolonged poverty. Many of them are very ignorant about their suffering. They tend to give up on these issues and make no additional effort to bring the scenario out of the current problem. Those who are most important can meet nutritional needs (Suseno et al. 2020). The house is in good condition, and the most important thing is not heat or rain.

A scavenger is a person who works full-time as a collector of used products for his daily needs. The existence of scavengers who collect used products for recycling becomes important so that garbage does not form a high mountain in landfill (Abdillah, 2019). Scavenging is one of the informal sector activities involving garbage and secondhand goods such as newspapers, plastic, cardboard, scrap metal/scrap, bottles, and other plastic and iron based glassware, and so on. The more used products collected, the better the scavenger results (Sumarni, 2012 & Suseno, 2019).

Everyone aspires to work in a good and respectable environment. They can get results from this work, both in terms of selling goods and sales services. Through the findings obtained, you can buy or use it for daily needs (Suseno, etal. Primary, secondary, and tertiary needs are all met. Everyone’s daily life will definitely be difficult because of this (Suseno, et al. 2020). How did he divide his income to fulfill his many goals? When it comes to dividing and utilizing what has been produced, caution is required. But what about a scavenger who chooses to become one? Of course, this is one of those calls that, in terms of sustainability, is associated with second-hand goods and even slums.

According to Hasanuddin, a graduate of the Faculty of Usuhluddin, Philosophy, and Politics of Alauddin State Islamic University of Makassar, "Social Life of Scavengers in Landfills (TPA) Tamangapa Manggala Village, Makassar City District, "Social Life of Scavengers in Landfill (TPA) Tamangapa Manggala Village District of Makassar City"

"Few people are familiar with the life of a scavenger. Scavenging used goods is the only way for some scavengers to pick up a piece of rice and stay alive in this capital. Scavengers avoid picking up used bottles amid people who eat and drink, but they want to look for waste bags for cardboard, plastic, and other discarded materials that have a strong odor. He does it to quench his thirst and satisfy his hunger (Suseno, 2018). They only consider what they will eat today, tomorrow, and the following days. That's all they want. However, some scavengers are also looking for work. Unfortunately, many of the new restrictions and educational limits imposed by the changing times prevented them from shifting from scavenging for jobs. They would rather be rich in a non-halal way than in a halal way" (Hasanuddin, 2017: 3-4).

Because these scavengers tend to be a less beruntung group at squalid conditions, the social status of scavengers is often underestimated. However sebagian besar scavengers do not realize that they bercontroversi dalam solve the problem of garbage. According to him they only work to get money to support their families (suseno, 2017).

The life of a scavenger is turned upside down near the Banten Lestari Park Housing complex in Serang City. Some scavengers are not natives of the area, but migrants from other areas who complain of not being able to find suitable jobs, similar to scavenger life in other areas. However, in reality, many who are looking for a good and decent career do not have the solid education and necessary abilities. Scavengers are a side profession for most scavengers in TBL to supplement their income and meet their family’s basic needs. There are some interesting rickshaws, construction workers, and housewives who wash workers and iron workers among the heads of households. Because a large number of scavenger hunts are carried out by the mother and her children. There are also some that use scavenging as a primary or secondary source of income. Scavengers can spend hours on the streets, in landfills, and in residential areas in Serang City collecting or picking up unwanted products that can be resold.

A non-uniform approach is needed to respond to the impact of the Covid-19 epidemic, which differs between countries, countries, and times (World Bank 2020). Because it is closely related to basic and primary needs, the poor are the ones who bear the brunt of the effects. The Indonesian government has been responding to the scenario since March 2020 by implementing a policy of offering a variety of social safety networks and pre-employment programs.

There are two elements to this policy. Sumbako amounted to 1.9 million RT in Jabodetabek, cash social benefits outside Jabodetabek, free electricity assistance for 33.6 million consumers, and employee wage subsidies of Rp 37.7 trillion for four months (Yumna et al. 2018). Short-term support in the form of free food and power to meet the basic food needs and food of the poor and precarious is provided when the receiving group is no longer able to meet their basic needs. In addition, short-term pre-employment assistance in the form of cash social assistance and salary subsidies for workers is given to groups of workers who are actually workers but unable to work or have stopped working due to the outbreak. Medium-term programs, such as BLT for village funds, pre-employment cards for training...
and encouragement, and BLT for micro and small businesses for 1 million UMK, are offered to groups that have fallen into poverty due to lack of employment opportunities, but can return to productivity by providing solid employment opportunities (Suseno, et al. 2021).

Suseno (2021) provides evidence that Covid-19 outbreaks show no signs of slowing down, and the number of infected people is increasing. The government announced an additional policy of Rp405.1 trillion, with the following details: (1) Rp150 trillion for national economic recovery; (2) Rp70.1 trillion for tax incentives and KUR stimulus; (3) Rp110 trillion for social protection; and (4) Rp75 trillion for health services (Bappenas 2020). The Ministry of Agriculture launched three strategic actions in reaction to the impact of the pandemic: (1) refocusing activities and anticipatory (short-term) budgets; (2) Accelerate labor-intensive programs, such as accelerated harvesting, development of agricultural infrastructure, and improvement of the quality of human resources (short-medium term); and (3) maintain the availability of basic foodstuffs, such as seed aid (short medium term). Policy reactions are nothing new, but they are becoming faster in response to the implications of the Covid-19 pandemic.

III. Method

In June 2021, descriptive qualitative research using qualitative techniques was used in this study. The complex in Serang City. Ten scavengers and other parties relevant and related to the research theme form this research informant. In this study, the method of finding informants was carefully selected (Purposive). The selection of informants is only temporary, and that will change as field studies take place. At the outset in the field, informants are selected by people with power and control over the system of items under investigation, to open the door to wherever researchers will collect data. Interviews, observations, and documentation are used as methods of retrieving data. Data is analyzed using qualitative analysis techniques by reviewing data, which starts with a review of all collected data, data analysis.

IV. Results of Research and Discussion

The scavengers come from the area around the housing of Taman Banten Lestari, especially from the villages of Kedaung, Jerakah, and Gempol, according to the results of interviews conducted with various scavenger informants in Taman Banten Lestari Housing. When asked how old one of the scavengers was, he stated that he was in his 60s. For decades, JM has been a scavenger. "I've been a scavenger for almost two decades, and it's very important that I work halal and not steal. I didn't dare to remove debris from the trash cans inside the house. Being a scavenger because my husband was constantly sick and unable to work. Alhamdulillah nong, getting help from the government through the PKH program every day gives the family hope. It's made from rice, eggs, and corn." If there's enough trash to sell, (JM informant) collects it. "I collect garbage first, and only if I have sold a large amount. I can sell it in two to three days before the mah epidemic. However, pandemics can now be purchased for up to four days or even a week. He went on to say.

Similar comments were made by (Informant MR), who indicated that she had been a scavenger for a long time and that this job had replaced her long-suffering husband, who underwent abdominal surgery. MR, like JM, receives assistance from the PKH program. "Fortunately, this program helped me, even if it wasn't enough for four children. According to the scavenging results I obtained before the epidemic, one sack can be obtained in one day at a cost of 2,500 per Kg. However, the price has dropped by 2,000 kg during the pandemic, and collecting and selling half a sack can take up to a week in the Warungjaud area."

According to the findings of interviews with (Informant SH), the revenue earned during the Covid-19 pandemic quickly dwindled because collectors were willing to pay very little for it. Before the pandemic, the price of waste was Rp 4,000, - for one type of bottle of used mineral water in good condition, according to an informant. During this pandemic, the price per kilogram was between Rp 3,000 to Rp 4,000. "Yes, the price has dropped significantly from the previous level of Rp 4,000 per kilo. It's about $3,000 now if it's cheap. This task was done part-time while I worked in Taman Banten Lestari Housing as a washing and ironing worker. I scavenged again on the way home after washing and ironing. Enough to replace my mother, who is rare and not strong enough to scavenge, my husband has long since stopped being his boss's angkot driver."

The interview was conducted with HD and RF informants, two brothers who attended SDN Gempol. Both interviewed mentioned that the scavenging was done because it helped meet the needs of both parents, where his mother who worked as a laundry worker and his father a construction worker. "I am still in the 5th grade of elementary school and my sister is in 3rd grade, from Lebak Gempol." Both claim to have long been scavengers, and during the Covid-19 pandemic both made the most of it. "Yes, pandemics and learning are also rare and still online, my sister and I every morning around the TBL housing complex." HD and RF have been scavengers for six years, especially when his father no longer works as a construction worker due to a lack of work from residents who build houses. Therefore, both can help ease the economy of both parents. When asked how much income is earned to become a scavenger. They smiled, replied; "Usually I get three-quarters of sacks. Before corona mah, I could get two more sacks collected in two days and sold. But because
of this corona period, many complexes are ported, so it can be a bit dech!"

Another scenario involves MR, ST, and AR, which claim to still be cousins at the time of the pandemic. Despite the fact that his parents worked as porters, they have shown that their profession has turned into scavenging because the money from aid is not enough to meet their daily snack needs. "Yes this, our parents do not love the snacks of money geh, so scavenge it, beautiful gonah belanje tuku ice!" he added, occasionally removing his mask from his face. The researchers asked, "Can scavengers’ income be enough for their snack money?" According to (an informant), the three got sacks in a day and collected them for a week before selling them to garbage collectors. "I'm a sack of Sedine, gang up on that wong telu!" "In a day, he can only get one sack; with his brother, he can get three." "I'm the same as carrying debris to join the air, which is good enough for snacking," said (Informant ST) They also stated that the debris was diilo until the collector who took the house.

For more than 5 years, the 53-year-old MN informant has been a scavenger. The idea is to help the husband with his daily needs. As a result of the husband's profession as a laborer (kenek handyman). Husbands rarely work as hard as wives, especially during pandemics. (MN, expert)

According to information obtained from the interview, they became scavengers to help his partner, who worked as a garbage collector and was lightened up with a motorcycle cart. They become scavengers because they have no other choice because they don't have any special talents, especially if they're just high school graduates. "What about tea? We both lack competence; Klo's demands are enough" (Informant MY).

V. Discussion

a) Portrait of the life of the First Layer Recycle Economic Actor

The Covid-19 pandemic has caused people to adjust their mindsets. Like it or not, major changes have taken place in various fields. Playing, working, studying, interacting, and even meeting with relatives are just a few examples. It is as if, in the event of a pandemic, the entire order of people's lives should be encouraged to adapt to existing settings and conditions. Anyone who is unable to follow instructions and adjust to their surroundings will be eliminated. Starting with the service sector, changes to the work system have affected entertainment, public services, education, health, and even banking.

Not a few business owners are out of business experience this incident, despite the fact that they have to desperately twist their brains to keep their company alive (Saefudin, 2019 &suseno, 2019). The rising cost of living is putting pressure on people's finances, and unemployment continues to rise. In the end, major layoffs ensued, companies terminated employment contracts due to rising production costs, and revenues plummeted. Culinary campaigners had to adjust the order of sales to frozen foods as a result of the impact, and some restaurants made moves to remove them. What about the initiative in the junkyard? Buying and selling pre-owned items? Is it destined for the same destiny as a food-related business? Or have you made another attempt? What will happen to the scavengers? Who will be paid as a day laborer if he manages to sell his trash? Is there a decrease in demand for raw materials?

Check out his aunt's informant "SH," who reported that on a normal day, he sold a bottle of used mineral water of the type in a clean state for Rp.4000.00 / kg, despite having to throw away the packaging because the container did not even have a single label. The top bottle can be purchased separately. Scavengers were unable to sell their scavengers on the same day due to lack of raw materials, and steamers had stopped holding and buying even raw, claiming that no company would buy, and would only resume operations after the corona had passed, lowering the selling price to Rp 3,000.00/kg, if not less. In addition, the negative impact of garbage scavenging decreases.

In the months before the pandemic, bottles of clear mineral water would be sorted and broken into small pieces, such as shards, and exported abroad to be made into sports shirts or jerseys. Meanwhile, bottle smelting is often used as raw materials for home appliances across the country, in addition to being recycled. One of them is for the material of the doormat mixture. The world is improving in the case of the corona phenomenon, but it is also encouraging humanity to adapt in order to survive. So, what happens to scavengers who make a living by selling garbage when Corona is dismatit surikan different business model?

It's all homework for us, of course. It's time for us to stop being so selfish. Follow the government's health advice, not only for us, but for the entire country of Indonesia. I hope this pandemic will end soon.

b) Survive lived during the covid-19 pandemic

The Covid-19 pandemic, which has affected behavior and economic activity, has resulted in an increase in the number of people living in poverty, both nationally and in village-city areas, as well as on an island. Increased unemployment, fewer job opportunities, and business all contributed to the decline in income. The impact of Covid-19 also continues to expand throughout Serang. Until the end of the epidemic, scavengers must get up early to get around; The target is a place to live. Because they have to be early, so that recyclable goods have not been taken by their colleagues. They raced with each other to
get up in the morning and set out to scavenge the wreckage before being overtaken by other scavengers. They were seen rushing along with the dawn prayer fighters who packed the mosque before dawn. As did "JM" and "MR," who had been scouring Taman Banten Lestari's residential waste cans for junkyards such as plastic bottles and cardboard since morning. Although it seems that the purchase of waste products was less common during the Covid-19 epidemic, this did not deter them from scavenging for windfalls in their sickly spouses' profession. Because individuals have to find added value and more in their daily lives, government initiatives through PKH are also considered insufficient for their living needs. Windfall scavengers thrive in the home of Taman Banten Lestari, which can collect up to 10 kg of garbage every day. Residential residents, on the other hand, reach out to help by bringing their rogso belongings into place (Yusuf & Suseno, 2020).

The female worker washes and irons while continuing her elderly mother’s profession, which is no longer strong enough to scavenge for her, despite the fact that it doesn’t have to be every day. Pandemics appear to be at stake in scavenging windfalls, despite widespread dissatisfaction with the consequences of litter. That's not all "SH" has to say. In collectors, the selling price of used goods per kilo is also lower than usual. He claimed to be able to sell up to Rp 4,000 per kilo before the outbreak. However, after the pandemic, the price can drop to Rp 3,000. Every day, his income is 5 kg or Rp 15 thousand. It is not immediately sold and must be picked up first (Wiyono, et al, 2021).

Scavenger workers undoubtedly increased during the epidemic, especially in homes, such as Taman Banten Lestari. They are angry that the Covid-19 outbreak has given them very little scavenger income, despite the fact that they should be able to meet their daily needs. Although they periodically breathe a sigh of relief because, with the help of residential residents, there are people who give them trash.

Some road entry points to Housing have been restricted due to the COVID-19 Pandemic. Community housing must also be done in an effort to break the chain of virus. At the very least, this creates a barrier for scavengers looking for trash. If all that is obtained is a plastic bottle of mineral water that does not always reach sekilo. Despite the fact that collected plastic bottles can be sold for Rp 3,000 per kg during this outbreak (Suseno, 2013). They can only give up and do a lot because they are just looking for anything that can be done because of their lack of competence or talent.

That’s the depiction of the lives of scavengers or sack people who keep themselves alive in the midst of the Covid-19 outbreak by scavenging for garbage in a housing complex that is considered a landfill. They also compete to wake up before the germdang azan shubuh in the morning. This is due to the high number of garbage seekers who have flooded the property market.

VI. Conclusion

During the Covid-19 pandemic, a garbage seeker in a housing complex noticed a change in the price of garbage, where for one item, a bottle of clean used mineral water, he sold at a price range of Rp 3,000.00 /kg on a normal day, and he also had to throw away the packaging without a single label attached to the bottle. Bottle! tops are available to buy separately. With the availability of raw materials, scavengers cannot sell their scavenger products on the same day, and collectors have stopped holding and buying raw materials for several months on the grounds that no company is buying, and will only resume operations when corona passes, the selling price for unlabeled cardboard and plastic bottles has dropped to Rp 2000.00/kg.

Survival strategy of epidemic covid-19 garbage hunters in housing complexes. The hunt for old products in Taman Banten Lestari Housing should begin early in the morning, before other scavengers go looking for garbage. Scavengers have been searching for junk items such as plastic bottles and used cardboard since the morning.

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