

# Relevancy of Islamic Economic Value to Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

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**Abstract-** The damage to natural resources occurring in many parts of Indonesia is a result of human activities (anthropogenic effect) in managing the natural resources. The fundamental question is what motivates people to manage the resources in such manners. This paper intends to find the drivers of nature-damaging activities by elaborating on neoclassical economics theory principles. Besides, this paper demonstrates how the Islamic values could be considered as a more suitable and compatible approach to achieve sustainable development goals (SDGs), especially life below water and life on land. The idea of resource scarcity, competition, free market, utilitarianism, maximum utility, and highest economic growth, which are a part of neoclassical economics principles, could be considered a source of the damaging activities. At the macro level, economic development's highest economic growth orientation leads to natural resource exploitation massively. We show that natural resources exploitation is driven by self-interest, maximum profit and utility, and greediness. We also reveal that Islamic values and teachings could minimize the adoption of destructive practices.

**Keywords:** destructive behavior, Islamic concepts, natural resources degradation, neoclassical economics, religious rituals.

## I. INTRODUCTION

Indonesia's natural environment and resources have been degrading in the last three decades. Between 2000 and 2015, Indonesia was the country in Southeast Asia with the highest forest loss (Keenan et al., 2015). As a result, natural catastrophes such as abrasion, floods, and landslides occur in most parts of Indonesia when the rainy season comes. Since 2007, as stated in the Jakarta Globe, Indonesia has been constantly swept by the worst flood compared to those of in other Southeast Asian countries (Varvel, 2013). Floods and landslides occur in most parts of Indonesia (Reliefweb, 2019), which often result in many casualties and damage. Not only do people lose their assets, but also sense of safety (Kompas, 2019; Kompas, 2020).

This paper attempts to qualify the destructive behavior by elaborating on neoclassical economics theory principles. This paper also demonstrates how Islamic values could be considered as a more suitable and compatible approach to achieve sustainable development goals (SDGs), especially those concerning sea and land biodiversity (goal number 14 and 15). To achieve those objectives, we first describe the evidence of the degrading natural

resources and environment in Indonesia. Second, we outline the causes of degradation. Third, we present critiques to neoclassical economics theory or paradigm. Finally, we offer Islamic economics' perspectives as an alternative economic paradigm to conventional (neoclassical) economics to support the SDGs' achievement.

## II. METHOD

The qualitative approach used in this research is aimed at identifying and analysing the driver motivation people in managing their natural resources. Besides, the qualitative approach is also used to synthesize the Islamic economics perspective as alternative economic paradigm to support the achievement of SDGs.

The technical data and information collection applied in the research includes documentation and literature study. The stages of qualitative data analysis consist of data reduction, data presentation, data interpretation, and conclusion. Through these stages, the evidences and the causes of degrading natural resources and environment is described. In addition, critiques to neoclassical economics theory or paradigm are elaborated. Finally, Islamic economics' perspectives are established as an alternative paradigm to support the achievement of SDGs.

## III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### A. Damages to Natural Resources and Environment

Damages to natural resources resulted from human activities (anthropogenic effect) in managing natural resources has been going on since several decades ago. Holmes (2000) noted that Indonesia has been managing its forest resources the wrong way. In the past 50 years, the country has lost around 40 percent of its forest. Despite growing concerns about the environmental, economic and social consequences, deforestation rates remain high. About 1 million hectares of forest were logged per year in the 1980s. The figure then increased to around 1.7 million hectares per year in early 1990s (Casson et al., 2002). Since 1996, deforestation appeared to have increased to an average of 2 million hectares per year (FWI & GFW, 2002).

In 2000, Indonesia's lowland tropical forests, very rich in biodiversity, entered a critical state. Holmes (2000) predicted that Sulawesi would have run out of forest resources and this would be followed by Sumatra in 2005 and Kalimantan in 2010. The estimation was based on the large-scale illegal logging practices accompanied by agricultural expansion, mass commercial logging, urban development, shifting cultivation, transmigration, mining and forest fires.

The loss of Indonesia's lowland forests has received intense scrutiny since the country is the home of some of the richest biodiversity and cultures in the world. Although the archipelago only represents 1.3 percent of the total surface on earth, Indonesia has about 25 percent of the world's mammals, 11 percent of the world's known flowering plant species, 15 percent of all amphibians and reptiles, 17 percent of all bird and 37 percent of fish species in the world, as well as unknown numbers of invertebrate species, fungi and microorganisms (Adisoemarto, 1992). If these species are to be protected, there is a great need to manage and regulate illegal logging practices and promote sustainable and equitable forestry practices.

The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) (2010) noted that in the 2005-2010 period, Indonesia lost its tropical forests at an average of 685,000 hectares per year. This figure is the second largest in the world after Brazil, which experienced an average forest loss of 2,194,000 hectares per year in the same period. Brazil and Indonesia together accounted for 52 percent of total world forest loss in that period. In total, during the period 2000-2012, Indonesia had lost 15.79 million hectares of its forest (Hansen et al., 2013). Indonesian Statistics Agency (BPS) (2019) also reported that during 2014-2018, there was a change in the percentage of forest cover in Indonesia. In 2014, it was 50.17 percent and then reduced to 48.77 percent in 2018, which equals to 93,483,291 hectares or reduced by 2,685,012 hectares (1.40 percent) within five years.

The decline in forested areas occurs in all groups of islands in Indonesia. The island groups with the highest rate of reduction are Kalimantan and Sumatera, at about 1,122,684 and 870,273 hectares respectively. Natural disasters, forest fires, deforestation, and forest reclassification are among the causes of deforestation. Additionally, there has also been a shift in the classification of forest, as well as changes from forest land to open land, shrubs, plantations, mixed-up dryland agriculture, swamp shrubs, dryland agriculture, mining and others (BPS, 2019).

Besides the forests, the coastal ecosystems have also been damaged. Coral reef is one of the most valuable coastal resources for the local communities, functioning both as a source of ecology and economy. The sustainable potential of coral fish can reach up to 20 tons per square kilometer per year, provided that the ecological condition is excellent, with 75% or more coral population being intact (Suharsono, 1995).

Coral reefs are the most diverse and productive natural ecosystem in the world. Although coral reefs cover only 255,000 square kilometers of shallow marine waters globally, it can support nearly 1 million species of plants and animals (UNDP et

al., 2000). Globally, the estimation of coral reef fish potential reaches 9 million tons per year, while the total global marine fisheries range from 75 to 100 million tons per year (Munro et al., 1994). The data is impressive considering the area of coral reefs that are very small compared to the entire sea area. Besides, coral reefs also provide accessible areas for small-scale fishing and protect the coastal areas from tidal waves and storms.

Coral reef ecosystems exist in more than 100 countries and archipelagic countries in the world. More than 60 percent of these countries depend on coral reefs as a primary source of the fish capture. Reef fish accounts for more than 30 percent of all catches in the tropics. For example, throughout Indonesia, coastal communities, especially the small-scale fishery businesses, are highly dependent on reef fish. The latest data shows that reef fishes contribute around 5 percent to 10 percent of Indonesia's total fish production (FAO, 2011). However, this number is far greater in reality because subsistence fishers are often not included in fisheries statistics (Cesar, 1996).

However, the potential of coral reef ecosystems has not been fully tapped into due to several obstacles (Afifi, 2011). The exploration of resources is still carried out on a massive scale without considering the sustainability. This stems from the socio-economic conditions such as poverty and underdevelopment, and lack of understanding of sustainable practices. As a result, coral reef resources are degraded and the ecosystems' ability to provide environmental services for human life is declining.

Afifi (2003) showed that awareness programs carried out by the government have not been effective. Besides, awareness among the local governmental institutions themselves is also low so policy-making does not address the problems of coastal resource management effectively. The messy bureaucracy and overlapping institutional arrangements responsible for coastal and marine resource management only exacerbate the condition. The system is then made even more ineffective by the weak law enforcement.

Exploitative activities have caused massive damage to coral reefs and these are common practices. The study by Hadi et al., (2018) showed that coral reefs in Indonesia have degraded in quality compared to the previous year. The coral reef inspection in 1,067 sites throughout Indonesia found that 36.18 percent were in a poor condition, about 34.3 percent in a moderate condition, only 22.96 percent is good and 6.56 percent excellent. Compared to the previous year, the percentage of coral reefs in both good and moderate categories had declined.

#### *B. Factors Causing Damage to Natural Resources*

Coral reef ecosystems are vulnerable to natural disturbance. This is why the damage is widespread, especially in densely populated coastal areas. Around 10% of the world's coral reefs have been degraded, with some heading towards extinction (ICRI, 1995). If there is no active effort to stop the destruction, biodiversity loss would be unavoidable.

The causes of damages to coral reefs and related ecosystems, including mangrove forests, seagrasses, and seagrass beds, may vary and could be difficult to pinpoint accurately (ICRI, 1995). However, there are two categorized causes of the damage, namely human activities (anthropogenic effects) and natural causes. The former does more damages than the latter and comprises two categories: direct and indirect causes. The direct causes include coral reefs mining. People often use reefs as lime, building materials and trading commodity e.g., for aquariums. Meanwhile, the indirect causes include destructive fishing such as by using morami nets. Fishers herd reef fish by hitting the reef using rocks tied to a rope, which cumulatively damages the reefs (McManus, 1995). Fishing using explosives and potassium to catch ornamental fish indirectly destroys coral reefs as well.

The economic development carried out in many developing countries poses no lesser threats to the existence of coral reef ecosystems. Sedimentation from industrial and household wastes, as well as the pollutions, can damage the reefs. Sun exposure, for example, would be limited that algae in symbiosis with corals cannot photosynthesize. Tourism activities, such as boat anchors and novice diving have also resulted in the slow destruction of coral reefs, and so have the excavation of sand and coral for industrial and lime production (Cesar, 1996). On a global scale, industrialization as part of economic development causes global warming, which results in rising sea levels. All these factors affect the coral reefs population and survival, although they have not been adequately measured (Cesar, 1996).

Analyses to understand how human activities damage coral reefs so far are still generic and normative. The Ministry of Environment, for example, states that economic, social, and cultural factors are among the drivers of the damages, which include rapid population growth in coastal areas, poor policy implementation, poverty, lack of awareness, lack of political will, lack of understanding of local wisdom, limited human resources and capabilities, and limited information (SME, 1996). These problems worsen coral reef ecosystems' conditions because one factor is connected to the others, so overcoming them requires a close coordination among stakeholders.

Djohani (1998) asserted that destructive fishing stems from the population growth problem and the competition over catchment areas. Population growth, driven by uncontrolled urbanization and modernization, drive the demand for fish and this drives the catchment, which leads to habitat destruction and the rapid depletion of fish stocks. Access to markets, products, and technology has changed coastal communities' fishing practices and this may lead to unsustainable practices. Also, oftentimes, the quantities cannot meet the daily needs or the market demand, and the competition become fiercer. This situation makes fishers easy targets for brokers, who will provide them with supplies, fishing gear and boats, but will eventually bury them in debts. Before they know it, they are left with no choice but to catch fish using potassium to pay their debts.

Mathew (2001) found that full-time fishers in Indonesia did not catch using explosives, while part-time fishers were likely to use them. Explosive fishing was commonplace among fishers with

low bargaining power. The cost was low so poor fishers tended to choose this over other methods that required proper gears. The results of explosive fishing were mostly sold locally or for self-consumption. The unskilled fishers considered that explosive fishing an acceptable practice.

Afifi (2003), in his study of the socio-economic and ecological effects of coral reef management in Indonesia, found that the coral reef destruction often resulted from the lack of community knowledge on sustainability practices. This is mostly caused by poverty and the common but unsustainable traditions and norms. They found satisfaction and excitement when they heard the explosions because this was followed by fish catchment. Various external factors such as weak government interventions, limited alternative of livelihoods in coastal areas, and high demand for fishery products also encouraged the exploitation of coastal resources in every way possible. Afifi (2011) also found that economic conditions were strong drivers. People with low-income levels tended to adopt unsustainable practices. Professional fishermen, on the other hand, tended to have a better understanding of coral reef ecosystems and so they avoided unsustainable practices. Communities with proper fishing gear also chose not to use destructive fishing methods.

Meanwhile, studies on the causes of deforestation and forest destruction are quite diverse. Bae et al. (2014) found that the driving factor of deforestation and forest destruction was population growth, which led to the increasing demand for food, fuel and residential area. The use of firewood as a source of household and industrial energy, small and large industries, also cause a high demand for firewood. The opening of access to logging technology and the improved quality of road and transportation infrastructure may also encourage illegal logging practices in various forest areas in Indonesia. Ownership issues that are not well understood by the community can lead to poor control over forests. Granting the management permits to the private sector to manage forest resources is likely to accelerate deforestation and forest degradation. In addition to these factors, Afifi (2019) noted that forest land occupation was perpetrated by those with no arable land and those who were economically capable. This was no longer considered a violation of the law, and the perpetrators range from lay people to community leaders, formal leaders and local entrepreneurs. They also believed that by controlling or managing the forest land, it would be easier for them to obtain tax returns or ownership certificates.

According to Kim et al. (2016), the loss of forests and the massive conversion of forest land in many parts of Indonesia was caused by the granting of land clearing permits to forest concession holders by the government without a condition of reforestation. This is worsened by ineffective forest management, inconsistent and often conflicting government programs, and weak law enforcement. Overall, poor forest management results in a lack of clarity about forest boundaries, inconsistencies in the licensing process, lack of transparency, and accountability. Hence, forestry-related violations, such as illegal logging, illegal clearing of forest land for agriculture, illegal exploitation and transportation of forest products continue to degrade the forests in most parts of Indonesia.

From the description above, we can see that the destruction of natural resources is a result of people's conducts in natural resource management activities, both legally and illegally. The government's role is central in the natural resources management as their policies will have a huge impact, but this has been practically ineffective. The factors influencing forest management activities include population growth, economic infrastructure development, regulation and governance, quality of human resources and law enforcement.

### C. Critiques of Conventional Economics

The study of natural resource management is part of economic studies. Economic theories and paradigms form the basis for analyzing various aspects of natural resources and environmental management (Perman et al., 2003). Therefore, poor management of natural resources can be perceived as a failure in the economic system, mainly the conventional (neoclassical) economics, which emphasizes on individualism, free-market economy (*laissez-faire*), competition, assumptions of scarcity, efficiency, maximum gain and satisfaction. On a country and corporation level, growth becomes the primary orientation, while in individual economical transactions, maximum satisfaction becomes the ultimate goal.

When individualism takes the central stage, social justice will be neglected, which in turn neglects the pursuit of economic democracy. Social justice focuses on the marginalized, the poor, and the underdeveloped so the individual's maximum satisfaction and corporation's maximum profit will not be pursued if it hurts the community (Swasono, 2008).

Scarcity is the main economic problem overcome by conventional economic theory (Lipsey et al., 1993; Samuelson et al., 2005). Economics as defined by Lipsey et al. (1993 p. 3) "is the study of the use of scarce resources to satisfy unlimited human's needs". The view implies that each individual must choose among limited options of goods and services. The limited goods and services will inevitably create a competition among individuals to obtain them. According to philosopher Arnold Palmer, this is unavoidable because people will die if they do not participate in the competition (Alchien et al., 1972 p. 11). The fierce competition makes people monetize everything so that nothing is free, as reflected in the saying 'there is no such thing as free lunch'.

These limited resources drive people to find a way to satisfy their needs. Efforts made by humans are inseparable from how humans view themselves. In conventional economic perspectives, humans are seen as utilitarian (the more they have, the better), enjoy luxury, think of themselves (individualist), rational, independent, and non-cooperative. All activities carried out are driven by their own interests. From there comes the phrase 'the more the better' and 'greedy is good', which shows that humans always want to maximize utility by consuming as much as possible (Ho, 2014, p. 105). Those perspectives reflect the picture of human beings who always think about their own interests and benefits. Adam Smith said that it is a part of human nature to act on self-interest since every human being follows their self-interest, as conveyed in his statement, "it is not from the benevolence of the

butcher, the brewer, or the baker that we expect our dinner, but from their regard to their interests" (Aydin, 2013, p. 10; Samuelson, 1995, p. 3; Alchien, 1972, p. 12).

We usually have to give up something we like to get other things that we like (Mankiw, 2001, p. 4). Every action we take has implications for costs. Another saying for this is from Russian proverb, 'the only place you find free cheese is in a mousetrap' (McEachern, 2009, p. 4). If someone gives something, then he/she must want something in return. It is in line with the basic principle of capitalism stating that the basis of human behavior is the desire for something. Modern economic theories explain the behavior of individuals who make up the economy based on principles such as, 'people respond to incentives' and 'rational people think at the margin' (Mankiw, 2001, p. 6-7). Individuals' decisions, therefore, are greatly influenced by how much profit he will get. The primary indicator of successful economic development is growth (Todaro et al., 2015). Hence, the destruction of natural resources is inevitable. Social gaps widen because of the pro-investment policies. Economic inequality among regions and community groups increases along with it.

Critiques of conventional economic doctrines and paradigms then emerged, often with rebuttal and alternative perspectives, concepts, and methods to solve the various economic problems at the various levels. Swasono (2010) maintained that there are at least five waves of critics demanding an end of the free market doctrine (*laissez-faire*) started from John Maynard Keynes (1926), Karl Polanyi (1944), and followed by Gunnar Myrdal, John Kenneth Galbraith, and Francis Bator, (1957-1960), then continued by Robert Kuztner, Lester Thurow, George Soros, and Joseph Stiglitz, (1990-2002), until finally by Eric Maskin (2007), Paul Krugman (2008), Elinor Ostrom and George Akerlof (2009). They believe that the market is not self-regulating and self-correcting because it often experiences failure, mostly when it overcomes imbalances. Stiglitz (2006) asserted that the free market system needs to be evaluated because of the frequent market failures that demand the initiative of new economic thinking (INET).

Mubyarto (2000) proposes people's economy people, an antithetical to conventional economics that believes that the economy should be carried out by the community without significant capitals, and should be self-sufficient, independent, with no worker and employer, or maximum profits. Rintuh et al. (2005) believed that the economy should be a social system to achieve mutual prosperity. As a social system, the economy prioritizes shared goals, values, necessary attitudes and understanding of rights and obligations, and authority and leadership. It aims to achieve a common goal so that production, consumption and distribution activities are regulated in a way that mutual prosperity can truly be realized.

Other economists such as Gunnar Myrdal, Jan Tinbergen, and Thorstein Veblen offer institutional economics as an alternative to a free market economy's failure to create prosperity. Myrdal (1976) disagrees with conventional economic ideas and doctrines on various levels, especially in analyzing economic problems in developing countries. He believes that different theories are

needed for developing countries with their social, economic, political, legal, and cultural conditions being different from the developed countries. Inductive-empirical economics can be accomplished by incorporating institutional issues in its analysis.

Economists continue to debate whether it is appropriate to question the ideological elements in economics. So far, it is believed that economics is a value-free science (*Wertfrei Wissenschaft*) because if ideological elements are included in economics, then it will be unscientific as the ideology can interfere with its objectivity (Arif, 2006). Finally, economists who favor economics' neutrality then make a demarcation between normative economics and positive economics. However, the opponents consider that the main theories put forward by classical, neoclassical, Keynesian, and other economists contain normative elements, social goals, and methods for achieving those social goals.

Leaning towards the belief to include normative elements in economic theories, Chapra (2001) proposes to include moral values and justice in economics analysis. If this succeeds, people will be closer to their goals in achieving unity and 'brotherhood', which is in line with the Islamic commitments. Economy and social unity are inseparable in the Islamic concept of *Khilafah and Ummah (unity of people)*. Chapra (2001) considers that conventional economics has failed in achieving humanitarian goals by excluding it from social justice and public welfare agenda. There is reluctance on value-based judgments and excessive concentration on maximizing wealth, satisfying desires, and individualistic attitudes. As far as social interests are concerned, conventional economists generally assume that competition will encourage personal interests and subsequently satisfy the social interests.

The overemphasis of conventional economics on wealth, desires and individualism is an apparent escape from the majority religions' fundamental philosophy. Religions generally teach that material prosperity, though important, is not a sufficient motivation for oneself and it does not prevent a wrong deed and injustice. Moral values are needed to motivate humans to be less self-centered (Chapra, 2001). Therefore, values derived from religions are relevant to be internalized in the analysis of economics theories.

#### D. Islamic Economics Perspectives

In the Islamic view, the concept of scarcity, which is the central theme of conventional economics analysis, is considered irrelevant. This is based on the fact that resources available in nature have so far been proven to be made available for human consumption. This lack of resources is relative because God has created the universe with a meticulous and accurate measurement to meet human needs and all creatures. The scarcity is a test for humans to use all of its potentials to explore and manage the universe. It is explained in the Qur'an (25:2) as follows:

*"He, whose the kingdom of the heavens and the earth belongs to, and who did not take to Himself a son, and who has no associate*

*in the kingdom, and who created everything, then ordained for it a measure."* (the Qur'an, 25:2).

Then in the Qur'an (31:20), God says:

*"See you not that Allah has made subservient to you whatever is in the heavens and whatever is on earth, and granted to you His favors complete outwardly and inwardly?"* (The Qur'an, 31:20).

Mahatma Gandhi also denies the concept of resource scarcity, in the famous quote, 'the earth has enough for every man's need but not for every man's greed' (Needham et al, 1994, p. 35). The belief in scarcity affects individual and societal attitudes and conducts in the economic activities to satisfy their needs. Islamic values are also antithetical to this conventional economics value. Islam upholds generosity, cooperation, honesty, trustworthiness, justice and social responsibility following the instructions of the Qur'an. Values like these could prevent harmful economic practices such as monopoly (*ihhtikar*), hoarding (*iktinaz*), speculation (*ghharar*), gambling (*maisir*), and usury (*riba*) (Misanam et al., 2008), which often lead to inequitable distribution of income and wealth. If inequality widens, then social gaps will also widen, which may trigger frictions and conflicts.

In Islamic teachings, Allah has created the earth, and Allah gave humans the power to manage or become caliphs on earth. As caliphs, humans are also practitioners of Allah's commands, and they are the only managers on earth and not the owners (Mahasneh, 2003). They benefit from nature but should not destroy nature. The teaching emphasizes that heavens and earth and all that they contain belong to God alone, and God has given humans the responsibility to manage earth following God's intended purpose as its creator. Humans have the right to use it for their benefits and the benefit of other creatures, and the fulfillment of their interests and the interests of other creatures.

In addition to the right to utilize natural resources, humans must also preserve them quantitatively and qualitatively. Natural resources should be perceived as the source of human life, and because God created them, human beings must realize the goals of their creation and nature, such as planning the utilization, building on it, inhabiting it, utilizing it sustainably, enjoying and preserving their beauty. Therefore, humans do not have the right to damage the natural environment and tilt the nature's balance. Humans also do not have the right to exploit or use natural resources unethically in such a way as to damage the food source and livelihood for other living things, or to expose them to destruction and defilement (Mahasneh, 2003).

Acts of destroying nature are contrary to Islamic norms and values. Destruction of nature will cause misery because this can lead to natural disasters and natural food-produce scarcity. It is easy to find many verses in the Qur'an about the obligation to preserve natural resources and the environment. In the Qur'an (30:41), God says: *"Corruption has appeared on land and sea on account of that which men's hands have wrought, that He may make them taste a part of that which they have done, so that they may return."* (the Qur'an, 30:41).

In the Qur'an (26:183) God says: "And wrong not men of their dues, and act not corruptly in the earth, making mischief." (the Qur'an, 26:183). In the Qur'an (7:85) God again warns people not to damage the earth with His word as follows: "...and make not mischief in the land after its reform. This is better for you if you are believers" (the Qur'an 7:85).

Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) said, "The earth is green and beautiful, and Allah has appointed you, His servants, His caliphs, to reach there, and Allah sees how you release yourself." The Prophet also stressed the need for the protection of natural resources and the environment in his hadiths. He forbade cutting cedar trees in the desert where animals found shelter and cover. He also said that part of Islamic faith was to keep the roads clean of garbage. In another hadith, Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) reminded us that in the last hours of the day of judgment, if one of us holds a plant in hand, we must plant it. In another hadith, Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) said, "The world is green and pleasant, and God has appointed you to manage it." (Mahasneh, 2003).

Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) said that a Muslim who plants or cultivates plants and make food out of them, or other people, animals or birds get food from them, he/she will receive a gift from Allah. The prophet (pbuh) also said that whoever plants trees where people can take shelter or take cover from the sun, he/she will also receive a credit from Allah. Therefore, cutting down trees without a reliable and valid reason is violating God's commands (Ramly, 2007).

By considering the meaning of the verses and hadith above, a Muslim must be a protector of the environment. Therefore, to conserve and manage natural resources and the environment, the religious concept of conservation and sustainable management of natural resources needs to be applied. One study of the relationship between religions and natural resources and environmental conservation can be found in Harrop's fieldwork (2010). He examines the relationship between conservation and Islam in Sumatra while actively raising awareness of Islamic teachings about conservation.

Harrop aimed to show that conservation of natural resources can benefit from integrating religious concepts and traditional conservation approaches into the contemporary management plans and conservation strategies. Meanwhile, local people can benefit from making conservation relevant to them. He found that several vital principles in Islam, such as *tauhid* (the knowledge about Allah), *caliph* (leadership), *mizan* (account), and *fitrah* (nature), supported nature conservation, and outlined humans' role in preserving natural resources. Harrop also identified three interrelated land use management systems in Sumatra that apply Islamic principles in their nature conservation. The three management systems are *hima* or management zones designated for sustainable use of natural resources; *harim* or nature reserve used to protect water resources and environmental services; and, *ihya al-mawat* or the encouragement to revive abandoned lands to be productive.

Indeed, humans' task is as a leader in the world (*khalifah fil ard*) and leadership that brings blessings (*maslahah*) and mercy to the universe (*rahmatan lil alamin*). Therefore, it is necessary to develop good leadership or moral characters with a spiritual perspective so that awareness arises that every human being will be tried hereafter for all his deeds in the world. This includes the nature preservation both on land and in the sea. The study with coral miners as the analysis unit found impressive results (Latifah et al., 2015). There is a close and significant relationship between one's worship habits and the treatments to coral reefs. The more obedient a person in performing ritual worship is, the better is his conducts in dealing with humans and their environment. Worships practiced by the community can prevent them from carrying out activities damaging coral reefs. The study shows that religious values and norms contribute significantly to establishing human civilization because these values and norms encourage and inspire people to maintain their relationship with humans and their environment.

#### IV. CONCLUSION

This paper attempts to show that human activities can destroy natural resources and the environment. The destructive activities resulting from the conventional economics' views, values, and norms are often not in line with the efforts to preserve natural resources and the environment; hence, the SDGs. Greed and selfish conducts encourage people to exploit natural resources massively. These values, views, and norms are compatible with neoclassic economic views and perspectives that tend to be positivism and value-free science (neutrality of science). The implementation of those neoclassical economics views outlook causes inevitable damage to natural resources and the environment. Besides, inequality, injustice, scarcity, and human exploitation occur because competition becomes a vital element. Furthermore, the idea of realizing social justice and mutual prosperity are becoming a far cry.

Criticisms of the views, principles, and teachings of neoclassic economics have long been voiced. However, we see that the neoclassical views still dominate decision makers' ways of thinking in many countries, including countries with a Muslim majority population such as Indonesia. Islamic values are more suitable and supportive of the efforts to preserve the environment and natural resources, and could be an alternative to the default systems.

Therefore, to support the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), especially goals number 14 and 15, life below water and life on land, Islamic values and views need to be instilled not only in the community but also among decision makers. This paper has shown how SDG values and Islamic teachings are compatible, namely creating a beautiful and sustainable environment. Islamic economics concepts such as resource abundance, collaboration, *maslahah* (benefit), *ummah* (unity of people), *khalifah* (leadership), *rahmatan lil alamin* (blessing for the universe), *akhlaqul karimah* (proper manners) could prevent people from doing misconducts which may harm human being and environment as well.

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