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Economic Strategy Livelihood And Social Relations Of Onion Farmers In Brebes Central Java

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Abstract— This study aims to examine the livelihood strategy and economic social relations of Brebes onion farmers of Central Java. This research was conducted in Pegandon District Kendal Regency. The data collection was done through observation, interview, documentation study and literature study with data triangulation technique which then analyzed qualitatively to explain the research data and facts. Research findings: (1) One of the livelihood strategies of the Brebes onion farmers to maintain the household economy is to migrate to areas such as Kendal, Majalengka and Tegal in groups. The destination area is chosen based on the area best suited for the growing season of onion growth. Several sub-districts in Kendal Regency are the areas chosen by onion farmers of Brebes to migrate. During the planting period, onion farmers of Brebes will temporarily migrate to the area, especially in Pegandon Sub-district. (2) Temporary migrant onion farmers of Brebes have a high level of rationality such as: establishing social and economic relations in the villages of migrant destination in Kendal. The socio-economic relation is built by onion farmers of Brebes both between farmers and local villagers, relationships on grouping patterns, capital activities and profit sharing system, and fulfillment of daily necessity, as well as on the land lease system, the relationship with the bureaucracy and the village community as a whole.

Keywords—Livelihood strategy, Relation social and economic, Onion farmers Introduction

I. INTRODUCTION

Brebes Regency becomes the largest onion production center in Indonesia. The regency produces 68% of Central Java production. The production reaches 3,001.4 ton with harvest area of 26,645 ha. Total planted area by end of 2015 is 26,666 ha [1]. Brebes onion becomes the trademark due to its position as the biggest producer of the commodity in national level. Onion uses as the symbol of Brebes Regency. It is confirmed in the Regional Regulation of Brebes Regency No. 8/1986 stating that regional symbol has an egg-shape and a onion representing that salted egg and onion are the specific

products of Brebes are [2]. To date, the market share of Brebes onion receives positive response from the public. The onion is known for its savory and delicious taste.

Onion in Latin language is *Allium ascalonicum*, which is a seasonal horticultural crop with high economic value. However, in certain time overproduction in onion occurs causing a decrease in price. The decrease in onion price in the market is aggravated by import policy set by the government. It causes onion farmers to innovate in production through expansion and production out of town to stabilize price and to produce quality onions. Onion farmers have been conducting mobility to various areas in Central Java, such as Kendal, Pemalang, and Tegal to increase production.

One of onion farmers' strategies to produce quality onions is by migrating from Brebes to destination areas, such as Kendal Regency. The area is selected by many Brebes onion farmers. Areas in Kendal Regency chosen by the farmers are, among others, Pegandon, Ngampel, Brangsong, Kaliwungu Selatan, Weleri, and Sukorejo. During the planting season, Brebes onion farmers will migrate to those areas, especially to Pesawahan Village, Pegandong Sub-district. Geographical factor is the dominant factor since rice field account for 2/3 of all areas (settlements and rice fields) in the village. Brebes onion farmers will come in group to the village in early year, in January to end of March and they will rent villagers' houses during the onion plantation season, which is about three months. The migration is conducted to fulfill onion production without being disturbed by planting season transition.

A research result of Susiloningtyas [3] on migration phenomenon stated that planting season in the destination area influences migrant income. A research by Suhaini [4] on reasons for young villagers to have interest in conducting secular migration to the city found that there were push and pull factors in the migration. The push factors were less employment at the village, jobs at the village are considered as bored, village is far from tourism objects, and it is hard to obtain items

needed. The pull factors were more employment at the city, the availability of basic needs, high income, many tourism objects, and interesting working experiences at the city.

Research location was at Pegandon Village Kendal Regency Central Java. Research informants were people domiciled at the area of Lukulo River, actors in sand mining/sand miners, and public figures. Informants were determined using stratified random sampling [5]. Qualitative research used to describe and understand the migration activities conducted by onion farmers. Regarding social relations built by the farmers at the destination area, the analysis unit was individual (man who conducted migration) assuming that individual action in migration is supported by various aspects, especially economic aspect. Qualitative data analysis conducted on information on events/incidents and motivation underlying the social action of actors involved in migration activity related to the social actions. Data collection technique and validation was conducted through observation, interview, documentation, and data triangulation.

II. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

A. Brebes Onion Migrant Farmers in Pesawahan Village

It was estimated that Brebes onion farmers conducted temporary migration to Pesawahan Village since 2008. Those farmers consisted of farmer employers and farm workers. The farmer employers played role as an employer who rented land and house and to provide funding during onion planting. Onion farmer workers were paid farmers worked in maintaining the onion crops. The migration of migrant farmers occurred spontaneously thus it was unknown who the first person migrated to Pesawahan Village.

Brebes onion farmers came in group to Pesawahan Village and in a large number, around hundreds of farmers. In 2017, migrant farmers in Pesawahan Village reached 13 groups of onion farmers. The farmers would rent a land and a house of Pesawahan villagers during the onion planting season, which is about two to three months. The settlement pattern of temporary migrant farmers in Pesawahan Village occurred randomly and it did not join other groups. A onion employer would rent a house to be occupied with his workers, about 10 people. The house was an empty place with limited facilities, such as water for bathing and mats for sleeping.

B. Factors Motivating Brebes Onion Farmers to Migrate to Pesawahan Village

Lee [6] stated that factors influencing a person to decide to migrate and the migration factors can be

summarized into four points: factors from the origin place (push factors), factors from the destination place (pull factors), the hindering obstacles (intermediate factors), and personal factors. stated that migration volume in an area develops according to the diversity level of the areas. In this case, every area has many factors influencing a group to migrate or there are other factors that force a group to leave their original place including what happen to the onion farmers in Brebes. Factors in the origin place of the onion farmers were the push factors to migrate in certain period. According to [7], every area has many factors influencing a person to stay or attracting people to move to the area; there are also other factors that push a person to leave the area. A person will stay in his original place or migrate determines by whether or not the individual needs and condition fulfill in the area . Along with the principle, onion farmers chose Pesawahan Village as their temporary migration destination based on the following factors:

C. Local Community Acceptance

In various locations, the existence of newcomers will cause clash with the local. However, the arrival of onion migrant farmers from Brebes was welcomed by the Pesawahan villagers who mostly worked as a farmer. The Pesawahan villagers who worked as rice farmer as well as farm worker did not feel marginalized by their presence. Brebes onion migrant farmers brought new economic source for the villagers. Farmers who owned a land would voluntarily rent their rice field after harvest to the Brebes farmers. The villagers who worked as farm workers did not feel that they lost their jobs. The villagers were openly welcomed the Brebes farmers indicated by their hospitality and the fact that they could mingle with them.

D. Higher Income Opportunity in Pesawahan Village

Income is one of goals to be gained by every farm workers as a reward from work they have conducted. Job as a farmer will look more attractive if it gives high income. This was felt by the onion farmers when they migrated and became a migrant farmer. It was due to the income they received as a farm worker in Brebes would be different to those in the migrant area. In Brebes the farmer paid in daily system, whereas in the migrant area they will be paid in *mara* system.

E. Socio-Economic Relations of Onion Migrant Farmers

Brebes onion farmers who migrated to Pesawahan Village had two socio-economic relations either between farmers or with the villagers. Inter-farmers relation could be found in grouping pattern, capital activities, and profit-sharing system as well as life necessities fulfillment. Relations between Brebes onion farmers could be found in land rent system, relation with the village bureaucracy, and relation with the villagers.

Brebes onion farmers maintained good relationship with Pesawahan villagers by having a direct interaction. Social relations were needed to strengthen relationship between Brebes onion farmers and the villagers, for example, by giving a bunch of onion to the land owner through a middleman. Economic activity relations of Brebes onion farmers with the local could be found during land cultivation and harvest periods. During cultivation period, Brebes onion farmers would employ the locals. Land cultivation period is land preparation period for onion seedlings.

In addition, social relations built were socialization through casual chat with the neighbors up to maintaining communication with the locals after harvest, especially with the villages and middlemen. It was conducted to build social capital so they could still get the land to plant onion in the next year and to avoid possibility of an increase in land rental price when approaching the planting season since there are many land enthusiasts in Pesawahan Village. Onion farmers often have to give down payment for land rent after harvest time in the current year to avoid the possibility of not getting the land in Pesawahan Village for the next year.

Socio-economic relations of Brebes onion farmers became important for the continuity of onion planting. As a village farmer, Brebes onion farmers always used rationality to maximize profit without harming others. Therefore, it can be concluded that Brebes onion farmers were visionary farmers and had evaluation action although their level of education was considered low.

III. CONCLUSION

One of strategies conducted by onion farmers to maintain their household income was by migrating to a destination place, which was Kendal Regency.

The farmers came to Kendal in group and each group led by one head of group who would guide them in the migration destination place. In addition, the farmers also came based on the planting season, which was in February to March every year. Socio-economic relations built by Brebes onion farmer are between the farmers and with the villagers. Inter-farmer relation can be found in grouping pattern, capital activities, and profit sharing system as well as in life necessities fulfillment. Relations between Brebes onion farmers could be found in land rent system, relation with village bureaucracy, and relations with the villagers.

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