

may join me harvest. In other words, *kedokan* system is an agreement by which a limited right to harvest is granted to designated workers in consideration of their performance of specified tasks (hoeing for men, transplanting for women, weeding for both).

## **B. Kedokaan System In The Nineteenth Century**

*Kedokan* system is an old system, but how long has it been practiced in Javanese village cannot be known exactly. According to one of the few available sources, in the last quarter of the nineteenth century this system had been encountered in *pesantren* areas in East Java (Van der Kolff, 1936: 14–15). *Pesantren* means an area where Moslem disciples, called *santri* had come to settle nearly or around their religious teacher's residence. Since generally they came from far away, in order to live they offered their services as labourers in the ricefields of their teachers. Since this service was a part-time service what they had to do was a specified task within the stages of rice cultivation for which they got a certain share of the harvest. This system therefore is differentiated from that of sharetenance (*bagi hasil*) in that in the latter case all works should be done by the tenant (Van der Kolff, *ibid.*).

In the case of Kebanggan village (one of the Agro-Economic Survey's observed villages), according to the village elders, *kedokan* system has been practiced since the time immemorial. Before the World War II the task of the *pengedok* was only hoeing (*macul*). Hence, the system is called *paculan*, until now. The amount of share received by the *pengedok* at that time was one-third to one-fourth of the gross yield. The landowners were willing to apply this system because they

wanted guaranteed harvesters during harvest time Whereas for the *pengedok* the system guaranteed a certain amount of rice. Even when money economy started to penetrate the villages and wage labour began to be practiced, this system remained survive because the labourers seemed to prefer a guaranteed rice, rather than money. Nowadays *kedokan* system is operating in many parts of the island of Java and the term used for it differs from one region to another (e.g *ceblokan* in some areas in West Java; *pajegan*, *paculan* in Central Java; *ngepak-ngedok* in East Java).

### **C. Changes in its Function and Arrangement:**

#### **The General Trend in 1968-1978**

What will be discussed; is the changes of *kedokan* system regarding its function and its arrangement, (i.e., the amount of work to be done by the *kedokan* tenants, the amount of share received by them and other things related to it) by comparing three points of time namely before 1968; 1968-1978: and after 1978 up to now.

The function and arrangement as have been described above, according to the village elders, remain the same for so long until the coming of the new rice varieties in 1968. Due to the increase in yield, the share as well as the amount of work were changed. However, this development varies from village to village.

Since the amount of the normal share or *bawon* as well as the amount of *kedokon* share varies widely from village to village, the comparison between normal harvesters' and *pengedok's* income varies accordingly. In 1973, in some areas in West

Java and Central Java for example, while the *pengedok* receives one-fifth ( $\frac{1}{5}$ ) of the rice field, a normal harvester receives only one-fifteenth ( $\frac{1}{5}$ ). When a normal harvester joins the harvest in *kedokan* section (by the permission of the *pengedok*) she will, get one-third of the share received by the *pengedok*.

In East Java, however, the normal harvesters receive one-tenth ( $\frac{1}{10}$ ) of the gross yield and when they join the harvest in a *kedokan* section, they will receive 50% of the share received by the *pengedok*, the latter's share being one-fifth of the yield (Wiradi, 1974; 4–5). In this case, the *kedokan* system is apparently more beneficial to the normal harvesters than to the *pengedoks* themselves. *Pengedoks*, therefore, tend to limit the number of harvesters. Hence participation in the harvest is usually limited to family members, close relatives and friends (Soentoro. 1973; 11).

According to Soentoro who studied the *kedokan* system in 1973, the income of *pengedoks* in one season was at least 20% higher than if they were to work as a regular daily wage-labour (Soentoro. Ibid; 18). The money equivalent value of their earnings, of course, depends on the rice price at a time. And despite their higher income, they have to wait three to four months before they receive their share.

For the landowners, operating their land themselves and applying the usual method of harvesting allowing large numbers of people to join (*pracangan* system), would result in various kind of losses: stamp-down loss, dropping loss, losses during transportation and losses due to the distribution of shares (Utami & Ihalouw, 1973. 53). In the *kedokan* system these losses become the responsibility of the *pengedok*. As a result, almost 25% of the gross return to landowners can be saved

(Wiradi, 1974: 32) Thus, it must be these losses that account for what is otherwise a paradox in that landowners have a greater return and at the same time the *pengedoks* have higher income. Having the responsibility to manage the harvest and wanting to have more rice, the *pengedoks* are more careful in handling the harvest. One way to ensure that greater care is taken is to limit the number of people joining the harvest and to include only close friends and family members.

Thus, while in the past the *kedokon* system appears to have been used to ensure that the landowner had enough harvesters for his field, since the last decade it has been used, instead, by the landowners to limit the number of harvesters (Sinaga & Collier, 1975: 26). Thus despite its survival, this institution has undergone change its function.

This functional change has, of course, certain implication. In *kedokan* system, since there is no cash payment, less money is *needed* by the landowner during the period of cultivation. In addition, because the right to manage the harvest is *granted* to the *pengedoks*, the risk of failure is shared with the *pengedoks*. Thus for the landowners the functional change of this system does not seem to influence anything. They will even enjoy an additional advantage in that they can indirectly limit the number of harvesters thus avoiding the risks of various losses.

For the landless harvest labourers, however, it means a decrease in job opportunities. The wider the size or the larger the number of plots of land operated in *kedokan* system, the less open the system of harvesting, hence the less the opportunity for the common labourers to join. In addition, since the use of sickles (which *are* now common to harvest the high

yielding rice varieties) is considered more suitable for men than for women, they reduce the opportunity for the women harvesters to participate in the harvest.

For the *pengedok*, the system appears to be acceptable if not beneficial simply because, regardless of its functional change, it ensures them a larger share than would be usual. Despite the necessary time of about three months for them to wait before they receive their share, being *assured* that they will have rice seems to be more important than the money equivalent. Thus the survival of this institution could be interpreted as an indicator of the still prevailing attitude of “fear of food shortage”, which may be the remnant of what James Scott proposes to call the “subsistence ethic” in *most* pre-capitalist societies.

“A tenure system which provides the tenant with minimal guaranteed return is likely to be experienced as less exploitative than a system which while takes less *from* him on the average, does not rate his needs as a consumer as primary” (Scott 1976; 7).

The above description is what happened in 1968-1978 and how social scientists, in general, try to explain. Further explanation of the next changes however is still questionable.

#### **D. What Happened After 1978**

Case studies which have been done in 1981/1982 by the Rural Dynamics Study of the Agro Economic Survey (SDP-SAE) in 10 villages in Java reveal that there is an indication that change in the labour arrangement in *kedokan* system which could be viewed as being more exploitative have been occurring. While the share for the *pengedok* remains more or

less the same, a number of additional job are to be done by them. In the past (before the World War II) the special unpaid work is either hoeing (*paculan* system), or transplanting (*ceblokan* system). Only sometimes, in some areas, an additional task of weeding should also be done by the *pengedoks*. But now, instead of “either or”, they should do all of these works. In the village of Kebanggan, Banyumas, for example, beside these task, even a number of additional works like making besides these tasks, even a number of additional works like making dykes, controlling irrigation water, drying the rice during the harvest and watching it, should be done by the *pengedoks*. The only compensation for all these changes is that the *pengedoks* receive a prepaid incentive of Rp 100 per person.

The data in Table 3.1. show that in the case of Kebanggan village the burden of *pengedok* is becoming heavier and heavier whereas the amount of share remains more or less constant. It is true that the absolute amount of share is increasing due to the increase of the gross yield. Data in Table 3.2 show however, that the net return to the landowner is much higher in the new arrangement. If we compare the net return to the farmers who apply *kedokan* system with that of those who do not (i.e. landowner-operator who employ wage labor *pracangan* system), it is clear that the difference is even higher.

Another example is the case of Wargabinangun, Cirebon. Besides the increasing burden of the *pengedoks* (in this area: *penceblok*), the right to harvest is no longer absolutely in the hands of the *penceblok* because the landowner could cancel the agreement during the harvest season if the *penceblok*

would not harvest the rice precisely at the time demanded by the landowner. The reason for the landowner to do this, which seems acceptable, is because, due to simultaneous transplanting and hence simultaneous harvesting period, the *pencebloks* sometimes tend to delay the harvest of their own *ceblokan* section they have worked, and give priority to join in the open harvest in other areas. As a result, when finally they harvest it. It was too late (the rice become too old). The landowner does not want it happen. In this case, probably, it could be viewed as an adaptation of an institution to the application of new technology.

Table 3. 1. Various Task to be Done by Penedok.  
The Case of Kebanggan Village Banyumas Central Java

	Unpaid work load of the Penedok			
	Before the War	1973	1981	
			One-fifth share	One-sixth share
1 Seed bed preporanon	-	-	-	-
2 Piowing	-	-	x	-
3 Harrowing	-	-	x	-
4 Hoeing	x	x	x	x
5 Making dykes	x	x	x	x
6 “Daud”	-	-	x	-
7 Transplanting	-	x	x	x
8 Weeding I	-	-	x	x
9 Weeding II	-	-	-	-
10 Fertilizing	-	-	x	x
11 Spraying	-	-	x	x
12 “Jagir”	-	-	-	-

Note:

“Daud” : To pull the grown seed from the seedbed to be transplanted

“Jagir” : To watch the collected rice which immediately after harvest,  
remains to be kept in the *sawah* for 3-4 days.

X : Indicating the tyepest of work to be done

Table 3.2. Cost and Return to Farmer/Landowner in Kedokan and Pracangan System (Kebanggan Case, September 1973 and December 1981)

Items	1973 (IR5 and IR8 Rice Varieties)					1981 (Cisadane and Semeru Varieties)				
	Kedokan <sup>a)</sup>			Self-Operated & Open Harvest (Pracangan)		Kedokan <sup>a)</sup>			Self-Operated & Open Harvest (Pracangan)	
	1/5 share	%	1/6 share	%	%	1/5 share	%	1/6 share	%	%
1. Yield (gabah) per ha (q/ha)	27	-	27	-	27	36	-	36	-	36
2. Value of yield (Rp/ha) <sup>b)</sup>	108,000	100	108,000	100	108,000	349,000	100	349,000	100	349,200
3. Pre-harvest production cost (Rp/ha) <sup>d)</sup>	27,400	25	27,400	25	32,000	48,400	14	70,550	20	102,000
4. Harvesting cost Rp/ha) <sup>d)</sup>	21,600	20	18,000	17	7,200	69,840	20	58,200	17	23,200
5. Estimated Loss during the harvesting Process (Rp/ha) <sup>e)</sup>	-	-	-	-	10,800	-	-	-	-	34,920
6. Net Return Farmer (Rp/ha)	59,000	55	62,600	58	58,000	230,960	66	220,450	63	189,080

Source: Primary Data from AES' Field Study

Note :

- In 1973 the blood-relation determined the amount of share. One fifth for Relatives. One-sixth for other people. But the burden or load of work to be done unpaid, were the same. It was no longer practiced in 1981. It is the amount of work which determines the amount of share.
- The price of gabah in 1973 was Rp 4,000/quintal; in 1981 Rp 9,700/quintal.
- Included agricultural inputs such as fertilizers, pesticides and seed.
- These figures derive from the multiplication of the share by the price of gabah. For Pracangan, the share is one fifteenth.
- These losses are: stamp-down loss, dropping loss, losses during transportation, and losses due to the distribution of bawon. In Pracangan, people are mixed together (relatives and others, so that it is difficult to control the amount of bawon). In Kedokan, this risk in the hand of the Pendedok and the landowner is free from it.



However, whether it is a mere adaptation or could be viewed as exploitative, further in-depth research seems necessary. But the fact remains, despite this seemingly more exploitative new arrangement, *kedokon* system remains survive. Even more than that, in Kebanggan for example, almost all lands are cultivated under *kedokon* system. Of course, by changing the tool from *ani-ani* to sickles, there is nothing to lose for the *pengedoks* because they will receive the same total amount of rice whatever tool they use. Instead, something may be gained, that is to reduce the loss and to save time. However, the fact that *kedokon* system survives even under a new arrangement in which a number of additional burdens should be done by the *pengedoks*, indicates that this new arrangements is accepted by them anyway. Why? This is a problem the answer of which remains to be found out.

One of the probable explanation is that the landless labourers have no choice because no other job opportunities is available. Another hypothetical explanation is that even if we take into account the problem of higher loss or higher return for both the land-owner and the *pengedoks*, and acknowledged the functional change of the system, the survival of this institution appears to be closely related to the two moral principles in Javanese rural life: the norm of reciprocity or *gotong-rayong* and the right to subsistence.

“The right to subsistence in effect, defines the minimal needs that must be met for members of the community within the context of reciprocity” (Scott, 1976: 167).

For the landowners, the *kedokon* system provides labour at less cost than would otherwise be necessary. For the

labourers, it provides rice, the basic need to subsist. Whether or not this explanation is appropriate remains open to discussion, because in view of various indication of increasing commercialization in today's rural life, do those two moral principles remain prevailing principles?