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Original Article

Analysis of Empowerment Efforts and Implementation of Funeral Corpses in Indonesia

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Abstract: In Indonesian society, it is customary for Modin to handle the deceased remains of locals. However, this poses several issues in Indonesian society, particularly in densely populated cities. This study examines attempts to empower and implement funeral corpses in Indonesia. This study is the outcome of practical research by UIN Walisongo Semarang students on funeral bodies in society. This is a field research report based on qualitative data gathered through interviews, observations, and documentation. The study's sample locations were Tabanan City in Bali, Surabaya City in East Java, Semarang City in Central Java, and Jakarta City. The resulting community empowerment initiative involves organizing mentoring events and training on funeral bodies for long-term benefits.

Keywords: Caring for corpses; Funeral corpse; Indonesia; RUKEM.

Introduction: Every creature experience death. In public, corpse funerals are conducted in a variety of ways depending on the custom and religion of the deceased. Islam has created their system in such a way that it starts with the process of caring for a corpse and ends with Fiqh and its laws. Caring for corpses is one of the Islamic law principles revealed by Prophet (*Ḥaḍrat Muhammad Rasūlullah Khātām un Nabīyyīn Ṣallallahu ‘alaihi wa ‘alā Ālihi wa Aṣḥābihi wa Ṣallam*). However, many people do things out of habit or by following their predecessors without completely understanding the arguments and instructions. In essence, we know that one of the most serious issues concerning human relations with other humans is related to the topic of caring for corpses. Therefore, Islam places a high priority on this issue, making it one of the tasks that humanity, particularly Muslims, must accomplish.

Caring for the corpse is a right of the corpse that Muslims must do. Ironically, not all Muslims understand the procedure of caring for a corpse. Even many people make mistakes in caring for a body.¹ It is because the law of caring for a corpse is Fard al-Kifayah, which implies that some people are capable of doing so. If the entire community fails to care for the dead, it will face prosecution before Allah Almighty. Meanwhile, those who accomplish it will be rewarded by Allah Almighty.

This is evident in Indonesia, which is noted for having one of the world's largest Muslim populations. This is demonstrated by Indonesia's large Muslim population, which totals 229 million worldwide.² Indonesia is the largest archipelago with approximately 17,000 islands in Southeast Asia.³ Despite Indonesia's large Muslim population, there are still concerns with funeral corpses. Local religious authorities are responsible for arranging funerals in Indonesian public view. Thus, the remaining people or outsiders bear no responsibility for it. Using this perspective, the public believes that the process of caring for a corpse from beginning to end is unimportant because of the presence of leaders.⁴

The existence of an improper mindset may simply cause some issues. In one example, if several persons die at the same time but in separate locations (yet in the same area as one local religious leader), the burial for some bodies will be postponed or unable to be performed promptly since they rely solely on the local religious leader. People surrounding the corpse believe they are unable to carry out the funeral procedure due to a lack of information about corpse care. Essentially, it is true that caring for a body requires a substantial amount of knowledge and ability. If this is not addressed, several issues will arise. In order to properly understand the problems that exist in society and give answers to them. Then this article will highlight the problem with the title "Analysis of Empowerment Efforts and Implementation of Funeral Corpses in Indonesia".

Empowerment: Empowerment according to the Cornell University Empowerment Group quoted from Hatta Abdul Malik, empowerment is a deliberate and ongoing process centered on human life that includes mutual respect, critical thinking, care, and group participation, in which people who do not believe they have collective ownership of valuable resources have better access to obtain and control these resources.⁵ In Indonesian, it is rooted from "*daya*" with meaning power or strength, process, method, and act of empowering.⁶ While in Quran which is mentioned as "*al-Quwwah*" appears in 33 times.

To achieve community empowerment, various factors must be addressed, including clarity, acknowledgment, and preservation of the community's role as consumers of government programs, governance, and development. Clarification, acknowledgment, and protection of the community's bargaining power are required to fight for its ambitions through community-accepted institutions and media. Clarification, acknowledgment, and protection of people's rights to adequate knowledge and skills for future participation in more rapid social change.⁷

As a result, empowerment boosts confidence in one's ability to do anything. Therefore, there will be more job satisfaction, better collaboration with others, clearer goals, and outcomes when goals are met. Recognition is a reward that makes employees express greater gratitude.

The desire to be empowered is frequently greeted with resistance. On the one hand, there is dread since they have never done this before, or others believe they have done a power-up activity previously but it did not go as planned. As a result, there is a belief that empowerment within the organization will not prevent them from feeling compelled to change because the current status is favorable.

Funeral Corpse: The burial of a corpse is divided into four stages: purification, shrouding, prayer, and burying. The majority of experts believe that Fard al-Kifayah is the process of purifying a Muslim's corpse.⁸ Fard al-Kifayah signifies that the responsibility is imposed on all of the mukallaf in that place, but if it is carried out by a few persons, the obligation of the entire mukallaf is nullified.⁹ After being purified, the corpse will be shrouded with cloth. The quantity of shrouds required varies depending on gender. Women require more clothing than men, and this is established in Fiqh. Furthermore, the law applies differently to someone who dies as a result of war than to the usual death.¹⁰

After shrouding the dead, some folks will pray. According to the Ulama, Fard al-Kifayah is the paw of holding funeral prayers.¹¹ The final step is to bury the body.¹² If there are no issues, the body should be buried from the feet down. When burying a woman's corpse, it is customary to wrap it in fabric and place it in the grave, preferably with her mahram. Place the deceased in the grave with its face turned to the right and facing the Qibla. Secure it to the grave wall so it does not shift, and cushion the back with a lump of soil to prevent it from tipping over backwards. Recite a prayer before burying the dead. Untie the shroud from the corpse's head and feet. After placing the body in the grave, it will be covered with a cabin (dirt, boards), followed by soil. Before filling a grave, it is sunnah to apply three handfuls of soil to the head, waist, and feet.¹³

Review of Literature: There are several articles that discuss funeral corpses, particularly in Islam. The burial corpses used in its implementation were symbolic of God's relationship with his servants. Thus, some scholars use different approaches to implement the procedure, such as the demonstration technique.¹⁴ Many issues have been raised in many areas of expertise by some researchers. On one hand, unique research, which is rare to disclose, has also arisen. A beginner's or school-level math idea related to funeral bodies could be analyzed in some cases.¹⁵

On the other hand, many researchers conducted research on COVID-19. This circumstance created intricate difficulties that are linked to every action in human life. The studies are varied. Some must investigate the COVID-19 corpse-snatching patients.¹⁶ Others must investigate the rejection of medical funerals for COVID-19 victims.¹⁷

Furthermore, certain people need to understand the burial process for COVID-19 corpses, as well as the various actions that must be taken as a result of the death disease.¹⁸ They also develop technologies to help people handle the caring corpses.¹⁹ Nevertheless, implementing any of them requires some training and simulation for a specific instance, the funeral of COVID-19 corpses.²⁰

In addition, some of them are discussing Fiqh to solve some problems. They studied the training of funeral corpses in Pesantren,²¹ Sambas village,²² and Sukabumi village²³. They did not, however, resolve the issues that Indonesia is facing as a whole. The article examines how Indonesians traditionally handle deceased people. This article provides the process Requirements for Achieving Results to Overcome Issues. This process started in 2021. Students from UIN Walisongo's community empowerment program created this

report in an effort to address the problem and offer answers. As a result, this study must be carried out.

Methodology: To begin, this study conducts field research to observe and collect data on the customs and issues of burial corpses in various regions of Indonesia. The data will then be presented using qualitative research to analyze the phenomena of funeral corpses in Indonesia. To make the facts obvious, this study selects four regions in Indonesia: Tabanan on Bali, Surabaya on East Java, Semarang on Central Java, and Jakarta. This paper chose those places because there is a comparison between regions with numerous Muslims and those with few Muslims in specific sections of Indonesia. Second, several members' origins are from certain locations, which makes it easier to conduct the research.

In addition, this paper collects data through interviews, observations, and documentation. The interview in this study was conducted in order to learn about the social problems associated with funeral corpses in Indonesia, as well as to get their opinions, willingness, faith, and procedure of caring for a body in their respective locations. To obtain answers, this study conducts a direct interview with interviewees using the question and answer (Q&A) method. Observation is used to comprehend the problem in those areas and to investigate various phenomena associated to funeral corpses. Documentation is employed to obtain non-numerical information from a burial body. Furthermore, this paper uses the triangulation approach to obtain reliable data. Finally, this article adopts descriptive analysis as its data analysis method. In data analysis, the initial step is to collect data through observation and interviews, followed by documentation procedures. After the data has been collected, it will be sorted and reduced if it does not match the requirements. Once the data has been sorted and minimized, it will be evaluated to conclude.

Result and Discussion: Funeral corpse activities are rarely carried out by the closest family members in Indonesia's big cities. Turning over corpses is typically done by persons who are deemed qualified to handle corpses. This is a social phenomenon that occurs in cities and is distinct from villages and rural places. From the five loci used in this study, it is clear that all urban locations, namely Surabaya City in East Java, Semarang City in Central Java, and Jakarta City in Indonesia, do not practice family burial as compared to Tabanan City in Bali. When compared to regions on Java Island, only places with smaller Muslim populations, like as Bali and Borneo, have a higher incidence of family corpse care.

This situation is caused by a variety of circumstances, including a lack of understanding about corpse care and a shortage of human resources who are experts in the field. Individual urban lifestyle habits differ from those of persons living in rural or village regions. Villagers care more about each other when they maintain unity.²⁴ In Indonesia, the government establishes an institution that performs an important public service function in people's lives. The position is best suited to someone with great religious ability who can handle all social problems from conception to death. Modin is in charge of carrying out this role.

The Big Indonesian Dictionary defines Modin as a translator of the call to prayer, muezzin, mosque employee, or male prayer reader. However, Modin is a government-appointed

public worker. A Modin is responsible for a variety of tasks, including maintaining all records of death management and death-related activities, collecting data on marriage, talaq, reconciliation, and divorce, and providing facilities for fostering harmony among religious, socio-cultural, and religious communities.²⁵

With the government's provision of facilities, the public believes that Modin is in charge of corpse care. Thus, everything pertaining to the funeral corpse is passed up to the Modin. In fact, in several circumstances, the bereaved family just needs to receive the body cleanly since they have paid someone to care for it. According to Fiqh, the burial of a corpse is the responsibility of the deceased's closest family. If the nearest family is not present, other Muslims are obligated to care for it.

The government assigned one Modin person to every urban village.²⁶ Each urban village has at least fifty families. If this intricate work is only handed to one Modin, numerous issues will develop. Some of Modin's duties are not optimal, particularly in emergencies such as death. Mr. Imam Ashari stated in an interview that each urban village has only one Modin. The government will next impose regulations on Modin. However, smaller parties than the urban village, like neighborhoods and hamlets, are unaware of this legislation because it pertains to the urban village itself.

According to Modin, in one of Semarang's sub-districts, he came across a case in which he was responsible for registering a marriage in RW 2. However, after some time, a resident of RW 9 died. Residents and the deceased's relatives elected to wait for the Modin to process the funeral corpse. This is due to a lack of Modin and individuals capable of caring for the corpse. This tragedy may be difficult for the family and the deceased.

One of the reasons why the funeral procedure is not carried out by the Modin dispatched from the urban village is that the Modin frequently fails to attend death events when invited. In contrast, when there is a wedding event, the Modin appears more frequently. During the interview, the interviewee stated, "Modin should be a friend in times of joy and sorrow." Do not merely come during a joyous occasion, such as a wedding. But when there is sadness, specifically death, Modin does not appear. Imam Ashari said, "It is not a good attitude."

In one of Surabaya's sub-districts, the urban village's change of Modin without RW and RT consent generated several issues. The transition of Modin in the urban community has left the people disgruntled. This is linked to the social relationships between residents and the new Modin, who was replaced. However, poor social relations cannot be measured numerically. Aside from that, residents require time to adjust to working with Modin. As a result, an effective solution is required to address the issues that develop.

If they follow the practice followed by Bali's minority Muslim population, Muslims will form an association to handle funeral remains. Apart from that, Muslims in many RTs in Semarang organized an organization or institution known as RUKEM.²⁷ They formed this body to overcome the non-optimal function of Modin's work, especially in sudden cases such as death. Apart from that, this body was also formed based on the public's lack of

knowledge about the caring of corpses. The duty of the RUKEM itself is to be ready to receive calls from the family of the deceased who ask for help in a funeral corpse.

Initially, RUKEM had only three members: one coordinator and two members. The coordinator will engage directly with the deceased's family, ensuring that if someone dies, the family contacts the RUKEM coordinator rapidly. One person will be responsible for preparing and carrying out the facilities utilized for funeral corpses. Another member will distribute death cards to residents to inform them that someone has died. They were all responsible for purifying and shrouding the corpse.

All RUKEM members have already received training from the Urban Village. The RUKEM is responsible for assisting persons who are experiencing financial difficulties as well as providing funeral services, from purifying to shrouding. RUKEM's role is confined to shrouding the body. RUKEM does not carry out the next steps, such as praying for the deceased, taking it to the grave, or burying it. Because they do not yet have these talents and were not assigned this work. As a result, residents frequently call on older figures whom they believe are capable, and only these individuals are entrusted with carrying out burial services for corpses.

However, this is not the same as the organization founded in Bali's Tabanan city. The body that was constituted is responsible for everything from body purification to funeral arrangements. Aside from that, because Muslims are a minority in Bali, there is a strong sense of camaraderie among them. Thus, the role of this council is critical to the lives of Bali's Muslim population. This institution exists both in males and in females. So, if a woman dies, the corpse will be cared for by females in the institution who will purify and shroud it. Meanwhile, funeral prayers and burials are still performed by male. However, RUKEM, which was founded by the people of Semarang, only includes male members. This is what restricts the movement of RUKEM Semarang.

Furthermore, because Jakarta and Surabaya are big cities in Indonesia, the establishment of corpse management organizations is rather simple. Initially, the founding of this institution in large cities was extremely useful. However, the ease of forming this institution does not guarantee the quality of its functions. Immigrants travel to Jakarta and Surabaya. The new immigrants eventually settled and formed associations there. However, not all immigrants plan to live in Surabaya or Jakarta. Some of them are students and laborers, so they will not be around for long. As a result, the issue is that the newly established entity lacks personnel. Aside from that, this has an impact on people's lifestyles, as they are more likely to adhere to traditional village practices. Thus, when a resident's family member dies, they prefer to seek assistance from community leaders in their area rather than caring for the corpse alone.

After examining the organization made to handle corpses, it was discovered that there was a personnel deficit in the field. In this scenario, a solution is required to address the restricted human resources faced by cities with a large Muslim population. According to the leaders, it would be unfair if the burial process were carried out only by that person. This is because the coverage is for one RW rather than one RT. RW is larger than RT,

hence it will pose problems if the person being handed over is not present at the same moment.

The special team in charge of investigating that organization believed that the community's customs, which are dictated by the village elders, needed to be changed. They believe that significant reforms are required to shape the leaders of a new generation. The goal is to resolve issues if community figures who have been trusted to care for bodies die. As a result, the leaders and authors (who also serve as solution providers for community empowerment projects) agreed to implement a reform within this agency. After several informal meetings, it was decided at one final meeting that training would be carried out.

At the last meeting, the leadership representatives proposed naming this program "Modin Training". However, the name "Modin" appears to have a very broad task in comparison to the event to be carried out. As a result, the term "Funeral Corpse" came into use. For this event, each RT in the urban village must send at least one representative. The goal of maintaining this representation is so that if there is a fatality incidence in one RT, they can handle it directly without having to contact someone from another RT. By providing empowerment and training on funeral corpses, many workers would be able to appropriately care for corpses. Therefore, there will be no problems if some people die on the same day. Furthermore, offering assistance and training for funeral corpses has broader implications, since it prepares them to care for the corpses of their family members if the need arises.

The training was conducted by inviting presenters from each city's urban village, specifically Modins. The speaker will present fundamental information about corpse care and direct practices, beginning with purification and ending with burial. Then, additional agendas will be developed to strengthen the material provided at the prior meeting. This is to assess participants' comprehension of the material presented. The meetings will be held more than twice, with further meetings planned. It is intended that this event will promote community empowerment and abilities in funeral preparation. Finally, the organizers will continue to analyze and help the representatives provided by their RT in order to form the forerunners of a new generation responsible for corpse burial. Thus, these representatives are indirectly affiliated with RUKEM or are members of RUKEM at their respective RT levels.

Conclusion: Funeral Muslim bodies require adequate knowledge to obey everything that Prophet (*Ḥaḍrat Muhammad Rasūlullah Khātām un Nabiyyīn Ṣallallahu ‘alaihi wa ‘alā Ālihi wa Aṣḥābihi wa Ṣallam*) instructed. Indonesians have a tough situation when it comes to corpse burial. This is the product of society's current habits. As a result, UIN Walisongo students executing the community empowerment program attempt to address this issue by proposing solutions. The solution adopted was a collective decision by regional leaders. The solution proposed is to arrange assistance events and funeral corpse training sessions. This event will be implemented in every RT from urban villages to major cities in Indonesia.

Declaration:

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- ²⁶ Urban village is a subdivision of subdistrict. In Indonesia is called "*Kecamatan*". The sub of urban village is Hamlet or "*Rukun Warga (RW)*" in Indonesian. While the smallest party after family and the sub of Hamlet is neighborhood or "*Rukun Tetangga (RT)*".
- ²⁷ RUKEM is standing for "*Rukun Kematian*" which is known as some people who gather to the funeral corpse from purifying to burying the body.