

Why Yet Become A Prosperoucity Coffee Farmer?

(Ethnography of Smallholder Coffee Producers in the Gayo Highlands)

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ABSTRACT

This paper argues that smallholder coffee producers in the Gayo highlands are not prospering due to two main factors, namely structural and cultural barriers. By using an ethnographic approach as a method of data collection, analysis and representation of data, the author wants to show that there are two main obstacles that have caused smallholder coffee producers in the Gayo highlands to not move towards the concept of farmers using modern post-harvest technology inputs in order to increase production before selling, either to cooperatives or other buying companies.

Keywords: *Smallholder Coffee Producers, Farmers, Cultural Barriers, Structural Barriers, Gayo Highlands,*

DOI : *10.29103/icospolhum.v3i.152*

1. INTRODUCTION

Coffee has become a cultural identity for the Gayo highland people. Along the way that we are going, the natural scenery that is presented is only coffee plants, although occasionally we also see rice fields, but that is only a little between the slopes of the hills which are full of coffee farms. Starting from Bener Meriah Regency, Central Aceh to Gayo Lues. It seems that there is no Gayo family that does not have a coffee plantation. Of course, there are many coffee commodities in Indonesia, but when it comes to flavors that are recognized by the world, coffee from the land of Gayo remains the prima donna and is discussed.

Dian, the owner of the Coffee Gallery in Takengon, tells how coffee actually exists in the life of the Gayo people. "Coffee is not a plant brought by the colonials to Gayo land," he confessed. The reason is, coffee-like plants have come first with stems reaching four meters or more. People around call it jackfruit coffee or forest coffee. This plant became known as Liberika, a coffee plant originating from

Liberia. This type of coffee has larger leaves, branches and fruit than Arabica and Robusta coffee, is more disease resistant, but not so much fruit. It can also grow in the lowlands. So, what the Dutch actually brought to the archipelago was coffee knowledge; how to process and produce it. Over time, Arabica and Robusta coffee became known.

Of the approximately 3,000 varieties of coffee in the world, 2,000 of them are found in Indonesia, and 1,700 of them are in the Gayo highlands. Knowledge about coffee farming is inherited and is hereditary from previous generations. It's just that, over time, that knowledge is growing so that it gives birth to various types of coffee beans with different tastes. Knowledge, practice, system, experience, and habits practiced by farmers form the habitus of Gayo farmers in their treatment of coffee plants.

In fact, the coffee agro-industry sector in the Gayo highlands has continued to develop in this decade and has shown positive results for the level of coffee production and the price level received by farmers. In a report released by BPS regarding coffee

production per province, Gayo coffee production has increased every year from 2017-2021. The increase of 2.65% surprised all parties because other provinces such as East Java, Riau, South Sumatra and West Sumatra experienced declines. The second positive condition shows that opportunities for technological inputs for coffee production can be perfectly integrated thanks to the existence of institutions at the coffee farmer level that are already connected on a fairly wide scale. However, this development also has a worrying aspect, as it is known that the marketing channel for coffee at the farm level must be through cooperatives to be able to access the global market is directly proportional to the price. This has implications for the dependence of coffee farmers on prices determined by the global market, whose price fluctuations are never understood by farmers.

Based on the background of the problems above, the author argues that Gayo farmers are not prospering for two reasons, first because of structural obstacles such as the absence of regulations, as well as market pressure for improvement. The second is because cultural barriers such as local knowledge are not reproduced thoroughly and are adaptive to market developments and the identity of Gayo coffee whose movement of change is not linear with global market developments.

2. METHOD

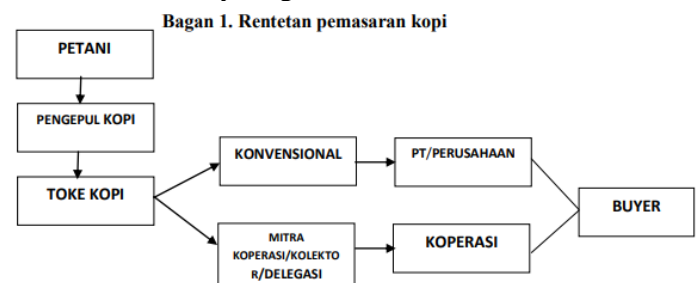
This study uses ethnographic methods as a process of data collection, data analysis and data representation. Ethnography is used as an approach in qualitative research to thoroughly describe the existing reality related to the life of coffee farmers in the Gayo highlands (Moleong, 2010). The data collection process was carried out for 4 months starting from July to October 2022. The author uses several data collection methods such as participatory observation targeting smallholder coffee producers, in-depth interviews with both farmers and coffee agroindustry stakeholders to obtain data related to structural barriers in the process of increasing the welfare of smallholder coffee producers. As well as focus group discussions as part of data triangulation.

3. RESULT

The fact that production growth and price improvements are directly proportional to the welfare of farmers is a blessing for the lives of coffee farmers in the Gayo highlands (Zainura et al., 2016). This fact confirms the view that currently the

coffee commodity in Gayo can be said to be a commodity based on the people's economy. So that coffee is a source of income for most of the people there.

Due to its nature which is a people's economy which means that the level of economic development is largely determined by the results of coffee production, institutional improvement processes are also very central at this time. This will be directly proportional to the addition of value to their post-production process. Preliminary field data from observations show that on average smallholder coffee producers in Gayo sell it in the form of pumpkin (which has gone through the washing process). So that farmers do not get added value from collectors. In general, the marketing channels for coffee in the Gayo highlands are as follows:



Source : (Nazaruddin, Nasution, Kamil, & Prastika, 2022)

Based on this marketing channel, smallholder coffee producers farmers can be seen as being at the base point of the Long Way of world coffee exports, so that the average price of export quality coffee is Rp. 57,000 to Rp. 58,000 / kg, they get a selling price from the level of coffee collectors, only Rp. 9,000 to Rp. 10,000 / kg or Rp. 12,000 to Rp. 14,000 per bamboo. They will usually get this price at a time when world coffee prices are high, otherwise the price could drop drastically. The problem is that during the big harvest season in October, November and December, it is often during these months that the rainy season also arrives, so even though the price of coffee is high, smallholder coffee producers cannot sell it because they cannot dry the coffee that has been harvested.

The authors see these conditions as a form of smallholder coffee producers' dependence on global markets mediated by cooperatives that they cannot understand (Nazaruddin, Nasution, Kamil, & Prastika, 2022). Whereas in the Gayo highlands, coffee cooperatives are increasing. Data shows that

in Central Aceh alone there are around 16 cooperatives with varying numbers of fostered members and an average target of marketing to Asia, Europe and America, except for Gayo High Land producer cooperatives which are oriented to local and regional markets (Department of Trade, Cooperatives, Small and Medium Enterprises, 2020).

4. DISCUSSION

There are two root causes that the author sees as the cause of the slowing down of the process of reproduction and social mobility of smallholder coffee producers in the Gayo highlands. First, because of structural barriers related to policies, the lack of optimal knowledge transmission processes from cooperatives to smallholder Coffee producers, as well as market pressure for improvements in Good Agricultural Practice. Second, due to cultural barriers related to the local knowledge of Gayo smallholder coffee producers which cannot be reproduced holistically.

These structural barriers occur due to smallholder Coffee producers' dependence on global markets because of the necessity for smallholder Coffee producers to be able to follow the concept of good agriculture practice so that inevitably farmers must follow global standards in caring for their farms. Even though the smallholder producers have local knowledge that has manifested in their daily habits (Nazaruddin et al., 2020), this cannot be said to be a collective representation of smallholder producers in the Gayo highlands. The slowdown in the collectivity of local knowledge has become a centrifugal force that has an impact on increasing income not seen in Gayo smallholder Coffee producers as a whole. Although according to (Achwan et al., 2019a; Toledo & Moguel, 2012). Smallholder Coffee producers in Gayo treat their farms with global standards and produce organic coffee, this only happens to groups of smallholder who take shelter in cooperatives and their productivity results are only 850 kg/ha and are still far from expectations.

In addition, the slowdown in social mobility of smallholder in the Gayo highlands is also caused by the formation of a variety of habitus which then has an impact on variations in agricultural practices (Nazaruddin et al., 2020). This variation raises a different awareness process among the smallholder to their satisfaction regarding maximizing

production yields from every hectare of plantation they have. So that smallholder of coffee producers in the Gayo highlands, most of whom are in cooperative development, do not maximally absorb knowledge about Good Agricultural Practice which is directly proportional to the increase in coffee production (Nazaruddin, et al., 2022).

The absence of policies related to mainstreaming the interests of smallholder towards increasing production yields is the main cause structurally. Because smallholder as one of the elements of the coffee agro-industry system cannot do much in terms of global standards that have been set regarding the obligation to produce organic coffee and various other standards in maintaining coffee plantations.

The results of the study shows that efforts to present policies in the form of Qanuns in the Gayo highlands have been carried out by various stakeholders to protect Gayo coffee as a geographical indication area. However, until the research process is completed, the policy formulation process is not finished. Facts on the ground show that business processes and marketing channels for Gayo coffee with the aim of export are currently still being mediated by cooperatives and companies (Nazaruddin, Nasution, Kamil, & Prastika, 2022). So currently smallholders are still dependent on global policies mediated by cooperatives. as a farmer organization. This means that until recently smallholder did not have a safety net and were directly confronted with uncertain global markets and standards. Although initially, smallholder received certainty about the stability of coffee prices even during the main harvest, and received assistance with maintenance tools through premium fees as part of corporate social responsibility based on consumer awareness (Levy et al., 2016).

The second barriers that becomes a factor is related to the non-prosperity of smallholder coffee producers in Gayo due to the involuntary movement of collective knowledge as the basis of agricultural practices. As pointed out by (Nazaruddin, et al., 2021; Nazaruddin, et al., 2021) regarding the habitus of smallholder coffee producers based on local knowledge who are not completely disposed in various fields and only survival in the social sector. So that the objective condition economically in achieving maximization of coffee production per hectare from each of their plantations does not occur. According to Bourdieu in (Haryatmoko, 2016), this condition is formed because local knowledge

discourses are formed in the collective minds of the Gayo people which are reproduced imperfectly in daily practice because other discourses clash with each other, such as ecosystem preservation, consumerism morals as a result of fair-trade coffee. (Pelsmacker et al., 2005) and the material authenticity of the coffee itself (Kamil, 2019).

When viewed from various coffee Agricultural practices among smallholder in the Gayo Highlands, it can be seen that they agricultural practice based on Traditional Ecological Knowledge (TEK), such as planting shade trees, making rorak and carrying out water resource conservation efforts (Achwan et al., 2019b). . So that cooperative business processes in the Gayo highlands are easier to run in order to access the global market through the fair-trade coffee mechanism. However, as explained above, coffee farmers in Gayo do not get high selling prices apart from subsistence morals (Nazaruddin et al., 2020) as well as a lack of post-harvest technological inputs.

5. CONCLUSION: A REFLEXIFE

In general, smallholder coffee producers around the world experience the same thing related to the slow process of transforming agricultural systems because the process of technological inputs has not been optimally applied.

Likewise with the condition of most smallholder coffee producers in the Gayo highlands on the western tip of Sumatra. Until now, the smallholder have not applied technology inputs evenly and at every stage of their agricultural system. This condition causes by definition they are still referred to as smallholder coffee producers farmers with household production scale and not yet referred to as farmers with modern technological inputs aimed at maximizing production yields.

From the results of the research, the problem leads to two main obstacles, namely internally due to cultural barriers and externally due to cultural barriers. Cooperatives at the beginning of their formation in the Gayo highlands were expected to be a safety net for the existence of small household scale farmers when they were dealing directly with the global market, but their function later declined and were co-opted by market interests through the implementation of good farming standards whose goals were not achieved at this time, namely equal distribution of technological inputs and maximization of production results is directly proportional to the welfare of farmers.

As a cultural identity, coffee is currently the prima donna commodity for most people in the Gayo highlands. Because they get additional income both from production, distribution and direct marketing to consumers. However, the cultural identity that manifests in their collective knowledge is actually close to good farming standards applied by global interests and cannot be reproduced as a centrifugal force in realizing the ideals of welfare.

The slow process of reproduction of knowledge and cultural values is due to the clash of discourses and the disposition of knowledge which objectively creates confusion between moral subsistence and rational economy.

AUTHORS' CONTRIBUTIONS

M. Nazaruddin and Abdullah Akhyar Nasution have made substantial contribution to the theoretical framework, and methodological. Ade Ikhsan kamil has been involved in drafting manuscript and revised critically for important contents. And Faizul Aulia make final draft in production process until the version ready to published.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

We thank Malikussaleh University for all support to researchers both in funding and moral support. We also thank the 3rd IcosPolhum team for the opportunity that has been given so that we can present the results of this research. Likewise with all colleagues in the faculty of social and political sciences at Malikussaleh University, we would like to thank you for the very useful discussions during the research process and the process of writing this article. From the bottom of our hearts we would like to thank profusely to the informants who have taught us how to become farmers and researchers who are practically useful.

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