

AGENT-STRUCTURE RELATION IN POVERTY ALLEVIATION OF FISHERMEN: THE CASE OF BANGKA ISLAND, INDONESIA

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to unravel the inter-relation between agent, structure, and resource system in the poverty alleviation of the fishermen community. An exploratory and descriptive approach is undertaken by involving a wide range of relevant stakeholders. The case study chosen is the fishermen community in Central Bangka District, Bangka District, and Pangkalpinang City, all located in the Province of Bangka Belitung, Indonesia. This research uses a qualitative approach, with a descriptive method to gain an in-depth understanding of the research problem. The data collection process was carried out using semi-structured interviews conducted with informants, field observations, and FGDs involving various stakeholders such as the government, private sector, and fishermen group representatives. The data obtained is then validated by reducing, displaying and verifying the data. Verification refers to the rethinking process of data gathered from the field while at the same time accommodating the validation results. The results showed that the characteristics of fishermen community, added by the presence of tin mining activities has been contributing to the prolonged poverty faced by this community. The study found that government institution holds a significant role to the poverty alleviation initiatives. Three improvement strategies are proposed, covering the creation of a comprehensive regulation covering basic rights of fishermen, foster intense collaboration among sectoral institutions as well as the creation of efficient poverty alleviation policies in coastal area.

Keywords: Poverty, Fishermen, Government, Collaboration Strategy, Indonesia

ABSTRAK

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengungkap keterkaitan antara agen, struktur, dan sistem sumber daya dalam pengentasan kemiskinan masyarakat nelayan. Pendekatan eksplorasi dan deskriptif dilakukan dengan melibatkan berbagai pemangku kepentingan terkait. Studi kasus yang dipilih adalah komunitas nelayan di Kabupaten Bangka Tengah, Kabupaten Bangka, dan Kota Pangkalpinang yang semuanya berada di Provinsi Bangka Belitung, Indonesia. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif, dengan metode deskriptif untuk mendapatkan pemahaman mendalam dari permasalahan penelitian. Proses penggalian data dilakukan dengan menggunakan wawancara semi terstruktur yang dilakukan terhadap para informan, observasi lapangan, serta FGD dengan melibatkan berbagai stakeholders seperti pemerintah, swasta, perwakilan kelompok nelayan. Verifikasi mengacu pada proses berpikir ulang dari data yang dikumpulkan dari lapangan dan pada saat yang sama mengakomodasi hasil validasi. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa karakteristik masyarakat nelayan ditambah dengan adanya kegiatan penambangan timah turut berkontribusi terhadap kemiskinan berkepanjangan yang dihadapi masyarakat tersebut. Studi ini menemukan bahwa institusi pemerintah memiliki peran yang signifikan dalam upaya pengentasan kemiskinan. Tiga strategi perbaikan yang diusulkan, meliputi pembuatan regulasi yang komprehensif yang mencakup hak-hak dasar nelayan, membina kerjasama yang intens antar lembaga sektoral, serta pembuatan kebijakan yang efisien dalam pengentasan kemiskinan khususnya di wilayah pesisir.

Kata Kunci : Kemiskinan, Nelayan, Pemerintah, Strategi Kolaborasi, Indonesia

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INTRODUCTION

In the perspective of sociology, poverty is a social problem that has to be addressed in a sustained way. Not only that, poverty alleviation also requires participation from all relevant stakeholders (Collins, 2012). As observed by Thorpe et al. (2005), the complexity of poverty as a social problem has mostly lied on the dysfunctionality of poverty alleviation management. The role of government, through policy and program, therefore, is pivotal here (Devas, 2001), especially in developing countries such as Indonesia. Fishermen have been significant in number in Indonesia, given the majority (two-thirds) of the country's area is marine (Harun, 2013). Ironically, the presence of abundant natural resources could not improve the welfare of the fishermen community. The government had undertaken several measurements in reducing poverty through various participatory programs, for example, Coastal Community Empowerment Program. Nevertheless, these programs have not been optimum in addressing poverty due to the incompatibility between programs and the characteristics of the local community where the programs were undertaken (Cahaya, 2015).

Such a phenomenon was also found in other Asian countries, such as Philippine. A study was undertaken by Manejar, Sandoy, and Subade (2019) highlights the failure of a conservation program in the Philippines' coastal areas in tackling poverty was due to under looking the characteristics of the local fishermen community. Collins (2012) suggests that the reason for the relatively unsuccessful government programs was due to the top-down approach used in designing the program. A set of universal solutions was offered for various and different local problems. In mediating national interests and local uniqueness, Sowman et al. (2014) noted that the role of local government, therefore, is crucial, especially in the era of decentralization (Lele, 2019).

Another problem identified is the lack of synergy among different stakeholders that led to lack of coordination in the implementation (Collins, 2012). Several government programs were also redundant to each other. For instance, sectoral programs found in 25 coastal area spots in Sumatra, were deemed unable to overcome the problem of poverty comprehensively due to their nature as sectoral programs (Standford et al, 2005).

The Province of Bangka Belitung is chosen as the case study due to its coastal area deterioration caused by tin mining, given its status as the major tin mining area in Indonesia. This is resulting in a decrease of the fishermen catchment area. On the other side, the relatively low technology of boat used by the fishermen hampers them to go further to the sea in order to increase their catchment area. Therefore, to understand how the problems faced by fishermen, social practice will help this research to explain the reality in the field.

According to Giddens (2010), human practice is an action formed in a structure, whereas the structure itself becomes a place for production and reproduction of social practices. Repetitive social practices become daily social life. The social practice involves duality that consists of an agent and structure. Giddens (2010) put a relatively bigger role in agents (Ritzer, 2012). The agent is considered to have abilities

in making differences in social life. Any actors would not be classified as an agent when their capabilities in making a difference is no longer exist (Ritzer, 2012).

In the poverty alleviation context, one example of a poor community empowerment model is by adapting "to help them to help themselves" principle. It aims to improve the welfare of poor families by empowering human and natural resources around them. The empowerment approach involves the participation of the people in planning, monitoring, and preservation (Collins, 2012). Poor itself can be classified into two categories: absolute poverty and relative poverty. Absolute poverty is when household income is below the poverty line, making the household unable to meet daily needs. On the other hand, relative poverty is when household income is above the poverty line; however, the income of the household is significantly lower than its neighboring households. As the cause of poverty itself, two theories are widely discussed: cultural and structural. Cultural poverty points to the habit of the people itself, causing them to be poor. The lack of motive in improving their welfare has made people trapped in poverty. Structural poverty, on the other hand, points out at the system (demographic and labor context) that prevents poor people from improving their welfare (Suyanto, 1995).

Fishermen, as a type of social community in Indonesia, have been relatively marginalized and powerless in terms of social, economic, and political (Apridar, 2010). One of the causes of this is because of the high dependency of fishermen in the fish catching activities. Be specific, and fish availability is pretty much influenced by both technical (technology used, for example) and non-technical factors (weather, for example) (Mariam, 2018). Fish availability is also out of the control of fishermen. It is relatively different from farmers, where crops could be partially controlled with technologies. This hampers fishermen to diversify their sources of income, which may lead to their resilience against the upside-down of the economy (Kusnadi, 2006).

Cahaya (2015) also suggests that fishermen are vulnerable to poverty because normally they have limited assets, limited access to the market as well as weakness in the ability to master science and technology. The welfare level of fishermen, in particular in Indonesia, just a little above migrant worker or as similar to small farmers (Kusnadi, 2002). On the other hand, fishermen also possess potential resources in the form of social capital, manifested in kinship, and habits of helping each other.

To assist fishermen, various empowerment-based poverty alleviation program has been introduced. However, most of these programs have been underlooking between-actor relationship (Collins, 2012) and how it has been influencing the resource system possessed by the fishermen community. In the case of the Bangka Belitung coastal area, the relationship between actors plays an important role in poverty alleviation in fishing communities. This is in accordance with a study undertaken by Long et al, (2019), which highlights the urgency of the role of actors, particularly those who work for the government, in designing an optimum poverty alleviation program. Specifically, Soto-Onate& Lemos-Nobre (2020) points out the need for locally specific programs addressing a specific issue faced by fishermen, such as fishing gears, level of education, unemployment. Length of time of intervention is also important, as

noted by Shaffril, Samah & D'Silva (2017), which are short, medium, and long-term interventions that will influence the program's success.

Nevertheless, given the complexity of poverty in the fishermen community, it is deemed necessary to promote collaboration strategy in designing poverty alleviation programs. The underlying theoretical framework used in this study to support the need for collaboration strategy is the theory of structuration. The relationship between agent and structure produces a change in life. To be able to produce change, it is of importance that collaboration strategy is implemented between all related stakeholders, as a way of agents in influencing structure (Giddens, 2010).

Several previous research has been exploring the various adaptation of poverty alleviation programs, covering local community involvement, skill diversifications, cash assistance, as well as the application of technology in improving fishermen's capacity (Shaffril, Samah, & D'Silva, 2017). However, less is known about the inter-sectoral collaboration strategy especially in the effort to alleviate fishermen's poverty in relation to the interaction between structure and agent. This study focuses on this particular direction. Three research questions are posed: (1) What is the relation between poverty experienced by fishermen and the resource system available? (2) How agents and structures interact in providing solutions to overcome poverty? (3) What kind of collaboration strategy undertaken?

THE METHODS

Referring to the empowerment model, the focus of the study can be classified in several stages. First, it starts with exploring the characteristic of independent poor communities. Next, it questions synergy among different institutions at the supra-structure level in alleviating poverty. Last, it proposes a collaboration strategy to improve pro-poor programs. The model developed on the basis of collaboration strategy is expected to successfully overcome poverty as well as improving the capacity of society in spiritual, physical, economic, and social aspects (Nurdin, 2015; 2017).

The study uses a qualitative method; in particular, the descriptive analysis is used to gain a deeper understanding of the problems researched. The descriptive analysis is also used to describe how agents/stakeholders may influence the structure/institution. The object of the study is a collaboration strategy performed in alleviating fishermen's poverty. The subject of the study is poor fishermen, fishermen's cooperation as well as relevant government's institutions. The study took place in Bangka District, Central Bangka District, and Pangkal Pinang City. All located in the Province of Bangka Belitung Island. The research is undertaken from April 2019 until February 2020.

Qualitative data is obtained from the informants, which are sampled in this study. The sample is taken out of the population of the fishermen community in the study area. The sample is chosen on the basis of the purposive and snowballing sampling method. At first, six key informants were chosen before other informants were subsequently decided. In particular, a total of twenty-six key informants were selected among elderly or public figures who possess substantial knowledge about their societies.

Semi-structured interviews were used to dig more on the information. Several informant including poor fishermen community, local marine and fishery department, local cooperation department, local planning agency, as well as the manager of fish port and fish market. The aim of the interview is to gather information on the effectiveness of poverty alleviation programs undertaken in the study location. Questions cover, but not limited to, to what extent government programs in alleviating poverty were effective, what kind of obstacles in the program implementation, as well as input for program improvement.

The observation was undertaken to ensure the condition of the fisherman characteristic. The observation form is filled, reflecting events or behavior of the subject of the study. Besides taking notes, observation, following Kunto (2010), was also undertaken by creating valuation in the form of scale. The document study was focused on programs report prepared by the government. Additional data from mass media were also collected and analyzed.

In this study, Focus Group Discussion (FGD) was being used as a validation tool. FGD aims to produce an agreement between different stakeholders such as local government over particular topics, such as the availability of public facilities, the availability of fishing equipment as well as the condition of poor fishermen community and alleviation program implementation. The result of FGD then confirms or refutes the information gathered through observation, interviews, and document analysis (Creswell, 2009).

After validation was undertaken, analysis of the information was performed in three phases: data reduction, data display, and verification (Miles & Huberman, in Silalahi 2007). Verification refers to the rethinking process of data gathered from the field while at the same time accommodating the validation results.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

STRUCTURATION THEORY

Structuration Theory explains that social practices are carried out continuously across space and time (Giddens, 1984:viii). The conceptual core of structuration theory lies in the idea of structures, systems, and dualities of structures within society that are interconnected and shape social practices. Social practice according to Giddens assumes a connection between action and the model of reproduction and transformation of social life (social interaction). In other words, the relationship between action and social interaction is complementary (duality). Action produces social interaction and at the same time action is constituted by that social interaction. Giddens wants to prove how the actor's actions are structured in their daily context through the character of the action and the process of its appearance (Wahyu, 2011; Thompson, 1984).

Action is a continuous process, a flow, where the reflexive monitoring maintained by the individual is the basis for the body control that is usually continued by actors in their daily lives (Giddens, 2004:11).

Actions, as stated by Giddens, place the context of how actors (agents) and social structures that exist in society show the starting point of relationships that emerge in the subject's consciousness and have an intentional nature. In other words, consciousness is not something that is closed and detached but is in a goal that is directed and always involves objects. Therefore, agency and structure cannot be considered as part of each other; they are a duality, all social actions include structures, and all structures include social actions. Agency and structure are inseparably intertwined in ongoing human activities or practices. Giddens emphasizes individual actions in three types based on the internal dimensions of the actor, namely unconscious motivation, practical consciousness, and discursive consciousness. Structuration theory views that human society or social systems, frankly, would not exist without human agency, but this does not mean that actors create social systems, actors reproduce or change them by reorganizing what already exists in the continuity of practice. (Giddens, 2010:212).

In this paper, the relationship between structure and agent is very close in efforts to reduce poverty in fisherman communities. Structure is a very important component in duality with agents who move with the same goal. In structure, the presence of rules and resources will support the achievement of planned goals. Resources are related to social institutions that shape practices and then form social systems. Social systems, further understood in relation to control mechanisms over space and time where social practices cross the essentials of space and time so that the formation and development of social practices are possible. In poverty alleviation, the practices created have not shown optimal efforts in terms of both structure and agent awareness in building actions, so a poverty alleviation model is needed as an effort to accelerate the handling of problems in the research location using Giddens' theory.

In other studies related to poverty alleviation of fishermen, the structuring of fishermen occurs in every interaction process between structural components, culture and processes, none of which are empowering. Even in practice, the structure increasingly binds poor fishermen into layers of poverty spaces (Juliantono & Munandar, 2016). Apart from that, another study shows that with the analysis of Giddens' Structuration theory, we can dissect the practices that produce poverty in fishing communities through patron-client practices that occur (Nuris, 2024). In this paper, the use of structuration theory will strengthen the findings in poverty alleviation efforts through the relationship between agents and structures in poverty alleviation among fishermen at the research location.

Poverty Alleviation

Poverty is a fundamental problem faced by almost every country in the world, especially in developing countries like Indonesia. Poverty is not just a person's inability to meet basic needs such as clothing, food and shelter caused by low income, but emphasizes accessibility to opportunities and resources. In addition, poverty is a multidimensional phenomenon and requires holistic handling to eradicate the problem of poverty. (Sachs, 2005; Chambers, dalam Nasikun, 2001; Sen, 2001). Poverty also has forms including absolute poverty, relative poverty, cultural poverty, and relative poverty (Nasikun, 2001), as well as natural poverty and artificial poverty (Mas'oed, 1997).

For fishermen, especially small fishermen in coastal communities in Indonesia, poverty has become a factual situation to this day (Hermawan, 2024; Yonvitner, et.al., 2021; Cahyagi & Gurning, 2018; Humaedi, 2012). This shows that the issue of poverty in fishing communities is still one of the important issues that need to be resolved. Fishermen, especially fishing laborers and traditional fishermen, can still be classified as a social class that is vulnerable to poverty when compared to other sectors because many still depend on their lives from only one sector of work (Hermawan, 2024; Imron, 2002; Kusnadi, 2002; Retno & Santiasih, 1993). Various research studies on poverty among fishermen in Indonesia show that poverty among fishermen occurs due to various factors and occurs in various forms such as cultural poverty, structural poverty, natural poverty (Ahmad, 2022; Olanda, Bahtiar, & Upe, 2019; Pinem, Widiono, & Irnad, 2019; Anwar & Wahyuni, 2019; Suleman, Pratiknjo, & Sandiah, 2019), and absolute poverty (Fesanrey & Umasugi, 2022).

Poverty that occurs is always attempted to be eradicated through various means, both through programs from the Government, the global community such as NGOs, and local communities and academics who study poverty issues. Efforts to eradicate poverty in society also continue to be carried out by developing various models developed by various fields including sociology, including the strategy to overcome poverty in Eretan Wetan Village, Indramayu Regency by conducting accurate data collection related to natural and human resources, especially fishermen, with the involvement of the role of government, private sector that is pro-small people, and the involvement of Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) (Iryana, 2019). Apart from that, the results of other research reveal that efforts to eradicate fishermen poverty are carried out through educational strategies and economic diversification, as well as empowerment strategies and strategies for increasing fishing fleets (Alifa & Rahmadian, 2024; Ali, 2020; Jamilah & Mawardati, 2019). Efforts to eradicate poverty among fishermen must also be carried out through empowerment strategies. Poverty alleviation must also be based on cross-sectoral strategies to strengthen and accelerate poverty alleviation efforts (Nurdin, et.al., 2019). Based on the studies found, there are still not many studies on the relationship between agents and structures for poverty alleviation in fishing communities, especially on Bangka Island, Bangka Belitung Province, Indonesia.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The Characteristics of Poor Fishermen Community

The poor fishermen community is mainly located in the coastal area. According to the Bangka Belitung Province Fish and Marine Department, currently (2017), the majority of fishermen consist of small fishermen (70-75%). Small fishermen tend to catch fish close to the coastal area, due to their ships' limited technology. Based on our observation, the living conditions of these fishermen communities are relatively below standard, given the poor housing conditions. An irony that has been long observed while they live next to the coastal area, where abundant natural resources are available (Baun, 2008). Some of their habits and characteristics are depicted as follows.

1. Way of Thinking and Habits

Preliminary interview in South Bangka District shows that majority of education attained by fishermen was only junior high school. This contributed to the perspective owned by them who mostly saw jobs as fishermen is inherited from their parents. One of our informants said:

"I have seen South Bangka. This area has been considered wealthy. Fisheries, agriculture, and tin mining are particularly strong. But the people do not want to continue to higher education. Weird. They just finished junior high school. Some of the wealthy families ended up as poor families, as consequences". (Informant Adhari, 2020)

Another informant also compared the community with the Javanese community in terms of habits that could lead to welfare improvement:

"The mindset of the people here is different from the Javanese people. In Java, maybe, the competition is high, thus endorse Javanese people to keep changing. Here, not so much competition." (Informant Hartono, 2020)

One of the factors influencing the poverty in fishermen community is that the community has not been used to competition. Competition refers to the willingness to change, improving skills, diversifying products, etc. This has also been exacerbated by the relatively low education level of the community, where most of them are only graduated from junior and senior high schools.

The willingness to continue to higher education has been relatively low, despite they have the ability and financial capability to pursue it. Because of this, most of the senior high school graduates work directly in the mining sector, which requires no particular skill while receiving a good amount of money. Our informant from the local planning agency said:

"It does not mean that they do not have the capability to continue their education. Given the presence of mining sites around them, they do not look further for their future. Work in mining is their goal. No need for a specialty in skills". (Informant Yuyun, 2020)

Another habit found that contribute to the poverty of fishermen is the consumptive lifestyle. Local fishermen tend to buy electronic equipment and vehicle, which most of the time they do not really need. Payment installment has been a lifestyle in obtaining those luxurious goods. Interestingly, regularly the fishermen community upgrades their electronic equipment to be able to have new goods regularly. On the other hand, the same fishermen community was also keen to get assistance to provide by the government for poor families (i.e., rice for poor, etc.). Below what is said from one of the informants:

"Some of the fishermen do have electronic equipment and vehicle, yet they are taking rice given by the government. They also create a new installment loan when they have finished with their previous one". (Informant Baiq, 2020)

2. The Pattern of Going to Sea

Local fishermen in the study area are normally going out to sea from morning to afternoon. This has been a habit developed since a long time ago. On the basis of our interview, it is found that this habit is

different from fishermen from other regions. It is less profitable given the time used is shorter than the time normally used by fishermen from other regions. Moreover, the area covered by the fishermen in the study location is mostly 5 to 10 miles from the coastal area, a maximum of 15 miles. The coverage area is relatively close to coastal areas as compared to the coverage area of other fishermen using more complicated technologies. Additionally, the change of season also plays a significant role in the activities of local fishermen (Shaffril, Samah & D'Silva, 2017).

Given all of these limitations, the income gained by local fishermen has been relatively low. Money obtained from their catchment could only support their modest daily needs. The different pattern of going out to sea is recorded from one of the respondents:

"Here, it is quite different from fishermen in Java, for example. Local fishermen do not go far away to catch fish. We went in the morning and by afternoon we have arrived back home. Our habit is relatively different. That is why, perhaps, programs given by the government did not meet our needs". (Informant Baiq, 2020)

The government had assisted these fishermen with bigger boats for farther area of the sea to be covered. However, the lack of skill possessed by local fishermen hampered them to use the boats efficiently. Local fishermen also do not get used to stay several nights out in the sea. They prefer to go home on daily basis. Such characteristics were not properly accounted in the assistance program provided by the government.

3. Middlemen Factor

One of the crucial problems faced by local fishermen is the irreplaceable middlemen as the way of selling their products to the market. Collectors act as middlemen between fishermen and the market. Fishermen become dependent on middlemen; thus, the latter could freely decide the price, regardless of the real price in the market. The relationship between middlemen and fishermen, to some extent, could also be extended to the provision of installment loans by the middlemen for fishermen to increase their capacity or simply to meet their daily needs. This creates a vicious cycle that puts fishermen under the middlemen. The middlemen also offer flexibility for the fishermen so that they could sell their catchment in front of their house, without having to go to the fish market, which to some fishermen is relatively far. On the other hand, this habit has resulted in a decrease in fish market activities. One of our respondents from local fishermen said:

"Some of us would love to unload the catchment behind our houses. The middlemen came and bought the catchment from us directly. Even some of the middlemen make permanent contracts to buy fish directly in the fishermen house. It has been impacting our fish market". (Informant Ahmad, 2019)

Based on the results of the analysis of the problems of the characteristics of fishermen at the research location, it can be seen the main issues that are of concern to address the problem of poverty of fishermen. The results of N-Vivo show the following data

government aid issue	collaboration between stakeholders	inter-institutional collaboration	fishery potential
	government regulation issues		fishery issues
government vision and planning	poverty issue	society behavior	tourist
		environmental issues	geological issues
		home industry of marine products	

Figure 1. The Main Issue of Poverty among fishermen in Bangka

Source : Researcher Data, 2020

Figure 1 above shows that the main issue that is of concern to the local government is that poverty among fishermen is due to the suboptimal government assistance, which can be seen from the largest portion of complaints regarding the issue of government assistance. After that, from the many issues that emerged, the institutional aspect is the dominant aspect that is one of the important strengths in alleviating poverty among fishermen. This aspect is then divided into several focuses, namely regulation, planning vision and collaboration. Clustering the problems experienced by fishermen provides an overview of how poverty alleviation efforts are carried out through the practices of various related agents. Hence, the clusteritation helps strengthen the analysis of collaborative programs carried out in efforts to alleviate the poverty of fishermen in the Province of Bangka Belitung Islands. The clustering of problems that arise in efforts to eradicate fishermen can be seen in the image of the results of the Nvivo analysis presented in figure 2 below.

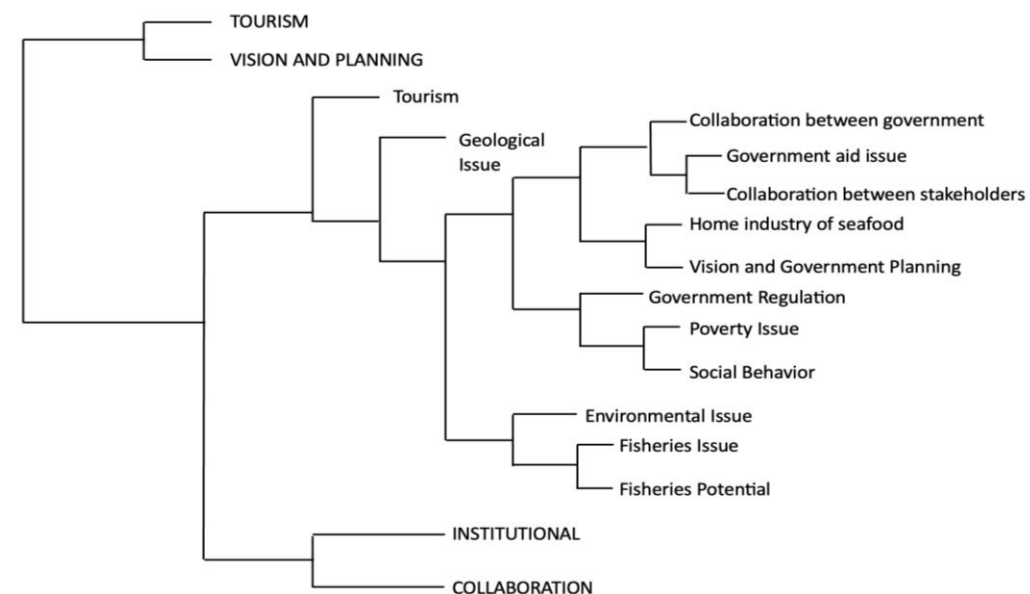


Figure 2. Items Clustered By Word Similitiry

Based on these results, the problem formulation mind map can be structured as follows according to the

image below. This means that the institutional portion requires serious handling in terms of improving and strengthening existing regulations, strengthening collaboration both across agencies and between other related stakeholders, and evaluating the assistance provided to be more targeted.

The Characteristics of the Environment

One condition that influences the welfare of fishermen in the study location is the massive tin mining done by individual miners or large companies. Deprivation of coastal areas pushes fishermen farther to catch fish. Fishermen who initially fish in the area closest to the coast, then fish in areas further away. however, there is a gap due to the limited technology owned by fishermen. this then causes problems with the fish catch obtained in one fishing trip. Given their limited technologies, going further to sea has been relatively difficult. As a consequence, the coverage area of local fishermen has been significantly decreasing. This is depicted from one of the respondents:

"Due to the tin mining activities, pollution kills fishes. To overcome this, we should go further to the sea. It has not been easy for us". (Informant, Khairul, 2020)

The deprivation of coastal areas also impacts the quality of the fish cached by fishermen. In particular, tin mining located close to the fish catchment area made fish unfavorable for buyers. The price of the fish was then going down.

The aforementioned characteristics of local fishermen provide an insight into the structure in which they live on a daily basis. Different habits, as well as environmental deprivation, are problems that need to be addressed by fishermen. This could only be done by involving all relevant stakeholders in a collaborative manner.

The Role of Structure in the Poverty Alleviation

Such institutions as a structure could assist in power-sharing and the creation of regulations that help poor fishermen community to improve their welfare. As quoted from one of the respondents:

"To be honest, many programs have been created to overcome poverty. These programs came from different local departments, such as the marine and fisheries department, the transportation department, etc. Nevertheless, all seem stuck due to the absence of regulation and the presence of asymmetric power-sharing between fishermen and other stakeholders". (Informant Sopiari, 2020)

As noted from one of the respondents from a local government agency:

"We have been coordinating with the Local Planning Agency, as well as with the Ministry of Social Affairs. Funds provided by the central government are particularly helpful in addressing poverty. For example, assistance to improve fishermen's housing could be divide into two parts: central government budget funds the majority of the project, while local budget funds a small amount of workers' fee." (Informant Khairul Amri, 2020)

One of the potential solutions in improving the welfare of local fishermen is to provide value-added to the fish catches by the fishermen. Looking at the variety of fish cached by local fishermen, opportunities

are available for home industries to emerge and process those fish to other products. Nevertheless, this effort has been minimum, given the habit of selling directly fresh fish to middlemen.

Local governments endorse the fishermen to further process their catchment. Training has been provided and begins to regularly held. One of the local government's staff said:

"We tailored the training program on the basis of local fishermen's habits. They like to eat sea fish, so we provide training on making fish floss out of the sea fish they catch". (Informant Ruli, 2019)

With product diversification, potential markets could be expanded. For example, canning fish enable local fishermen to access the export market, given the demand for canned fish has been relatively high from abroad. One of the local government's staff said:

"We have been conducting training for women in fish canning. Some obstacles were faced—for example, the shortage of raw material. The potential market in Java (i.e., Banyuwangi) needs continuous supply. However, we easily ran out of raw material. What we caught sometimes was only sufficient for our needs". (Informant Yuyun, 2020)

Additional training provided by the local government is on using the online market place. Fishermen are expected to cut the vicious cycle between them and middlemen through direct access to the market. One of the main obstacles faced is the inability of most fishermen to operate smartphones in accessing the online market place. Further assistance could be developed to overcome this problem. Besides the online market place, fishermen were also encouraged to actively engage in any bazaar activities to sell their processed products.

Various programs developed by local governments should also aim to make the fishermen community more dynamic in changing their life conditions. Discursive awareness is important among fishermen if they want to provide feedback to the structure in improving their welfare.

Discussion

In the case study proposed in this research, the poverty of the local fishermen can be classified as absolute and relative poverty. Fishermen who are categorized in absolute poverty is due to the limited resources possessed by them. This has resulted in limited fish they could catch and limited money available to support their daily life. Consequently, if any family members of these local fishermen got sick, they chose not to bring them to the doctor. Instead, they looked for traditional medicine to avoid costs associated with medical treatment. Alternatively, they brought the sick to the doctor once the money sufficient, or they borrowed the money from their relatives.

Other fishermen fall into relative poverty category. These are fishermen who were not able to improve their well-being, although their income was higher than the cost of going out to the sea. The limitation lay upon their inability to choose their buyers who would buy their fish at a fair price. These fishermen sold their fish to local collectors, who then sell the fish to bigger parties or even for export.

Given their vulnerable conditions, poor fishermen facing difficulties when they are in an emergency

situation (Narayan, Chambers, Shah, & Petesch, 2000). Both fishermen in absolute and relative poverty are helpless in converting their daily jobs as a way to improve their welfare. In particular, asymmetric information on fish market impeded fishermen to receive appropriate payment for their products. On the other hand, fish collectors were relatively free in determining the price given their access to a much wider fish market.

Referring to three types of internal dimensions, poor fishermen in this study may be classified in unconscious motives (Giddens, 2010). Unconscious motives are related to the need or want that potentially direct actions, but not actions themselves (Priyono, 2002). They have not fully realized that competition enables them to improve their welfare. They are used to their normal habits where they inherit jobs from their parents and still receive assistance provided by the government. Lack of willingness of these fishermen, to create a new source of income.

To overcome this, collaboration among different stakeholders (i.e., government, private sectors) are of importance to assist small entrepreneurs such as these local fishermen (Widyaningrum, 2003). Coordination among different agencies could also be scaled down, reaching the lowest level of administrative unit: the villages. A hierarchical set-up laid down by regulation enable inputs from local fishermen to be accommodated through Musrenbang of villages, sub-districts as well as districts.

Government institutions hold an important role in influencing the resource system (Giddens, 2010; Grindle, 2004). To be able to overcome the problem of asymmetric information between fishermen and middlemen and the access inequality, for example, higher authorities (i.e., government) plays a significant contribution (Wekke and Cahaya, 2015). Government assistance becomes the most quoted factor by our respondents. Three problems emerged and need more attention to improving government institution: regulation, collaboration, and policy/program,

According to the local Social Department, local people are also skeptical that education could assure them jobs. They think that tin mining could last forever, while it is not. This is what Giddens (2010) called as the locus of active self. The actors determine that their life is not dependable upon education but upon the availability of non-skilled jobs available around them. To change this mindset, supports from various stakeholders is needed. One viable solution is to diversify products from the fishermen so that they would be able to be resilient against the upside-down of the economy.

The structure is explained through rules, norms, languages, which provide room for agents to move dynamically in a system (Giddens & Goodman, 2008). The structure involves the institution. In the context of poor local fishermen community, the welfare of these fishermen could be altered by the presence of appropriate institutions. Given the risk embedded in the nature of their jobs, added by expanding the catchment area due to coastal area deprivation, fishermen are prone to calamity and disaster. Structure, in the forms of institution and regulation, could also assure the safety of fishermen. Institutional settings that are expected should also promote effective and efficient coordination among different local government agencies. The aim of such coordination is to improve the quality of the poverty

alleviation program.

Regulation

Regulation is considered as important as a means to alleviate poverty. Specifically, the regulation that covers fishermen from price volatility/status quo determined solely by the middlemen. To produce such regulation, it is important for all relevant authorities to cooperate: Sea and Fisheries Department, Industry and Trade Department, Investment Coordinating Agency, Planning Agency, Social Department as well as Tourism Department and Cooperation Department. Existing regulation is deemed insufficient to achieve this aim, according to our interviews.

An example of proper regulation can be seen from Blanakan Fish Market, in West Java. Fish caught by fishermen sold to the market using an auction system. Fish are registered before entering the auction, then sold to the highest bidder on the spot. In this way, the market price shall determine the appropriate price, not the middlemen.

Regulation is also important in a laid down basic structural foundation for various policies to be stipulated. For example, a set-up of an online market place that enables fishermen to meet directly to buyers could be implemented with appropriate regulation. Further, regulation could also improve the development of the local area in which the fishermen live. The development of the deprived area into eco-tourism, for example, could also lead to the welfare improvement of the fishermen communities. Additionally, regulation can also be set up to improve equipment possessed by fishermen (i.e., providing boats).

Collaboration

The lack of collaboration was observed among local government departments in program delivery. Programs delivered individually by each local government department under no coordination. Local planning agency, the one who is responsible for such coordination, seem did not fully able to function properly.

Microfinancing delivered by local government could be improved by coordination with the bank, by using appropriate regulation. Another example, coastal area delineation for the purpose of fish catching and tin mining is currently undergone (which should be done earlier to avoid environmental deprivation). This is involving various local government departments. We have seen results in a coordinated policy, such as the destruction of illegal fish boats. This has doubled fish stock."

One of the main problems faced in poverty alleviation programs in the study location is legitimation. According to Giddens (2010), legitimation is assured by the provision of norms and regulations by the structure to be adopted by agents in social practice. The provision of norms and regulations, thus policies, relied upon the collaboration that is built upon trust (Fleming et al., 2020). Trust among local government institutions is important, given the knowledge on local issues possessed by these institutions.

In reality, given the lack of coordination observed among local government institutions, it is then assumed that lack of trust among them could be one of the reasons. Lack of coordination has been the main factor behind non-optimum poverty alleviation programs (Grindle, 2004; Devas, 2001). Obviously, as discussed

before, the existence of proper regulation could overcome the lack of trust. Nevertheless, given the absence of such regulation, a trust could not be assured.

One of the opportunities for collaboration is the potential of fish product diversification. Instead of sold as it is, fish that is processed to crackers could improve the quality of the product. Product marketing (foreign and domestic markets), product packaging, and product distribution require extensive collaboration among various local government institutions (i.e. Trade Department for packaging and marketing, Social Department and Fisheries Department for processing training, etc.). Such collaboration enables fishermen to gain potential benefits on their products

Policies

The absence of proper regulation and the lack of collaboration, unavoidably, resulting in non-optimum policies implemented. At the moment, various programs have been launched, but apparently, the focus needs to be shifted to community-based programs. Community-based programs have been relatively more successful as compared to individual-based programs, given the level of involvement (Collins, 2012).

One of the challenges in setting up a community-based program is the level of awareness and willingness from the fishermen communities. Fishermen also prefer a direct cash program as opposed to a rather sustainable community-based program (i.e., setting up a small startup). Lack of willingness to participate was caused by the lack of trust in the program's sustainability. Again, solid programs should be based on proper coordination and on the basis of strong regulation.

One of the recommended community-based programs that suit the fishermen community in the study area is cooperation body. The cooperation body enables a group of fishermen to manage programs given by the government. Cooperation also enables regular coordination between the fishermen and the authority (i.e., Social Department) or other stakeholders. Cooperation also helps fishermen to gain access to bank credits.

Insurance, for example, provided for the fishermen, provides a safety net for the fishermen once they are going to sea. Insurance could help fishermen overcoming hardship once members of their families become sick.

CONCLUSION

On the basis of our study, it is found that agent-structure relation contributes to the ineffectiveness of the poverty alleviation program in the fishermen community. At the structure, the absence of assertive leadership and redundant sectoral programs have been the main problems. Additionally, the absence of regulation that provides safety and comfortable market environment to the fishermen has also been the problem.

At the agent level, several habits of the local fishermen community (selling fresh fish directly to the middlemen, lack of competitive spirit, lack of willingness to attain higher education) hamper their welfare

improvement.

A collaborative approach is proposed to overcome these problems. All relevant stakeholders should be invited in comprehensive programs consist of:

1. Redefinition of poverty. Given the habit of local fishermen that is eager to access government assistance, while at the same time preserve their consumptive lifestyle, a unique definition of poverty on the basis of local characteristics is expected to exclude non-poor fishermen in the list of a poor family to be assisted by government
2. Regular training programs to be introduced in a long-term perspective. Not only these shall help local fishermen in upgrading their skills, but also motivate them to be active in improving their life condition
3. To increase the catchment capacity, it is proposed that fishermen are going out to fish in groups. Additionally, financial assistance in upgrading fishermen's ships is also important. Better ships mean wider coverage area (farther than 15 miles from the coastal area), thus potentially increase their catchment.

Collaboration and clear role allocation, supported by effective coordination, shall determine the success of the poverty alleviation program addressed to the local fishermen community. Such collaboration could also materialize in the formation of cooperation. Cooperation enable fishermen to improve their bargaining power in facing the structure.

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