
Participation of Fatayat Nahdlatul Ulama South Tangerang in Handling the Impact of the Covid-19 Pandemic

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Abstract:

This study examines the participation of Fatayat Nahdlatul Ulama (NU) South Tangerang, a women-based community organization, in handling the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic, as tackling the outbreak requires synergy between government and civil society. It aims to identify the reasons and strategies behind this participation. The study uses a qualitative approach with participatory observation and interviews, in which the researcher was directly involved in Fatayat NU activities. Primary data came from interviews with branch leaders, activity committees, cadres, and NU community members, as well as from its social media; secondary data came from journals, books, and online news. The data were analyzed using descriptive and content analysis. The findings show that Fatayat NU South Tangerang was very active in four areas: (1) health education, (2) social service, (3) religious activities, and (4) economic revival. These activities disseminated useful information, helped break the chain of transmission, and helped the community survive the pandemic.

Keywords: Women's Participation; Fatayat NU South Tangerang; Covid-19

Abstrak:

Penelitian ini mengkaji partisipasi Fatayat Nahdlatul Ulama (NU) Tangerang Selatan, sebuah organisasi kemasyarakatan berbasis perempuan, dalam menangani dampak pandemi Covid-19, karena penanganan wabah ini membutuhkan sinergi antara pemerintah dan organisasi kemasyarakatan. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengetahui sebab dan strategi yang digunakan oleh Fatayat NU dalam berpartisipasi. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif dengan metode observasi partisipatif dan wawancara, di mana peneliti terlibat langsung dalam beberapa kegiatan Fatayat NU. Data primer diperoleh dari wawancara dengan pimpinan cabang, panitia kegiatan, kader, dan warga NU, serta dari media sosial Fatayat NU Tangerang Selatan; data sekunder bersumber dari jurnal, buku, dan berita daring. Data tersebut dianalisis menggunakan analisis deskriptif dan analisis isi. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa Fatayat NU Tangerang Selatan sangat aktif dalam empat bidang, yaitu: (1) edukasi kesehatan, (2) bakti sosial, (3) kegiatan keagamaan, dan (4) kebangkitan ekonomi. Kegiatan tersebut membantu menyebarkan informasi yang bermanfaat, memutus mata rantai penularan, dan membantu masyarakat bertahan dalam menghadapi pandemi.

Kata Kunci: Partisipasi Perempuan; Fatayat NU Tangerang Selatan; Covid-19

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Introduction

The Coronavirus Disease 2019 (Covid-19) pandemic has had an extraordinary impact on community life in various parts of the world, in terms of health, social conditions, and the economy. According to Budi Gunadi Sadikin, the Minister of Health, this pandemic is a major problem that the Ministry of Health (Kemenkes) cannot solve alone (Kompas.com). To help resolve this major issue, all levels of society must participate, as Fatayat NU (Nahdlatul Ulama) in South Tangerang does as a community organization.

Fatayat NU is an autonomous body of the Nahdlatul Ulama organization that accommodates young women within the productive age range of 20-45 years. This wing organization for the role of young women has played many roles in Indonesia's social life, particularly on issues concerning young women and children (AD-ART Fatayat NU, 2005). Therefore, this research describes various activities initiated by Fatayat NU in the City of South Tangerang in handling the impact of Covid-19 as a form of active participation in the fields of health education, social service, religious activities, and economic revival.

Fursatul explains that in Dadapan Village, the existence of the Fatayat NU organization has brought change to the community, particularly for women. This change is reflected in the massive scale of activities such as Al-Barzanji religious study sessions, Qur'an recitation (Tadarus), Yasin recitation (Yasinan), celebrations of NU's anniversary (Harlah), the birthday of the Prophet Muhammad SAW (Maulid), and celebrations of other major Islamic holidays. The Fatayat NU organization also actively participates in organizing training and guidance for women in Dadapan Village. Fatayat NU also carries out a series of humanitarian solidarity activities. Fatayat NU consistently works to build the existence of a harmonious Islamic society (Fursatul Faroh, 2020).

In addition, Ulfah (2021) also examined the role of Fatayat in addressing the problem of *stunting*, which still occurs among the Indonesian population. *Stunting* is a failure to thrive and a form of chronic malnutrition. *Stunting* occurs before birth due to poor nutrition during pregnancy, poor eating patterns, and low-quality food. Takalar Regency is one of 10 regencies contributing to the highest stunting rate in South Sulawesi, at 44% in 2018. This figure then decreased to 25% in 2019 (Takalar District Health Office, 2019). A lack of awareness about the importance of maternal nutrition results in insufficient stunting-prevention efforts. This condition continues until the child is born. The role of Fatayat NU is needed to improve the knowledge and skills of pregnant and breastfeeding mothers in stunting-prevention efforts. This effort is carried out through counseling and the processing of moringa leaves into fruit juice. The result is an alternative food product in the form of processed moringa-leaf food that can help meet the nutritional needs of pregnant and breastfeeding mothers and prevent stunting.

Pribadi also researched the role of Fatayat NU in combating violence against children. This is pursued by holding training on preventing violence against children. According to data from Komnas Perempuan (the National Commission on Violence Against Women), cases of violence against children have continued to increase year by year. Successively, in 2016 there were 245,548 cases, in 2017 there were 259,150 cases, and in 2018 there were 348,446 reported and handled cases of violence against women. The community has a very important role in reducing and even preventing acts of violence against women. Through Komnas Perempuan, the government seeks to increase public awareness of their environment by providing complaint services, either through a Call Center or online complaints via email, Facebook, and Twitter, which are easily accessible to the general community. The College of Informatics Management and Computer Science (STMIK) Amikom Purwokerto, as one of the computer-science higher-education institutions in Banyumas Regency, held a community-service activity providing training aimed at socializing and teaching the correct way to report violence against women to the mothers of Fatayat NU Dawuhan Kulon. The method used in this community-service activity was presentation and practical exercises on preventing violence against women, for members of Fatayat NU Dawuhan Kulon. This activity successfully gave the mothers of Fatayat NU Dawuhan Kulon an understanding of the forms of violence against women. They also learned how to nurture and develop concern for their surrounding environment, as well as how to report violence to Komnas Perempuan if they

encounter cases of violence against women nearby. (Pribadi, 2019, Nadhifah, 2018).

Furthermore, according to Astuti, participation is the involvement of one or several people in an activity. This involvement can take the form of mental, emotional, and physical involvement, using all of one's abilities (taking initiative) in every activity carried out to achieve goals, along with responsibility for that involvement. Participation is also the mental and emotional involvement of a person in a group situation that encourages them to support the achievement of the group's goals and to share responsibility for the group (Astuti, 2011). A similar view was expressed by Newstrom and Davis, who argued that, "*participation is the mental and emotional involvement of people in group situations that encourages them to contribute to group goals and share responsibility for them*" (John W. Newstrom and Keith Davis, 2002). Participation is thus defined as the involvement of people, both mentally and emotionally, in various group situations — a situation that encourages them to contribute and share responsibility for the group's goals.

The City of South Tangerang was formed through a division within Tangerang Regency. The City of South Tangerang was inaugurated on October 29, 2008, by the Minister of Home Affairs, Mardiyanto, with 7 districts. https://id.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kota_Tangerang_Selatan

Fatayat NU in the City of South Tangerang is relatively young in age. However, the organization's movement has been quite massive in its participation in the fields of social affairs, religion, women, and children. Based on the reasoning above, this research examines another aspect of Fatayat NU's participation in handling the Covid-19 pandemic. This pandemic is an outbreak that has become global, so that the community needs the participation of all parties, including community organizations such as Fatayat NU. This research focuses on exploring the active role and the da'wah (preaching) strategies of Fatayat NU in handling the Covid-19 pandemic.

Methods

This research uses a qualitative approach, namely research conducted by collecting words or sentences from individuals, books, and other sources (Martono, 2014, Rukajat, 2018). Data collection used participatory observation and interview methods. The participatory component requires social researchers to take part in the way of life of the object being studied. However, a difference in degree remains between the research informants and the researcher, in that the participating social researcher is not actively involved in the activities under study to the same extent as the research informants. It is widely believed that participant observation must be conducted over a long period. Previously in anthropology, for example, researchers were required to live with the individuals they studied for at least one year. Today, studies of shorter duration are also considered acceptable (Anggito et al., 2018).

Conducting participant observation was explained by Bronislaw Malinowski (Atkinson et al., 1988), who is regarded as one of the main founders of this method. Participant observation allows social researchers to understand the native's point of view and their relationship to life, in order to realize their vision of their world. To this day, this method of participatory observation remains relevant and retains its strength as a research method. Therefore, the views, perspectives, experiences, and so on of research participants always serve as the starting point of analysis. At the same time, social researchers may go beyond — and even challenge — these perspective views in their account of the research participants' way of life (Zahle, 2017, Eramian, 2018).

In using this participant-observation research method, the researcher was directly involved in several activities held by Fatayat NU South Tangerang in handling the Covid-19 pandemic, which allowed the researcher to conduct in-depth observation and interviews directly. The primary-data collection technique used observation and interviews with a number of Branch Leadership administrators, members, cadres, and NU community members, as well as the social media of Fatayat NU South Tangerang, in order to obtain a further perspective on the research theme. Secondary data was sourced from online news, books, journals, and literature related to this research. The researcher conducted observation through the Instagram account @fatayatnutangsel_official, with a total of 192 feed posts, and the Fatayat NU Tangsel YouTube channel, with 7 uploaded videos, covering the period from June 7, 2021 to September 30, 2021. The

collected data was then analyzed qualitatively using a descriptive-analytical approach and content analysis to describe the problems at hand. The researcher then drew the research conclusions deductively.

Results and Discussion

History of Fatayat NU South Tangerang

Fatayat Nahdlatul Ulama is a young women's Islamic organization, one of the autonomous bodies within Nahdlatul Ulama. It was founded in Surabaya on 24 April 1950 CE, coinciding with 7 Rajab 1369 H (<https://fatayatnu.or.id/sejarah/>). Historically, forming Fatayat as an NU Autonomous Body accommodating young women was not easy because of the patriarchal culture in Indonesia at the time, so its founders had to work hard to convince their parent organization, Nahdlatul Ulama. During the pioneering period (1950-1953), history records three young Nahdlatul Ulama women of that time: Khuzaemah Mansur, Aminah Mansur, and Murtosijah Chamid. The three are known as the “Tiga Serangkai” (Trio) founders of Fatayat NU. The second stage was the period of organizational development and consolidation (1953-1969), during which Fatayat organizations began forming across almost all of Indonesia—Kalimantan, Sulawesi, and Sumatra—from the regional level down to branches, sub-branches, and local units. With the Fatayat organization in place, women's potential began to be recognized, and several Fatayat women cadres even came to hold important positions in government. However, during the New Order regime, Fatayat was largely dormant for almost twelve years, with little activity, because the scope of movement of Nahdlatul Ulama and its autonomous bodies, including Fatayat, was tightly restricted (Anggia et al., 2016).

In 1979, Muslimat and Fatayat NU held a Congress in Semarang. At that time, the elected general chairperson was Mahfudhoh Ali Ubaid. Under Mahfudhoh's leadership, Fatayat began reviving the organization, starting with religious activities such as Diba'iyah, Tahlilan, Maulid Nabi, and the study of classical texts (kitab kuning) such as tafsir, hadith, fiqh, and so on; Fatayat also began opening itself to synergize with several government-formed organizations and to support several of their programs, such as posyandu (integrated health posts), “living pharmacies,” and *dasa wisma* (neighborhood women's groups). In addition, Fatayat NU also began establishing ties with international organizations such as UNICEF, ADB, and others. Around the 1990s, Fatayat NU came into contact with what is called the gender-perspective women's movement — a perspective that deconstructs old understandings of gender roles in at least three respects. *First*, deconstructing the meaning of “kodrat” (women's supposed inherent nature) or what is viewed as something ‘natural’ for women. *Second*, deconstructing old understandings of the rationale for a sexual division of labor. *Third*, this perspective created space to trace the social-historical roots of subordination, marginalization, violence, and injustice toward women, while also recognizing inner strength as a basis for organizing collective power (Anggia et al., 2016, <https://fatayatnu.or.id/sejarah/>).

The Fatayat NU organization in South Tangerang (Tangsel) began to take shape in 2009; based on the results of the first branch conference, Hj. Kholidah Tamami, S.Ip, was decided upon as the first Branch Chair, serving from 2009 to 2014. During its pioneering period, Fatayat NU in South Tangerang formed four Sub-Branch Leaderships (PAC) at the district (kecamatan) level, namely PAC Ciputat Timur, PAC Pamulang, PAC Pondok Aren, and PAC Setu. However, this formation was still hampered because many people still felt unfamiliar with Fatayat's presence. Another obstacle was that Fatayat cadres were dominated by young mothers who were busy building careers and managing household affairs, children, and husbands, so the cadre-development process did not run optimally. In 2014, Fatayat NU Tangsel held its second branch conference, at which Nurul Mudrika, S.Pd., was elected Chair of the Fatayat NU Tangsel Branch Leadership for the 2014-2019 term of service. During this period, the administrators and cadres also carried out extensive consolidation to reactivate the four Sub-Branch Leaderships (PAC) already formed, as well as form additional PACs: PAC Ciputat, PAC Serpong, PAC Setu, and PAC Serpong Utara. In 2019, the Branch Leadership held its third branch conference, at which Nurul Mudrika, S.Pd., was

re-elected for a second term, serving 2019-2024. During this period, the number of Fatayat NU Tangsel cadres grew larger and more organized, and the cadre-development process became well established, not only at the level of the Sub-Branch Leadership in each district but also at the level of local branches, villages, and urban wards. (Nurul Mudrika, Chair of Fatayat NU South Tangerang, personal communication, November 1, 2021)

Fatayat NU runs its organization based on two foundations: a vision and a mission, produced at the 15th Congress in 2015. Fatayat NU's vision is to become an autonomous body of NU women capable of translating Islam as a blessing (*rahmat*) for both women and men, by actively participating in realizing an equal and just order of life within the family, society, the state, and the world. The missions to be carried out and achieved by Fatayat NU are: (1) to become an independent, strong institution that masters information and communication technology; (2) to become an institution reckoned with at the local, national, regional, and global levels; (3) to become a reference institution for knowledge on Islam and women; (4) to have a support system for its congregation so they can properly fulfill their rights; (5) to prepare cadres of Muslim women leaders at the local, national, regional, and international levels who hold a strong Aswaja ideology, sound religious and general knowledge, mastery of advocacy skills, and high concern for the problems of the ummah (Results of the 15th Congress of Fatayat Nahdlatul Ulama, 2015).

Participation of Fatayat NU South Tangerang in Handling Covid

Women possess a God-given nature and set of excellences from Allah SWT, so it cannot be denied that they form a primary foundation in raising a generation capable of bringing benefit to all of humankind. The role of women, both within the family and in society, is therefore an important one, meaning that women must receive education, knowledge, and understanding, particularly concerning the problems faced during the current Covid-19 pandemic. Fatayat NU South Tangerang, as a community organization, needs very much to participate in responding to community needs amid this Covid pandemic, especially for women (Maryudin, 2020, Dayana 2021, Muhsin, 2021).

In pursuing its vision and mission and its strategy for handling the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic, Fatayat NU Tangsel put together 4 flagship programs: (1) Covid-19 Outbreak Health Education, (2) Social Service, (3) Religious Activities, and (4) Economic Revival. These programs were realized through activities in various forms, as follows.

First, Covid-19 Outbreak Health Education

The first activity carried out was online Covid-19 education through Kulwap (WhatsApp lectures). Several studies note that the use of WhatsApp Group applications dominates other educational platforms as a medium for learning (Wahsun, 2020, Ismayanti, 2021). A Kulwap titled "Beware of Covid-19: Recognize the Symptoms and How to Prevent It" was attended by 235 participants from 23 cities/regencies across Indonesia on 20 March 2021, with presenter Surotul Ilmiyah, SKM, MKM (member of the PBNU Covid-19 Task Force, Chair of LKNU Tangsel, and also a Fatayat NU Tangsel cadre). The presenter explained the symptoms of Covid-19 and the steps for prevention. A question-and-answer session was then opened, closed with door prizes for the best questions. This activity gave the community — particularly mothers — a great deal of knowledge for understanding, responding to, and handling the coronavirus, as shown by the large number of participants and the lively discussion, with enthusiastic engagement from attendees (Fatimatu Zahra, coordinator of the Fatayat NU Tangsel Health Division, personal communication, November 1, 2021).

During this Covid era, the community faced a dilemma in sustaining their livelihoods: on one hand they underwent many changes, while on the other hand they had to keep their households intact. Household resilience became a distinct challenge for the government (Kamarudin Amin, 2020, Nanda 2019, Nurmahmudah, 2021). For this reason, Fatayat Tangsel collaborated with the National Population and Family Planning Board (BKKBN) and the Population Control and Family Planning Office (OPDKB) to promote family planning, reproductive health, and the prevention of gender-based violence during the Covid-19 pandemic. This activity involved doctors, religious

figures, and Fatayat cadres with the relevant capacity for the educational themes provided, and was carried out across 5 PACs (5 districts) and 10 urban wards in South Tangerang, both online and offline, in line with health protocols. (Instagram of Fatayat NU Tangel, 2021). Further education was carried out professionally, involving the DPMP3KB Office, the Ministry of Communication and Information (Kominfo), digital practitioners, and women's activists, in the form of the seminar "Women in the Era of Digital Disruption." This education was intended to provide understanding and further knowledge to women as they shift their activities from non-digital to digital across various aspects of life, given how high the community's current need for and interaction with the digital world has become (Ridwan et al., 2018).

This health-education program is not limited to physical health alone; alongside physical health, mental health also deserves attention (Ridwan Syafirin, 2021, Choir, 2020, Pujiati, 2019). Fatayat NU Tangel therefore held an activity titled "Cerita Cinta Fatayat NU" (Fatayat NU Love Stories) as a form of healing for Fatayat NU Tangel cadres during the Covid-19 pandemic. Cadres shared their love experiences with their respective partners in the form of letters, aimed at building harmony within the household. The love letters were read aloud and commented on by other cadres, creating a joyful atmosphere as each cadre's love story was recalled (Instagram of Fatayat NU Tangel). As is well known, women have been the group most vulnerable to the impact of Covid-19, even bearing a heavier burden than men because of the pandemic (Kemenpppa, 2020, Dilawati, 2020, Lestyoningsih, 2020). This activity therefore served as a form of healing for the cadres, strengthening bonds among them and with their partners, and boosting their optimism in facing Covid-19.

Second, Social Service

Fatayat NU South Tangerang showed another form of participation through concrete, material action namely holding social-service activities to directly assist community members who survived or were affected by Covid.

The Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) said:

إِنَّ الْمُؤْمِنَ لِلْمُؤْمِنِ كَالْبُنْيَانِ، يَشُدُّ بَعْضُهُ بَعْضًا

Truly, a believer to another believer is like a building, one part strengthening the other (Bukhari, 1912; Sany, 2019).

The economic impact of the Covid-19 pandemic has been the aspect most keenly felt by the community, so Fatayat cadres are keenly aware that people must help one another and ease each other's burdens, in line with the hadith above describing fellow believers as like a single building or a single body. It also recalls the words of Allah SWT in the Qur'an, Surah Al-Hadid, verse 7:

"Believe in Allah and His Messenger and spend out of that in which He has made you successors [to wealth]. And those who have believed among you and spent, for them is a great reward" (QS. Al-Hadid: 7).

Based on interviews with Zuliatul Rosyidah, Chair of PAC Serpong, and Saraswati, Chair of PAC Pamulang, the social-service activities carried out by the Fatayat NU South Tangerang Branch Leadership include: (1) Fadilna (Fatayat Peduli Corona / Fatayat Cares About Corona), a solidarity action distributing free iftar snacks (*takjil*) and masks in the Pamulang and Serpong areas on 22 and 30 April. This activity received a very positive response from residents and itinerant traders in the area. (2) Distribution of basic food packages (*sembako*) and 1,000 masks, also carried out in the Pamulang area. (3) Sharing 1,000 boxed meals with orphans and those in need (*dlu'af*) on 1 May 2021. (4) A donation drive for orphans, under the theme "Moving to Share and Care for One Another During the Pandemic, in Commemoration of 10 Muharram 1443 H." (5) A joint iftar (breaking of the fast) event in commemoration of Fatayat NU's 17th anniversary (Harlah) and the launch of Fordaf by the Fatayat NU Tangel Branch Leadership. While the activities in points 1 through 4 were aimed at the wider community around South Tangerang, the activity in point five was held to strengthen bonds of fellowship (*silaturahmi*) among cadres and to launch the Fatayat NU Da'iyah (Female Preachers) Forum. This forum was established to strengthen the propagation of Islamic values.

Third, Religious Activities

Spiritual Quotient is the intelligence of the soul — an intelligence that helps human beings grow and build themselves as whole persons. Spiritual Quotient concerns the relationship between human beings and God (Ary Ginanjar, 2005; Solehudin, 2018; Muarif, 2020). To strengthen inner resilience and this spiritual intelligence, Fatayat provides space for both cadres and the wider public. Activities held include: (1) Regular Khotmul Qur'an sessions — a complete 30-juz recitation of the Qur'an completed over 10 days. According to a hadith, thousands of angels say "Amen" at the completion of a Khotmul Qur'an, making it easier for the prayer to be answered (HR, Addarimi, an-Nawawi, 2005). (2) Biweekly religious study sessions filled with dhikr and religious guidance (*tausiyah*) on matters of daily life. (3) "Tangsel Bermunajat" (South Tangerang Supplices), held on 17 July 2021 online via Zoom and livestreamed on the YouTube channel of PCNU South Tangerang, aimed at supporting the emergency Covid-19 PPKM (Public Activity Restrictions). The series of activities included istighasah (collective supplication), shalawat (praise upon the Prophet), tahlil, and joint prayer, inviting the general public to supplicate to Allah SWT that Covid-19 be lifted from the earth soon and that the Indonesian nation be granted patience in facing the pandemic; the event closed with a prayer (a prayer believed to change fate). (Abdullah Mas'ud, Chair of PCNU South Tangerang, 2021). (4) Commemoration of the 6th National Santri Day, including a santri parade (*kirab santri*), pilgrimages to the graves of several NU figures in South Tangerang, a Khatmil Qur'an, and observance of the Maulid of the Prophet Muhammad SAW.

Fourth, Economic Revival

The economy is never separate from community life, since it continues to develop alongside the changing times. In conventional terms, "economy" refers to the rules governing the fulfillment of human livelihood needs within a household — whether the household of ordinary people or of the state (Idri, 2015, Purba et al., 2020, Afida, 2020).

During the Covid pandemic, the economy became one of the sectors most severely affected among the population (Hanoatubun, 2020, Sumarni, 2020, Iskandar, 2020). In light of this, the Fatayat South Tangerang Branch Leadership carried out several activities, as described by Dina, Chair of the Fatayat NU Tangsel UMKM (Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises) division: given that the economic condition of people affected by the Covid-19 pandemic kept declining, reviving the community's economy particularly for women became a matter of concern, addressed through activities including: (1) Entrepreneurship Training, "Fatayat NU Cadres Dare to Start a Business"; (2) Entrepreneurship Training, "Fatayat NU Cadres Skilled at Running a Business"; (3) Entrepreneurship Training, "Tips for Managing Business Finances for Fatayat NU Cadres"; (4) Business Training, "Business Marketing Strategy for Fatayat NU Cadres" (source: interview with the UMKM Chair, 11 October 2021).

These four activities were held online via Instagram Live because PPKM (Public Activity Restrictions) were still in effect and to allow participants to join from various cities across Indonesia, as well as from abroad, such as Malaysia and Hong Kong (source: Instagram of Fatayat NU South Tangerang, 2021). The response from cadres and the community alike was very positive, so this entrepreneurship training came to be eagerly anticipated and was held on several occasions.

Another activity Fatayat NU Tangsel carried out to revive the community's economy was establishing the Fatayat NU South Tangerang UMKM group. The output of the entrepreneurship activities carried out was that Fatayat was able to form an UMKM group whose members — cadres and non-cadres alike started their own businesses, including in bedsheets (RD brand), babyfish, honey, Muslim fashion, and headscarves (*jilbab*) (source: Instagram of Fatayat NU South Tangerang, 2021).

Analysis of the Participation of Fatayat Nahdlatul Ulama South Tangerang in Handling the Impact of the Covid-19 Pandemic

The government has made many efforts to handle the Covid-19 pandemic, but the Indonesian government cannot work alone; it requires participation from all levels of society and

from community organizations (Maryudin, 2020, Santika, 2020, A Riansyah, 2021). Fatayat NU Tangsel serves as a forum for its members and the surrounding community to share useful information about the Covid-19 pandemic, since many members of the public remain unfamiliar with the subject and require guidance and comprehensive information on Covid-19; with such information, the community can recognize and prevent transmission and protect themselves and their families. (Septi & Dewi, administrators of Fatayat NU Tangsel, personal interview, November 11, 2021).

Greenberg and Baron argue that, *“people not only learn more quickly, but also retain the skills longer when they have been involved actively in the learning process. This is the practice of participation”* (Greenberg and Baron, 2008). In practice, participation not only helps a person learn faster, but also helps them retain their abilities when they are actively involved in the learning process (Fikri, 2017, Sufirmansyah, 2019, Gasong, 2018). This is something felt directly by Fatayat NU cadres and the NU community in the City of South Tangerang.

The participation carried out by Fatayat NU South Tangerang in handling the spread of Covid-19 demonstrates autonomous and collective participation, as an organization that champions women’s interests broadly. This participation was driven by a new situation in the surrounding environment — the high number of coronavirus infections and the wide-reaching socio-economic impact of the spread of Covid-19 (Maryudin, 2020, Gani, 2020, Hekmatyar, 2021). Facts on the ground show that communities affected by Covid-19, particularly in South Tangerang, were considerably helped by the participation of this women’s organization under the auspices of Nahdlatul Ulama (NU) — the Fatayat NU organization. According to Blackburn, women’s movements conducted through organizations have more strength and sustainability than individual efforts (Blackburn, 2004). This means collective strength has come to be seen as an important and fairly significant method within the women’s movement in Indonesia, particularly in South Tangerang.

This participation of Fatayat NU South Tangerang is quite widely known to the public, because publicity has been carried out not only person to person but increasingly adapted to today’s digital era — through WhatsApp, Instagram, Facebook, YouTube channels, and several local media outlets such as NU Online and Berita Tangsel, which have also reported on Fatayat NU South Tangerang’s participation in handling the impact of Covid-19.

The activities carried out by Fatayat NU South Tangerang in contributing to and participating in handling the Covid-19 pandemic are quite significant and clearly visible. According to Kaharuddin and Shybalkina, the concept of participation consists of three stages — planning, implementation, and utilization — reflected across three periods of development: a first, pioneering period; a second, developmental period; and a third, advancement period (Kaharuddin, 2020, Shybalkina, 2021).

Beginning with planning drawn up by the administrators or core committee, the implementation and utilization stages are strongly felt by both cadres and the general public, particularly women. The theory of participation, in its pioneering, developmental, and advancement stages, has all been achieved by Fatayat NU South Tangerang through a remarkable process and set of achievements — so the benefits of Fatayat NU South Tangerang’s existence have been demonstrated across various contexts and locations. This research is therefore, in effect, a continuation that fills a gap in the development of factual practice concerning the role and participation of NU women’s organizations in handling the social and economic problems caused by the Covid-19 pandemic.

In terms of planning, during the pioneering and developmental stages, all PACs — together with the ranks of administrators and cadres — were strengthened through Basic Cadre Training (LKD) and Work Meetings (Raker), preceded by upgrading sessions for cadres. In the advancement stage, administrators and cadres had work programs ready for implementation.

In terms of implementation, during the pioneering and developmental stages, administrators carried out activities using resources available internally within Fatayat itself, with guidance from Branch Leadership administrators. Media that is now easily accessible to the whole community was

put to use, so activities could be carried out and the community could benefit from them. In the advancement stage, the implementation of activities allowed administrators to work in synergy with various bodies such as BKKBN and the Ministry of Communication and Information.

In terms of direct utilization, during the developmental and advancement stages Fatayat was able to establish the Fatayat Da'iyah Forum (Fordaf), which brings together female preachers (*da'iyah*) in the South Tangerang region and develops da'wah (preaching) in this region and across Indonesia; the Fatayat UMKM group, which brings together women entrepreneurs; and the establishment of the Women's Empowerment and Child Protection Consultation Institute as a forum for community complaints, particularly for women and children, regarding problems arising from the impact of Covid-19.

The results of this research align with the view of Newstrom and Davis, who stated: "*participation is the mental and emotional involvement of people in group situations that encourages them to contribute to group goals and share responsibility for them*" (John W. Newstrom and Keith Davis, 2002). Here, participation is defined as the involvement of people, both mentally and emotionally, in various group situations — a situation that encourages them to contribute and share responsibility for the group's goals. The same holds true for the administrators and cadres of Fatayat NU South Tangerang, who were very actively involved in the preparation, implementation, and utilization of these activities, engaging emotionally and mentally across various situations; it was this pandemic condition that drove administrators and cadres to contribute within the community, particularly for women.

Ida Royani, an administrator of the Fatayat Tangsel Branch Leadership, related that because of the understanding about Covid that Fatayat provided, she and her family were able to take preventive measures against Covid-19; some people in her immediate community were even directly helped with information on vaccination locations and received masks from Fatayat (personal interview, November 10, 2021).

Atifa, a Fatayat cadre, said she felt calmer and more optimistic because of the religious activities carried out by Fatayat. Likewise, Lia, who runs a home-based business, said that her donut business began thanks to motivation from the economic-revival activities initiated by the Fatayat Tangsel Branch Leadership (personal interview, November 9, 2021).

Conclusion

Based on the observation, participation, interview, and documentation data, and in answer to the problem addressed in this research, the author draws the following conclusion: Fatayat NU, as a women-based community organization, has participated in handling the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic, because this women's organization possesses fairly massive collective strength in driving virus-transmission prevention and in helping to enforce health protocols, thereby helping to break the chain of transmission.

The strategy carried out by Fatayat NU in the City of South Tangerang was to conduct a range of activities, including: providing educational information about the Covid-19 pandemic; mobilizing women's solidarity to hold social-service activities for survivors and those affected; religious activities to strengthen spirituality so as to remain physically and mentally healthy; and efforts to build and boost the economy through various entrepreneurship and business training programs, as well as by establishing UMKM groups.

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