



INTERNATIONAL AID AND LOCAL TRANSFORMATION: EXAMINING SOCIAL CHANGE IN POST-EARTHQUAKE TRIENGGADENG-INDONESIA

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Abstract

Indonesia, situated along the Pacific Ring of Fire, is highly vulnerable to various natural disasters, including floods, landslides, volcanic eruptions, earthquakes, and tsunamis. While the Indonesian government—through BASARNAS—plays a central role in emergency response, international assistance often becomes crucial during post-disaster recovery. This qualitative study, based on interviews, focus group discussions, and field observations conducted across five villages in the Trienggadeng sub-district, Pidie Jaya Regency, Aceh, investigates the social transformations following the 2016 earthquake and the involvement of international aid organizations. The findings reveal a dual impact of aid: it accelerated economic recovery, enhanced infrastructure, and introduced new work ethics and intercultural perspectives. Conversely, it also disrupted traditional communal values, triggered social tensions, fostered dependency, and eroded trust in local governance due to perceptions of favoritism and nepotism. Additionally, while some community members experienced a religious revival, others became more materialistic. This study highlights the complexity of aid-driven recovery and emphasizes the importance of culturally sensitive and participatory approaches to ensure that international assistance supports both physical reconstruction and the preservation of social cohesion.

Keywords: Disaster Recovery; International Aid; Social Change; Community Resilience; Post-Earthquake Reconstruction.

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Abstrak

Indonesia yang terletak di Cincin Api Pasifik merupakan negara yang sangat rentan terhadap berbagai jenis bencana alam, seperti banjir, tanah longsor, letusan gunung berapi, gempa bumi, dan tsunami. Meskipun pemerintah Indonesia—melalui BASARNAS—memegang peran penting dalam penanganan darurat, bantuan internasional sering kali menjadi krusial dalam tahap pemulihan pascabencana. Penelitian kualitatif ini, yang didasarkan pada wawancara, diskusi kelompok terfokus, dan observasi lapangan di lima desa di Kecamatan Trienggadeng, Kabupaten Pidie Jaya, Aceh, bertujuan untuk mengeksplorasi perubahan sosial yang terjadi pascagempa bumi 2016 dan keterlibatan lembaga bantuan internasional. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa bantuan memiliki dampak ganda: di satu sisi, mempercepat pemulihan ekonomi, meningkatkan infrastruktur, serta memperkenalkan etos kerja dan perspektif antarbudaya baru; di sisi lain, mengganggu nilai-nilai komunal tradisional, memicu ketegangan sosial, menumbuhkan ketergantungan, dan mengikis kepercayaan terhadap pemerintahan lokal akibat persepsi nepotisme dan ketidakadilan distribusi. Selain itu, sebagian masyarakat mengalami kebangkitan religius, sementara yang lain menunjukkan kecenderungan materialistik. Studi ini menegaskan kompleksitas pemulihan berbasis bantuan dan pentingnya pendekatan yang partisipatif serta sensitif terhadap budaya lokal agar bantuan internasional dapat mendukung rekonstruksi fisik sekaligus menjaga kohesi sosial masyarakat.

Kata Kunci: Pemulihan Pascabencana; Bantuan Internasional; Perubahan Sosial; Ketahanan Komunitas; Rekonstruksi Pascagempa.

INTRODUCTION

Indonesia has experienced numerous types of natural disasters over the past decade, ranging from floods, volcanic eruptions, and bushfires to more devastating events such as earthquakes and tsunamis.¹ According to Statista (2023), the country averages approximately 1,500 natural disasters per year, which include events triggered by volcanic activity, earthquakes, tsunamis, floods, landslides, droughts, and forest fires. This frequency places Indonesia among the most disaster-prone countries in the world, a condition largely attributed to its geographic location along the Pacific "Ring of Fire".²

Furthermore, Emmett (2018), writing for *Earth Magazine*, noted that in a single recent year (2017), Indonesia experienced over 2,000 significant disaster events. These included a variety of catastrophes such as floods, landslides, wildfires, volcanic eruptions, tornadoes, and tsunamis.³ Additionally, Mercy Corps (2020) reports that Indonesia continues to endure daily seismic activity, frequent volcanic eruptions, and routine flooding events—

¹Harry Masyrafah and JMJA McKeon, 'Post-Tsunami Aid Effectiveness in Aceh', USA: Wolfensohn Centre for Development, 2008.

²Mona Siahaan, 'Indonesia: Natural Disasters Risk Index by Type 2023| Statista', 2023 <https://www.statista.com/statistics/920857/indonesia-risk-index-for-natural-disasters/?utm_source=chatgpt.com> [accessed 18 June 2025].

³Arielle Emmett, 'Hazards in Paradise: Indonesia Prepares for Natural Disasters' <<https://www.earthmagazine.org/article/hazards-paradise-indonesia-prepares-natural-disasters>> [accessed 18 June 2025].

especially following the catastrophic tsunami of 2004—underscoring the chronic vulnerability of the nation to environmental hazards.⁴

Given this context, Indonesia's status as a highly disaster-prone nation has been reaffirmed, particularly in regions such as Aceh, where the frequency and severity of earthquakes have intensified in recent years.⁵ In response to this ongoing threat, the Government of Indonesia established the National Search and Rescue Agency (BASARNAS), tasked with leading emergency responses in affected regions.⁶ Nonetheless, empirical data and field observations reveal that the scale of devastation in many disaster-stricken areas frequently exceeds the government's capacity to respond effectively. As a result, external support—particularly from non-governmental organizations (NGOs), international agencies, and foreign governments—has become indispensable in post-disaster recovery and reconstruction efforts.⁷

A striking example of this reliance on international assistance occurred in the aftermath of the 2004 earthquake and tsunami that devastated Aceh.⁸ According to Doocy et al. (2007), the death toll following the disaster was estimated at 131,066, a figure that could be significantly higher when including those reported missing. The Rehabilitation and Reconstruction Agency (BRR, 2005–2009) reported that over 80,000 houses were completely destroyed or severely damaged along the northern coast of Aceh.⁹ Additionally, 3,000 kilometers of roads and 120 bridges were rendered inoperable, effectively cutting off many communities from aid and relief services. Educational infrastructure was also severely impacted, with 2,065 schools damaged and over 100,000 students left without access to proper schooling. Tragically, around 1,870 teachers and 45,000 students perished.¹⁰ Healthcare infrastructure faced a similar fate, with more than 500 facilities damaged or destroyed, significantly hindering the delivery of medical assistance during the critical emergency period.

In light of this overwhelming devastation, both the central and provincial governments acknowledged their limited capacity to manage such a large-scale crisis.¹¹ As Gaillard et al. (2008) noted, the post-tsunami recovery in Aceh necessitated an unprecedented level of international involvement due to the government's logistical and

⁴Indonesia Tsunamis Facts - What To Know | Mercy Corps' <<https://www.mercycorps.org/blog/facts-indonesia-disasters>> [accessed 18 June 2025].

⁵Shahar Hameiri and Fabio Scarpello, 'International Development Aid and the Politics of Scale', *Review of International Political Economy*, 25.2 (2018), 145–68.

⁶Krishna S Pribadi and others, 'Post-Disaster Housing Reconstruction in Indonesia: Review and Lessons from Aceh, Yogyakarta, West Java and West Sumatera Earthquakes', *Disaster Recovery: Used or Misused Development Opportunity*, 2014, 197–223.

⁷Arie W Kruglanski, 'New Developments in Goal Systems Theory', *Goal Systems Theory: Psychological Processes and Applications*, 9 (2023).

⁸Patrick Daly and Yenny Rahmayati, 'Cultural Heritage and Community Recovery in Post-Tsunami Aceh', *From the Ground Up: Perspectives on Post-Tsunami and Post-Conflict Aceh*. Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 2012, 57–78.

⁹Sonia Akter, Talitha Fauzia Chairunissa, and Madhavi Pundit, 'Assessing "Invisible Loss" During Medium-Term Earthquake Recovery: The Case of Indonesia's 2016 Aceh Earthquakes', *Economics of Disasters and Climate Change*, 8.3 (2024), 541–61.

¹⁰Irfan Zikri, 'Social Transformation and the Change of Community Capacity of Post-Tsunami Aceh, Indonesia', *Pertanika Journal of Social Sciences and Humanities*, 25.3 (2017), 1297–1318.

¹¹Mojgan Taheri Tafti and Richard Tomlinson, 'Long-Term Socio-Spatial Transformation of Earthquake-Affected Neighbourhoods in Bhuj: Who Stayed, Who Left and Who Moved In?', *International Journal of Disaster Resilience in the Built Environment*, 7.3 (2016), 230–58.

institutional constraints.¹² A comparable situation emerged during the 2016 earthquake in Pidie Jaya, where the scale of damage once again required collaboration with international institutions to facilitate reconstruction. Despite the mobilization of national resources, including military support under President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono's administration, the government still encountered significant barriers in addressing the needs of affected populations.¹³

To mitigate the humanitarian impact in such scenarios, the Indonesian government had little choice but to accept international aid—from NGOs as well as foreign governments.¹⁴ These actors provided critical assistance, including emergency medical services, reconstruction of public infrastructure and housing, and the distribution of essential goods. NGOs, in particular, played a pivotal role by conducting needs assessments, implementing recovery projects, and establishing operational bases in affected regions.¹⁵ Their interventions spanned a wide range of initiatives: rebuilding and renovating homes, distributing basic necessities, initiating economic rehabilitation through cash-for-work programs and business capital grants, and delivering psychosocial support to address trauma.¹⁶

However, while this aid was largely perceived by disaster survivors as a lifeline, it also brought unintended social consequences. In communities such as those in Aceh—predominantly Muslim and deeply rooted in Islamic cultural and religious traditions—external aid introduced complexities that intersected with local values and belief systems. Many community members interpreted the disaster as a divine warning, prompting a call for greater religious observance.¹⁷ As described by Sanny (2008), Acehese communities often view natural disasters through a theological lens, regarding them as tests of faith, opportunities for spiritual purification, and reminders of divine compassion. This religious framing shaped their response to the disaster, with a collective emphasis on improving religious piety and mutual support within the community.

Nonetheless, the introduction of aid also precipitated new tensions. Minor conflicts emerged within the community, often stemming from discrepancies in the type, amount, or quality of aid received. In some cases, these tensions escalated into acts of data manipulation or favoritism aimed at securing additional assistance. Hellerup (2025), drawing from his study of the Sida program in Haiti, observed similar patterns, noting that post-disaster aid can unintentionally foster dependence and hinder long-term development.¹⁸

More significantly, these conflicts catalyzed shifts in socio-cultural values and social cohesion. As Abdul (2002) explains, social change is a natural and ongoing process in

¹²Jean-Christophe Gaillard, Elsa Clavé, and Ilan Kelman, 'Wave of Peace? Tsunami Disaster Diplomacy in Aceh, Indonesia', *Geoforum*, 39.1 (2008), 511–26.

¹³Gordon Crawford and Chas Morrison, 'Community-led Reconstruction, Social Inclusion and Participation in Post-earthquake Nepal', *Development Policy Review*, 39.4 (2021), 548–68.

¹⁴Matteo Clemente and Luca Salvati, 'Interrupted' Landscapes: Post-Earthquake Reconstruction in between Urban Renewal and Social Identity of Local Communities', *Sustainability*, 9.11 (2017), 2015.

¹⁵Nizam Nizam and Ikaputra Ikaputra, 'Transitional Settlement Strategy Post Disaster-A Comparative Study of Aceh Tsunami and Yogyakarta Earthquake Disaster', in *IOP Conference Series: Earth and Environmental Science* (IOP Publishing, 2025), MCDLXXIX, 12043.

¹⁶Ahoura Meskinazarian, 'Social Resilience of Post-Earthquake Bam' (King's College, London, 2012).

¹⁷Masrijal, *Pengendalian Masalah Sosial Melalui Kearifan Lokal* (Syiah Kuala University Press, 2015).

¹⁸Ella Hellerup, 'Sustainability or Dependency? | LUP Student Papers', 2025 <<https://lup.lub.lu.se/student-papers/search/publication/9179497>> [accessed 18 June 2025].

human society, often prompted by shifts in external conditions. However, when such change is driven by cultural interactions with foreign aid actors, the transformation can be profound, affecting not only social structures but also religious and moral frameworks.

Given these dynamics, the present study seeks to investigate how the residents of Trienggadeng sub-district, Pidie Jaya Regency, experienced social transformation following the 2016 earthquake and the subsequent aid-driven reconstruction process. This research aims to understand community attitudes toward international assistance—both positive and negative—and to analyze how rehabilitation efforts reshaped social behaviors, trust dynamics, and cultural norms in a post-disaster context.

METHOD

This study employed a qualitative field research approach, with primary data collected through direct observation, structured interviews, and focus group discussions (FGDs).¹⁹ A moderate²⁰ form of participant observation was utilized, whereby the researcher maintained a balanced stance—acting simultaneously as an insider who engages with the community and as an outsider who observes objectively. For instance, the researcher engaged in informal conversations and community discussions at local gathering spots such as coffee shops, while also maintaining a critical perspective during observation.²¹

In addition, the study applied open and naturalistic observation methods, allowing phenomena to be recorded as they occurred in their actual settings without intervention.²² Structured interviews were conducted using predetermined themes or aspects, which had been carefully identified prior to fieldwork. The key informants included the sub-district head (camat), village leaders, and local residents who had firsthand experience with post-disaster aid programs.

To ensure data triangulation and enrich the validity of findings, the research also incorporated Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) with diverse community stakeholders from the Trienggadeng sub-district in Pidie Jaya, Aceh. These discussions served as a platform to capture collective narratives, clarify conflicting accounts, and validate individual interview responses. Furthermore, the researcher systematically analyzed relevant documentation, including records on aid distribution mechanisms, the nature and types of aid provided, and institutional program reports. These secondary sources were critical in establishing a contextual understanding of the community's socio-cultural background and disaster recovery dynamics.

The study was conducted in five villages within the Trienggadeng sub-district—namely Rawasari, Meue, Cot Lheu Rheung, Tampui, and Me Pangwa. These villages were selected based on a stratified damage assessment criterion, encompassing areas that experienced severe, moderate, and minor levels of destruction during the 2016 earthquake. This

¹⁹John W Creswell and J David Creswell, *Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Methods Approaches* (Sage publications, 2017).

²⁰Sevilla Nouval, 'Moderat Adalah Sebuah Sikap, Simak Pengertian, Ciri, Dan Contohnya - Gramedia Literasi' <https://www.gramedia.com/literasi/moderat-adalah/?srsltid=AfmBOopwSwaKideNIn__Y1JgJcSVen__ZkdfaanRqVfbKHb8xtQ_xndo> [accessed 18 June 2025].

²¹Basrowi Sukidin, 'Metode Penelitian Kualitatif Perspektif Mikro', *Surabaya: Insan Cendekia*, 2002.

²²Moh. Kasiram, 'Metodologi Penelitian: Kualitatif-Kuantitatif', *UIN-Maliki Press, Malang*, 2010 <<http://repository.uin-malang.ac.id/1621/>> [accessed 18 June 2025].

selection strategy was designed to capture a comparative perspective on community responses and post-disaster social transformation. Through this multi-site approach, the research aimed to explore community attitudes, social changes following reconstruction and rehabilitation, and the various factors contributing to these shifts.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

A. Social Community

The community of Pidie Jaya, like other Acehese communities, is deeply rooted in Islamic principles, with religious teachings shaping both social structure and local customs.²³ In the Trienggadeng sub-district, Islamic values are inseparable from the daily lives of residents, influencing not only moral conduct but also governance systems at the village level. This influence is evident in the central role of religious leaders (imams) alongside elected village heads (geuchik) and other officials in local decision-making. The kinship system is likewise infused with Islamic norms, reinforcing communal bonds and religious obligations.

Each village in Aceh, particularly in Trienggadeng, possesses a Meunasah (a community Islamic prayer hall) that serves multiple functions. Beyond its primary purpose as a place of worship, the Meunasah operates as a community hub for religious education, health activities, and even recreational events.²⁴ Deliberation on public matters is conducted through inclusive meetings that involve village leaders, hamlet representatives, youth, and imams—although the inclusion of women in these forums remains limited.²⁵

In terms of livelihood, residents of Trienggadeng engage in diverse economic activities, including employment as civil servants, traders, entrepreneurs, fishermen, and farmers (both in rice fields and aquaculture). The majority are subsistence or small-scale rice farmers. Educational attainment is moderate, with a growing number of youth attaining higher education and migrating to other parts of Aceh and beyond in search of better opportunities.

B. Community Attitudes and Views on Post-Earthquake Assistance

The Trienggadeng community generally reflects a moderate and tolerant disposition, particularly in their reception of international aid following the 2016 earthquake. According to Daly and Brassard (2011), challenges often arise when aid distribution lacks participatory mechanisms, leading to community rejection or discontent when assistance fails to align with local needs or expectations.²⁶

This study categorizes community responses into three primary attitudes toward international aid: acceptance, acceptance with suspicion, and outright rejection.

1. Accept Attitude

Most of community members in Trienggadeng sub-district do not have significant problems with newcomers or outsiders, especially those who bring aid after

²³Mustafa O Attir and others, *Sosiologi Modernisasi: Telaah Kritis Tentang Teori, Riset Dan Realitas* (Tiara Wacana Yogya, Yogyakarta, 1989).

²⁴Craig Thorburn, 'Village Government in Aceh, Three Years after the Tsunami', in *Post-Disaster Reconstruction* (Routledge, 2010), pp. 126–54.

²⁵Shulamit Reinharz and Lynn Davidman, *Feminist Methods in Social Research*. (Oxford University Press, 1992).

²⁶Patrick Daly and Caroline Brassard, 'Aid Accountability and Participatory Approaches in Post-Disaster Housing Reconstruction I', *Asian Journal of Social Science*, 39.4 (2011), 508–33.

the earthquake that hit their area. They are also aware very well that of the number of institutions that came with aid are non-Muslim groups. However, with the uncertain conditions after the earthquake, they did not question it.

This character shows that they are able to understand the conditions and issues that are going around them during the rehabilitation process. However, they were able to rationalize them so that they were able to understand that there was no connection between their belief and aid provided to help them. In the end, it was proven that they currently do not find any activities or aid that are related to apostasy or teachings that deviate from their beliefs, so they express that they are very fortunate not to be affected by various negative issues during the distribution of aid after the earthquake disaster.

2. Accept with Suspicious

This condition was shown by some of the Trienggadeng community members after the earthquake. Along with the arrival of aid for disaster recovery, the issue of a certain mission behind the aid, especially from non-Muslims, was also blown by unknown and irresponsible sources. This issue spread by word from mouth to mouth in their village so that they increased their sense of alertness. However, most of this group accepted the aid even though they were full of anxiety. If the aid came from a non-Muslim institution, they always checked it carefully and were very careful about the administrative process requested by the institution providing the aid, even though the workers in the field were Acehnese themselves.

3. Not Accepted

However, there are a number of situations where the community members still closed and rejected the assistance from non-Muslim institutions. This rejection occurs because of the growing issue of a hidden mission wrapped with the assistance, especially related to religion and the community's beliefs. The community rejection generally occurs for housing assistance, so that in the end many people do not have proper houses constructed during the construction process till rehabilitation period ends. The rejections also occurred for other assistance such as blankets and food but not dominant. After the emergency and rehabilitation period was over, they feel a little regretful for believing the issue that the sources source were unclear. In the end, they themselves were the ones who regret to their attitude during the process. This regret attitude can be seen when researchers try to perceive information about why they believe about such issues.

In aid distribution process in the field, researchers also found various obstacles. There was aid individually distributed directly to the community but was unable to cover the entire village, so only people who selected randomly received the assistance. Thus situation caused jealousy and social conflict for some other community members. There was also aid given in small amounts through village officers. This kind of aid often become a polemic for village officials because they could not directly distribute it to the community. The reasons for the village officials are actually quite logic that they tried to avoid the conflict and jealousy problem within the community, so the village officials prefer to postpone the distribution while waiting for other aid to arrive. If the goods were basic needs

foods, it might be a little easier because even though it is small, it could still be distributed directly by adjusting the amount.

However, if the aid is in the kind of sarongs, blankets and other similar stuff, it is impossible to adjust. This such condition was very vulnerable in society because it raised various prejudices and suspicions. Many people assumed that the aid that has arrived was not distributed by village officials because they want to control it themselves or distributed to their relatives. The polemic such as this occurred and caused the community members fallen in prejudice and mutual suspicion. This situation caused the fragmentation of community harmony that they had in the village before the earthquake. Even this condition also stretched the family members, especially if there are family members involved in aid distribution activities.

C. Social Change in Society

The changes that occur in society in post-earthquake rehabilitation and reconstruction response can be divided into two groups, positive changes and negative changes.

1. Positive Changes

Most of the Trienggadeng communities experienced a lot of changes towards the positive direction after the rehabilitation and reconstruction of the Pidie Jaya earthquake. This community group, especially in the center of the sub-district town who has various businesses that are very closely related to reconstruction activities. When institutions, individuals, and community groups come, they stoped by for a few days and shopped for various daily needs or tools for the reconstruction process which in fact helps accelerate the process of economic recovery in the Trienggadeng sub-district.

In addition, many people are directly involved in reconstruction process by working for companies or contractors who are involved in rebuilding houses and other public facilities. This condition not only helps the economic recovery of families, but the community members involved also have new experience of how the system works in companies and contractors who are very strict with the use of finances, working hours and deadline. Those involved have different experiences from what they have been practicing normally by themselves, both as craftsmen and freelance construction workers in their sub-districts

Trienggadeng sub-district is an area categorized as severely damaged by the earthquake so that the reconstruction process gets a larger portion than other sub-districts. This portion resulted in many agencies and institutions coming to set up their operation in the area. So that many local people have direct contact with them in term of the cultures of the foreign workers. From this interaction, there were positive and negative values were deleoped. However, on the positive side, there was local people used to adopt a positive foreign culture towards local culture, such as behavior, ways of speaking, reprimanding and greeting, and the culture of work enthusiasm for a more decent life.²⁷ Direct interaction is certainly a means to exchange stories about each region of origin, which increases the local community's insight into other regions, both in Aceh itself and Indonesia and even abroad.

²⁷Peter G Ossorio, *The Behavior of Persons* (Descriptive Psychology Press, 2006).

2. Negative Changes

It was a nature that everything has two sides and it also does with positive and negative. Positive values are always followed by negative values which are two poles that always go hand in hand. This negative change is very obvious to community groups that have high resistance to new things. This community group is very firm in rejecting new ideas, new conditions for various reasons. Negative values can also occur when society is over-reactive to new things where they accept them wholeheartedly without filtering and adjusting them to their own culture and character. This situation will later become an internal problem for them when the reconstruction workers completed their duties and returned home.

Direct interaction with both the company's work mechanism and the contract system as well as sharing stories about their respective regions. When there are members of the community who are unable to meet the work targets that have been imposed, of course they will be given sanctions. This sanction will later become a problem for the community who may have never experienced this kind of condition. There are a number of people in Trienggadeng sub-district who have experienced similar things and understood this condition from a different perspective. Stories from direct interaction will also sometimes add prejudice and stereotypes to certain community groups when the community misunderstands the story being described.

D. Factors Contributed to Social Change

After the reconstruction and rehabilitation efforts in Pidie Jaya, especially in Trienggadeng sub-district, it turns out that whether consciously or not, many changes have been brought about in the community itself. Some of changes were actually caused by the earthquake disaster itself, while others occurred due to social interaction between the reconstruction workers and the community in Trienggadeng sub-district.

1. The people of Trienggadeng sub-district, especially Muslim, the earthquake had experienced as a warning from Allah, so that after the earthquake hit the community, they were more obedient in practicing their religious obligations that they had previously neglected. Villages in Trienggadeng sub-district have also carried out various religious activities such as congregational prayers, religious lectures, religious studies and zikr together as a routine activities. This discussion is in accordance with what expressed by Mrs. Rahmawati from Tampui village: *"After the earthquake, the community became more religious, practicing praying five times a day in jama'ah, organizing regular religious studies by inviting the teungku-teungku (Imams), and organizing group Zikr in their respective villages and sub-districts. The community seems to be more devout and obedient to religious teachings."*
2. In addition to being religious, the reconstruction process also changed the attitude of society which was previously considered very social to be a little materialistic. The society begun to measure everything with money. The culture of mutual cooperation is only for the public interest, the rest is work that must be converted with wage. In addition, there are also people who are a little dependent on aid and become lazy in working and trying.
3. In aid distribution, the community becoming more suspicious, especially they assumed that there is a lot of misappropriation and nepotism, thus eliminating the sense of trust to village officers. This condition creates an attitude of distrust and mutual suspicion in the community. In addition, the community itself sees that

people who are close to village officers or even their own relatives receive better aid, such as food, clothing, or even houses, even though their houses are not really damaged caused by earthquake. One source who did not want to be identified showed an example when the researcher was in the field. the fraction within the community due to suspicion cannot be avoided, resulting in a sense of individualism and mutual distrust.

CONCLUSION

The post-reconstruction period in Trienggadeng sub-district, Pidie Jaya, presents a multifaceted picture of community resilience and transformation. The 2016 earthquake not only caused extensive physical destruction but also became a catalyst for profound social shifts. Community responses to international aid—particularly from non-Muslim organizations—varied significantly, ranging from full acceptance to outright rejection. The most dominant response, however, reflected a rational and tolerant stance, where humanitarian assistance was accepted without compromising religious beliefs.

Nevertheless, underlying concerns about cultural intrusion, misinformation, and unequal aid distribution generated suspicion and social tensions within certain segments of the community. In some cases, refusal to accept aid based on unfounded rumors had long-term consequences, such as the inability to access adequate housing. These dynamics underscore the fragility of social trust in times of crisis and emphasize the necessity of transparent and equitable aid management systems to maintain social cohesion.

The reconstruction phase also brought about positive transformations, notably economic revitalization through employment opportunities and exposure to new systems of work and cultural interaction. Values such as discipline, accountability, and intercultural understanding began to take root. Concurrently, there was a marked spiritual resurgence, with community members becoming more devout and reinvigorating religious practices, thereby reinforcing a collective sense of purpose and emotional resilience during recovery.

However, not all changes were beneficial. The period also revealed emerging challenges such as increasing materialism, dependence on aid, and diminishing trust in local leadership due to perceived favoritism. These developments led to social fragmentation, weakening previously strong communal ties. Therefore, future disaster response strategies must go beyond physical reconstruction to include culturally sensitive, inclusive, and participatory approaches that safeguard the social fabric and promote long-term community resilience.

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