



Empowerment Of Horticultural Peasants (Study At The Karo Regency Agriculture Service Post-Eruption Of Mount Sinabung)

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Abstract

The eruption of Mount Sinabung impacted not only people living at the foot of volcano, but also surrounding communities. Although damage was not as severe as that experienced by displaced people, the eruption of Mount Sinabung had an influence on lives of people living in Sinabung area, particularly in agricultural sector. The agricultural production of community has diminished as a result of Mount Sinabung's eruption. Aside from lower agricultural production, lower selling prices are also a result of lower quality. This research will show how Karo Regency Agriculture Office empowers Peasants horticulture who have been impacted by Mount Sinabung's eruption. The descriptive qualitative method was employed in this study. The findings revealed that Karo Regency Agriculture Service's execution of empowerment horticultural Peasants following Mount Sinabung's eruption was still not optimal due to a number of circumstances. These factors include that Mount Sinabung is still erupting, mentality of people who have yet to accept instructor's presence, and fact that quality of extension resources is still inadequate, both in terms of expertise and field demands. The absence of field people, presence of extension workers who are members of structural posts, and a limited budget are all hurdles to horticultural Peasants' empowerment.

Keywords: Empowerment, Horticultural Peasants

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INTRODUCTION

Indonesia is known as an agricultural country, with the majority of the population employed in farming agriculture. Indonesia is situated in the equatorial zone, which receives abundant sunlight and rainfall throughout the year, making the soil particularly fertile and allowing plants to thrive, making it simpler for the agricultural industry to progress swiftly. This may be observed in Indonesia's history, which demonstrates that the agricultural sector has played a significant part in the country's overall economic development. The agricultural industry serves as a source of foreign exchange, a source of extensive employment, a supplier of industrial raw materials, and a source of food for the Indonesian population, among other things (Purwanto, 2022).

Karo Regency is one of the regions where agriculture is the most important industry. The Karo people, who make up the majority of the population, make a living as Peasants. Apart from being a center for horticulture production in North Sumatra, with vegetables and fruits being the most well-known products, it is also well-known for its tourism industry. As a result, the focus of Karo Regency development is on expanding the agricultural and tourism sectors in order to achieve the vision and goal of development (Sahri, 2022). Karo Regency's agricultural sector has a significant impact on the regional economy. It has been established that the agricultural sector generated 58.67 percent of GRDP (Gross Regional Domestic Product), or half of the GRDP value

(Hafni, 2021).

Horticultural crops are the principal agriculture commodity of Karo Regency. Vegetable crops such as shallots, chili, potatoes, and cabbage will produce 8,216 tons, 81,790 tons, 70,367 tons, and 134,718 tons in 2020. While vegetables such as shallots, chilies, potatoes, and cabbage are gathered on 806 ha, 8,045 ha, 3,676 ha, and 1,451 ha, respectively (BPS Kabupaten Karo, 2021). Despite the fact that the agricultural sector in Karo Regency generates exceptional agricultural goods, particularly in the field of horticulture, this does not mean that all agricultural activities run well. This may be seen in the drop in horticulture crop yield in Karo Regency as a result of the Sinabung volcano eruption (Pandia, 2018). The eruption of Mount Sinabung had a significant impact on agricultural output in Karo Regency. Since Mount Sinabung erupted in 2010 and 2020, it has caused a slew of issues that most Peasants in Karo Regency can't avoid. So far, the eruptions have produced lava, heated clouds, and strewn volcanic ash. Mount Sinabung's volcanic ash has an impact on the quality of Tanah Karo's agricultural products. Reduced agricultural product quality as a result of ongoing eruptions has resulted in lower agricultural commodity prices. As a result, Peasants' revenues are reduced as a result of the low selling price and the short quantity of crops (Sinaga, 2019).

According to Law Number 24 of 2007 on Disaster Management, the government is responsible for dealing with any disaster that occurs in Indonesia. The law governs disaster management from pre-disaster planning to emergency response and post-disaster recovery. The Karo Regency Agriculture Office is the relevant local authority in this study undertaken by the author. Peasants must be empowered by being classified based on regional potential and proximity to superior regional commodities, so that each region/region can grow and flourish with its own superior commodities and build programs that the community need, requiring a different method for empowerment. additionally (Suri, 2016). The empowerment process is a set of activities aimed at strengthening and/or optimizing the empowerment (in terms of ability and/or competitive advantage) of vulnerable groups in society, such as people living in poverty (Nasution, 2019). Peasants are projected to benefit from the Karo Regency Government's assistance, which could include assisting growers or empowering horticultural Peasants. Peasants' wellbeing is predicted to increase as a result of the Regional Government's cooperation with them.

In article 3 paragraph 1 of Law No. 19 of 2013, covering the Protection and Empowerment of Peasants, it is stated that one of the purposes of the protection and empowerment of Peasants is to promote welfare and a better life. The Peasant Protection and Empowerment Law governs planning, Peasant protection, Peasant empowerment, financing and funding, supervision, and community participation, all of which are carried out in accordance with the principles of sovereignty, independence, benefit, togetherness, integration, transparency, efficiency, and justice (Septian, 2014). The Karo Regency Agriculture Service has made a number of steps to alleviate the strain on the community's Peasants. However, it appears that it has yet to attain even and optimal results. Many challenges exist, one of which being the uncertainty surrounding the conclusion of Mount Sinabung's eruption. As a result, when a program cannot reach maximum outcomes due to Mount Sinabung's continual eruption.

Faced with the challenge of the Sinabung eruption since 2013, the Karo Regency Government has worked with numerous parties to assist communities affected by the eruption through the Department of Agriculture. Both from CSR aid from seed producers, North Sumatra Distan, Ministry of Agriculture, BNPB, and Karo BPBD, the Karo Regency Government has

dispersed agricultural production facilities. The Karo Regency Government would also endeavor to work with connected parties in the future to deal with the Mount Sinabung volcanic tragedy. Peasants affected by Mount Sinabung's eruption have also received fertilizers and agricultural machinery from the Department of Agriculture, albeit these have not been dispersed fairly (Febrin 2016). The Department of Agriculture then held a socialization session for Peasants on how to deal with the challenges produced by Mount Sinabung's eruption. Plants exposed to volcanic ash are pumped (cleaned) with a compressor with a mixture of sunshine or Rinso with a set dose, and the socialization is channeled through a combination of Peasant groups (Gapoktan). The volcanic ash-affected area is then treated by combining the ash with soil and organic fertilizer.

The District II Runggu, which was conducted on April 6, 2017 at the Karo Regent's Office Hall in the context of dealing with the impact of the Sinabung eruption, comprised discussions on impacted areas in response to the needs of affected Peasants. It was mentioned during the deliberation that there were at least five major issues that occurred at the same time. The first three communities in Siosar were relocated. Second, with an independent relocation system, the second phase of relocation for four communities begins. Three villages and one hamlet are the three relocation plans for the third stage. Fourth, there are eight communities that have yet to be relocated. Fifth, dealing with the affected communities, which are distributed over four sub-districts. As a result, the goal of this research is to show how the Karo Regency Agriculture Office empowers horticulture Peasants in the aftermath of Mount Sinabung's eruption, as well as the challenges in putting the program in place.

RESEARCH METHOD

A qualitative descriptive research method is used in this study (Gunawan, 2013). The research is focused on empowering horticulture growers who have been impacted by Mount Sinabung's eruption. Focus In 2017, this study was carried out at the Karo Regency Agriculture Office. The Agriculture Office, field extension officers, and affected horticulture Peasants were the research informants. Data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing are all part of the data analysis process (Miles & Huberman, 2018).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Empowerment of Horticultural Peasants After Mount Sinabung Eruption

The Karo Regency Agriculture Office's implementation of Peasant empowerment is a vital move done by the Regional Government for Peasants, particularly those affected by the Mount Sinabung eruption, to be able to survive in the current scenario without knowing when the eruption will stop. Peasants who are harmed by Mount Sinabung's eruption, particularly volcanic ash in general, are not Peasants who have fled, but Peasants who are still in the Mount Sinabung's circle. The volcanic ash produced by Mount Sinabung impacts all places near the volcano, not just Tanah Karo, and even Medan when the eruption is severe.

Volcanic ash greatly inhibits plant growth which in turn affects the selling price. Moreover, some of these plants cannot be resold because of the dense dust attached so that no one wants to buy them. The author's statement can be proven by the results of interviews from Mr. Agus Sitepu as a Horticultural Peasant on Mount Sinabung: *"When questioned about the afflicted area, particularly in our town, I would respond that there are times when agricultural products are no longer available for purchase." I sold beans to the market yesterday, but because the ash was too*

heavy, I returned them here and threw them away. Then I brought chiles, which were similarly reduced in price due to the ashes. There's also a jipang that we recently planted; it can only be sold ready once it's been harvested yesterday, and it's no longer available".

Mr. Agus Sitepu was not the only one who was affected by this tragedy; other Peasants were as well. The Peasants in Tanah Karo have drastically reduced their quality of life as a result of seeing things like this. According to the results of Mr. Bachelor Purba's interview on August 16, 2017, the following impacted locations in Naman Teran District have been registered with the National Disaster Management Agency (BNPB): Kebayaken Village, Kuta Gugung, Kuta Rayat, Kuta Mbelin, Sukandebi, Gung Pinto, and Naman. Cimbang, Payung, Selandi, Ujung Payung, Batu Karang, Tiganderket District: Sukatendel Village, and Simpang Empat District: Beganding Village are all located in the Payung District. Mount Sinabung is around 6 to 15 kilometers away from the 18 impacted settlements.

Given these issues, the Department of Agriculture should operate as a public servant enforcing regional sovereignty, particularly in the agriculture sector. The objective of regional autonomy is to speed the attainment of community welfare by improving services, empowering citizens, and involving them in decision-making (Thamrin, 2021). This empowerment is referred to as counseling in the Department of Agriculture's implementation of empowerment. As a result, the extension sector empowers Peasants in the field through PPL (Field Agricultural Extension) in accordance with the already established Agricultural Extension Work Area (WKPP). The fundamental goal of this Peasant empowerment project, particularly for the impacted Peasants, is to build their capacity so that they can live in the current natural condition and meet their daily demands.

By improving Peasants' abilities, Peasant groups' knowledge will improve, and their knowledge and skills will affect their conduct. The initial planning stage, namely program preparation, is carried out in order to empower the impacted Peasants (Harahap, 2022; Batubara, 2022). The RKTTP was born out of the Agricultural Pathway Program: Village Monograph (Annual Work Plan for Agricultural Extension Officers). The RKTTP is used to create targets that will be carried out over the course of a year, as well as a visit schedule that includes a scheduled visit topic. If you have visited, you will notice that the knowledge, abilities, and attitudes of Peasants have changed and improved. Peasants' knowledge is increased by socialization and extension of new knowledge, which is then put into practice by the Peasants to improve their skills.

There is a comparison between socialized information and knowledge that has previously been known. Extension personnel must also keep an eye on what Peasants are doing. The extension worker must keep a diary after the counseling session. Following the creation of the topic and visit schedule, the teacher is expected to create an LPM (Teaching Preparation Sheet), with the last one evaluating the instructor's performance at the conclusion of the year. As a result, it's evident that the Department of Agriculture's extension staff in the field are continually keeping an eye on this Peasant empowerment activity. The author will show how the eruption of Mount Sinabung affected the implementation of the Department of Agriculture's duties and roles in empowering Peasants in this research. In this research of horticultural Peasant empowerment, the author employs Edi Suharto's 5 philosophy, which stands for Enabling, Strengthening, Protecting, Supporting, and Maintaining (Suharto, 2005).

Enabling

Empowerment must be capable of removing the community's structural and cultural constraints. So, in this scenario, the possibility is how the policies are implemented in order for the community to develop. The policies taken as steps to minimize the impact of the volcanic ash itself in empowering Peasants affected by Mount Sinabung's eruption include: first, land maintenance or land processing methods mixed with organic fertilizer, with the government providing a hand tractor to make it easier for Peasants to loosen their soil. Second, rice and corn are planted on land utilizing *jajar legowo*. The land can boost production by planting because as the planting eye grows, so does the population. The third option is to use a modified tripe machine to remove volcanic ash. Its purpose is to blow air across the plant, causing the dust to fall. Fourth, include seeds such as potato, corn, onion, and coffee seeds that can withstand volcanic ash. Shallots and coffee, however, were the most widely spread of these four seeds.

Furthermore, a lot of agricultural land around Sinabung has changed functions as a result of the eruption of Mount Sinabung, particularly in the areas affected by the eruption of Mount Sinabung. The majority of rice fields have now been converted to land farming. This is due to issues with the irrigation system. The difficulty with this irrigation system is also caused by damage to the cold lava lake dam, which causes it to merge with agricultural irrigation water flows, destroying the irrigation flow. It's also impossible to enhance irrigation because it's in the red zone. Based on all of the aforementioned activities, it can be determined that the Department of Agriculture's efforts to empower Peasants are successful. All efforts are being taken to reduce the impact of Mount Sinabung's eruption on horticultural growers who are being affected by volcanic ash.

Strengthening

Empowerment must be capable of developing all of the community's abilities and self-confidence that promote independence. The author examines what the Department of Agriculture is doing to empower empowered affected Peasants, including how Peasant empowerment is implemented, working partners to strengthen Peasants' abilities, how empowered Peasants participate, aspects built into empowerment, and the quality of agricultural extension workers. The Agriculture Service, through PPL (Field Agricultural Extension), empowers disadvantaged Peasants by combining their potential and abilities with new knowledge held by extension personnel. So that public knowledge might evolve by incorporating fresh knowledge and knowledge that is already known to the public.

In addition to empowering Peasants, the Department of Agriculture collaborates with other fields that are required in the field. In addition, self-help extension workers and private extension workers aid the Department of Agriculture in empowering Peasants. Private extension agents, for example, are formulators who offer agricultural medications like insecticides as partners. Mr. Andriano, a formulator for agriculture from Eksindo, and his team, for example, are coffee partners with Starbucks. These self-help extension personnel, on the other hand, are Peasants themselves. For instance, the most successful Peasant is followed by the Peasant who is appointed as a self-help extension worker.

With so many Department of Agriculture partners, it is hoped that the impacted Peasants would be strengthened. Because, in addition to offering assistance, these partners can also serve

as a forum for exchanging information, allowing empowered Peasants to expand their knowledge. Knowledge, skills, and attitudes are built in the process of empowering the affected Peasants. To be able to establish this feature, PPL and Peasants must have a relationship. However, it appears that it is still inadequate in this scenario. This is due to the Peasants' own opposition to the presence of extension workers on the property. Many Peasants believe that because they have more experience in agriculture, they are more capable than extension workers. On reality, Peasants account for 80 percent of extension workers in the field. Even though he works as an extension worker, he is also a Peasant who has benefited from the empowerment offered to the community. Peasants' active engagement becomes even less participatory as a result of this erroneous perspective.

Peasants will not be able to be empowered unless they have placed their trust in their extension workers to guide and direct them. Meanwhile, many extension workers have failed to adequately carry out their duties and responsibilities. Many of these extension staff are still unconcerned about the Peasants in their regions of responsibility. The empowerment will be ineffective if the extension worker does not perform adequately. On the other hand, there are extension employees whose quality is insufficient to be considered extension workers. In this situation, the Peasant is clearly superior to the extension worker. As a result, the Department of Agriculture's strengthening efforts are tailored to Peasants' knowledge and capabilities, as well as relevant partners in their sectors, in order to develop components of knowledge, skills, and attitudes toward Peasants. However, even though it meets the needs, it is still impeded by the Peasants' attitude and the poor quality of extension workers. Peasants are resisting, and extension staff are also being careless, so the strengthening will not be ideal.

Protecting

The government must safeguard the community, particularly the weaker groups, against oppression by powerful and dominating groups, avoid unfair competition, and prevent the strong exploiting the weak (Sinaga, 2022). Empowerment must be focused on eradicating any forms of discrimination and dominance that are detrimental to the local group. Weak groups, minorities, and isolated communities must be protected through empowerment. There isn't much more to say about strong Peasants in terms of empowering these afflicted Peasants. All of the impacted Peasants have the same status as weak Peasants. As a result, the author sees the Department of Agriculture's protection in terms of gender equality and equality for all Peasants in this protection.

All Peasants are in the same situation; there is no difference. Every Peasant has the same rights and shares in the same proportions. Similarly, if a request for assistance can be fulfilled quickly, the Department of Agriculture will distribute the requested aid as soon as possible. The support will be supplied through Peasant groups and divided among the members of the groups. As a result, all assistance and empowerment activities are carried out through Peasant groups, and the Department of Agriculture encourages all Peasants to join Peasant groups so that, if assistance or government programs are implemented, they can be provided to all Peasants. As a result, Peasant organizations prioritize Peasant empowerment and support distribution. Overall, the results of the interviews show that in terms of protection, the situation is good because there are no gender differences or variations between Peasants.

Supporting

It is critical to provide direction and assistance to vulnerable groups so that they can fulfill their duties and functions in life (Thamrin, 2022). Empowerment must be able to sustain the community so that they do not fall into progressively weak and marginalized situations and places (Thamrin 2020). In other words, support refers to how to provide direction and assistance to Peasants who have been impacted. Extension personnel must be able to communicate effectively with Peasants in order to provide guidance and support. According to the author's research, communication between extension workers and Peasants has been fairly good thus far. Peasants and extension workers are able to communicate openly. Extension workers will point Peasants in the right direction if they have questions or concerns. For example, extension personnel may direct people to make requests for agricultural assistance.

Ensure that contact between extension workers and Peasants is effectively established so that guidance and support are well received by Peasants. Every time an extension worker is scheduled to visit, they provide guidance and support. In farming, extension workers emphasized *ora et labora* (working while praying). As a result, when providing advice and support to Peasants, extension workers continue to encourage them to trust in God and trust that all will work out. As a result, it can be argued that the Department of Agriculture has done a good job of assisting and empowering affected Peasants.

Maintaining

Conditions must be maintained in order to preserve a fair allocation of power among various community groupings. Empowerment must be able to maintain a sense of balance and harmony so that everyone may benefit from commercial possibilities. In this context, maintenance refers to how the Agriculture Service follows up on the empowerment activities and monitors the empowerment program that has been implemented. The Department of Agriculture continues to monitor the program's implementation in relation to this affected Peasant empowerment activity. According to the Agricultural Extension Work Area, Field Agricultural Instructors continue to follow empowered Peasants (WKPP). The RTR refers to the follow-up to the implementation of Peasant empowerment (Follow Up Plan).

A program of regular visits is also used to monitor the situation. Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, and Friday are the days for visits, with at least two visits every week. Even if you are unable to meet with the Peasant group due to unforeseen circumstances, you will be rescheduled on a day that will be chosen jointly. During this visit, the extension worker will keep a close eye on the Peasants. The instructor then uses a journal to create comparisons, which will be published on a bi-weekly, monthly, quarterly, and six-monthly basis. The final step is to evaluate the instructor's performance at the end of the year.

CONCLUSION

The Karo Regency Agriculture Office's implementation of Peasant empowerment is a vital move made by the Regional Government to help Peasants, particularly those devastated by the Mount Sinabung eruption. The Work Area for Agricultural Extension (WKPP) has been determined. The assessment of horticulture Peasants' empowerment is based on an examination of their options, as well as their strengthening, protection, support, and maintenance. The Department of

Agriculture's implementation of empowerment for affected horticultural Peasants has not been optimal in terms of the five dimensions since there are still barriers in the implementation of Peasant empowerment. The still-erupting Mount Sinabung, the mentality of the people who have yet to accept the presence of extension workers, and the fact that the quality of the extension resources is still lacking, both in terms of knowledge and in terms of being equipped and armed according to their needs, are all obstacles. Lack of personnel in the field, including extension workers who are employed in structural positions, as well as a restricted budget, continue to be barriers to horticulture Peasants' empowerment.

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