

# The Vulnerability and Social Resilience of Indonesian Society in Facing the COVID-19 Pandemic

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## Abstract

This article discusses how the social vulnerability and social resilience of the Indonesian people in the face of the COVID-19 pandemic. This research was conducted using a qualitative exploratory method. Data were collected through literature studies and field studies using observation and in-depth interviews. The COVID-19 pandemic, which has an impact on the living conditions of people in nearly 207 countries in the world, is also being felt in Indonesia. A COVID-19 pandemic is a form of danger that has the potential to threaten all aspects of people's lives. Conditions of social vulnerability (social vulnerability) are a real reality that occurs in society in the face of the COVID-19 pandemic. Researchers argue that the social resilience of the Indonesian people in the face of the COVID-19 pandemic is quite strong, this is because the Indonesian people have a local culture that is not shared by other countries in the world, namely the culture of mutual cooperation. Indonesian society is known as a collective society with strong solidarity that is not shared by people in other countries who tend to be individualistic.

Keywords: Social Vulnerability, Social Resilience, Community, Adaptation.

## A. INTRODUCTION

2020 is a year of crisis and worrying experienced by all countries in the world due to the COVID-19 virus pandemic (Phan et. al., 2020). The COVID-19 virus is a new disease that has a relatively fast

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transmission rate and a high mortality rate (Susilo et al., 2020). Until now, there is no definitive therapy that is appropriate to treat this virus (Whitworth, 2020). The phenomenon of the outbreak of Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) in most parts of the world was an event that had not been predicted well beforehand (Cahyono, 2020).

The COVID-19 pandemic is a humanitarian emergency first reported in December 2019 in Wuhan China. After an investigation, it was declared by the World Health Organization (WHO) on January 31, 2020 as a public health emergency of international concern and a pandemic on March 11, 2020 (Li et al., 2020; Zhu et al., 2020; Prem et al., 2020; Adhikari et al., 2020). Since its inception, the Coronavirus outbreak has spread to 209 countries, with 3,040,000 confirmed cases and 211,000 deaths reported globally as of April 28, 2020. The impact of this public health emergency is severe, countries and communities are affected in terms of economic, socio-psychological factors, and international relations.

The COVID-19 pandemic, which has an impact on the living conditions of people in nearly 207 countries in the world, is also being felt in Indonesia. The COVID-19 pandemic is a form of danger that has the potential to threaten all aspects of people's lives, such as social, economic, health, and psychological. The impact on society in Indonesia is certainly not much different from people in other countries who are also facing the COVID-19 pandemic. The condition of social vulnerability is a real reality that occurs in society in the face of the COVID-19 pandemic (Imron & Syaqi, 2020). Therefore, the social resilience of the community in facing the COVID-19 pandemic is an interesting theme that deserves to be studied more deeply.

Social resilience concerns social entities, be they individuals, organizations, or communities, and their ability or capacity to tolerate, absorb, cope with, and adapt to various types of environmental and social threats (Keck & Sakdapolrak, 2013). Social resilience can also be understood as the ability of individuals or groups to actively participate in the community, both in a stable state and in turmoil (Leitch & Sutton, 2017; Suwignyo & Yulianti, 2018). The Ministry of Social Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia (2006) defines social resilience as the ability of a community or society to overcome risks due to economic and political changes.

Some of the definitions of social resilience mentioned above have in common, namely that a community is said to have social resilience if the community has the ability to participate in groups to help vulnerable or powerless groups to face changing conditions, whether stable or unstable.

Furthermore, there are three dimensions that need to be emphasized in observing the active participation of the community, namely: (1) the ability or capacity of the community to manage problems; (2) people's ability to adapt; and (3) the ability of society to change according to the demands of changing conditions. The Ministry of Social Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia determines several indicators that a society is said to have social resilience if: (1) it is able to effectively protect its members, including vulnerable individuals and families; (2) able to carry out social investment in social networks; (3) able to develop effective mechanisms for managing conflict and violence; and (4) able to maintain local wisdom in managing natural and social resources (Decree of the Minister of Social Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia Number 12 of 2006).

The COVID-19 pandemic presents potential dangers to all aspects of people's lives, from social, economic, health and psychological aspects. Social vulnerability is a real reality that grows in society. This will shock the resilience of the community in responding to COVID-19 (Syaifudin, 2020). Social vulnerability that weakens the resilience of society makes people lose their ability to use available resources, such as technology, food, jobs and so on. As a result, the middle to lower class people experience social anxiety due to decreased productivity and disruption of their livelihoods. Based on this problem, the aim of this research is to examine and study in depth the extent of the social vulnerability and social resilience of the Indonesian people in the face of the COVID-19 pandemic.

## B. LITERATURE REVIEW

According to Grotberg (1999) resilience is the human ability to face, overcome and become strong when facing obstacles and obstacles. According to the IPCC's fourth Report, resilience is the ability of a system to overcome disturbances or the capacity to adapt to stresses and changes that occur in the environment.

However, according to Dodman (2009: 153), the definition of resilience will be more precise, namely a process that allows the community not only to be able to face disturbances but also to be able to face challenges that can worsen life and facilitate more actions to improve the quality of life of the community. This means that the community is expected to have the ability to deal with disturbances or pressures by adapting to increase socio-economic resilience. From the definition of resilience above, resilience has four important components, namely adaptation, response, self-organization and learning that can be taken (Sapirstein, 2007).

Good resilience can be achieved if the community has a better ability to deal with the disturbances that occur. Based on the theory of Obrist et al. (2010) resilience has several levels, namely the lowest level, namely individuals can exercise resilience by learning the ability to deal with interference; The middle level is the social community or the community has close kinship so that it can collaborate to deal with disasters together and the highest level is the existence of government intervention in making policies so that it can help the community in dealing with disturbances that occur.

Meanwhile, social resilience is the ability of community groups to deal with pressures caused by external conditions and disturbances that occur due to changes in social, political and environmental conditions. Social resilience is defined at the community level rather than the individual level (Adger, 2000; Hall & Lamont, 2013; Adger et al., 2002; Keck & Sakdapolrak, 2013; Cacioppo et al., 2011; Obrist et al., 2010).

Many studies on social resilience have been carried out including Adger (2000), Hall & Lamont (2013), Adger et al. (2002), Keck & Sakdapolrak (2013), Cacioppo et al. (2011), Obrist et al. (2010) and many others. However, studies on social resilience in the face of the COVID-19 pandemic have not been carried out, especially in Indonesia. The existing study only examines food security and community economic resilience in the face of the COVID-19 Pandemic (Masniadi, et al., 2020; Imron & Syaharga, 2020). Therefore, this study has a novelty and will have a major impact on scientific development.

### C. METHOD

Research on the social resilience of the Indonesian people in the face of the COVID-19 pandemic was conducted using qualitative methods. With this qualitative method, researchers attempt to reveal the universal essence of phenomena personally experienced by a group of individuals in depth (Esterberg, 2002; Taylor et al., 2015; Creswell & Creswell, 2017; Moleong, 2017). Data was collected through several techniques, including observation techniques, focus group discussions, and documentation studies. Data analysis was carried out through three analysis processes, namely coding, merging codes that emerged into themes, verification of themes through theory and follow-up interviews, and drawing conclusions (Creswell, 2010; Boeiji, 2009).

#### D. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The cases of the COVID-19 pandemic in Indonesia are continuously increasing. The COVID-19 pandemic in Indonesia has had a multi-sector impact, from health, education, social, economy, to worship activities in the community. The public is starting to feel the impact on these sectors. The COVID-19 pandemic is a form of danger that has the potential to threaten all aspects of people's lives, such as social, economic, health and psychological. The impact on society in Indonesia is certainly not much different from people in other countries who are also facing the COVID-19 pandemic. Conditions of social vulnerability (social vulnerability) are a real reality that occurs in society in the face of the COVID-19 pandemic. Social vulnerability has put community resilience into shock due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Community resilience is related to the ability of the community to be able to use available resources (such as technology, food, work, and a sense of security) in meeting basic needs and carrying out their social functions (Cutter, et al., 2003; Andrew et al. , 2008). However, the current condition has made people's resilience experience social vulnerability. Social vulnerability leads to decreased productivity, disrupted livelihoods, and the emergence of social anxiety disorders in society (such as panic). This is what we can see why instructions regarding physical distancing do not work effectively. This is because physical distancing instructions are considered to create social vulnerability in the community, especially those who have informal employment status, whose sources of economic income are obtained daily and do not have a fixed base salary (such as online traders and motorcycle taxis).

Based on data from the National Labor Force Survey of the Central Statistics Agency 2019, the number of people with the status of formal workers was 55,272,968 people and people with the status of informal workers were 74,093,224 people. This data shows that more people work in the informal sector, and this is why there are still many people who do not carry out physical distancing instructions, because it is to maintain the economic resilience of their families. Apart from work problems, other factors that make physical distancing instructions ineffective are due to the cultural characteristics of society, and government policies that are not firm and even tend to show sectoral egos between government agencies, both central and regional.

The impact of social vulnerability can make people commit three interrelated actions, namely apathy, irrational action, and criminal action. We can see this in the current social phenomenon.

So what happens to society is the culmination of social vulnerability that is currently being faced by society.

First, apathy. In apathy, we can see the actions of the people who do not care about government instructions for physical distancing and do not return to their hometowns (going home). In fact, physical distancing is not working effectively. There are still many people who we can see doing get-together and other crowd activities. In addition, nowadays many people choose to return to their hometowns. The act of returning to the community's hometown seems to have actually increased the number of COVID-19 cases and the distribution of their territory, both those with ODP (People Under Monitoring), PDP (Patients Under Supervision) and COVID-19 Suspect status.

Is this apathy by society wrong? Sociologically, it cannot be said to be wrong (non-ethical). So if there are individuals or groups of people who blame and get angry on social media about this community apathy, according to the author, it is not wise. Because what people do is an instinctive response to the social vulnerability they are facing. Therefore, this is the government's job to be able to make people have social resilience so as not to take apathetic actions when this nation and country is faced with the COVID-19 pandemic.

Second, irrational action. In irrational action, not a few people believe in various medicinal ingredients and prevention methods so as not to be exposed to COVID-19 even though there is no scientific research evidence. For example, there are people who believe that the method of lying down to sunbathe on the railroad tracks can help prevent the transmission of COVID-19. What the community does in the use of certain medicinal ingredients and methods to prevent contracting it from COVID-19, even though there is no evidence of scientific research, is inseparable from the community's attachment to usage, habits, mores, and customs. (custom) that applies to their environment. Sociologically, this social action is called traditional action.

Another irrational act, namely panic buying. Panic buying is the public's response to not having difficulty meeting their daily needs, and this actually makes various prices for necessities soar high and becomes a step due to illegal hoarding. The next irrational action, which initially the community understands the high risks (such as high interest rates, and data theft) is not to apply for loans to moneylenders, both conventional loan-based loan sharks and online (fintech) loans. Like it or not, people apply for loans to moneylenders as a survival mechanism for themselves and their families in times of uncertain economic conditions in the COVID-19 pandemic.

Third, criminal acts. The thing that is most worried about the social vulnerability of the COVID-19 pandemic is criminal acts committed by members of the community. Sociologically, a criminal act is an act that violates the law and harms himself and others (the victim) which disturbs the balance, peace and order in society. Forms of criminal acts that occur include theft, mugging, pickpocketing, looting, looting, and even murder. We can find clear examples of criminal acts due to the COVID-19 pandemic in various news media that have started to occur in other countries (such as Italy, India, China, America), even in Indonesia there have been cases of theft with the motive of reducing income. economy due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Criminal acts committed by community members as a result of the social vulnerability they face can at least be understood in 3 sociological contexts. First, basically the society is in a stable condition, its living systems operate smoothly and function. However, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, this condition of stability and functioning was disrupted. In order to be in a stable and functioning position, for people who do not have proper access to capital, a short risky path will be undertaken. Second, criminal acts occur because the rules governing behavior clash. For example, the government instructs the public to carry out physical distancing, while the government does not prepare instruments to protect the resilience of people whose jobs are in the informal sector. And third, criminal acts occur because of the absence of control or social control. For example, there is no strict sanction and deterrent effect for individuals who take advantage of the conditions of the COVID-19 pandemic for their own interests and enrich themselves, such as hoarding and counterfeiting hand sanitizer fluids and drugs which are then sold freely in the community.

The three actions described by the authors above along with some examples are only part of the impact of social vulnerability that will occur in our society due to the COVID-19 pandemic. So for this reason, before the government applies a physical distancing policy, or area quarantine or lockdown, it must pay attention to aspects of social welfare in the community. This is so that government policies are fully supported by the community and run effectively when people have social resilience to themselves and their families.

The COVID-19 pandemic, which has an impact on the living conditions of people in nearly 207 countries in the world, is also being felt in Indonesia. The COVID-19 pandemic is a form of danger that has the potential to threaten all aspects of people's lives, such as social, economic, health, and psychological. The condition of social vulnerability is a real reality that occurs in

society in the face of the COVID-19 pandemic (Imron & Syaqi, 2020). The onslaught of the COVID-19 Outbreak has in fact succeeded in testing the social resilience of the Indonesian people by reviving the culture of mutual cooperation and increasing social solidarity.

The social solidarity shown by the community when facing the COVID-19 pandemic, among others, started from the initiation of the community at the community level to carry out self-protection, both related to health, safety and comfort which became known as the term. The community as members of the community then jointly spray disinfectants in their neighborhood, distribute masks, hand sanitizers, stay at home campaigns, family isolation, and so on.

In addition, a socio-economic-based humanitarian movement was also born, ranging from fundraising to social security for residents, in the form of food assistance, subsidies for vulnerable groups, solidarity with salary cuts and others, and social literacy campaigns such as health care and solidarity actions to help victims. Acknowledged that the COVID-19 pandemic problem was not only a health problem but also a social impact problem because then there was tension, suspicion, distrust, as well as the issue of economic decline which gave birth to social inequalities which had the potential to create violent conflict and crime. Meanwhile, some people still interpret physical and social distancing excessively. Fears of contracting COVID-19 have once again succeeded in provoking and creating social exclusion, resulting in events of refusal of funerals, closing of access and other counterproductive actions.

When compared to other countries with individualistic societies, Indonesians have a strong culture of mutual cooperation because the culture of collectivity and interdependence of society can spontaneously help their fellow countrymen who are socio-economically affected by COVID-19 (Mutiarra et al., 2020). The aids can be in the form of medical assistance, materials, basic necessities and so on. Social solidarity in the midst of the onset of the COVID-19 outbreak has again raised the values of mutual cooperation into mutual enthusiasm and awareness, so that the social resilience of the community in facing the COVID-19 pandemic is quite high.

### C. CONCLUSION

The COVID-19 pandemic, which has an impact on the living conditions of people in nearly 207 countries in the world, is also being felt in Indonesia. The COVID-19 pandemic is a form of danger that has the potential to threaten all aspects of people's lives, such as social, economic, health, and



psychological. Conditions of social vulnerability (social vulnerability) are a real reality that occurs in society in the face of the COVID-19 pandemic. The researcher argues that the social resilience of the Indonesian people in the face of the COVID-19 pandemic is quite strong, this is because Indonesian people have a local culture that is not shared by other countries in the world, namely the culture of mutual cooperation. Indonesian society is known as a collective society with strong solidarity that is not shared by people in other countries who tend to be individualistic.

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