Social and Economic Life of Itinerant Vegetable Traders in Sumowono Village

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Abstract
This study aims to analyze the contribution of non-farm employment opportunities to the household income. The experiment was conducted in Sumowono Village, Semarang Regency, Central Java Province. Respondents were itinerant vegetable traders and community leaders. Data collection was carried out by means of in-depth interviews. The analysis shows that non-farm employment opportunities in rural areas conducted by itinerant vegetable traders become one of the alternative employments and contributed to income generation. All itinerant vegetable vendors are male. Most of them are married, have averagely two children, and only 20 percent are unmarried. The major education of the itinerant vendors is junior high school. The range of the working area varies from the surrounding of the villages in the sub-district, outside the district, regencies and outside the province. Motorcycle becomes one of the means of transportation used. The outpouring of the working time each day is approximately 9 hours. The contribution to the household income is by 70 percent.

Keywords: non-farm; itinerant vegetable vendors; household income.


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INTRODUCTION
The number of the world population has reached more than 7 billion (PRB, 2013). The population of Indonesia has reached 235 million or 3.35 per cent of the world population (BPS, 2011). The rate of the population growth has been declining for decades, from 2.2 percent to 1.49 percent every year and the total fertility rate is 2.6 whereas the target by 2015 in accordance with the Millennium Development Goals, the rate of the population growth is 2.1 percent (BKKBN, 2011). Despite the decline in population growth, the population has absolutely increased a lot. Every year 2.5 million people are in their working age and will have an effect on the high level of open unemployment. The present employments are not capable of absorbing the population of working age (Rummuris, 2013). More than half of which (52 per cent) live in rural areas (BPS, 2011).

The development in various sectors has been carried out but it still has many problems. Rural areas are still the crater of poverty. Rural residents are unable to meet the daily needs they deserve by hang on to the agricultural sector. The agricultural sector is not considered to be able to sustain most of the inhabitants’ daily needs (Sutjiptoheriyanto, 2008). Labor absorption is one part of the developmental participation and will illustrate how big the ability of a production sector in hiring laborers is. In rural areas economic diversification process occurs (Suhardjo, 1999; Rijanta, 2012). More are also described by (Maurer, 1991; Rijanta, 2012) that non-farm jobs going on in Java can no longer be said to be innovative or in conjunction with socio-economic marginalization.

Non-agricultural job opportunities in rural areas usually carried out by women undergo a shift. Travelling vegetable traders is one form of men’s job to the realm of women. The division of work based on sex between men and women has been long lasting (Raffles, 1978). History has proven that the trading world in rural areas cannot be released from the role of women. The situation prevailing prior to the 1990s is invalid in the period of the new millennium or the 21st century. Socio-cultural transformation occurs due to several factors. Soekanto (1988) gives the explanation that the socio-cultural transformations that occurred in the community can be caused by factors of the increased or decreased population, the existence of a new invention, disagreement in the community, and the influence of culture from other societies. Hardati (2011) tells us that in Semarang Regency area, transformation has occurred that can be identified from the changes in population, land use, and population activities. The global crisis accelerates the onset of that transformation. Baiquni (2007) and Rijanta (2012) explain that after the economic crisis hit Indonesia, its impact reached the household in the rural areas.

This paper describes the work in a non-agricultural sector especially the role of itinerant vegetable vendors and their contribution to household income in the village of Sumowono, Sumowono Sub District, Semarang Regency.

METHODS
The research was carried out in Sumowono Village Sumowono Sub District Semarang Regency. Sumowono village was one of the four villages of samples in the study carried out by the author of the dissertation. The type of research was survey, by using spatial, environmental and regional complexity approach. The unit of the analysis was the household. The respondent was a member of the household who worked as an itinerant vegetable trader. In addition, to complement the data, triangulation technique was used from the community leaders. Data collection techniques were by means of interviews, using the prepared interview guide, and by documentation. Two types of data used were primary data and secondary data. The data were analyzed by descriptive quantitative and qualitative techniques. This paper is part of the research report, dissertation writers are being carried out, which is adapted to the onsite rule.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION
The following descriptions present the re-
sults of the research and simultaneously discuss in sequence accessibility and potential of the research areas, employment in non-agriculture and itinerant vegetable traders activities and their contribution to the household income.

Accessibility and Potential of The Research Areas
Sumowono village is one of the villages in the Sub-District of Sumowono Semarang Regency. It is located on the slopes of Mount Ungaran, in an absolute term is between 1100 18 ‘ 30 “– 1100 19 ‘ 30” East Longitude and 70 12 ‘ 27 “– 70 13 ‘ 53” South Latitude. In a relative basis is located at the junction of the road leading to Kendal and Temanggung District. The West and South area are bordered by village of Lanjan, to the East is village of Jubelan, and the North is the village of Kendongan and Bumen (Bappeda, 2013). This relative location of the village is an outstanding natural potential and gives the village very high accessibility. The line connecting the three regions have undertaken public transport regularly, but various public transportation fleets of several towns in Central Java often pass through the highway lanes. The highway becomes one of the alternative pathways that connect the region with Semarang, Kendal, Temanggung, Wonosobo, Purwokerto, and some other areas. At the crossroads is the village of Sumowono, so it is very easy to reach from different areas. The location makes the village to be in the golden triangle that has a lot of benefits from various aspects.

An area that has high accessibility can easily be reached by the residents from different areas and it can ease the activities of social, cultural, economic and others. The accessibility of these regions can contribute indirectly to the well-being of the population. The village of Sumowono can be viewed as a buffer zone between rural and urban areas. One important aspect is to function as a gateway for trade, serve as a distributor of products to the rural area from the areas surrounding it, or vice versa, and as a distributor of agricultural commodities from the rural to the urban areas around.

Sumowono Village is an area of 324 hectares wide, or 5.82 percent of the total area of Sumowono Sub district, and 0.34 percent of the total area of Semarang. From there, 62.50 percent of the land is used for agriculture and the rest is for non-agriculture. Water needed for agriculture in 85.56 percent of the paddy fields is irrigated by technical means and the remaining 14.44 percent is by non-technical means. All of them are dry land farming. The leading commodities owned are various kinds of horticulture vegetable (BPS, 2013). The area has good natural resource assets, such as fertile soil, fairly enough rainfall, and cool-climate. Physical resource assets based on morphological condition are mostly wavy, high transportation access, allowing residents to plant varieties of crops, such as polowijo (crops planted in dry season), horticulture plants and different types of vegetables. Sumowono becomes the center of Chrysanthemum flower and various kinds of vegetables and horticulture plants.

The population density in Sumowono is 8 inhabitants / hectare. According to the classification of population density, in the village of Sumowono is included in a low density area. The number of families are 738 families, so that average household members of each family are 3.71 or every 100 families inhabits 371 inhabitants. Human resource assets, a population of 2.738 inhabitants, with a sex ratio of 103, means every 100 female residents are 103 male populations. In general, the composition of the population has adult age structure; this is showed from the percentage of the population aged 15-64 years old that achieves 70.27 percent. Dependency ratio is amounted to 42.31 percent, which means that economically, the number of residents are productive, besides sustaining their lives, they still have to bear as many as 42 people that are not yet and not productive. Mantra (2003) explains that the smaller the number of dependency or dependency ratio, the lighter burden shouldered by the productive age population, and will have even greater savings or investment. Even nationwide in the period of 2015-2035, demographic bonus occurs; the condition of
demographic bonus in each area will vary, from both the timing and magnitude of dependency ratio.

The quality asset of the human resources in the village of Sumowono is still relatively low. Of the population, 5.34 percent are bachelor degree graduates; 3.73 percent are diploma degree graduates; 22.81 percent is high school graduates; 18.88 percent has completed middle school, the population is dominated by people who have finished elementary school; it reaches 32.77 percent, and the rest have not finished elementary school. Demographic bonus when it is not followed by good quality will be the burden of development whereas demographic bonus will not be repeated during the history of the growth of the population in an area.

The structure of inhabitants’ livelihood in the village of Sumowono varies, similar to the other villages on the island of Java in general. The main livelihood of the majority of the working age population is in the field of agriculture; it reaches 51.34 percent, the remaining 48.66 percent works in various non-agricultural sectors (BPS, 2012 and 2013). Based on the classification of Jonah (2006) based on the structure of employment if agriculture as the livelihood structure of a population in an area is more than 60 percent, the area is called agriculture-structured area; 40 – less than 60 percent is called semi-industry structured; and more than 60 percent of so-called industry-structured area. Based on the classification, the village of Sumowono is in the semi-industry structured area. And if it is examined more deeply, it can be explained that the non-agricultural activities dominated is a type of agricultural trade services. And it is one of the villages in the rural diversification typology village associated with trade services with the highest diversification index in Semarang (Hardati, 2014).

Non-Farm Employment Opportunities

Employment opportunities that is not in the field of agriculture or off-farm employment opportunities are not the same as employment opportunities beyond the field of agriculture. Employment opportunities beyond the field of agriculture can refer to all activities that are not agricultural or non-agricultural. One of the employment opportunities outside agriculture is working on a plantation, usually carried out by farmer household (Effendi, 1993). Non-farm employment can be done by both farmer household and non-farmer household. On-farm employment opportunities are all activities in the field of agriculture.

Labor absorption is one part of the developmental participation and describes how big the ability of a production sector in hiring labor is. Based on the structures of employment, rural areas, the agricultural sector is able to absorb 45.50 percent, but its contribution to GRDP is only 19.85 percent. The non-agricultural sector can absorb 54.50 percent working labor force, with the contribution to the GRDP amounted to 80.15 percent (BPS, 2013). The magnitude of the contribution of the trading sector, retail, restaurants, and hotels to the gross regional domestic product (GRDP) in Central Java province is about 19.51 percent; the magnitude of the processing industry is 34.05 percent; and agriculture in a broader sense which includes agriculture, forestry, hunting, and fishing, reaches 19.85 percent (BPS, 2013). It provides an illustration that there is a decline in the agricultural sector in contributing to the development, in contrary there is an increase from the non-agricultural sector. An itinerant vegetable trader is one among the other workers in the non-agricultural sector which is not formal or non-formal. In the non-formal sector generally has a weak condition, due to the limited financial assets especially the budget. The non-formal sector is often not reached by Government policy whereas this sector has numbers of roles in economic entities for national and regional economic development (Handoyo, 2013).

The work done by one member of the household being an itinerant vegetable trader is one form of non-agricultural jobs in rural areas. Becoming an itinerant vegetab-
le trader, the working age population who becomes the labor force will increase the rate of labor force participation. Labor force participation rate is largely determined by the number of people employed and the population of working age (Hardati, 2005; Sukamdi, 2007). The village of Sumowono who has experienced the process of diversification of the rural economy associated with high service trading (Hardati, 2014), also shown by labor force participation in the field of trading and service businesses that reaches 51.27 percent, while agricultural business field is only 22.62 percent (BPS, 2013). This shows that the agricultural sector does not become a major business because the field has been dominated by trading and service businesses. The more itinerant vegetable traders, the higher level of labor force participation, and will reduce the unemployment rate, and increase income.

The trading activities in a rural area previously or some period last year is always carried out by women. Since the global economic crisis occurred in 1997, the dynamic changes occurred both in quantitative and qualitative terms. Rural household is very dynamic in responding to the crisis (Baiquni, 2007), some experienced an increase or the winner and some experienced a decline or the loser. On the one hand there were some people who experienced termination of employment relation whereas employment opportunities were very limited. This was due to some reasons, one of which is the high growth in the population of working age. On the other hand, the needs of household increased, and it pushed the people to immediately find a job outside agriculture. The non-agricultural sector activities may be one alternative employment that does not require many formal requirements. One of the options taken by part of the population is becoming an itinerant vegetable trader.

The Activities of Itinerant Vegetable Traders and the Contributions to the Household Income

The village of Sumowono which became the hub of the agricultural commodities especially food crops and vegetables has the potential to do a non-agricultural activity. Hardati (2014) explains that the village of Sumowono is one of the villages that were experiencing the process of rural diversification associated with service trading; with the highest diversification index, numbers of households work in agriculture and have a non-agricultural job in the sector of trade conducted in a rural and/or urban area.

Some types of activities, which is not related to agricultural trading services in the village of Sumowono are farmers who sell vegetable crops and horticultural plants, adang-adang merchants, grabatan merchants, walik dasar merchants, roadside merchants, itinerant merchants, candak kulak merchants, pasar lesehan merchants, stall merchants, bango merchants, kiosk merchants, and store merchants.

Itinerant vegetable trader, which is called bakul ider in Javanese, is a merchant who sells vegetables and goods by going around the area. Itinerant vegetable trader is one type of traders who sells variety of household necessities (vegetables, side dishes, snacks, seasonings), by walking around the location of the customers’ residence. At times it used to be (before the 1960s, before the land transportation dominated), the itinerant vegetable traders worked by walking around the village carrying the goods, and conducted by midlife ages women (economically productive age or about 15-59 years old). Now in the 21st century, the itinerant vegetable traders sell their goods by driving a fleet of motorcycles and all are men.

Itinerant vegetable traders from the village of Sumowono, most of which, 99 percent, get around riding a motorcycle, with a basket or two placed on the back of the rider or on the back seat. The remaining 1 percent uses a pick-up car or lorry car modified with trading equipment, such as desks, trading baskets, and more.

Itinerant vegetable traders move freely to any village or town as they want when they are working. In general they have already had travel routes and customers. Consumers just need to wait at home respectively. The range of Itinerant vegetable traders is
relatively fixed. From numbers of itinerant vegetable traders existing, 50 percent said that their working coverage is outside the village, out of the sub district, 40 percent are out of the village, outside of the district, and only 10 percent that work outside the village in an area of sub district. As quoted from the interview with one respondent of the itinerant vegetable traders:

“Where is the range of the location up to? The primary locations of selling vegetable are a dormitory in Kedungmundu, Gayamsari Residence, Cendana Residence, Kinibalu Residence, Semarang and some villages passed while going home. The travel route: depart from Sumowono, directly go to some customers (the residences above), go straight home through the village of Pudakpayung, and go back to Sumowono.” (Suratno, an itinerant vegetable trader from Sumowono)

The characteristics of the itinerant vegetable traders’ households are very diverse. Most of the itinerant vegetable traders are the head of the household, and only 20 percent are still unmarried. All of the vegetable traders are men. They do not all come from the village of Sumowono, 60 percent of which come from the surrounding villages. The average ages is 37 years old and are married with one to three children. Most of them are high school graduates. All said that itinerant vegetable trader is a major work; some said that they have a side job as a farmer, and some work in the non-agricultural sector (public transportation or taxi).

In conducting their activities, the itinerant vegetable traders have fixed buyers or customers. Their customers are generally a household, most of whom are housewives, housemaids or helpers. The following is the interview with one of the itinerant vegetable traders.

“Who are the buyers? The fixed buyer is a household, usually housewives and / or household helpers.” (Walsidi, an itinerant vegetable trader from Sumowono)

Itinerant vegetable traders contribute a benefit to their customers (housewives/housemaid) because they do not have to go to the market every day. The daily needs of vegetables and side dishes are enough just by buying from itinerant vegetable traders. In addition, it saves expenses because most itinerant vegetable traders are happy to wait for customers to finish choosing the items that will be bought.

The customers can easily purchase the items brought by the itinerant vegetable traders every day. There are times when the customers can order the goods that will be bought, the day before, by ordering it directly or contacting them by electronic device; through short message service or SMS or call directly to their cell phone numbers. That method is performed if the customers want to purchase special items or buy one type of item in large quantities. As the result of the interview to one of the itinerant vegetable traders who have received regular orders from customers, as follows.

“How can you serve your customers, sir? I usually go round their houses everyday; the customers usually wait at home respectively; or I sometimes stop at a roadside that is easily accessible by several houses. Customers are served in accordance to their needs. Sometimes I (trader) wait for some time until the customers finish choosing the goods they would like to buy. When it’s necessary, the customers can book in advance the required items because there are several items not provided on a daily basis. How to order is done by SMS a day earlier. This was to simplify the setting up of the item and satisfy the customers.” (Rev. Supartono, itinerant vegetable trader from Sumowono)

By ordering the items in advance, the needs of the other customers are not bothered. Rahmawati (2011) tells us that information technology can shorten the spatial moving patterns of residents in meeting their daily needs. Shopping is done to meet the needs of daily, weekly, monthly, and yearly. Housewives do not have to go to the market every day, because their needs have already been fulfilled just by ordering the items they
need to the itinerant vegetable trader.

An itinerant vegetable trader usually sell staple goods for daily consumption, various kinds of vegetables, such as peas, carrots, cabbages, spinach, water spinach, long beans, eggplants, squash, mustard greens, leeks, chives, celery, and green onions. Seasonings, such as: onions, garlic, coriander, pepper, nutmeg, and spices. Traditional snacks, such as: gethuk (cassava cake with grated coconut), lapis (layer cake), moho, lemet (cake of grated coconut steamed in banana leaves or corn husks), apem (rice flour cake), lopis (cake of glutinous rice steamed in banana leaves) and various fries. Various kinds of fruit, such as: papaya, grapes, mangoes, rambutans, avocados, bananas, and the others, adjusting the existing fruit season. Side dishes, such as: tofu, tempeh, many different types of marine fish and freshwater fish, chicken meat, beef or lamb (only in case of order).

The work time allocation of the itinerant vegetable traders is very diverse. All said that they work every day, with no days off. The itinerant vegetable traders do not do his work only on certain days, such as when there is a wedding in the neighborhood, when there is a very important family need, or because of illness. Such condition (no activity) is generally notified a day earlier to the customers. This is done so that the customers know it and do not feel disappointed. The itinerant vegetable traders’ activity pattern is also similar to the daily activity patterns of individuals in general. Pontoh and Maryati (2003) illustrate that women’s travel patterns are more diverse compared to men’s. Men’s travel patterns tend to focus on the activities of working.

The average outpouring of itinerant vegetable traders’ work time is 7-9 hours each day. They go to the market to buy vegetables or kulakan prior to be carried around in the early morning. Every itinerant vegetable trader has different departure and return time. Some leave at 2 a.m., some others are at 3 a.m., and the others leave at 4 a.m., this depends on the destination and customers’ occupation type. For the traders who have customers who work as civil workers that should set off at 6 a.m., they have to arrive at the location before 6 a.m., so they have to leave early. The traders who have housewives or housemaids who are not too hasty to depart to the work place as their customers are different. They set out a bit late, around 4 a.m. They must arrive at the location of the customers around 6 – 7 a.m. If they exceed the agreed time to arrive at the location of the residents, the customers will leave them; it means they lose the buyers. Itinerant vegetable traders also have different time to go back home, from 11 a.m. to 12 a.m. The following is the interview with one of the traders.

“How many hours do you work (as an itinerant vegetable trader)? I leave from home at 02.00 in the early morning, and return home at around 11 a.m. or at noon. I leave at 02.00 to go to a morning market to buy goods (kulakan). Every day, I work for about 8-10 hours.” (Rev. Suparton, an itinerant vegetable trader from Sumowono)

The itinerant vegetable traders purchase the goods (kulakan) at Sumowono market. It is because the village of Sumowono has two markets, a Day Market and a Night Market. Day Market is like traditional markets in general, which open in the morning and close in the afternoon at around 5 p.m. Night Market is a traditional market managed by a private sector by renting out a land that will be used for trading activities similar to traditional markets in general; it opens every evening in the early hours at around midnight and closes until 06.00 in the morning. It sells varieties of household needs. The traders come from villages and towns/counties like Salatiga, Semarang, Surakarta, Magelang, Temanggung and Kendal. Most of the goods sold are the goods needed by the itinerant vegetable traders.

It is interesting to explain that the itinerant vegetable traders have a habit of shopping or kulakan in the village of Sumowono’s night market by quick and orderly purchasing system. The itinerant vegetable traders have always taken a note of goods that will be purchased according to customers’ orders. After arriving at the mar-
ket, they directly park their fleet of motorcycles in line on the roadside of the market, and then go to the merchants in the market according to the type of the goods and hand over their notes, and then the merchants are ready to serve. For example, as done by the food and traditional snacks merchant, they enforce the order to the buyers who are all itinerant vegetable traders, as follows. First, the itinerant vegetable traders must submit a note (according to the purchased items/customers’ orders, can be left to go shopping for other items), after the check, then there will be a worker who prepares the purchased items, items ordered is according to the records, they will be put on a table, then the itinerant vegetable traders are to pay at the cashier’s desk and by bringing the receipt, they can take the items. This process is as what exists in a modern store.

Itinerant vegetable traders’ income varies greatly depending on the budget. Budget or asset belonged to each individual determines the livelihood, livelihood strategies, and sustainability of the livelihood (Baiquni, 2007; and Rijanta, 2012). Likewise, budget or asset owned by itinerant vegetable traders will determine the number and the type of goods sold, so as to determine the amount of income. Income is the economic benefit acquired by someone who comes to the stated amount of money or the value of goods and services.

Most of the itinerant vegetable traders have a limited budget; the major educational background is elementary and junior high school; having a motorcycle by means of credit or buying a second-handed motorcycle; most do not have an agricultural land. They build social asset to raise the budget; with harmonious social networking will facilitate the buying and selling of commodities, and will ultimately increase the income.

Itinerant vegetable traders get daily income of not less than Rp. 50,000 – Rp. 100,000. It depends on the amount of the budget and the type of items sold. The itinerant vegetable traders whose budget is less than one million will earn profit about Rp. 50,000 as the daily turnover. The more the amount of the turnover, the more various will the types of the items be, and the greater the profit. The itinerant vegetable traders with a turnover of Rp. 1,000,000 – Rp. 1,500,000 can certainly get to Rp. 100,000 per day. It means the profit obtained each itinerant vegetable trader every month is around Rp. 1,500,000 to Rp 3,000,000. The profit earned by the itinerant vegetable traders is the net income. The income of the itinerant vegetable traders’ households does not come from a single source. Most of them have another source of income from another job, whether earned by the husbands or the wives. Based on an interview to one of the itinerant vegetable traders is as follows.

“How much is the budget and the profit earned each day? The amount of the budget owned is uncertain; it depends on the money received from the sales result on the previous day and the family expenses. If the budget is about Rp. 500,000 and it is up for kulakan, it is certain that there will be about Rp. 50,000 (profit); if the budget for kulakan is a million, then there will be about Rp. 75,000; but if more than a million runs out for kulakan, then the profit will be about Rp. 100,000. It has included buying gasoline for going back and forth, and the vehicle is in a full of gasoline position. Besides that, during working, we never shop for daily needs, because if there are leftovers, we will cook them at home.” (Walsidi, an itinerant vegetable trader from Sumowono)

The magnitude of the profit depends on the amount of the budget owned by each itinerant vegetable trader. The contribution of the itinerant vegetable traders’ income to the household income per month is averagely 70 percent. The amount of the income they earn is less than the farm high-owners there, but almost the same with the farm owners, and greater than the farmers (Surtati, 2008). When associated with the Regional Minimum Wage (RMW) of Central Java (BPS, 2013) in 2008 which was about Rp. 601,419 and in 2012 which was Rp. 834,255; and the magnitude of the Minimum Living Cost (MLC) in the same year i.e. Rp. 864,859, then the income of itinerant vegetable traders is greater.
CONCLUSION

Becoming an itinerant vegetable trader is a form of non-agricultural employment in rural areas. A non-agricultural employment opportunity in rural area or rural non-farm employment done by itinerant vegetable traders is an alternative employment, reduces the unemployment rate, and can trigger the onset of other activities as the result. Non-agricultural activities in rural areas, on the one hand are expected, because it has contribution to the household income and employment opportunities. On the other hand, it has an impact on the difficulty of obtaining employment in the agricultural sector; it is perceived by farm owners.

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