EMPOWERING RURAL COMMUNITIES THROUGH AGRICULTURAL TRANSFORMATION: A CASE STUDY IN BONDOWOSO

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Abstract

Food security is an important issue in agriculture-based rural development in Indonesia. This study focuses on the empowerment of the community of Sukosari Kidul Village, Sumberwringin Subdistrict, Bondowoso Regency through a food security program. The study aims to analyze how the program is implemented and what factors determine its success. This research uses a descriptive qualitative method with a literature review approach, data was obtained from journals, books, policy documents, and relevant news articles. The results indicate that the program's success is determined by the synergy between the village government, farmer groups, and community leaders. The activities carried out include the construction of farm access roads and the provision of food storage facilities, supported by funding from the state budget. empowering process was carried out in a participatory manner, from planning to evaluation, which ultimately had a positive impact on community welfare and the sustainability of the agricultural sector. This study emphasizes the importance of a collaborative approach in building food security at the village level.

Keywords: *Community Empowerment; Food Security; Village Development.*

Abstrak

Ketahanan pangan merupakan isu penting dalam pembangunan perdesaan berbasis pertanian di Indonesia. Penelitian ini berfokus pada pemberdayaan masyarakat Desa Sukosari Kidul, Kecamatan Sumberwringin, Kabupaten Bondowoso melalui program ketahanan pangan. Studi ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis bagaimana program tersebut diimplementasikan serta faktor-faktor yang menentukan keberhasilannya. Penelitian menggunakan metode kualitatif deskriptif dengan pendekatan tinjauan pustaka, di mana data diperoleh dari jurnal, buku, dokumen kebijakan, dan artikel berita yang relevan. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa keberhasilan program ditentukan oleh sinergi antara pemerintah desa, kelompok tani, dan tokoh masyarakat. Kegiatan yang dilakukan meliputi pembangunan jalan akses pertanian dan penyediaan fasilitas penyimpanan pangan, didukung oleh pendanaan dari anggaran negara. Proses pemberdayaan dilakukan secara partisipatif, mulai dari perencanaan hingga evaluasi, yang pada akhirnya berdampak positif terhadap kesejahteraan masyarakat dan keberlanjutan sektor pertanian. Penelitian ini

menekankan pentingnya pendekatan kolaboratif dalam membangun ketahanan pangan di tingkat desa.

Kata Kunci: *Pemberdayaan Masyarakat; Ketahanan Pangan; Pembangunan Desa.*

A. Introduction

Strengthening the agricultural sector has a direct relationship with improving the socio-economic quality of life, nutrition, and health of rural communities. Empowering rural communities through strengthening the agricultural sector plays a strategic role in the rural development agenda (Hoerudin 2023). Agriculture is not only a business that produces food, it is also a source of household income, a source of local employment, and a tool for reducing community poverty. Villages can achieve more stable income, strengthen family food security, and improve their nutritional status through the development of sustainable and competitive agriculture. This has a significant impact on the health of society in general.

New momentum for this transformation comes from advances in agriculture and technology. Modern agricultural technologies, such as automated or sensor-based irrigation systems, proper cultivation management for input and land use, the use of organic fertilizers and environmentally friendly local materials, and the integration of soil and water conservation practices, can increase production, reduce long-term production costs, and improve the quality of yields. Additionally, farming methods that prioritize ecosystem regeneration help rural agroecology sustain itself by maintaining soil fertility, reducing environmental damage, and supporting the balance of surrounding ecosystems (Rahmat et al. 2023). Since rural agricultural production typically relies heavily on the quality of local natural resources, these positive ecological impacts are crucial.

Modern agricultural technologies such as the use of organic fertilizers, efficient cultivation methods, and automated irrigation systems increase agricultural productivity. In addition, these methods support ecosystem sustainability and environmental conservation efforts (Rahmat et al. 2023). However, these efforts will not succeed without being complemented by improvements in human resource capacity in rural areas, particularly among women and youth. It is assessed that empowering these groups through vocational training in crop production, livestock farming, and other agricultural fields enhances the knowledge, skills, and competitiveness of local agricultural communities (Haryanti and Soebiantoro 2023).

Through the provision of services, assistance, and education, as well as the development of empowerment programs for farmers, village governments play an

important role in building a sustainable empowerment ecosystem. Farmers must be guided to become independent and empowered actors in facing economic, social, and environmental challenges within the framework of food security-based development. Therefore, the process of community empowerment in the agricultural sector requires collaboration among various stakeholders, including village governments, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), cooperatives, training institutions, and agricultural research institutions (Masbullah et al. 2023).

In addition to institutional support, community capacity building also requires consistent and continuous assistance, socialization, training, and education. This is especially true for labor-intensive agricultural sectors that depend on local potential. By using an integrated approach, community empowerment through strengthening the agricultural sector will not only increase farmers' income and productivity, but will also accelerate the process of sustainable agriculture-based development.

Although agriculture is an important part of life for the community in Sukosari Kidul Village, Bondowoso Regency, East Java, there are still several fundamental problems that prevent the potential of agriculture from being maximized. As a village where the majority of the population depends on agriculture, the development of this village is intended to improve local food security and increase the welfare of farmers. However, in practice, the development of the agricultural sector in this village has not achieved these objectives.

In addition, one of the biggest obstacles in the community empowerment process is the difficulty of accessing agricultural land, resulting in low productivity among farmers and an inability to improve the standard of living of the community at large. Furthermore, there is a lack of food storage facilities that could help maintain food stocks for the community. These issues indicate that the organized and integrated community empowerment system has not fully supported agricultural development. Therefore, in-depth research is needed to understand how community empowerment strategies in agriculture can be effectively implemented at the village level. This requires programs that can enhance village food security, promote community empowerment, and foster sustainable local economic growth.

B. Research Methods

This research is field research (library research) using a qualitative approach with a case study method. According to Dedy Mulyana, field research is a type of research that studies phenomena in their natural environment (Mulyana, Pawan, and Maabuat 2022). This research uses descriptive analysis as a means of analyzing

the research results. The research location is Sukosari Kidul Village in Sumberwringin District, Bondowoso Regency, where the majority of the population are farmers. Data was collected through in-depth interviews, observation, and documentation. The research methods used included document analysis to obtain a comprehensive picture of the implementation of community development programs through empowerment.

C. Results and Discussion

1. Community Empowerment Theory

According to Mardikanto and Poerwoko in (Mulyana, Pawan, and Maabuat 2022), empowerment is the process of giving or optimizing community power. Power in the sense of skills and bargaining power is the definition of empowerment. Poverty alleviation is usually associated with economic issues during the process of community empowerment, which varies. Mardikanto also views community empowerment from three perspectives, namely:

a. Creating the potential or climate for society to activate its potential. The standard used here is the awareness that every individual and society has the potential to progress. To build this strength, empowerment helps, encourages, and raises awareness of your potential and strives to develop it.
b. Empowerment, which means improving the status or strength of society. Concrete actions to make different contributions and open up different opportunities to strengthen the community.
c. Enforcement, which also means protection. In the empowerment process, we must not weaken weaker groups because they are unable to compete with stronger groups. Mandatory protection is an effort to prevent unfair competition and prevent stronger parties from dominating weaker parties. There is no intention for community empowerment to make communities increasingly dependent on philanthropic programs.

In this case, Sumadyo in (Mulyana, Pawan, and Maabuat 2022) defines community empowerment as Tri Bina, which means human development, business development, and environmental development. Mardikanto then states that institutional development is very important because Tri Bina can be implemented properly if it is supported by the performance of various related institutions.

One of the mandates of the Village Law is to empower rural communities. In other words, this task is based on an objective understanding of the sources of poverty in rural areas. The Village Law recognizes that rural poverty is the result of unequal and uneven systems, laws, and policies. Sufficient, capable, and quality resources to manage villages must support the right of villages to manage and organize community affairs independently without external intervention (self-governing community). Currently, most villages still have low capacity due to a lack of human resources, which naturally slows down the acceleration of village development.

The development of rural communities through coercion enables these villages to achieve independence. Villages have undergone many changes over the years, so they must be preserved in order to remain strong, progressive, independent, prosperous, and democratic. In this way, they can build a solid foundation for fair and prosperous village governance. Under the Village Law No. 6 of 2014, villages are given the opportunity to become self-reliant through the principles of recognition and subsidies, as well as authority over their origins and land rights. This law positions itself within the village as the site of village government development, which is a political party that promotes village independence and prosperity (Ra'is 2017). With policies that prioritize recognition and conquest, villages need not worry about the consequences.

The idea of community empowerment is to create independence so that communities can act, understand, and apply it in various development activities (Iryana 2018). The main objective of community empowerment is to strengthen communities and provide them with independence, especially for vulnerable and marginalized groups. These challenges can be caused by internal factors, such as self-perception, or external factors, such as resistance to unfair social systems (Alhada Muhammad 2017). It is hoped that communities will achieve prosperity, have the strength to meet their basic needs, and ultimately create self-reliant communities.

Community empowerment must include various opportunities available to the community (Munawar 2019). These factors include:

a. The government, where the government must be able to adapt to these tasks, encourage community participation, open space for public discussion, create regulatory instruments, and regulate market processes that benefit the lower classes.

b. Non-governmental community organizations, national and local community organizations, and non-governmental environmental community organizations.
c. Community organizations originating from the community itself, such as BPD, PKK, Karang Taruna, etc.
d. Cooperatives.
e. Assistance.
f. Empowerment
g. Community Participation.

According to (Odagiri et al. 2020), there are several programs in implementing empowerment strategies, including::

a. Improving the quality of human resources;
b. Improving group institutions;
c. Optimizing state (private) capital;
d. Improving beneficial businesses;
e. Providing relevant news.

Additionally, in relation to community empowerment programs (Odagiri et al. 2020) suggests that to achieve the objectives, the following strategy should be formulated::

a. Developing data collection tools. In this program, the required data may include the results of previous initiatives, available references, findings, or observations.
b. Aligning perceptions and commitments to support the independence of individuals, families, and communities.
c. Designing an information system, developing an analysis system, and monitoring and evaluating the empowerment of individuals, families, and communities.

2. Developmen Theory

Basically, development is the development of a society or nation as a whole to achieve a prosperous society (Akbar, Hermawan, and Karlina 2019). In terms of progress, development means dealing with complex issues and lengthy processes, in line with the dynamics of society as the subject and object of development.

According to Rostow, the concept of development can be defined as the process of development of a society or country from traditional to modernization. During President Soeharto's administration, Rostow's idea of

community development was incorporated into the concept of national development. According to Triharyanto and Siswanta in (Amboisa et al. 2023), development theory from a taxonomic perspective emphasizes the important elements of organizational information structure, which allows everyone to access it in the context of the organization as a whole. The conflict and balance paradigm has replaced the taxonomic perspective. All natural resources must be explored, renewed, and utilized to the fullest to achieve development goals. Village governance based on recognition, decision-making, diversity, cooperation, wisdom, democracy, participation, integration, and empowerment has been strengthened following the enactment of Village Law No. 6 of 2014.

The areas of village development implementation based on Village Development Guidelines No. 114, established by the Minister of Home Affairs in 2014:

a. Development, use, and maintenance of village infrastructure and areas, including, for example:
    1) Boat bridges
    2) Residential roads
    3) Roads between village settlements and rural areas
    4) Micro-hydro power plants
    5) The living environment of village residents
    6) Urban infrastructure appropriate to urban conditions
b. The construction, operation, and maintenance of health facilities and infrastructure include:
    1) Village-scale clean water
    2) Maintaining environmental cleanliness
    3) Posyandu and other village health services
    4) Health services and other infrastructure equivalent to village conditions

3. Community Empowerment as a Catalyst for Rural Agricultural Development in Sukosari Kidul Village through the Food Security Program

Community empowerment through the food security program in Sukosari Kidul Village, Sumberwringin Sub-district, Bondowoso District. There are several stages in the community empowerment process carried out in Sukosari Kidul Village, including: the preparation stage: where the Sukosari Kidul Village government is preparing two things: community

workers and the land/location to be used so that the community empowerment program can run smoothly. This preparation is being carried out. Next, the assessment stage: this stage is used to identify the issues faced by the community, such as social, economic, political, cultural, or environmental issues. The next stage is the action plan formulation stage: at this stage, the vision, mission, objectives, targets, indicators, and goals of the community empowerment program are formulated. Additionally, this phase also includes the creation of a log frame for the community empowerment program. This log frame must include inputs, outputs, outcomes, effects, assumptions, and risks. The final stage is the empowerment stage: at this stage, the community will be given opportunities according to their capabilities through active and sustainable participation. This will give the community a greater role, as well as recommendations regarding their desires and guidance for self-evaluation.

The implementers of the food security program are the village government of Sukosari Kidul Village, which coordinates the programs offered by the Bondowoso Regency government with the farmer groups involved in the implementation of the programs and community leaders. This is supported by the Sukosari Kidul Village-Owned Enterprise (BUMDES).

The community empowerment programs and activities carried out are outlined in the 2024 Village Budget (APBDes) using funds from the State Budget (APBN). This food security program has been implemented in Sukosari Kidul Village through the construction of a Village Food Storage Facility during the first phase of the Village Budget disbursement and the construction of Farm Access Roads during the second phase of the Village Budget disbursement. This food security program is implemented through the construction of a Village Food Storage Facility and Farm Access Roads, both of which are intended to facilitate access and increase community productivity.

Through the construction of food barns and farm roads, the Food Security Program has shown significant achievements in supporting food availability, accessibility, and stability at the village level. The construction of food barns helps maintain community food stocks. These barns not only serve as storage for agricultural products, but also as a place for farmer groups to manage food stocks, which helps villages become more self-sufficient. On the other hand, the construction of farm access roads reduces transportation costs and minimizes the risk of crop loss by facilitating farmers' access to agricultural land. Agricultural intensification, accelerated

mobilization of production tools and materials, and opportunities for village-based economic activities are all made possible by representative farm access roads. In essence, this program enhances village food security, promotes community empowerment, and drives sustainable local economic growth.

D. Conclusion

The Food Security Program, through the construction of food storage facilities and farm access roads, has had a tangible impact on improving food availability, access, and stability at the village level. Food storage facilities strengthen community food reserves and promote farmer group independence, while farm access roads facilitate the distribution of agricultural products and improve production efficiency. Overall, this program not only supports food security but also accelerates village economic growth and sustainable community empowerment. Empowerment actors include village governments, farmer groups, and community leaders. The program involves the construction of village food storage facilities and farm access roads, supported by the national budget, human resources, and production facilities. Achievements related to empowerment include improved community welfare and sustainable agriculture. Additionally, it is recommended that village governments enhance training and mentoring for farmer groups to optimize the management of food storage facilities and farm access roads. Furthermore, sustained collaboration with various stakeholders is necessary to ensure the program's effectiveness and sustainability in achieving village food security.

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