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Political Interaction Between Farmer Groups and Village Government During Crop Failure Conditions: A Case Study of Sumber Suko, OKU

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ABSTRACT

Most farmers in Sumber Suko Village are small-scale and face economic challenges, hindering their capacity development. Recent harvest failures have exacerbated their plight, but instead of giving up, they persevere. The village government collaborates with farmer groups to address issues like pest infestation, adverse weather conditions, and fertilizer scarcity.

This study delves into the dynamics between farmer groups and the village government during crop failures, aiming to grasp agricultural management principles and strategies for sustaining productivity despite setbacks. Employing descriptive qualitative methods such as observation, interviews, and documentation, the research purposefully selects data sources to capture both primary (interviews) and secondary (literature) information. Findings reveal a symbiotic relationship between farmer groups and the local government, bridging communities with governance. Some farmers are not only group members but also village officials, leveraging their roles to educate and empower peers through mentorship, training, and environmental awareness initiatives. These efforts identify hurdles and pave the way for more successful agricultural management in the face of adversity.

Keywords: Political Interaction, Farmer Groups, Village Government, Harvest Failure

ABSTRAK

Sebagian besar petani adalah petani berskala kecil dengan kemampuan ekonomi yang relatif lemah dan keterbatasan dalam mengembangkan kapasitas diri mereka. Kelompok tani dan para petani di Desa Sumber Suko pernah mengalami gagal panen yang menyebabkan kerugian dalam produktivitas pertanian mereka. Hal unik di Desa Sumber Suko adalah meskipun mengalami gagal panen, para petani tidak merasa putus asa untuk meningkatkan pekerjaan pertanian mereka; sebaliknya, mereka terus berusaha mempertahankan sektor ini. Pemerintah desa juga aktif berinteraksi dengan kelompok tani untuk memecahkan masalah gagal panen yang disebabkan oleh hama, cuaca, dan kelangkaan pupuk.

Penelitian ini mengkaji interaksi antara kelompok tani dan pemerintah desa saat menghadapi kondisi gagal panen untuk memahami konsep pengelolaan pertanian serta upaya mempertahankan produktivitas pertanian meskipun mengalami gagal panen. Penelitian ini menggunakan metode kualitatif deskriptif dengan teknik pengumpulan data melalui observasi, wawancara, dan dokumentasi. Pengambilan informasi dilakukan dengan teknik purposive sampling, menetapkan kriteria tertentu, dengan sumber data primer berupa wawancara dan sumber data sekunder berupa literatur.

Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa interaksi antara kelompok tani dan pemerintah desa dapat menghubungkan masyarakat dengan pemerintahan. Terdapat petani yang tergabung dalam kelompok tani, beberapa di antaranya juga menjadi perangkat desa, yang berperan penting dalam meningkatkan pengetahuan dan mengembangkan potensi pertanian melalui kegiatan pendampingan, pelatihan, dan kesadaran terhadap alam. Dalam mengatasi gagal panen, mereka melakukan kegiatan pemberdayaan untuk mengidentifikasi hambatan, sehingga memungkinkan pengelolaan pertanian yang lebih sukses di masa mendatang.

Keywords: Interaksi Politik, Kelompok Tani, Pemerintah Desa, Gagal Panen

INTRODUCTION

Agriculture has a crucial role in national development. The agribusiness sector has helped increase foreign exchange earnings, create jobs, enhance added value and competitiveness, and meet the needs of domestic consumption and raw materials for industries. During the economic crisis in 1997-1998 in Indonesia, the agribusiness sector served as a savior with its positive growth, significantly contributing to the Gross Domestic Product (GDP).

Agriculture in Indonesia continues to hold a central role in the national economy to this day. This role includes providing food, and the agribusiness sector also serves as a supplier of raw materials for the agricultural industry, being the main source of income for farmers across Indonesia, and making a significant contribution as the second-largest source of foreign exchange after the oil and gas sector (Effendy and Apriani 2018).

Farmer groups are entities consisting of adult farmers, both men and women, as well as youth, informally bound within a region based on common needs and

compatibility, influenced by a lead farmer. These farmer organizations aim to develop the potential of their members not only to enhance their agricultural business but also to serve as platforms for extension services and motivating members in various activities. Some farmer groups are also active in mutual cooperation activities and participate in savings and loan and arisan initiatives to support their agricultural activities.

Farmer groups play a central role in applying the concept of farmers' rights into comprehensive policies, strategies, and programs. Additionally, they function as development platforms, raising members' awareness to perform their entrusted duties. The binding elements of these groups include common interests and responsibilities towards farming business areas. The farmer cadres aim to gain support from fellow farmers and involve them in beneficial activities, with support from local community leaders. Clear leadership within the farmer groups allows for directed task distribution in every activity. These groups aim to address farmers' issues that cannot be solved individually, creating consolidated agriculture through the provision of information, the latest technology, as well as seed, fertilizer, and pesticide assistance (Handayani, Tedjaningsih, and Rofatin 2019).

The province of South Sumatra, with an area of 8,701,742 hectares, has the National Food Barn Program due to its diverse land resource potential. About 895,182 hectares of the total area are rice fields, with rice production reaching nearly 1.5 million tons annually, while the rice requirement for a population of 6.7 million is about 980,000 tons per year. Thus, there is a surplus supply of over 450,000 tons.

Ogan Komering Ulu (OKU) Timur Regency is one of the main contributors, with potential agricultural land reaching 1,170,022 hectares, including tidal rice fields (17%) and dry land (83%). In Banyuasin Regency, 83 percent of the area uses tidal land, with Belitang District being the center of rice production. Efforts to develop the potential of rice plants are being made as 34.6 percent of the population is involved in the agricultural sector (Wijaksono and Navastana 2012).

In facing climate change, especially floods in rice fields, measures to reduce the risk of crop failure for farmers have been taken through the provision of agricultural insurance. Crop failure due to floods often becomes a serious problem for farmers, and solutions need to be developed to maintain their production and income. Therefore, research on farmers' perceptions of agricultural insurance is important to support the sustainability of this program.

Sumber Suko is a village that still maintains traditions and is isolated from modern developments. The villagers rely on subsistence farming to meet their own needs. The village administration is ineffective, the village government institutions are not functioning well, education and health levels are low, and access to basic services is difficult to obtain. Although Sumber Suko Village is still governed by its traditional customs, social changes are influenced by traditional culture. According to the Minister of Home Affairs Regulation No. 84 of 2015, the village should have two units of affairs and two sections. However, in its development, traditional norms are no longer binding, interactions among residents tend to be more rational, and residents' jobs have shifted to non-agricultural sectors. The application of new technologies in agriculture has been implemented, increasing productivity, and village infrastructure has also been improved.

In rice field areas, pest problems often arise, causing farmers to face crop failures. The rice farmers in Sumber Suko Village generally rely on pesticides to deal with these pests, but excessive use can have negative impacts on rice plants because pesticides contain chemicals (Utami Putri 2022).

Sumber Suko Village has 11 active farmer groups, which include Wono Usaha, Wono Usaha II, Kerta Usaha, Kerta Usaha II, Sumber Jaya, Sumber Jaya II, Sumber Karya, Sumber Karya II, Panca Karya, Sumber Harapan, and Usaha Makmur. Political interactions include individuals or groups with interests aligned with the state and government. This includes participation in class deliberations, general elections, and active involvement in organizations. Its functions involve maintaining domestic order, resolving community issues, and efforts to improve public welfare (Gazali 2004).

LITERATURE REVIEW

First, the research conducted by Syamsul Hadi, Arief Noor Akhmadi, and Henik Prayuginingsih, titled "The Role of Farmer Groups and Farmers' Perceptions of the Implementation of Organic Rice Cultivation in Jember Regency," reveals that farmers in Jember Regency are currently less enthusiastic about transitioning from conventional to organic farming. They are more inclined towards modern agricultural technologies, which are perceived as faster and easier, neglecting the sustainability and environmental friendliness of organic farming. Major factors include unclear organic certification, perceived high production costs, and the complexity of implementation. Although it has been socialized that organic farming can increase productivity with lower production costs, farmers remain hesitant due to the lack of price guarantees and marketing difficulties. Despite the rising market demand for organic products, some farmer groups in the region have not fully adopted organic farming, although they have the potential to drive change if they have a strong commitment. This study was conducted in 2017 in several districts of Jember Regency using a survey method due to the large and dispersed population (Hadi, Prayuginingsih, and Akhmadi 2010).

Second, the research by Nazaruddin and Oeng Anwarudin, titled "The Impact of Strengthening Farmer Groups on the Participation and Motivation of Young Farmers in Agricultural Activities in Leuwiling Bogor," highlights that the generational involvement in agriculture in Indonesia has significantly declined, necessitating immediate solutions given the vital role of agriculture in national development. Despite Indonesia's reputation as an agrarian country, a 15 percent decline in the number of farmers over the past decade indicates serious challenges. Additionally, young farmers, who are seen as the future of the agricultural sector, face issues with varying levels of motivation (Nazaruddin and Anwarudin 2019).

Third, the study by Radhimas Ardi Syahputera and Aryo Fajar Sunartomo, titled "Participation of Members of the Tani Mulyo Farmer Group in the Implementation of Organic Farming in Tamansari Village, Licin District, Banyuwangi Regency," categorizes participation into four types: decision-making participation, implementation participation, benefit utilization participation, and evaluation participation. Driving factors include significantly lower costs, particularly for fertilizers, easier pest control, and better marketing due to partnerships with Sirtanio. Inhibiting factors include the level

of activeness in contributing and participating, labor shortages, and limitations in production facilities or equipment for making organic fertilizers or pesticides (Gazali 2004).

Fourth, the research by Delia Aprilina S, Indah Nurmayasari, and Kordiyana K Rangga, titled "The Effectiveness of Communication in Farmer Groups in Implementing the Jarwobankplus Program in GadingRejo District, Pringsewu Regency," shows that the factors related to communication effectiveness in groups include group cohesion, leadership type, and frequency of semantic disturbances. There is a significant relationship between group communication effectiveness and the implementation of the Jarwobankplus program in Gadingrejo District, Pringsewu Regency, with an rs score of 0.233. This indicates that the achievement of the Jarwobankplus program is determined by the effectiveness of group communication by 23.3 percent. This study used a survey method with descriptive analysis and non-parametric statistical analysis using Spearman Rank correlation to test the hypothesis (S et al. 2017).

Fifth, the research by Joni Jafri, Rudi Febriamansyah, Rahmat Syahni, and Asmawi, titled "Participatory Interaction Between Agricultural Extension Workers and Farmer Groups Towards Farmer Independence," shows that participatory interaction between agricultural extension workers and farmer groups is significantly determined by the capacity of both the extension workers and the farmer groups. The capacity of farmer groups has a more significant impact on participatory interaction compared to the capacity of extension workers. The low capacity of agricultural extension workers leads to low achievement in participatory agricultural extension. The study was conducted in Merangin Regency and Kerinci Regency, Jambi Province, with a total sample of 180 people, consisting of 36 agricultural extension workers and 144 farmers. Qualitative data collected were analyzed descriptively-inductively, while quantitative data were further analyzed using the partial least squares (PLS) program (Jafri et al. 2015).

The previous studies mentioned above share similarities with the research to be conducted, namely regarding the political interaction of farmer groups. However, there are significant differences in terms of research objects and methods. The research to be conducted will focus on how the political interaction between farmer groups and the village government occurs during crop failure conditions (Case Study of Sumber Suko Village, Belitang District, East OKU Regency).

METHOD

This research employs the Library Research method, utilizing a qualitative approach. This involves a series of activities related to the method of collecting library data, reading, recording, and processing research materials. In this study, data is gathered from various sources such as reference books, textbooks, scientific journals, magazines, newspapers, documents, and other sources. (Mahmudah, 2017)

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Sumber Suko Village, located in Belitang District, East OKU Regency, is predominantly an agricultural community. Despite its abundant natural potential, the village struggles with agricultural management, leading to frequent crop failures. Therefore, the Village Government and Farmer Groups collaborate to address these issues.

Abdul Kodir, the head of the Farmer Group, notes that farmers in Sumber Suko, including himself, face crop failures due to rat and brown planthopper infestations. These pests affect 205 hectares of farmland, with 102 hectares damaged by rats and 103 hectares by brown planthoppers. Despite various efforts to combat these pests, their high populations make it challenging for farmers. Rats damage plants by cutting the stems, while brown planthoppers feed on the plant tips, causing significant losses.

Anang Basri suggests that in response to crop failures, the village government should empower farmers through systems that help identify the barriers causing these failures. This approach would enable better agricultural management, anticipating problems, improving yields, and introducing field schools to enhance farmers' productivity and knowledge.

Septo Yugantoro shares that when crops fail, he and other farmers experience income loss. To mitigate economic difficulties, they converted their farmland into fish ponds and started planting cassava, corn, and other crops. This diversification has helped them maintain their livelihoods despite crop failures.

Sutanto, a member of the Wono Usaha Farmer Group, highlights that group members, including himself, are active in various roles from farming activities to addressing welfare issues. Their participation aims not only for individual benefits but also for the overall progress of the farmer group. They are involved in facilitating the group's access to agricultural funds and aid, which are used as public facilities.

Septo Yugantoro emphasizes that crop failures are influenced not only by rat and brown planthopper infestations but also by climatic conditions. For example, during the rainy season, flooding can submerge and rot paddy crops, while in the dry season, drought poses a challenge in keeping crops alive. Farmers face multiple adversities, including pests and extreme weather conditions.

Anang Basri adds that during crop failures in Sumber Suko Village, the community faces income reduction for about a year. To address this issue, the Farmer Group and Village Government work together by repurposing agricultural land for fish farming, and planting cassava, corn, and other crops. This strategy aims to empower the land and help the community maintain their livelihoods.

Farmer groups consist of adult farmers, both men and women, informally connected in an area based on mutual needs and compatibility. Organized by a farmer liaison, these groups develop agricultural enterprises, serve as extension services, and engage in collective activities such as mutual aid, savings and loans, and work rotations to support agricultural efforts (Jafri et al. 2015). These groups act as sources of extension services and provide support to members through mutual aid, savings and loans, and work rotations. Additionally, they play a role in political matters, interacting with the

village government, especially during crop failures, and collaboratively designing strategies to address these situations.

Emerging rural institutions can be considered modern as they typically possess:

1. A well-defined structure and principles.
2. Formalization with clear membership and procedures.
3. Written regulations in constitutions and by-laws.
4. Formal leadership.
5. Establishment from the awareness of their importance in the social context of rural communities.

Enhancing awareness of the importance of solidarity among members is crucial for strengthening the institutional capacity of farmer groups. Support in marketing through partnerships and accessible capital is key to boosting productive activities within farmer groups, ensuring harmonious cooperation among members, and enhancing overall group dynamics in the agribusiness context.

The social environment plays a vital role in the development of farmer group independence, aligning with Kurt Lewin's field theory. Lewin emphasizes the significance of interaction between group members and their environment in shaping group dynamics. Solid cooperation in this environment is foundational to achieving the independence of farmer groups, meeting farmers' needs through mutually beneficial collaboration.

1. Information search and distribution.
2. Land processing procedures.
3. Mass spraying.
4. Maintenance of channels, water management, and construction of dams and drainage systems.
5. Construction of huts.
6. Plant growth supervision.
7. Road restoration.
8. Funding for agricultural activities.
9. Group management.

In village administration, the Village Head and staff ensure the empowerment of farmer groups by integrating good governance principles such as transparency, accountability, and community involvement. Community empowerment efforts can be realized through farmer group empowerment strategies, indicating that in village governance development, decision-making does not solely involve the elite but also engages the participation of farmer groups.

The significant potential of farmer groups can support the implementation of various agricultural development programs. Empowering farmer groups requires enhancing their capacity in various areas:

1. Understanding the strengths and weaknesses within the group.
2. Considering future opportunities and challenges.

3. Selecting options for various problem-solving methods.
4. Operating the group harmoniously with the environment sustainably.

In managing agriculture, farmers often face challenges related to high fertilizer costs and water needs during the dry season. While the rainy season provides water without issue, the dry season brings difficulties in supplying water to the fields. Additionally, pests such as brown planthoppers and rats, along with climatic conditions and fertilizer shortages, can devastate crops, leading to failures as experienced by farmers in Sumber Suko Village, Belitang District. Serious attention from the village government and community is required to address these issues so that farmers can remain productive, support their livelihoods, and ensure their survival. An ideal community efficiently manages resources, maximizing their use for a sustainable future. Achieving this ideal community involves community empowerment activities aimed at improving the quality of the environment through integrated management, fostering self-reliance, and enhancing business capabilities to develop income sources that impact the community's economy.

Ogan Komering Ulu Timur is a regency located in the southern part of Sumatra, known as a major agricultural hub in the province. When crop failures occur in Sumber Suko Village, located within Belitang District, there is a significant decline in agricultural produce shipments from the district. Sumber Suko Village, within Belitang District, has extensive agricultural land.

Due to pest infestations by rats and brown planthoppers, cooperation between the community and the Village Government is needed to create shared prosperity. This effort involves developing productive farmer groups as a strategy to empower farmers, aiming to improve their economy and quality of life. This empowerment is expected to generate full community participation to achieve common welfare.

In Sumber Suko Village, Belitang District, East OKU Regency, the crucial role of farmer groups and the village government in bridging the gap between the community and the government is significant. Farmers, including some who are village officials, play a role in enhancing knowledge and developing agricultural potential through mentoring and training activities. These efforts focus on planting patterns, organic farming, and environmental awareness, aiming to improve community welfare through the active participation of farmers in every aspect of agriculture.

In this study, the researcher examines the political interactions between farmer groups and the village government. According to Chaplin, interaction is the relationship between two systems that influence each other. Gillin and Gillin, as cited by Soekanto (1982), explain that social interaction involves the dynamic relationships between individuals or groups of people. For instance, when two people meet, social interaction begins with actions such as greetings, handshakes, communication, or, in some cases, can even lead to physical conflict.

Several factors influence plant growth, such as the use of superior varieties or seeds, appropriate fertilization, adequate irrigation, the ability to control disturbances, and the application of optimal soil and planting distance management. In agricultural productivity, the concept of farm management needs to be implemented according to

farm planning. This planning aims to understand resource use in productivity through analysis as an evaluation of the impact of changes in production methods, which are key factors influencing agricultural production results.

Collaboration between Farmer Groups and the Village Government can be a crucial bridge between the community and the government. In Sumber Suko Village, farmers who are part of the farmer groups, including some who serve as village officials, play key roles in enhancing agricultural knowledge through mentoring, training, and awareness of planting patterns and environmental sustainability.

To address crop failures, empowerment efforts are undertaken to identify obstacles and prepare anticipatory steps for the future. Field schools are established to improve productivity and agricultural management progress by disseminating agricultural science and knowledge to farmers.

In agricultural management, there are two main goals farmers aim to achieve: pre-harvest goals to obtain the highest possible yields, and post-harvest goals to maximize income from agricultural products. Additionally, the availability of sufficient fertilizer is crucial to meet agricultural needs.

CONCLUSION

Based on the research in Sumber Suko Village, Belitang District, East OKU Regency, there is a thesis entitled "Political Interaction of Farmer Groups During Crop Failure" Political Interaction of Farmer Groups and the Village Government During Crop Failure. (Case Study, Sumber Suko Village) With reference to the findings of this research, the conclusion drawn is that the farmer groups in Suko Village, Belitang District, East OKU Regency, have specific characteristics or are in line with the findings revealed in the study. Sumber Suko and the Village Government have various roles in agricultural activities, both directly and indirectly. Based on the research results, several interactions between farmer groups and the Village Government can be identified.

Relationship Interaction between farmer groups and the village government can connect the people with the government, as seen in Sumber Suko Village, Belitang District, East OKU Regency. There are farmers who are part of farmer groups, some of whom also serve as village officials, playing a crucial role in enhancing agricultural knowledge and developing agricultural potential through mentoring, training, and environmental awareness. In addressing crop failures, they engage in empowerment activities to identify obstacles, enabling more successful agricultural management in the future. Field schools are established to enhance productivity and agricultural progress through the dissemination of agricultural science and knowledge to farmers.

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