

The Implementation of Community Empowerment Program in Reducing the Poverty (Case Study of PNPM-Mandiri Urban in Besito Village, Gebog Sub-district, Kudus Regency, Central Java)

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Abstract

PNPM-Mandiri as community empowerment program is a national program to accelerate the poverty reduction. The implementation of the program in some areas showed the successful by the poverty reduction. Nevertheless, many areas failed in implementing the program showed by the poverty remains, even worse. Therefore, it needs further analysis whether successful of the implementation of the program could not automatically reduce the poverty rate. The problem was occurred in Besito Village Gebog Sub-District Kudus Regency. BKM Besito Makmur, the community based organization in the Village, won Kudus Regency awards in some years and also from Provincial level, but the poverty rate is still relatively high. This research used qualitative method in analyzing the implementation of PNPM Mandiri Urban in Besito Village, a community empowerment project supported by World Bank joint funded by local community. Besides this research analyzed the effectiveness of PNPM - Mandiri in reducing the poverty, this research also analyzed the roles of stakeholders to reduce the poverty through PNPM - Mandiri, the constraining factors, and the result of program implementation. As a result of evaluation, this program seems to be failed in terms of poverty reduction as final goal. The poverty reduction in Besito Village cannot be achieved although the BKM won awards because the implementation of the program only good in administration. The roles of stakeholders were not optimal, since the poor, women, and community leaders were not involved in all activities especially in the planning stage. The constraining factors divided into two categories, structural problems and operational problems. The poverty alleviation program needs some improvement to be more effective, efficient, relevant, sustainable and give positive impact in reducing the poverty. To cope with, the poor should be centered in implementing the program.

Keywords: Community Empowerment; Poverty Reduction; National Program

INTRODUCTION

Classical problem of poverty in Indonesia is considered to be continued as the hardest problem faced by The Government of Indonesia. Various ways have been done, but until now, the ways seem not effective to alleviate the poverty in the country. So, in 2007 the government launched PNPM-Mandiri as Community Empowerment Program to accelerate the poverty reduction.

According to the report of PNPM - Mandiri in Kudus Regency year 2008-2012, the implementation of PNPM - Mandiri in Besito Village has been running well, even won BKM awards in year 2008, 2009 and 2011. However, from the data of the poor family in Besito village Profile there is no significant decline in poverty rates. So, the researcher was attracted to analyze the implementation of PNPM-Mandiri in Besito.

The background and motivation of my research is reevaluation of a local empowerment project – PNPM Mandiri in Besito Village. My analysis is based upon below research questions;

- (1) Why was the project not effective in reducing the poverty rates?
- (2) How did the stakeholders play roles in reducing the poverty through PNPM - Mandiri?
- (3) What are the results of the PNPM - Mandiri Urban implementation?

Furthermore, the purposes of the research are to analyze items as follows;

- (1) The effectiveness of PNPM - Mandiri in reducing the poverty,
- (2) The roles of stakeholders in coordination and participation to reduce the poverty through PNPM - Mandiri,
- (3) The result of the PNPM - Mandiri implementation.

By conducting this research, it is expected that it will give some benefits;

- (1) Academic benefit: This research will give lessons learned from the real practice. Especially stakeholders' participation study

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- gives new point of view in conducting community empowerment program, and
- (2) Practical Benefit: This research will give good input to determine community development planning, and for the researcher, this research is one of many steps in learning stakeholders' participation and will support to do daily task in work site.

METHOD

The type of research method used for this study is qualitative method. This research aims to analyze the implementation of PNPM - Mandiri in Besito Village. This research also involves case study, interview, and observational that describe routine and problematic moments.

In qualitative research, the data comes from informants by the explanation and information, documents, survey, and facts from field.

1. Facts

The facts were gotten from events and phenomena which are related to the research focus.

2. Informants

The informants were selected by purposive and snowball sampling. The informants were chosen from local government officials, the leaders or respected people, and the poor knowing about research focus. The researcher use an interview guide as instrument by using the key questions and then recording the interview by making a note (field note). Record of what is heard, seen, experienced and considered in the context of data collection and reflection on the data in qualitative research [1].

3. Documents

The data from documents consist of government regulations or guideline, PNPM - Mandiri Reports, and other documents related to the research focus.

In order to evaluate the program, the researcher used the project evaluation method developed by Development Assistance Committee (DAC) at Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD). The five DAC evaluation criteria are based on the conception that evaluation is an assessment to determine the relevance and fulfillment of objectives, developmental efficiency, effectiveness, impact and sustainability of efforts supported by aid agencies.

THEORETICAL REVIEW

This research closely related to two previous theses: Community Development in PNPM Mandiri Implementation to Build Public Participation and Community Empowerment on Poverty Reduction, Case Study in Balerejo Subdistrict, Madiun Regency by Cahyono Setiawan year 2010 and *Implementasi Kebijakan PNPM-Mandiri, Studi di Bappeda Kota Kupang* (Policy Implementation of PNPM-Mandiri, Case Study in Development Planning Agency, Kupang Municipality) by Andreas Jeke Bara year 2009. Both evaluation reports of similar local empowerment projects describe about policy implementation in PNPM - Mandiri, but the difference is that this research analyzed the reasons and the facts causing the relatively high number of poor in Besito Village whereas the BKM won awards in implementing PNPM - Mandiri Urban. The previous researches mostly did not analyze the trend of the number of poor in the area as the outcome of the program. They only show the interview with local government officers about the program implementation, so it was not enough to evaluate the program itself. This research also gathers information from local citizen as key stakeholder, so it becomes more objective in evaluating the program. Therefore, this research aims to evaluate the implementation of the program and tries to recommend some solution in reducing the poverty in the future.

PNPM - Mandiri implementation as a policy implementation is a part of several stages in the policy cycle. One of definitions of implementations formulated by Mazmanian and Sabatier, that the carrying out of a basic policy decision, usually incorporated in a statute but which can also take the form of important executive orders or court decisions [2]. Furthermore three models of policy implementation have been proposed by Birkland top-down model, bottom-up model, and hybrid model [3]. Otherwise, there is no single model of policy execution that will guarantee policy accomplishment but a process of implementation [4]. This model assumes that the implementation of policies run as linear from public policy, implementer, and the performance of public policy [5].

The goal of the implementation of the program is empowerment. Empowerment refers to people's ability, especially vulnerable and weak group in order to have power and ability in: fulfilling their basic need in order they have

freedom, not only to give opinion, but also free from hunger, stupidity, and pain, reaching productive sources allowing them to increase their income and gain goods and services they need, and Participating in developmental process and policies influencing people [6].

Specifically, highlighted the core of empowerment for the poor through four elements: access to information, inclusion and participation, accountability, and local organizational capacity [7].

It was deeply described by Kartasasmita (2008) that community empowerment main activities are Train the communities in identification, analysis and decision making process to tackle their poverty problems, Create or expand small scale infrastructures and community economic productivities, and Increase community capability and self-help to achieve better live.

Power is defined not only about political power but also has a broader meaning that is the community power of Power over personal choices and life chances, Power over the definition of need, Power over ideas, Power over institutions, Power over resources, Power over economic activity, and Power over reproduction [8].

Empowerment itself can be defined as process. Empowerment has five processes: Enabling is to create an atmosphere or climate that allows the potential for community develop optimally, Empowering is strengthening the knowledge and capabilities of the community in solving problems and meeting needs, Protecting the public, especially to protect vulnerable groups, not oppressed by the powerful and dominant groups to avoid an unbalanced competition and prevent the exploitation of the powerful against the weak, Supporting by providing the guidance and support for poor communities in order to be able to perform the role and functions of life, Fostering is maintaining conditions conducive to keep a proper balance of power distribution between different groups of people [6].

The stakeholders' participation as public participation is processes in which individuals, groups, and organizations have the opportunity to participate in making decisions that affect them, or in which they have an interest [9]. Public participation in PNPM - Mandiri is voluntary involvement rather than compulsory, so it needs strong commitment from the participants to run the program in order to

achieve the main goal: reduce the poverty. Furthermore Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) defines three levels of involvement: information, consultation, and active participation [10]. The levels of involvement above in line with Pateman, citizenry participation can be divided into pseudo, partial and full participation [11].

The public participation is a key factor to reduce the poverty for PNPM - Mandiri. Poverty is a situation of scarcity that occurs is not desired by the poor. Population in general characterized by low levels of education, labor productivity, income, health, nutrition and welfare so that it shows a circle of powerless. Poverty is caused by limited human resources that are owned and utilized primarily of formal and informal education [12]

Furthermore, the definition of poverty is divided into the relative poverty, absolute poverty, structural and cultural poverty. Relative poverty is a condition of society as development policies that have not been able to reach all segments of society that led to unequal distribution of income. In absolute poverty is determined based on the inability to meet minimum basic needs. Structural and cultural poverty is caused by the structural conditions of poverty and indigenous cultural factors of a particular area of the handcuff someone [13].

RESEARCH FINDINGS AND DATA ANALYSIS

The evaluations of the program were done by macro approach of empowerment and OECD evaluation method. The macro approach has four elements such as access to information, inclusion and participation, accountability, and local organizational capacity. While, the evaluation project by DAC OECD has five criteria such as effectiveness, efficiency, relevance, sustainability, and impact.

(1). Macro Approach of Empowerment

This approach is often called a strategy of market systems (large-system strategy), because the target system changes directed at the wider environment. Formulation of policy, social planning, campaigns, social action, community organizing and community development are some of the strategies in this approach.

The results analyzed by four elements of macro assessment are following:

(a) Access to information

The program has been implemented using two-way information, flows from governments to citizen and from citizens

to governments as critical for responsible citizenship and responsive and accountable governments, but still limited. Since the socialization is not open and transparent to the public, so citizen has limited access to the information of the program. It needs to improve better information access for citizens to take advantage of opportunity, access services, exercise their rights, and so on.

(b) Inclusion and participation

The poor people act as a subject or co-producer with authority and control over decisions and resources (particularly financial resources) devolved to the lowest appropriate level. But in Besito Village, it seems lack of participation from the poor especially in the planning stage. Inclusion of poor people and other traditionally excluded group in priority setting and budget formation at the local level has to be implemented to ensure that limited public resources build on local knowledge and priorities, and build commitment to change. But it also needs to be improved since some activities mismatched with local needs and community livelihoods.

Poverty reduction can be achieved by participation especially women empowerment as stated by Chambers (2007, p.1) suggests that while poverty may never be made history, a sharp reduction can be achieved if powerful professionals become more participatory and get closer to and learn more from those who live their lives in poverty; and then act on what they experience, learn and feel [14].

The stakeholders' participation as public participation stated by Smith (2003) is processes in which individuals, groups, and organizations have the opportunity to participate in making decisions that affect them, or in which they have an interest [9]. Public participation may involve both individual and collective voices. Individual voices is coming directly from citizens who choose to express their views, and collective voices from communities, interest groups or other organizations able to synthesize or aggregate shared messages.

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c. The levels of involvement according to Pateman, citizenry participation can be divided into pseudo, partial and full participation [11]. Pseudo participation only entails national awareness and keeping one's self informed of issues and challenges facing the country; partial participation is the offering of feedback and suggestions; while full participation is where citizens are fully engaged and involved in policy implementation. Accountability The public officials, private employers, or service providers were called to account, requiring that they were answerable for their policies, actions, and use of funds. The local government, private sectors, NGO, and volunteers from community leaders joined the program, but it still needs to expand the channeling with private sectors and NGOs.

d. Local organizational capacity

Local organizational capacity is still dominated by BKM Managers and Village Officers in implementing PNPM - Mandiri. It should be more likely to have poor people voices heard and their demand met from local community. In fact, it still lack of capacity from the poor and women.

According to Ray Jennings (2000), participatory development paradigm, organizations implementing participatory programs must more fully commit in thought and action to decentralizing and giving their power to local partners [15].

Furthermore, decentralization can promote both efficient service delivery and local empowerment simultaneously [16]. The elements have to be fulfilled in implementing PNPM - Mandiri for building the community empowerment. The implementation of those four elements have to be comprehensive, it

cannot be separated each other in order to achieve the goal of the program.

2 Project Evaluation by OECD Method

As explained above, the project evaluation method of DAC by OECD has five criteria:

a. Effectiveness

The objectives of the program cannot be achieved because stakeholders did not work together and give the best effort in implementing the program by empowering the poor and women. Without cooperation and coordination from stakeholders especially the poor, it was difficult to reach the goal.

b. Efficiency

PNPM - Mandiri is cost-efficient program since the budget is not only come from government, but also those from community itself and private sector. By combining top down model and bottom up approach, empowerment as the basic of the program is the most efficient way for poverty alleviation. Although it seems difficult to reduce the poverty become a half in the year 2015, it still ongoing process to make betterment in implementing the program.

c. Relevance

PNPM - Mandiri program is still valid to be implemented in Besito Village because many poor live in the village. The activities and output of the program adapted the social, economic and culture of the village, although still need some improvement in implementing the program. To reach the goal of the program, all stakeholders have to be encouraged in participating start from planning, implementing, monitoring and evaluation. Although the program did not yet give significant reducing number of poverty, some improvement can be seen from the program activities, especially infrastructure. Since most of the populations are men as construction workers and women as factory workers, so the activities of the program should be related with the two main jobs.

d. Sustainability

After the budget of the program from government has stopped, it is expected the poor were already empowered, so they can solve the problem by themselves. The sustainability of the program will be achieved if all the stakeholders do their own

roles focused on poor empowerment by poor participation.

e. Impact

The infrastructures developments of the program were not only give benefit for the poor but also the rich. However, the poor and the rich can participate in the activities base on their capability, for instant, the rich give material things in this activity and the poor give their time and physically work. Furthermore, both of them can give their idea in order to reach the goal. Eventhough the program did not reduce the significant number of poor; at least people learn how to solve the problem by themselves. It can make them start to participate in every community activities and empower them to be part of development itself.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

Conclusion

- (a) The poverty reduction in Besito Village cannot be achieved although the BKM won awards because the implementation of the program only good in administration. Indeed, it still lack of community participation due to the delivery of information about the activities of BKM is not fully transparent. It caused not all elements of community can participate to the program.
- (b) The roles of stakeholders were not optimal, since the poor, women, and community leaders were not involved in all activities especially in the planning stage.
- (c) The poverty alleviation program needs some improvement to be more effective, efficient, relevant, sustainable and give positive impact in reducing the poverty. To cope with, the poor should be centered in implementing the program.

Recommendation

- (a) The information of the program by socialization should be more transparent to involve the community in each activity of the program.
- (b) The role of each stakeholder in implementing the program should be enhanced. The BKM managers and the village officers should share the responsibility in implementing the program to the poor.
- (c) The problems in the community should be handled base on the community local characteristics, such as customs, local

wisdom, religious level, the routine of society, and culture. Program should be matched to the local needs and community livelihoods.

- (d) For further researches, it needs comparative analysis of success and failure cases in same PNPM - Mandiri Implementation to clarify the causes.

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