ABSTRACT

This research examines the relationship between tobacco farmers and middlemen (a study in Buntul Musara Village, Tripe Jaya District, Gayo Lues Regency). The problems in this study concern the relationship between farmers and middlemen, farmers' economic dependence, the mechanism of bargaining position in determining tobacco prices, and the relationship from the perspective of Islamic sociology. This research uses James C. Scott's patron-client theory with a qualitative method and descriptive approach. Data were collected through observation, interviews, and documentation involving tobacco farmers, middlemen, village officials, and the Sharia Council. The results show that the relationship between farmers and middlemen is formed due to farmers' need for capital and marketing of their harvests. Middlemen provide capital, while farmers are required to sell their harvests to the middlemen who provide the capital, resulting in dependence on capital, marketing, and debt. Farmers can still negotiate prices based on market prices and tobacco quality, but their bargaining position becomes more limited when they have financial ties with middlemen. Farmers may also switch to other middlemen when prices or capital needs are not adequately fulfilled. From the perspective of Islamic sociology, qardh and bai' contracts are basically permissible; however, a loan accompanied by an obligation to sell the harvest to the lender at a price below the market price is not permissible because it provides a stipulated benefit to the lender and may harm the farmer. Thus, this relationship reflects reciprocal relations accompanied by economic dependence and an imbalance in bargaining positions.

Keywords: ***Farmer-Middleman Relationship, Tobacco Farmers, Patron-Client, Economic Dependence, Bargaining Position, Islamic Sociology.***