

# **Social Interaction Of The Community On The Slopes Of Mount Merapi In Deles Hamlet, Sidorejo Village, Kemalang District, Klaten Regency, Indonesia**

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## **Abstract**

*This research is a descriptive study which aims to look at the social interactions that develop in the lives of people in Deles Hamlet, Sidorejo Village, Kemalang District, Klaten Regency, Central Java Province, Indonesia who live on the slopes of Mount Merapi (4.5 km from the peak) with a high level of danger. This study was carried out from March to April 2024. Data was collected using observation, interviews and documentation methods. The results of this research are that the social interaction of the people of Deles Hamlet, Sidorejo Village, Kemalang District, Klaten Regency is very well established. Establishing social interaction is very much needed because mountain conditions fluctuate, so that people's lives become dynamic. With interaction, the community's slogans, namely "living comfortably with threats and "nadyan gari pondasi aku kudu bali" (even though the foundation remains, I have to go home) can become values that the community believes in. Cooperation in society in the form of mutual cooperation and mutual assistance dominates many aspects of community life. The aim of mutual cooperation is to build a sense of unity and oneness in society, foster public awareness of the natural and social environment, alleviate problems and increase community involvement. Collaboration is routinely carried out in the form of community service, sweeping streets, cleaning graves and celebrating certain commemorations, for example ahead of Ramadhan and Independence Day. Non-routine mutual cooperation and mutual assistance is more about community involvement in splicing or rewangan activities at weddings, funerals, a series of ceremonies after death, sick people, circumcisions and other ceremonies. Problems that arise in society are resolved using the principle of deliberation, namely bringing together conflicting parties to find solutions that benefit all parties.*

**Keywords:** social interaction, mutual cooperation, mountain slope farming, Deles Hamlet, Mount Merapi

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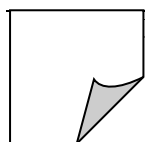
## **I. Introduction**

Society is a group of people who occupy a certain area or place and develop patterns of life, culture and patterns of interaction between them. The largest part of Indonesian society is the farming community (Sudrajat, 2018). Farmers in Indonesia are spread across rural areas and also in mountainous areas, each of which has different characteristics. Geographical location, natural conditions and soil fertility are some of the things that cause the two to differ in their agricultural cultivation methods.

Most people in Indonesia live by cultivating the land and developing traditional agricultural patterns. The characteristics of agricultural patterns vary, but most grow rice, secondary crops and vegetables. Apart from that, many are also developing plantations such as cloves, coffee, tea, nutmeg and fruit. For people who live in mountainous areas, planting secondary crops, vegetables and plantations is usually the main choice because their land is not rice fields, moors or gardens.

Communities in mountainous areas have special patterns in agriculture, especially when these communities live on the slopes or close to active mountain peaks. Natural resources and fertile land are important capital for farmers. However, on the other hand, people who live on the slopes of volcanoes are always aware that volcanic eruptions pose a threat to the safety of human life, pets and loss of property. The challenges faced by communities, especially communities on volcanoes, are more complex and challenging (Jati, 2013).

Seeing these conditions, people need to continue to develop special lifestyles so that they can survive. Society needs a socio-cultural and community approach in responding to nature and life. Nature, environment



and life have been integrated for generations, making them able to survive with patterns, values, habits and culture that they themselves have developed. Compared to the lives of people who live in the lowlands, people on the slopes of the mountains really need stronger fighting power and endurance, especially in facing nature which often changes due to volcanic eruptions.

One important factor that influences the resilience of communities on mountain slopes is the establishment of social interaction between them. Social interaction, which is a form of reciprocal interaction between individuals and individuals, individuals and groups and also groups and groups, is highly developed in community life. Lingga et al. (2021) explains that in social interaction, close relationships are formed which will then create social harmony. Therefore, social interaction has a big influence on the formation of social harmony in the community concerned. Through social interaction, people can cooperate with each other, appreciate, respect, live in harmony and work together. These attitudes are able to create order and order within farmer groups which encourages the emergence of social harmony. Social order is a condition where the aspects of community life run in an orderly and regular manner so that group goals can be achieved (Sastramihardja, 1987).

The form of social interaction that is developed is an attitude of mutual cooperation and mutual assistance among the community. Various activities and pursuits, both in agriculture and other fields, are carried out with the principles of mutual cooperation and togetherness. Under normal conditions and when a disaster occurs, the community prioritizes togetherness because the community realizes that only by working together can life order and survival be realized. Without developing mutual cooperation, there will be no unity, a sense of caring and community involvement in realizing a life in harmony with natural conditions.

Seeing the importance of this interaction, the author is interested in studying the social interaction of the community on the slopes of Mount Merapi in maintaining life and the forms of interaction that are developed. Apart from that, the author believes that the lives of people on the slopes of Mount Merapi, where this mountain is an active volcano on the island of Java because of frequent eruptions, have life challenges that are much more complex than people in other rural areas in terms of survival. Therefore, society develops various forms of interaction such as cooperation, mutual cooperation, leadership, mutual assistance and efforts to resolve conflicts that occur as a consequence of reciprocal life, both between individuals and within groups.

This research aims to look at the social interactions that develop in the lives of people in Deles Hamlet, Sidorejo Village, Kemalang District, Klaten Regency, Central Java Province who live on the slopes of Mount Merapi (4.5 km from the peak) with a high level of danger. The focus of social interaction here is more on associative forms of interaction, especially cooperation, which includes mutual cooperation, mutual assistance, as well as accommodation and assimilation. This research is descriptive research with data collection using observation methods, in-depth interviews and documentation.

## II. Literature Review

### Understanding social interaction

Interaction between individuals and individuals, individuals and groups and groups with groups is an important part of society's social life. Interactions that are well established will have an impact on the comfort of people's lives, whether in rural areas, urban areas or people living on mountain slopes, while interactions that are not well established will give rise to conflict and thus require appropriate accommodation so that the orderliness of people's lives can be realized.

Soekanto (1996) explains that social interaction is a dynamic social relationship that involves relationships between individual people, between human groups, and between individuals and human groups. Ghahtarani et al. (2020) states interactions in the theory of interpersonal interactions refer to the activities of individuals in binary communications. Social interactions can create conditions in which the combination and sharing of information and knowledge can be created. Knap in Sudrajat (2021) explains that social interactions carried out between individuals and individuals and groups of individuals or groups of individuals and individuals and or between one group of individuals and another group encourage the creation of order or social organization in community life.

In more depth, Knap explains the stages between people involved in social interactions (Ngangi, 2018). There are stages of social interaction that bring closer and there are stages of distance in social organization. An overview of these stages is in the table below:

**Table 1. Stages of social interaction in society**

No	Approaching Stages	Distancing Stages
1.	Initiating	Differentiating
2.	Experimenting	Circumscribing
3.	Instensifying	Stagnating
4.	Integrating	Avoiding
5.	Bonding	Terminating

(Source: Ngangi, 2018)

Based on table 1, the interaction stage starts with starting and ends with connecting. Linking interactions require a different process and time to reach a strong interaction. It takes time and process as well as a strong will from individuals or groups so that the relationships formed can be reciprocal and mutually beneficial. However, you need to realize that in establishing interactions, not all processes will be reciprocal and profitable. Often individuals or groups feel they are treated unfairly and only benefit one party. A discriminating relationship is the beginning of a distancing interaction stage. Individuals or groups will likely limit their interactions, avoid interacting with each other and ultimately decide not to interact.

### **Forms of social interaction**

Forms of social interaction based on the opinion of Soekanto (1996) explain that two types of social processes that arise as a result of social interaction are associative processes which consist of cooperation, accommodation and assimilation and disassociative processes which include competition, contradiction and opposition. In this research, the emphasis of discussion is on the disassociative process. Cooperation, which is a form of associativity, is very important for farming communities to achieve common goals. Forms of cooperation in farming communities include mutual cooperation, mutual assistance, mutualistic symbiosis and patron-client (Sudarta, 2016).

Mutual cooperation is a characteristic of the social life of rural communities in Indonesia. Activities carried out jointly are usually related to problems in people's daily lives, for example repairing village roads, maintaining environmental cleanliness, making patrol posts, community celebrations, independence birthdays and so on, whereas in farming communities it is usually related to agricultural cultivation. The mutual cooperation of people who live on the slopes of volcanoes in the agricultural sector is certainly more varied than farmers in the lowlands. With natural conditions, for example a volcanic eruption will certainly bring problems in the agricultural sector both in terms of time, cultivation methods and anticipation if nature is not friendly.

Gunawan (2015) explains that mutual cooperation in local (Javanese) terminology is interpreted as "nyambut gawe bebarengan" (working together). Various other terms that have the meaning of cooperation or mutual cooperation in society include: community service, mountain fall, splicing. In the current era, the most popular term for cooperation used is community service or also known as mutual cooperation. In general, these two terms are equivalent words which mean working together without compensation. As a tradition, mutual cooperation activities can be found in all communities in various regions of Indonesia, even this mutual cooperation is one of the elements of national characteristics. This mutual cooperation is held in the community, both in villages and in cities. In principle, mutual cooperation is carried out to solve environmental problems around the place of residence.

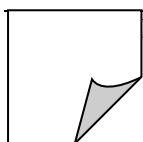
The consequence of mutual cooperation is the principle of mutual assistance and mutually beneficial relationships. These three are important keys to social interaction. So in Indonesian society, for generations, people's lives have been characterized by mutual cooperation because it provides many benefits. Julaiikha & Bahri (2014) argue that the advantages of this mutual cooperation are that work becomes easier and lighter than when done individually, strengthens and tightens relationships between members of the community where they are located, even with their relatives who live elsewhere and unites all residents community involved in it. In this way, mutual cooperation can be done to lighten work on agricultural land, lighten work at events related to parties held by one of the community members, or work together to create and provide for common needs.

Another form of associative interaction is accommodation and assimilation. Accommodation according to Sudarta (2016) is defined as a form of social interaction between two people or groups who are in conflict with each other trying to make adjustments to reduce or resolve the conflict (dispute). Sudrajat (2021) explains that the term accommodation can be used in two meanings, namely referring to processes and circumstances. As a process of accommodation, it refers to human efforts to mitigate a conflict, and which refers to a state of balance in interactions between individuals or groups of people which is related to the social norms of society. Based on the two opinions above, accommodation is an effort made by individuals or groups in society to make various adjustments so that conflicts that occur can be avoided so that balance in life can be achieved.

### **III. Materials And Method**

This research is descriptive research (Sugiyono, 2019), namely research that aims to describe the social interactions of the community in Deles Hamlet, Sidorejo Village, Kemalang District, Klaten Regency, Central Java Province, Indonesia. This study was carried out from March to April 2024. Social interaction focused on the associative type, especially cooperation, which includes mutual cooperation activities, mutual assistance and forms of accommodation to minimize conflicts that occur.

Data collection uses observation, interviews and documentation methods. Observations are carried out through the process of observing various activities related to community social interactions. Interviews were



conducted with hamlet heads, community leaders and several residents in Deles Hamlet. Interviews were conducted based on an interview guide prepared based on the thoughts of several experts. Documentation comes from secondary data and primary data. Secondary data obtained from notes, research reports or newspaper articles are used to describe the general picture of Deles Hamlet which includes: history, population conditions, natural conditions, hamlet organization and other data that supports the topic, while primary data obtained through interviews will be used to describes social interactions, forms and constraints in the lives of farming communities on the slopes of Mount Merapi.

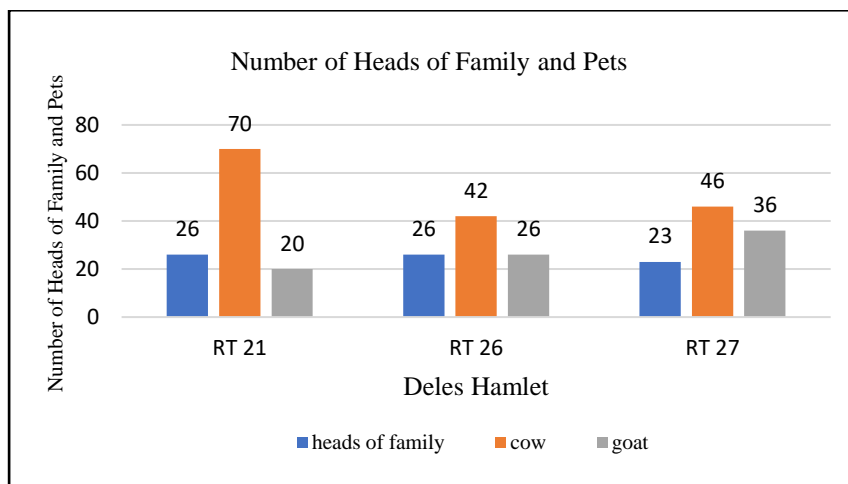
#### IV. Results And Discussion

##### Description of the Deles community

Deles Hamlet is a part of Sidorejo Village, Pemalang District, Klaten Regency, Central Java Province. Sidorejo Village is 1 of 13 villages in Kemalang District with an area of 705,000 ha that only about 4.5 km from the peak of Mount Merapi. Geographically, Sidorejo Village is located at an altitude of 900 m above sea level with rainfall of 30 mm/year and an average temperature of 25° C. Sidorejo Village consists of 10 RWs (Citizens Association or hamlets) and 27 RTs (Neighborhood Association).

Deles Hamlet consists of 1 RW, namely RW 9 and is divided into 3 RTs, namely RT 21, RT 26 and RT 27. The total number of families is 75 head of families or the average per RT is 25 head of families. The highest number of cows is in RT 21 with 70 cows and 36 goats for RT 27. Almost every house has cows, with a minimum ownership of 2 cows and a maximum of 7 cows. Cattle and goat farming is the main economic source of the community.

Deles Hamlet's economy, apart from animal husbandry, relies on agricultural businesses. Most water systems still use rain-fed systems and are semi-technical, so that in the dry season people tend to have difficulty getting water. The agricultural products are rice, cabbage, broccoli, chilies, carrots and mustard greens, while the plantation products are coffee, durians, snake fruit, avocados and oranges. The coffee commodity has been processed and sold in packaged form and is ready to be marketed. One of the coffee brands is "Petruk Coffee". Other economic sources come from sand and stone mining, and the tourism sector. Deles Hamlet has 3 tourist attractions, namely: Pesanggrahan Pakubuwono There is also a Girangkat tourist attraction which is located close to Deles. Data on the number of families and pets is presented in the Figure 1 below:



**Figure 1. Number of heads of family and pets**  
(Source: primary data analysis, 2024)

##### Social interaction in Deles society

Social interaction is a relationship and communication between individuals and individuals, individuals and groups and groups and groups that is mutually beneficial. Interaction in the Deles community between individuals and individuals is established in communication in daily activities, for example in visiting each other's homes, incidental meetings outside the home (rice fields, gardens, stables, roads) or when attending meetings or groups, whereas with The groups are Geological Disaster Technology Research and Development Center (BPPTKG), Lintas Merapi Radio Community, government officials, volunteers, farming communities, arts communities, livestock breeders communities, and others.

Social interaction in the Deles community is well established, however, a process is needed so that the community can build interaction so that there can be an understanding in thinking, acting and behaving. Building this understanding does not happen immediately, but there are stages that must be passed. The

experience of the eruption in 2006 and 2010 made the community aware that social interaction in the form of cooperation, mutual cooperation, mutual assistance, and accommodation are very much needed by the community so that the community can survive.

The slogans "living comfortably with threats" and "nadyan gari pondasi aku kudu bali" (even though the foundation remains, I must go home) have now been able to shape the values and culture of society so that they believe in its truth. It takes time and process and interaction between communities so that people understand that they cannot avoid natural environmental conditions that have existed for generations. People must learn to accept and always be grateful for the God-given life that is different from people in other areas. Society must go through conditions during an eruption that will always occur. After the eruption, society must return to repair and rebuild its natural and social environment. All of these things were realized because of very strong mutual cooperation and mutual assistance and well-developed interactions.

The establishment of an existing understanding begins and is explored based on experience in dealing with previous disasters. Interaction was then increased to make people aware that they would not be able to avoid disasters but instead had to realize the importance of preparation in facing disasters. Currently, interactions in society are able to unite and link them into one part of Deles society. People living on the slopes of Mount Merapi always face the threat of eruptions, but are better prepared than in previous incidents. The community believes that if there was an eruption in 2006, they would be evacuated, if there was an eruption in 2010, they would be evacuated and if another eruption occurred they would move to their location willingly and with full preparation and awareness. This value underlies society to live by accepting the natural and social environment as part of their life.

### **Associative social interaction**

Associative social interaction consists of cooperation (mutual cooperation, mutual assistance), assimilation and accommodation. Mutual cooperation as part of social interaction has become a part of the life of the Deles community. Various activities in community life, both in the social, economic and disaster management fields, are always based on mutual cooperation and mutual assistance (Triana, 2020).

Mutual cooperation and mutual assistance for the Deles community according to the results of interviews with community leaders which aim to:

#### 1). Building a sense of unity and oneness in society

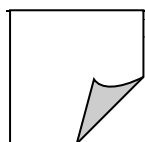
Building a sense of unity and oneness for the Deles community is very important in the midst of life under the threat of the eruption of Mount Merapi. With mutual cooperation, disaster mitigation and management can be carried out well so that it is hoped that there will be no loss of life when a disaster occurs. The experience of evacuating during the eruption of Mount Merapi in 2006 and 2010 taught the community that without unity and unity, disaster management would not be handled well. In April 2024, Mount Merapi's condition will be at Alert level. Several signs of eruption have begun to occur. If the level of Mount Merapi is raised and people have to evacuate, people think they have to temporarily move to avoid disaster or move to a more comfortable place. The community will move to the Kalimosodo GOR (Sports Building) and Paseduluran Menden Village by working together. The development of understanding of the concept of evacuation occurred because the people of Deles felt that mutual cooperation would foster unity and integrity in society so that if they had to evacuate it would not be a burden but something that had to be done.

#### 2). Growing public awareness of the natural and social environment

Concern for the natural environment is carried out by working together to maintain environmental sustainability and cleanliness. People are very aware that nature has provided secondary crops, garden products, fruit, sand and stones for life. Therefore, protecting the natural environment means enabling the Deles community to survive. On the other hand, mutual cooperation can also foster concern for others. One example is when the price of basic necessities is expensive before the month of Ramadhan and New Year, people will help each other so that their needs can be met, for example by sharing agricultural products (chilies, vegetables) if prices are very expensive on the market.

#### 3). Alleviate problems in society

Community problems usually occur around agricultural issues. For example, in March 2024, people failed to harvest because the wind destroyed oranges, durians and avocados. In fact, people are looking forward to the fruit harvest because the price is actually quite promising. The solution taken was to work together to organize the garden again. As a result of the deliberations, an agreement was finally reached to disburse the village treasury for those who needed capital to replant.



4). Increase the active involvement of residents in community development

Mutual cooperation is also fostered through direct and indirect community involvement in communities, one of which is related to disaster mitigation, for example the Environmental Love group (Kancing) and the Lintas Merapi Radio group. The Environmental Love Group (Kancing) is a group consisting of Elementary School (SD) and Junior High School (SMP) age children who learn about building understanding and knowledge of Merapi and Emergency First Aid (PPGD). The hope is that children will become the next generation who understand the values and culture of the Merapi people, including disasters. Once they are teenagers, the children from Kancing will become part of the Lintas Merapi Radio group. The Lintas Merapi Radio group is a community tasked with broadcasting news about the current conditions of Merapi and is part of the community who is always ready to volunteer. Radio Lintas Merapi group was founded in 2003 by Mr. Sukiman. Until now, Radio Lintas Merapi group has become a means of literacy and conveying information quickly to the public. The community of fathers and mothers is also very active in solving problems that exist in society.

Mutual cooperation or the Deles community often refers to community service, which can be done routinely or incidentally. Some examples of routine community mutual cooperation are: sweeping streets, cleaning graves and in welcoming certain commemorations, for example ahead of Ramadhan, Indonesian independence day and so on. The community does street sweeping every Saturday afternoon or if the weather is less favorable, it is done on Sunday morning. This activity involves all members of the community with the aim of making the natural environment, especially roads clean. With clean roads, tourists or guests who visit the Deles Indah tourist forest and other tourist locations will be more comfortable.

Regular mutual cooperation is also carried out ahead of the Independence Day of the Republic of Indonesia. This activity was carried out starting in early August or approximately 2 weeks before August 17. Mutual cooperation is carried out in the form of cleaning the environment, repainting monuments, village boundaries and gates, decorating villages with red and white attributes, installing flags and repairing street lights.

The community regularly carries out activities to clean graves before fasting through mutual cooperation. The tradition of making a pilgrimage to the family grave or "nyekar" is one of the traditions of Indonesian society before the month of Ramadhan. There are two graves, namely the Deles General Cemetery and the Mloyopati Cemetery. The aim of cleaning the grave is to make the grave comfortable for Deles residents and local residents to visit who carry out the ritual of visiting their ancestral graves. This activity also aims to strengthen ties of brotherhood and maintain togetherness in society.

Many communities carry out activities based on the principles of mutual cooperation, mutual assistance and togetherness ahead of Eid al-Fitr. Expenditures and needs for Eid al-Fitr are planned by the Deles community regularly for 1 year. The community has the principle that Eid al-Fitr is the best time to visit each other and stay in touch with relatives and residents, so they must be treated well. So that each family can prepare a banquet well, it requires good money and planning. Apart from that, this planning aims to help less fortunate families to be able to receive guests with adequate entertainment. There is no difference in the type of food served in families who can afford it and those who cannot afford it. All communities work together to serve the same type of banquet so that there is no social inequality in society.

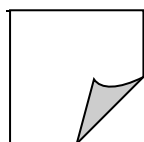
Planning for welcoming the Eid al-Fitr holiday is carried out by the community using the principle of mutual cooperation. The community is divided into several groups which are responsible for: 1) providing basic necessities (rice, sugar, tea, oil); 2) provide kitchen spices (garlic, shallots, salt, pepper, pepper); 3) provide snacks (bread, snacks, syrup) and 4) provide side dishes (chicken, beef, eggs).

The need to welcome Eid al-Fitr was planned through community meetings and resulted in several agreements. Some of the activities that are jointly organized are rice pinching, chicken pinching, and money pinching.

a). Rice pinching is rice that is collected every Sunday as much as 1 glass per family. After 35 days (selapan) the collected rice will be sold back to the public at a price of six thousand rupiah per kg. The money from sales is collected for Eid needs such as basic necessities, spices and snacks.

b). Chickens pinching is a collection of five thousand rupiah per family which is collected every Thursday for the purpose of purchasing chickens. This activity was carried out for 1 year.

c). Pinching of ten thousand rupiah per day per family for 1 year with the provisions that more than 1 family can afford it and poor widows and poor families may not participate in this pledge. The proceeds from this jimpitan are intended to purchase 1 cow for the Deles community for side dishes to be served during Eid. Apart from that, money was also distributed which was intended for fathers in preparation for giving fitrah to family members and young community members. The results from jimpitan are managed together and distributed to the entire community on the 20th of the fasting month (before Eid al-Fitr).





**Figure 2. Distribution of basic necessities and beef ahead of Eid al-Fitr 2024**  
(Source: Personal Documentation, 2024)

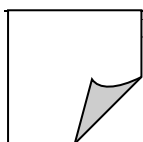
Apart from mutual cooperation activities which are carried out regularly, there is mutual cooperation and mutual assistance which is carried out incidentally because of necessity and is carried out with the aim of easing the burden on other people and to build a sense of togetherness. The Deles community, in terms of social activities, has traditions that are unique and different from other areas, especially when it comes to celebrations. Celebration activities in the community such as weddings, funerals, a series of post-death ceremonies, circumcisions and other ceremonies are carried out with the principle of mutual cooperation and mutual assistance. The community realized that during this celebration, families would not be able to carry out their usual activities. Several days are needed to carry out celebration activities so that activities such as looking for grass for their livestock cannot be carried out. Based on interviews with local community leaders, we got an idea that the need for grass or "ngarit" is what the community will do to help residents who are having a celebration. The community takes turns to note down the order and arrange it by the RT, so that they can help them find grass. The problem of finding grass is very important because the residents of Deles, numbering 75 families, have approximately 158 cows and 82 goats who really need grass to feed their livestock. Raising cattle and goats is the main source of income for the Deles community. Apart from grass, the community also donated firewood for cooking needs during the celebration.

Community assistance, as in celebrations, is also applied to people who are sick. If someone is sick, the residents will record the need for grass for cattle and goats then the community will work together and take turns in charge of looking for grass until the sick resident recovers. In establishing interactions in society, problems are often encountered that cause conflict. The Deles community, in interacting and carrying out various activities, tries to avoid and minimize any conflict with "rembugan" (discussion). "Rembugan" is defined as an effort to bring conflicting parties together face to face and convey each other's opinions and arguments in order to reach an agreement. In working together both routinely and incidentally, no problems are found that disrupt the stability of life in society. In the opinion of community leaders, the role of prioritizing feelings and togetherness is an important key in interaction. Society does not look at who or what they have, but rather at how to build togetherness, an attitude of mutual help, tolerance, cooperation and responding to life in their natural and social environment.

## V. Conclusions

The social interaction of the people of Deles Hamlet, Sidorejo Village, Kemalang District, Klaten Regency is very well established. Establishing social interaction is very much needed because mountain conditions fluctuate, so that people's lives become dynamic. With interaction, the community's slogan, namely "living comfortably with threats and "nadyan gari pondasi aku kudu bali" (even though the foundation remains, I have to go home) can become a value that the community believes in.

Cooperation in society in the form of mutual cooperation and mutual assistance dominates many aspects of community life. The aim of mutual cooperation is to build a sense of unity and oneness in society, foster public awareness of the natural and social environment, alleviate problems and increase community involvement. Collaboration is routinely carried out in the form of community service work sweeping roads, cleaning graves and in welcoming certain commemorations, for example ahead of Ramadhan and the independence day of the Republic of Indonesia. Non-routine mutual cooperation and mutual assistance is more





about community involvement in splicing or rewangan activities at weddings, funerals, a series of ceremonies after death, sick people, circumcisions and other ceremonies. Problems that arise in society are resolved using the principle of deliberation, namely bringing together conflicting parties to find solutions that benefit all parties.

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