

## COASTAL WOMEN EMPOWERMENT THROUGH PROCESSING OF FISHERY PRODUCTS IN TERNATE CITY

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**ABSTRACT.** This article reports women's empowerment activities in a fishery product processing program in Ternate City. Groups are assessed, not in terms of their success in producing fishery products and the impact on increasing the income of coastal families, from an economic perspective, but in terms of women's contribution and participation to women's empowerment in the program. This research uses a descriptive qualitative approach with data collection techniques carried out through in-depth interviews, observations and literature studies. Evidence emerged that women were only involved in the program implementation process. They are not involved in the process of determining women's basic needs in fishery business diversification, planning, monitoring and program evaluation stages. When considered in the construction of empowerment and democratization processes. Coastal women have not been involved as subjects in a fishery product processing program that aims to free them from poverty through various business trainings. As well as the cultural influence of coastal communities who still live in the customs of the Sultanate of Ternate. So that the results of the program based on the perspective of women's empowerment do not contribute to the critical awareness of coastal women so that an inclusive and equitable model of coastal women's intervention is needed and pays attention to social and cultural structures.

**Keywords:** Women; Empowerment; Coastal Women; Processing; Fishery Product

### PEMBERDAYAAN PEREMPUAN PESISIR MELALUI PENGOLAHAN HASIL PERIKANAN DI KOTA TERNATE

**ABSTRAK.** Artikel ini melaporkan kegiatan pemberdayaan perempuan dalam program pengolahan hasil perikanan di Kota Ternate. Kelompok dinilai, bukan dalam hal keberhasilan mereka dalam membuat produk hasil perikanan dan berdampak pada peningkatan pendapatan keluarga pesisir, dari perspektif ekonomi, tetapi dalam kaitannya dengan kontribusi serta partisipasi perempuan terhadap pemberdayaan perempuan dalam program. Riset ini menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif deskriptif dengan teknik pengumpulan data dilakukan melalui wawancara mendalam, observasi dan studi pustaka. Bukti muncul bahwa perempuan hanya dilibatkan pada proses pelaksanaan program. Mereka tidak dilibatkan dalam proses penentuan kebutuhan dasar perempuan dalam diversifikasi usaha perikanan, tahap perencanaan, tahap pengawasan sampai pada tahap evaluasi program. Ketika dipertimbangkan dalam konstruksi pemberdayaan dan proses demokratisasi. Perempuan pesisir belum dilibatkan sebagai subyek dalam program pengolahan hasil perikanan yang bertujuan untuk membebaskan mereka dari kemiskinan melalui berbagai pelatihan usaha. Serta pengaruh budaya masyarakat pesisir yang masih hidup dalam adat istiadat kesultanan Ternate. Sehingga hasil program berdasarkan perspektif pemberdayaan perempuan tidak memberikan kontribusi bagi kesadaran kritis perempuan pesisir sehingga perlu model intervensi perempuan pesisir yang inklusif dan berkeadilan serta memperhatikan struktur sosial dan budaya.

**Kata kunci :** Pemberdayaan; Perempuan; Perempuan Pesisir; Pengolahan; Hasil Laut

### INTRODUCTION

As the largest archipelagic country in the world, Indonesia has a land area of 1,904,000 square km. This country has 17,500 islands with a coastline of around 82,600 km. Most of the villages in this country are coastal villages with a total of 67,439 villages. A total of 9,261 villages are categorized as coastal villages with a poor population (Kusnadi, 2006; Satria, 2015). In the socioeconomic life of families in coastal areas, women play an important role in helping husbands who work as fishermen. Women have important roles in supporting the economy of

the families in coastal areas). The poverty in coastal villages encourages women to have more complex activities. This means that empowering women is the right step to help coastal communities to fulfill their basic needs and improve their welfare.

Many poverty alleviation programs initiated by the government fail due to using a top-down approach without considering the sociocultural aspects of the local community, the lack of women's involvement in the process of formulating the programs, and poor women's role only as objects or complements in the empowerment. Indeed, women have to be placed as the subject of empowerment programs

so that they can achieve “self-determination” to be independent, have awareness, have power in dealing with problems, and have full power in achieving prosperity. Darwin (2005) states that another source of the problem that causes less optimal gender equality policies is patriarchal culture. Coastal women’s depression keeps them away from social welfare resulting in rights neglectation. Based on the paradigm of social welfare science, empowerment is full of the value of social justice. So programs related to women’s empowerment in the economic, social, and cultural aspects can be seen from the access and distribution of justice values for women.

To assess the aspect of justice in the women’s empowerment program, training and mentoring activities for processing fish are seen based on the concept of women’s empowerment as proposed by Sarah Longwe (1995) that “development means enabling people to take charge of their own lives, and escape from poverty which is seen not because of lack of productivity, but because of oppression and exploitation”. Longwe’s analysis covers two stages. The first is to identify the level of equality and the second stage is to assess the level of recognition of women’s problems contained in a program.

The program of processing fishery products aims to increase the skills of coastal women in processing fishery products to add economic value. The empowerment program is directed at developing and maturation the women’s potential so that they can be involved in the implementation of fisheries development equally (Ministry of Marine Affairs and Fisheries, 2001). Empowering fisherwomen referring to the Technical Guidelines of the Ministry of Marine Affairs and Fisheries (2001) aims to improve the ability of women in business management and appropriate technology to facilitate them to develop businesses. The second is to increase women’s access to resources, capital, markets, and technology. The third is to increase women’s knowledge and concern about family health and environmental sanitation. The fourth is to increase the role of women as decision-makers in the fisheries business. The fifth is to improve the quality of the women’s role and institutional independence while considering the preservation of natural resources in the fishery areas. The last is to improve the welfare of women and families.

## METHOD

This study used a qualitative descriptive method. Data were collected from in-depth interviews, observation, and documentation. This study was

conducted in Ternate City by involving 30 women who are beneficiaries of the program of processing fishery products and stakeholders in the program implementation. The validity of the data was checked using triangulation of sources and methods. Data were analyzed through some stages including data reduction, data display, verification, and drawing conclusions

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Longwe’s (1995) framework analysis for women empowerment was developed based on the value of justice, equality, and women’s issues in poverty alleviation programs or policies. The analysis of women’s empowerment in the processing of fishery products is presented in two stages evaluating equality and assessing the recognition of women’s issues.

### *Program of Processing Fishery Products*

This study analyzes a program of processing fishery products implemented by the Ternate City Marine and Fishery Office. This program covers some activities such as training to make food products such as fish floss, fish sauce, and fish balls, product packaging assistance, and socialization of home industry food (PIRT). This empowerment activity for coastal women is important to help coastal communities get out of the problem of poverty. This program aims to help women to be able to have business from fishery products to improve the family economy. In this present study, the analysis of the program used Longwe’s framework analysis (1995) which focused on assessing the extent of women’s participation.

### *Analysis of the Equality Level*

Longwe’s framework (1995) analysis in the first stage is to see the equality focusing on level of women’s participation and critical awareness covering: (1) Welfare, (2) access, (3) awareness, (4) participation, (5) control.

In this case, welfare refers to women’s economic welfare and access to food supply and income. The activities of the program do not focus on activities for improving the family’s economy only. According to Longwe, all levels of women’s empowerment programs emphasize a higher level of equality because all activities start from the premise of trying to increase women’s level of trust, awareness, and control.

**Access** refers to the opportunity for women to production factors, for example, access to land, labor,

credit, training, marketing facilities, and all public services (March et al, 2003). Women's equal access to public services requires legal and political reforms to eliminate all forms of discrimination against women. This program is to support women to create more innovative fishery businesses. It also provides training on the production of fish floss, fish sauce, and fish balls. Women received knowledge about processing fish into floss and were then allowed to demonstrate the products. Then, they also received socialization about the preservation system and hygiene standards for product processing to product packaging. However, efforts to regulate women whose husbands work as small fishermen failed due to the inability of women to access information related to the activities. Most poor fishing communities cannot access skills development activities to process fishery products.

Awareness is an understanding that gender roles are a changeable culture. At this stage, awareness of equality in the division of labor based on gender and awareness of no economic and political domination between men and women is agreed upon by both parties. Belief in gender equality is the basis of gender critical awareness and participation in women's empowerment. The implementation of activities of the program does not touch the aspect of women's self-awareness because the human resources implementing the activities cannot build the confidence and self-awareness of coastal women to improve the family's economy by processing various creative and innovative economic products. The belief in the importance of women's participation in the economy has not been applied in various activities so that women's participation in processing fishery products, especially poor women, cannot develop themselves by starting fish floss, fish sauce, and fish ball business. Instead, they prefer to sell raw fish or smoked fish.

Participation is gender equality in the process of decision-making, policy-making, planning, and administration (Karl, 1995). Participation is an important element in development because it demands women's involvement in the needs assessment process, the formulation process, the implementation process to the evaluation stages. The importance of women's involvement is to articulate women's interests and involvement in making important decisions in programs that will affect the lives of coastal women's communities. Women need to provide input to the government on their expectations of this program. Thus, it is important to discuss the government and program beneficiaries. Women as beneficiaries are not involved in the needs assessment

process, program formulation process, evaluation, and decision-making. Women are involved in the program implementation process only.

Control refers to women's control over the decision-making process through awareness and mobilization. This is intended to achieve equal control over the factors of production and distribution of benefits. In the function of control or supervision, equality is to avoid domination based on gender differences. The control function of coastal women in the program of processing fishery products did not work because women were not involved since the beginning. Thus, women's needs that should have been accommodated by the government should have been monitored so that the various needs are failed to fulfill. Women are only seen as objects in the implementation of the empowerment program. The lack of involvement of women in controlling the program planning process is due to the knowledge of program implementers about the meaning of empowerment and participation in preparing program plans. The equality or involvement of women in this empowerment program based on five aspects is presented below.

**Table 1. Women Empowerment: Equality Levels**

Aspects of equality levels	Program of Processing Fishery Products		
	Training for producing fish floss, fish ball, and fish souce	PIRT Sozialization	Packacging product assistance
Welfare	No	No	No
Access	Yes	Yes	Yes
Critical awareness	No	No	No
Participation	Yes	Yes	Yes
Control	No	No	No

(Source: Field Study, 2018)

### ***Analysis of the Recognition Level of the Problem of Coastal Women***

The second stage was assing women's empowerment concerning the extent to which the program's objectives accommodate the problems of coastal women. Longwe's conceptual paradigm addresses women's problems specifically related to women's equality in the socioeconomic fields by involving an assessment of equality starting from aspects of welfare, access, awareness, participation, and control. The assessment of the recognition level of women's problems covers: *Negative level*: the program objectives do not mention women's problems. Women are very likely to be left worse off in various programs. *Neutral level*: the program recognizes women's problems, but does not make

women worse off than before. *Positive level*: the program's objectives are positively related to women's problems, namely to improve the position of women in society.

Those three levels help provide a final assessment of the program implemented by the Ternate Marine and Fishery Office which involves 30 women. The assessment aims to find out whether the problems of coastal women are recognized in supporting the achievement of program objectives and improving the position of women in society.

The analysis of the recognition level of women's problems in various activities of the program can be seen in the following table.

**Table 2. Recognition Levels of Women's Problems**

Activities/ equality levels	Program of Processing Fishery Products		
	Training for producing fish floss, fish ball, and fish souce	PIRT Sozialization	Packacging product assistance
Welfare	Negative	Negative	Negative
Access	Positive	Positive	Positive
Critical awareness	Negative	Negative	Negative
Participation	Neutral	Neutral	Neutral
Control	Negative	Negative	Negative

(Source: Field Study, 2018)

Based on the table, it can be seen that the training for producing fish floss is at a negative level due to not mentioning or including coastal women's problems such as lack of education and low access to economic resources or business capital. At the equality level, according to Longwe, welfare is not always access to the economy but is more concerned with the level of self-confidence and critical awareness so that women can be independent. Women's access to training activities is considered positive because women are given access to participate in various training on fish processing such as fish floss, fish balls, and fish sauce. The problem of women regarding the lack of knowledge about processing fishery products is an important issue in the implementation of this program. However, this program does not mention women's problems regarding critical awareness of the importance of empowering women in dealing with family poverty that requires awareness of equality between husband and wife. The aspect of participation is neutral due to the involvement of women even though only in the process of implementing activities. Women are not involved in the process of monitoring and evaluating.

Socialization of PIRT is considered negative due to not involving the problems of coastal women.

In the aspect of welfare, awareness, and control, there is no recognition of gender issues. Women only participate in program implementation and those who have a home food industry business can access home industry food certificates.

Procurement of product packaging is considered negative in the recognition level of women's problems. Women can only access product packaging for fishery businesses but are not involved in the program formulation process, supervision, and evaluation stages.

Activities in the program of processing fishery products aim to increase the skills and knowledge of coastal women to develop fishery businesses. This activity is important considering the potential of marine resources in the coastal areas of Ternate City. The results of the field study based on Longwe's concept can be used to assess programs or policies carried out by the government in all fields to see the position of women. Based on this concept, the reality of life requires interaction between men and women so policies or program interventions have to be able to address the problems of women and men and empower women and men equally.

Government programs and policies still discriminate against the position of women in society, including in fisheries and marine policies. Coastal women in fishermen's households have been involved in the processing of catch, but fisheries and marine programs and activities have not been able to solve women's problems in the socioeconomic and cultural aspects due to labeling of the position of women in an area. In Indonesia, Ternate City is a city of culture. The social structure of coastal communities still adheres to the customs of the Sultanate of Ternate. The roots of the patriarchal cultural structure surrounding the Sultanate of Ternate have affected the quality of policies and programs implemented by the government. Thus, a comprehensive model to implement various programs for coastal communities, especially for women is needed.

### ***Implications of Empowering Coastal Women in Social Worker Education and Practice***

In general, there are differences between coastal women and peasant women in facing life. Certainly coastal communities are more isolated than farming communities. However, in the economic context, the role of coastal women and farming women is very important to help their husbands meet their family's needs (Wiyati, 2015; Hayati, 2015). The problem of poverty that afflicts coastal communities and farming communities makes women have to play a dual role in meeting the needs of life.



Furthermore, in the education of social workers, the meaning of empowering coastal women emphasizes changes in social life. The idea of changing the lives of coastal women is based on the value of social justice for people who are powerless and need help. For Indonesia, fishery product processing programs must adapt to regional conditions. Social workers must have the skills to understand the social structure and culture of society.

This is to assist social workers in working and interacting with coastal communities. The most important thing about women's empowerment is increasing self-efficacy and self-improvement to participate in fighting for women's rights in the life of the nation (East, 2015; Indrawasih, 2021).

### CONCLUSION

Empowerment of coastal women through the program of processing fishery products in Ternate City is considered negative in some aspects such as welfare, control, and awareness. These activities are pragmatic and do not see the problems of coastal women that need to be accommodated in the program to realize the success and sustainability of the program. Based on the results of the field study, coastal women have not been able to be independent and achieve self-determination in the economic aspect due to sociocultural problems. The context of the Sultanate of Ternate contributes to the failure of women's empowerment because the community and program/activity implementers do not understand the cultural context and how to empower coastal women to achieve welfare. Therefore, in every fisheries policy, women are still discriminated against because their involvement does not fully meet the needs of the poor. Therefore, it is necessary to formulate an inclusive and fair policy model by considering the socio-cultural structure of the coastal community of Ternate City.

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