

## Optimization of the Role of BAZNAS KCP Sumenep in Zakat Management for Local Community Empowerment

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### Artikel Info

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**Abstract:** This study analyzes the optimization of BAZNAS KCP Sumenep's role in zakat management for local community empowerment. Using a qualitative research method, this study examines strategies for zakat collection, distribution, and utilization in addressing geographical challenges, low zakat literacy, and limited infrastructure. The findings indicate that digitalization innovation, increased transparency, and strengthened stakeholder collaboration are key to optimizing zakat management. These findings are expected to serve as a reference for more effective zakat policies in poverty alleviation.

**Keywords:** Zakat; BAZNAS KCP Sumenep; Zakat Management; Community Empowerment; Zakat Digitalization.

**Abstrak:** Penelitian ini menganalisis optimalisasi peran BAZNAS KCP Sumenep dalam pengelolaan zakat untuk pemberdayaan masyarakat lokal. Dengan menggunakan metode penelitian kualitatif, studi ini mengkaji strategi penghimpunan, pendistribusian, dan pendayagunaan zakat dalam menghadapi tantangan geografis, rendahnya literasi zakat, serta keterbatasan infrastruktur. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa inovasi digitalisasi, peningkatan transparansi, dan penguatan sinergi dengan pemangku kepentingan menjadi kunci dalam mengoptimalkan pengelolaan zakat. Temuan ini diharapkan dapat menjadi referensi bagi kebijakan zakat yang lebih efektif dalam mengentaskan kemiskinan.

**Kata Kunci:** Zakat; BAZNAS KCP Sumenep; Pengelolaan Zakat; Pemberdayaan Masyarakat; Digitalisasi Zakat.

## **A. Introduction**

Zakat is one of the pillars of Islam with significant potential to reduce social and economic inequality. As a religious obligation, zakat is not only a vertical relationship between humans and God but also has a horizontal dimension that can improve the living standards of underprivileged communities. Indonesia, as the country with the largest Muslim population in the world, holds enormous zakat potential. According to the National Zakat Board (BAZNAS, 2024), the national zakat potential exceeds IDR 300 trillion per year. However, actual zakat collection remains far below this potential, indicating challenges in zakat management, particularly at the regional level.

BAZNAS, as the official institution established by the government to manage zakat, plays a crucial role in optimizing the collection, distribution, and utilization of zakat. One of its operational arms at the local level is the Sub-Branch Office (KCP). In Sumenep Regency, the presence of BAZNAS KCP is highly strategic, given the region's unique geographical characteristics, encompassing both mainland and islands, with relatively high poverty levels, especially in remote areas such as Masalembu Island, Sapeken Island, and Raas Island (BPS, 2023). This condition presents both a challenge and an opportunity for BAZNAS KCP Sumenep to maximize zakat as an instrument for community empowerment.

Sumenep is one of the regencies in East Java Province with a relatively high poverty rate. According to the Central Bureau of Statistics (BPS) of Sumenep (2024), the poverty rate reached 196.42 thousand people or 17.78%, significantly higher than the East Java provincial average of 10.77%. This underscores the need for socio-economic interventions through zakat, particularly in rural and island communities that are often beyond the reach of conventional government programs.

Although zakat potential in Sumenep is estimated to reach billions of rupiah annually, actual zakat collection remains suboptimal. The 2023 Annual Report of BAZNAS East Java shows that zakat collection in Sumenep amounted to only about IDR

2.3 billion in 2022, far below the estimated potential of over IDR 15 billion. This indicates issues in optimizing the role of zakat management institutions in terms of governance, community participation, and strategies for distribution and utilization.

Effective zakat management at the local level involves three key elements: collection, distribution, and utilization. Collection efforts require innovative approaches to increase public participation, such as zakat literacy campaigns, collaboration with religious leaders, and the use of digital technology (Zain, 2022). Zakat distribution must be transparent and fair to ensure it reaches those truly in need. Meanwhile, zakat utilization should focus on productive programs such as skills training, business capital assistance, and micro, small, and medium enterprise (MSME) development, enabling mustahik to transform into muzakki in the future.

However, BAZNAS KCP Sumenep faces several obstacles in fulfilling its role. One major challenge is the low level of zakat literacy in the community, resulting in limited understanding of zakat obligations and benefits (Mustaqim, 2021). Additionally, human resource constraints, infrastructure limitations, and transportation access issues in island regions hinder effective zakat distribution and utilization. Public trust in zakat institutions is also a critical factor. To enhance trust, high levels of transparency and accountability are essential, particularly in reporting and program implementation.

Information technology utilization offers a solution to these challenges. Through digitalization such as the development of online zakat applications and web-based reporting systems BAZNAS KCP Sumenep can improve efficiency and transparency in zakat management (Rahman, 2023). Strengthening collaboration with local governments, educational institutions, and civil society organizations is also vital for implementing sustainable community empowerment programs.

Furthermore, effective zakat utilization should target productive economic empowerment initiatives, such as entrepreneurship training, business capital aid, integrated agriculture, and the strengthening of sharia cooperatives. However, many empowerment programs remain incidental and lack structured monitoring and evaluation systems

(Prasetyo, 2022). Therefore, this study on optimizing the role of BAZNAS KCP Sumenep is crucial to assess how the institution strategically and sustainably implements zakat collection, distribution, and utilization within the local context.

This research aims to analyze the optimization of the role of BAZNAS KCP Sumenep in zakat management, focusing on collection, distribution, and utilization for local community empowerment. This approach is expected to contribute to strengthening zakat as a tool for poverty alleviation and community development in Sumenep Regency, while also serving as a reference for zakat policy development at the national level (Sari, 2024).

## **B. Research Method**

This study uses a qualitative research method to explore in-depth the strategies, challenges, and solutions encountered by BAZNAS KCP Sumenep in zakat management. This approach is chosen for its ability to uncover social realities, firsthand experiences, and the perspectives of actors involved in the collection, distribution, and utilization of zakat elements that cannot be fully captured through quantitative methods alone.

The qualitative approach allows researchers to understand comprehensively and contextually how BAZNAS KCP Sumenep fulfills its role in community empowerment, particularly in geographically complex areas such as island regions. As such, it provides space to explore how zakat programs are implemented on the ground, how communities respond, and what factors support or hinder their effectiveness.

## **C. Results and Discussion**

### **1. Analysis of the Role of BAZNAS KCP Sumenep in Zakat Management**

BAZNAS KCP Sumenep plays a strategic role as a direct link between *muzakki* (zakat payers) and *mustahik* (zakat recipients), particularly in the archipelagic regions that face unique and complex geographical challenges.

Using a qualitative approach, this study explores in depth how the institution

carries out its zakat management functions within the distinctive social, cultural, and geographical context. Through in-depth interviews and participatory observation, it was found that BAZNAS KCP does not merely carry out zakat distribution mechanically, but also engages in intensive community education to enhance zakat literacy. This literacy is conveyed through direct dialogue with community leaders, religious study groups (*pengajian*), and outreach activities that are adapted to the local language and customs, ensuring that zakat messages are easily understood and accepted by the community.

Zakat fund management is conducted through a dual system, combining face-to-face conventional methods with digital innovations that utilize online applications and platforms. This digital approach not only facilitates the process of zakat collection and distribution, but also increases transparency, thereby fostering public trust. The qualitative findings reveal that the community welcomes these technological conveniences, yet still requires intensive assistance, particularly for those unfamiliar with technology, to ensure optimal access to services.

In addition, the empowerment programs run by BAZNAS KCP Sumenep are sustainable and context-based, encompassing micro-capital provision, skill training, and intensive mentoring tailored to the development of local economic potential. Through case studies and focus group discussions (FGDs) with *mustahik*, it was found that these programs successfully build both the economic and psychological capacity of zakat recipients, enabling them to transform into independent economic actors. The qualitative approach also highlights a shift in the mindset and expectations of *mustahik* from being passive aid recipients to becoming empowered individuals with initiative, who contribute back to their communities.

The results of the qualitative analysis support the notion that BAZNAS KCP Sumenep's transformational approach is effective in addressing structural

poverty, especially in geographically isolated areas. This approach also strengthens public trust in the zakat institution, as the community feels heard and involved in every stage of the program not merely treated as beneficiaries. This aligns with the findings of Alwi et al. (2023), who emphasize the importance of zakat digitalization and literacy in expanding service access and building institutional legitimacy.

Furthermore, the productive zakat management approach, which focuses on developing local economic potential, has proven successful in positioning zakat as a sustainable development instrument. Through in-depth interviews with program managers and beneficiaries, it was found that programs designed based on specific regional needs and potentials can maximize outcomes and generate positive impacts for the community. Thus, BAZNAS KCP Sumenep not only fulfills a distributive function in zakat management but also adopts a transformational role positioning zakat as an effective empowerment tool that breaks the cycle of poverty in geographically and economically vulnerable archipelagic regions.

## **2. Challenges in Zakat Management in Sumenep**

Zakat management in regions like Sumenep Regency faces various significant structural and cultural challenges. One of the main challenges is the low level of zakat literacy among the community, which leads to a lack of awareness about the obligation to pay zakat and a limited understanding of its social and economic benefits. Research by Sulaiman (2023) revealed that low zakat literacy causes many muzakki to prefer distributing zakat directly rather than through official institutions like BAZNAS, which results in suboptimal zakat fund accumulation.

Another prominent challenge in archipelagic areas like Sumenep is the limited infrastructure and transportation access. This geographical condition makes it difficult to distribute zakat evenly, especially to remote areas such as

Raas Island, Masalembu, and Sapeken. In this context, the effectiveness of zakat programs heavily depends on the readiness of logistics and the availability of local human resources who understand the field conditions well (Fauzi, 2021). Furthermore, public trust in zakat management institutions is also a critical issue.

The lack of transparency in reporting and implementing zakat programs raises doubts among the public regarding the credibility of these institutions. As Taufiqurrahman (2022) explained, the legitimacy of zakat institutions is greatly influenced by how open and accountable they are in carrying out their duties. In this context, the sustainability of mustahik empowerment programs is strongly affected by the relationship between public trust and the integrity of zakat managers. This combination of obstacles reduces the effectiveness of zakat as a community empowerment instrument and demands adaptive and synergistic strategies, whether through technological approaches or multi-stakeholder collaboration.

### **3. Strategies for Optimizing Zakat Collection**

The main strategy for optimizing zakat collection by BAZNAS KCP Sumenep is realized through a holistic and adaptive approach to local conditions. One of its key pillars is the enhancement of zakat literacy through social campaigns involving religious scholars (ulama), community leaders, and civil servants (ASN) as agents of change at the community level. Their role is crucial in shaping public awareness and trust regarding the importance of paying zakat through official institutions. In addition, BAZNAS KCP Sumenep has progressively utilized digital technology, such as online zakat payment applications, QR code integration, and web-based data systems. These innovations not only simplify the payment process but also enable transparency and real-time tracking of zakat funds, thereby strengthening institutional accountability.



This approach is further reinforced through collaboration with Zakat Collection Units (UPZ), religious institutions, and local governments to expand zakat service outreach and reach wider community groups, including those in remote areas. According to Maisiyah and Rahman (2022), educational approaches that involve local actors have proven effective in increasing community participation in zakat, even though zakat literacy remains a major challenge, especially in regions with low education levels. Meanwhile, findings by Lukman Rosyidi et al. (2023) emphasize that digital fundraising practices enhance collection efficiency, strengthen transparency, and open up community engagement in the local zakat management process. Thus, BAZNAS KCP Sumenep's zakat collection strategy reflects a synergy between cultural, digital, and institutional approaches, gradually building an inclusive, responsive, and sustainable zakat ecosystem.

#### **4. Effective and Equitable Zakat Distribution**

The distribution of zakat by BAZNAS KCP Sumenep is carried out by upholding the principles of transparency and social justice two fundamental values in zakat governance that prioritize the needs of mustahik (zakat recipients) who are genuinely in need. The implementation of a rigorous monitoring and evaluation (monev) system demonstrates the institution's commitment to maintaining public accountability over religious funds. This monev process includes internal audits, program impact evaluations, and periodic reporting accessible to stakeholders. These measures not only enhance the efficiency of distribution but also strengthen BAZNAS's credibility and public trust.

In addition, regular training for *amil* (zakat administrators) is a strategic step in strengthening institutional capacity to perform their duties professionally, fairly, and in a targeted manner. The training content includes not only technical aspects of zakat management but also public service ethics, digital literacy, and empowerment-based approaches. This creates *amil* who are not only skilled in



administration but also empathetic and socially sensitive to the conditions of *mustahik*.

A unique feature of BAZNAS KCP Sumenep's approach is the involvement of community-based local supervisory teams, assigned to verify and validate *mustahik* data. This approach not only improves the accuracy of zakat recipient data but also fosters active community participation in zakat governance, thereby narrowing the gap between the institution and the beneficiaries. Such involvement promotes a *co-governance* process in which the community acts not only as beneficiaries but also as stakeholders who help uphold the system's integrity.

As noted by Ahmad Ghilman Muhtar and Ahmad Supriyadi (2022), community involvement in zakat distribution supervision has been proven to increase public trust in zakat institutions, as it is perceived as more honest and accountable. Furthermore, this model aligns with the findings of Fitria et al. (2023), who demonstrated that participatory and transparent supervision in zakat distribution across several districts had a positive impact on institutional accountability and the sustainability of zakat programs.

In this context, transparency is not merely understood as administrative openness, but as an ongoing process that involves the public in every stage from planning to impact evaluation. This creates a *trust-building mechanism* that is essential in modern zakat management, particularly in geographically challenging areas such as Sumenep, which consists of islands and remote regions.

With a zakat governance system oriented toward *good governance*, the BAZNAS KCP Sumenep approach not only ensures accurate targeting in zakat distribution but also reinforces the institution's social legitimacy. This strategy is important to replicate in other regions, as it addresses classic challenges in zakat distribution, such as inaccurate data, uneven disbursement, and low public trust in formal zakat management institutions. In the long term, participatory and

accountable governance will serve as the foundation for transforming zakat into an inclusive, adaptive, and sustainable instrument of social development.

#### **5. Utilization of Zakat for Community Economic Empowerment**

The utilization of zakat by BAZNAS KCP Sumenep focuses on productive zakat programs tailored to the local needs of the community. Rather than merely offering consumptive aid, this approach aims to uplift *mustahik* (zakat recipients) from dependency to economic self-sufficiency, even encouraging their potential to become *muzakki* (zakat payers) in the future. These programs include vocational training, provision of business capital, and support for micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs), particularly in key local sectors such as fisheries, agriculture, and trade core economic potentials of the Sumenep region, especially in its island territories.

The effectiveness of these programs is supported by the integration of digital systems in zakat management and reporting, which streamline fund distribution, tracking, and transparency in program evaluation. This technological innovation is combined with participatory monitoring, where local communities are actively involved in assessing the success of the programs. This aligns with *community-based development* practices, proven to be more adaptive and sustainable as they are grounded in local needs and capacities.

In his study, Hamdi (2021) demonstrated that the implementation of the CIBEST model (Center for Islamic Business and Economic Studies), which measures both material and spiritual well-being, revealed that productive zakat programs significantly improved the welfare of *mustahik*, increasing from 23.6% to 60%. This provides empirical evidence that empowerment-based zakat management has a more sustainable impact than purely consumptive aid.

The model also allows for quantitative evaluation of zakat program effectiveness, enabling institutions to make data-driven and responsive improvements. These findings are especially relevant in the geographic context

of Sumenep, which consists of numerous islands with limited infrastructure access. According to Indriati and Fahrullah (2019), productive zakat is one of the most effective instruments for strengthening the economy of *mustahik* in areas with distribution challenges and remote economic access.

By prioritizing zakat strategies based on local needs and regional potential as implemented by BAZNAS KCP Sumenep zakat programs function not only as a distribution tool but also as a catalyst for microeconomic development. This approach offers a concrete solution for bridging development disparities between central and remote regions while strengthening community-based economic independence.

#### **D. Conclusion**

**Optimalisasi** The optimization of zakat management by BAZNAS KCP Sumenep demonstrates a strategic role in improving the welfare of local communities, particularly in island regions that face various geographical and social limitations. Through an intensive zakat literacy approach, the digitalization of collection and distribution systems, and the implementation of productive programs based on local needs, BAZNAS KCP has successfully encouraged the transformation of *mustahik* into more economically self-reliant individuals.

Although challenges such as low awareness of zakat, limited infrastructure, and a lack of public trust remain major obstacles, synergistic strategies involving multiple stakeholders including local communities, regional governments, and religious institutions have strengthened the accountability and effectiveness of zakat programs. The participatory evaluation model and the implementation of empowerment programs based on local potential have proven to significantly improve the welfare index of *mustahik*.

Thus, a zakat management approach that is adaptive to the geographic and social context, as applied in Sumenep Regency, can serve as a best practice model for other regions with similar characteristics. This study also emphasizes the importance of

integrating technology, zakat literacy, and community participation as key success factors in achieving economic empowerment through zakat at the local level.

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