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Economic Empowerment of the Poor Society in Sigi Regency, Central Sulawesi Province, Indonesia

Sitti Ulfah¹; Patta Toppe²; Edhi Taqwa²; Haerul Anam²

¹ Student of Doctoral Program in Economic Sciences, Postgraduate Program, Tadulako University, Indonesia

² Doctoral Program in Economic Sciences, Postgraduate Program, Tadulako University, Indonesia

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Abstract

The research objectives were to identify the processes, benefits, and efforts of implementing economic empowerment programs and formulating an economic empowerment model for the poor society in Sigi Regency. The data were obtained through a survey, structured interview, list of pair-wise comparison questions. A survey was conducted by providing a closed questionnaire based on a Likert scale with five answer choices, given to 113 samples; community administrators and members of microsmall scale business groups selected using a snowball sampling technique. Structured interview technique was with interview guidelines applied to regional apparatus organization, Regional People's Representative Assembly, Head of Sub-District (Camat), and Village Heads. A list of pair-wise comparison questions was to program facilitators. The analytical method used was a qualitative descriptive analysis method for implementing community empowerment and the Analytical Hierarchy Process (AHP) method for the Economic Empowerment Model for the poor in Sigi Regency. Implementation of community empowerment in Sigi Regency included the benefits of assistance received, procedures for requesting assistance, procedures for aid realization, the accuracy of aid targeting, quality and capacity of program assistants, benefits of local economic development, implementation of assistance, implementation of monitoring and evaluation. Those implementations had been running well based on the respondent's assessment. The process of raising awareness and shaping people's behavior, transforming knowledge, and increasing the capacity of the community, also received good responses. Likewise, group opportunities, group potential and protection, community, participation, and entrepreneurship received good responses. The Empowerment Model for the poor in disaster-prone areas was Economic Empowerment with the dominant role of assistants as empowerment actors, prioritizing protection and community support in their business activities.

Keywords: Economic Empowerment; Poor Society

Introduction

The economic crisis that hit Indonesia led to criticism of development policies and the emergence of weaknesses in the implementation of national economic development. The distortions that occurred in

the past have weakened the resilience of the national economy in the face of crises, creating various forms of social inequality, and hindering the ability to face crises quickly. The lack of even distribution of the implementation of development has resulted in growth disparities so that social unrest becomes very easy and occurs frequently.

The new sustainable development agenda was created to answer the demands of tackling poverty, inequality, and climate change in real action. Panuluh and Fitri (2016) stated that the 2015-2030 agenda consists of 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SGD). Poverty problems can be analyzed in two ways (macro and micro). At the macro level, the Government's level of policies has made in dealing with poverty problems. Meanwhile, at the micro-level, it is the provision of cash and non-cash food assistance.

PKH's great mission in reducing poverty has not yet been seen in the number of poor people in Indonesia in 2019. Poverty has decreased from 9.41% or 25.14 million people in March 2019 to 9.22% in September 2019, or 24.79 million people out of Indonesia's total population of 267 million. However, entering 2020, the situation has turned around again. The number of poor people in Indonesia in March 2020 amounted to 26.42 million people, which shows poverty at 9.78% (Badan Pusat Statistik, 2020). Due to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, in September 2020, the number of poor population will be around 28.05 million people, with a total increase of 1.63 million or 0.56%.

The main problem and the central issue related to handling the poor are economic empowerment and poverty (Anis and Kassim, 2016). Various studies have stated that Indonesia's economic growth is still low and of low quality. It does not have much benefit in overcoming various poverty problems. Also, Indonesia's economic growth does not entirely rely on domestic strength and potential (people's economy), so it is vulnerable to external shocks. Therefore, the Government recommends a development program based on the domestic potential of pro-growth, pro-job, and pro-poor, namely the empowerment of the people's economy.

Regional development priorities aim to provide direction and focus for development in the next five years. Apart from answering several challenges the Government and the people of Central Sulawesi face today and in the future. It is also, at the same time, the main agenda towards the realization of an Advanced, Independent, and Competitive Central Sulawesi. One of the implementations of regional development priorities based on the Mission of the Central Sulawesi Provincial Government is to accelerate the empowerment of the people's economy, alleviate poverty and social welfare. It is one of the development strategies to improve the quality of human resources and alleviate the poor. It is oriented towards empowerment as a community development effort to increase the poor's income (Geo-JaJa and Azaiki, 2007).

When examining poverty in Sigi Regency, it cannot be separated from the various problems surrounding it. The results of the deepening and analysis of the Sigi Regency Medium Term Development Plan/Rencana Pembangunan Jangka Menengah Daerah (RPJMD) 2016-2021 are as follows: 1) The high number of poor people due to both structure and culture; 2) Not yet optimal planning and implementation of poverty alleviation programs; 3) The existence of socio-economic factors that can trigger socio-economic insecurity and socio-economic conflicts; 4) Limited quantity and quality of social facilities that can provide services to the community, especially the poor.

What exacerbates this condition is that Sigi Regency is an area prone to natural disasters, including floods, earthquakes, and landslides. So that in the annual budgeting process, part of it is focused on disaster management funds. The big thing that also exacerbated poverty in Sigi Regency was a significant natural disaster on September 28, 2018. It destroyed residential areas, rice fields, community gardens, public facilities, and social facilities. What was broken was the damage to the Gumbasa

irrigation system, which is a source of water of the most extensive agricultural land and plantations in the Sigi Regency.

This study aims to formulate a model of economic empowerment for the poor in Sigi Regency, Central Sulawesi Province.

Method

Types of Research

This study used an explanatory survey method. The qualitative approach referred to the collection of data based on community participation and the local Government's role in realizing the welfare of the poor. Through this approach, the data collected was qualitative to explain the Implementation of Economic Empowerment for the Poor in Sigi Regency, Central Sulawesi Province. A sample of 113 respondents was obtained from the community who were members of the empowerment program recipient group. They were technically selected according to instructions from previous respondents on a rolling basis.

The operational definition of the variables in this study is described as follows:

- Community Empowerment in Sigi Regency was a joint activity carried out by the Government, Facilitators, and the Community. It was to increase individuals' capacity through a predetermined process and build community empowerment in Sigi Regency. The indicators were Community Activity Based, Participatory Based, and Entrepreneurship Based.
- Economic Empowerment of the Poor was an effort to develop independence, empower and strengthen the bargaining position of the lower classes by mobilizing resources to develop the economic potential of the people. It increased productivity to open access for the community to adequate basic environmental infrastructure and facilities with quality housing and settlements that meet eligibility standards and definite livelihoods. Indicators of economic empowerment for the poor were developing economic opportunities owned by the community (enabling), strengthening the community's economic potential (empowering), and protecting the community in protecting their economic activities.

A structured interview technique was used with interview guidelines and observations as well as document review. It is based on data sourced from facts about the research object, using data from regional apparatus organization (*Organisasi perangkat daerah*/OPD) assembled and data from the Central Bureau of Statistics Sigi Regency.

Process Hierarchy Analysis Techniques

It was analyzed using the AHP (Analytical Hierarchy Process) method to find the most appropriate economic empowerment model for the poor. The AHP method solved complex/complicated problems in an unstructured situation into several parts into groups and arranged them into a hierarchy.

Results and Discussion

Implementation of the Empowerment Program

Respondents' responses from the research results regarding implementing the community economic empowerment program in Sigi Regency were studied using the average answer score. The responses of the respondents were as follows:

Table 1. Respondents' Responses on the process of raising awareness and shaping community behavior

.	Respons	Value	Frequency	Score	Persentase
No		(x)	(f)	$(\mathbf{f.x})$	(%)
1	Very good	5	54	270	47.79
2	Good	4	59	236	52.21
3	Fairly good	3	0	0	0.00
4	Poor	2	0	0	0.00
5	Bad	1	0	0	0.00
Total			113	506	100.00
Score Percentage = (506 : 656) x 100 %					89.56
Mean value					4,.8

The results of public perceptions regarding awareness and the formation of community behavior were that 47.79 percent of respondents thought that the process had gone very well. The remaining 52.21 percent thought that the process had gone well, with an average score obtained as much as 89.56 percent (Tabel 1). Based on the results of an interview with the Head of Lolu Village, Mr. Sudirman, SH, as follows:

"After the earthquake, many people lost their livelihoods due to land degradation and irrigation. To maintain the continuity of life, some people have to change professions so that a strong understanding is needed in carrying out their economic activities, as well as the formation of behavior by program assistants." (interview on April 20, 2020).

Program assistants do their job to create initial conditions by providing awareness to the public to want to make changes to improve economic conditions and create a better future.

Table 2. Respondents' Responses about the process of transforming knowledge to society

No	Response	Value	Frequency	Score	Percentage
		(\mathbf{x})	(f)	$(\mathbf{f.x})$	(%)
1	Very good	5	0	0	0.00
2	Good	4	70	280	61.95
3	Fairly good	3	14	42	12.39
4	Poor	2	29	58	25.66
5	Bad	1	0	0	0.00
	Total		113	380	100.00
Score Percentage = (380 : 565) x 100 %					67.26
Mean	ı value				3.36

The stages of transforming knowledge to society showed that 61.95 percent of respondents answered that the process stage was going well, with an average score of 67.26 percent. Meanwhile, 12.39 percent gave adequate responses to the knowledge transformation process, and 25.66 percent gave unfavorable responses to the knowledge transformation process to the public (Tabel 2).

The process of transforming knowledge to the community had been implemented by program facilitators but not optimal because public awareness of the importance of this had not been optimal. It was marked by a lack of attendance at community capacity-building meetings. This condition was because people have to work to make ends meet.

The community will undergo a learning process in order to increase knowledge and skills relevant to their abilities. This situation will provide a stimulus for the role and participation of the community for their life (Fuller and Unwin, 2003; Henri and Pudelko, 2003).

The transformation of knowledge to society can take place well if the community is passionate about it. This stage will run well if there is good cooperation between the facilitator and the community (Bechky, 2003). For optimal results at this stage, the assistant must motivate the community to learn on their own (self-taught) and ask lots of questions to those who have succeeded (Takahashi and Vandenbrink, 2004).

Table 3 Respondents' Responses Regarding Community Capacity Building

No	Response	Value(x)	Frequency (f)	Score (f.x)	Percentage (%)
1	Very good	5	14	70	12.39
2	Good	4	99	396	87.61
3	Fairly good	3	0	0	0.00
4	Poor	2	0	0	0.00
5	Bad	1	0	0	0.00
	Total		113	466	100.00
Score Percentage = (466 : 565) x 100 %					82.48
Mean Value					4.12

Respondents' responses regarding the increase in community capacity were good, with a value of 87.61 percent and 12.39 percent. The average score obtained of 82.48 percent, with a mean value of 4.12 (Tabel 3). It illustrates that the community capacity with empowerment programs based on the stages of the process being undertaken had increased, following the objectives of the empowerment.

The process of community empowerment is closely related to internal factors and external factors. Without underestimating the meaning of one of the factors, the two factors contribute and influence each other synergistically and dynamically. The synergy between the empowerment actors will support each stage of the empowerment process to facilitate and encourage the community to position themselves as the main actors (Mohan and Stokke, 2000; Heritage and Dooris, 2009).

Empowerment includes not only strengthening individual members of society but also the institutions. Inculcating modern cultural values can be as hard work, frugality, openness, responsibility, togetherness are the main parts of this empowerment effort, likewise the renewal of social institutions and their integration into development activities and the role of society in them. Increasing the participation of the people in the decision-making process concerning themselves and their communities is a crucial element in this regard.

Empowerment Model

The initial stage in the Process Hierarchy Analysis method is the arrangement of a hierarchy or commonly called a decomposition (Cushman and McGarigal, 2002; Bohanec and Zupan, 2004), which is solving or dividing the whole problem into its elements into a hierarchical form of the decision-making process, where each element or element is interrelated. Through decomposition, a problem is broken down into groups and then arranges into a hierarchy (Saaty, 1990; Lee *et al.*, 2001; Albayrak and Erensal, 2004). This hierarchy was the basis for research on the aspirations or assessments of various parties who benefit from the economic empowerment program for the poor in Sigi Regency.

The focus to be analyzed using AHP is the role of the main actors in community economic empowerment and the supporting aspects of the community empowerment process. This analysis will use the same criteria: Enabling, call Opportunity, empower or potential, and Protecting or Protection. Therefore, 2 (two) hierarchical structures are created with the primary objective. The first hierarchy is related to the Main Empowerment Actors, as in the following figure:

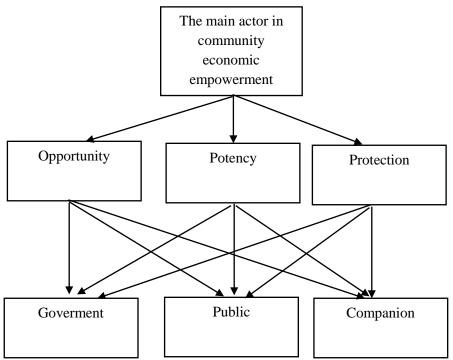


Figure 1. Hierarchy Structure of Priority Determination of Empowerment Actors

- 1. The first hierarchical structure
- a. The first level is the decision goal

In this analysis, the goal of the hierarchical arrangement is the main actor in community empowerment.

b. The second level is the criteria for empowerment

The criteria for economic empowerment of the poor raised in this study are:

- 1) Enabling opportunities, how to develop community opportunities.
- 2) Empowering, how to strengthen the potential of the community.
- 3) Protecting, how to protect themselves and community businesses.

The researcher raised these criteria based on the explanation of the efforts made in empowering the community conveyed by Ginanjar Kartasasmita.

- c. The third level is the alternative of empowerment actors and alternative empowerment supporters. Alternative actors of empowerment that are raised in this study, namely:
 - 1) Government
 - 2) Society
 - 3) Companion

The second hierarchy is related to Empowerment Support alternatives which can be seen in the following figure:

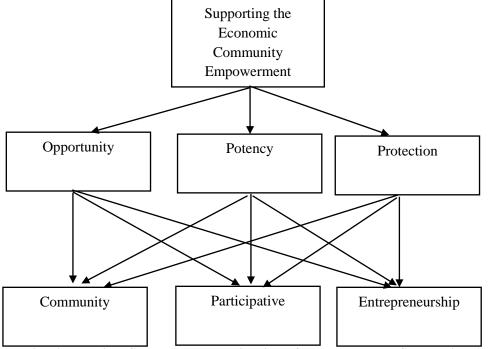


Figure 2. Hierarchical Structure Determination of Empowerment Supporting Alternatives

- 2. The second hierarchical structure
- a. The first level is the decision goal
 - In this analysis, the decision goal of the hierarchical arrangement is the supporting aspects of community empowerment.
- b. The second level is the criteria for empowerment

The criteria for economic empowerment of the poor raised in this study are:

- 1) Opportunity (Enabling)
- 2) Potential (Empowering)
- 3) Protection (Protecting)

The researcher raised these criteria based on the explanation of the efforts made in empowering the community conveyed by Ginanjar Kartasasmita

- c. The third level is an alternative to empowerment actors and an alternative to supporting empowerment. The alternative empowerment support that was appointed was:
 - 1) Community
 - 2) Participatory
 - 3) Entrepreneurship

After all, stages have been carried out. Each priority calculation result obtained, both criteria and alternatives, was combined in one table. It was done to see global or overall priorities to determine the most dominant actors in community empowerment in Sigi Regency.

From the calculation of the priority vector matrix, the priority scale of each aspect was obtained. Aspects considered by respondents as priority aspects in economic empowerment of the poor were protection aspects with a weight of 0.59, then potential with a weight of 0.25, and opportunities with a weight of 0.16. For alternative empowerment actors based on calculations that had been carried out, the results are as in the table 4:

Table 4 The final results of the calculation of the empowerment actors AHP

Alternative criteria	Enambling	Empowering	Protecting	Global Priority
Value	0.16	0.25	0.59	
Government	0.70	0.33	0.23	33%
Public	0.23	0.33	0.07	16%
Companion	0.07	0.34	0.70	51%

Based on the results of the calculations depicted in Table 9, the assistant obtained the most outstanding value, 0.51 or 51%. It means that the most dominant role as an actor in community empowerment in Sigi Regency was the program assistant. For alternative empowerment supporters based on the calculations that had been done shown in the table 5:

Table 5 The final results of the calculation of the empowerment actors AHP

Alternative criteria	Enabling	Empowering	Protecting	Global priority
Value	0.16	0.25	0.59	
Community activities	0.72	0.45	0.59	58%
Participative	0.06	0.04	0.20	14%
Entrepreneurship	0.22	0.50	0.20	28%

From Table 5 above, it can be seen that the most significant weight value was community alternatives. So, it can be concluded that the main priority for community economic empowerment was community activity-based. Empowerment is essential because it can provide benefits for rebuilding communities after trauma, such as victims of natural disasters or individuals and groups in war-torn countries (Walsh, 2007; Orencio and Fujii, 2013). The benefits expected from the Community Empowerment Program include improving long-term sustainable welfare, increasing income and improving livelihoods in communities and groups with low income, and increasing the use of development resources effectively and efficiently.

Based on the analysis results using AHP to develop economic empowerment programs for the poor, the highest value was the protection criterion. The dominant empowerment actor in implementing its function with the highest value was the program assistant. Supporting empowerment activities with the highest weight was being the community. Then, the researcher found a model of community empowerment for regional characteristics such as Sigi Regency. It rests on the role of program assistants as empowerment actors by prioritizing aspects of protection of the community and their economic efforts well as community-based in their group activities.

The economic empowerment for the poor would run optimum if the business group formed by the community were a community-based economic business group (Woolcock and Narayan, 2000; Mansuri and Rao, 2004; Seelos and Mair, 2005). Furthermore, in implementing community economic business activities, the most needed was protecting themselves and community businesses against technical and non-technical disturbances. Meanwhile, in the context of the sustainability of the community's economic business, assistance should continue to be provided by trained personnel who had the ability, expertise, and skills.

Conclusion

Implementing community economic empowerment in the Sigi Regency was seen from the benefits of the assistance received; it seemed promising. The procedure for requesting and realizing assistance was relatively easy. Aid targeting accuracy was precise and tended to be very precise. The process of awareness and formation of community behavior went well. The quality and assistant ability were excellent. In the utilization of local economic development, mentoring was very good because it was always accompanied. Routine monitoring and evaluation were carried out. The process of transforming knowledge to the community had been running but was not optimal. The opportunities, activities, and protection of groups in business activities were considered good. However, the importance of the community in the business group and their participation should be improved. The entrepreneurial ability of group members was considered good, and the improvement in community capacity was good.

The economic empowerment model for the poor was appropriate to be applied to areas with several unique characteristics and complex problems. The regions with poverty rates above the national level were underdeveloped areas, with around 70% of the forest area. It was a disaster-prone area and had recently been hit by a major natural disaster such as Sigi District. The empowerment model in the area was an Empowerment Model that rests on the role of program companion as an empowerment actor by prioritizing aspects of protecting the community and their economic efforts and community-based in their group activities.

The concept and operation of community economic empowerment could not be formulated generically. Far more important was a clear shared understanding of the characteristics of community powerlessness in the economic field. However, the community's powerlessness in poverty was influenced not only by economic factors alone but also by other factors. One of them was geographical and environmental factors in limited natural resources, disease, and land fertility. This research found that one additional item in the geographic and environmental factors that cause people's powerlessness in poverty, namely Disaster Prone Areas.

Suggestion

- 1. Optimizing the economic empowerment of the poor requires coordination and cooperation between the three pillars of development, namely the Local Government, the community, and assistants and other caring groups (NGOs, the private sector, universities, ulama, and others).
- 2. Based on the percentage of the poverty rate in the Sigi district, the poverty percentage rate fluctuates. It is necessary to increase the budget allocation for economic empowerment of the community to respond to that situation, especially for groups/communities of the poor, which is focused on the implementation of economic empowerment programs.

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