

Sustainability of Coastal Women's Economic Empowerment Program in Sampang Regency - Madura

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Abstract. Sampang Regency exhibits a relatively high poverty rate compared to other districts within Madura Island and East Java Province. According to data from the Central Statistics Agency (BPS), the poverty rate in Sampang ranges between 20-25% of the total population. This study aims to investigate the sustainability of women's economic empowerment programs in coastal areas of Sampang Regency. While the Regency has implemented various programs to empower coastal women, including training in fisheries product processing and entrepreneurship development, these initiatives have not demonstrated significant and sustained impact on the community. Several constraints hinder the effectiveness of these programs, including a lack of consistent monitoring and evaluation, and limited motivation among coastal women to actively participate and benefit from the programs. Consequently, these women's empowerment programs have not achieved sustainable outcomes within the community.

Keywords: Women Empowerment, Coast, Regency, the City of Sampang

1. Introduction

Poverty remains a significant socio-economic challenge in Indonesia. Despite progress in poverty reduction over the past decades, it remains a persistent issue. The Central Statistics Agency (BPS) measures poverty based on the poverty line, which represents the minimum income required to meet basic needs such as food, clothing, and shelter. In 2023, the poverty line was estimated to be around Rp535,000 per capita per month. According to BPS data from March 2023, the poverty rate in Indonesia stood at 9.36% of the total population, affecting approximately 26.4 million people. While this figure has decreased compared to previous decades, the rate of poverty reduction has slowed down in recent years.

Several factors contribute to poverty in Indonesia, including unemployment and inadequate employment opportunities. Many poor people are employed in the informal sector, characterized by unstable incomes and limited social protection. Furthermore, limited access to quality education restricts access to better employment opportunities, perpetuating the cycle of poverty.

Madura Island, comprising four districts (Bangkalan, Sampang, Pamekasan, and Sumenep), faces a higher poverty rate compared to other regions in East Java. Geographical constraints, limited access to energy sources, and inadequate infrastructure contribute to the persistent poverty in this region.

Sampang Regency, within Madura Island, exhibits a relatively high poverty rate, with estimates ranging between 20-25% of the total population. This indicates that a significant portion of the Sampang population lives below the poverty line. Sampang Regency has been designated as a "left-behind" region in East Java, highlighting the significant challenges it faces, particularly in the economic sector.

Women in Sampang Regency possess significant potential to contribute to poverty reduction efforts. Recognizing this, the Sampang Regency government has prioritized women's empowerment programs as a key strategy for improving the economic well-being of its citizens. The government aims to achieve gender equality by creating equal opportunities for women and men in education, economics, politics, social, cultural, and other spheres of life.

According to [1], women's empowerment involves enhancing their status and roles in national development, improving their quality of life, and increasing their organizational independence. Women's empowerment is a process of developing critical awareness, enabling women to optimally develop their potential, plan, take initiative, organize themselves, and become self-reliant.

Empowerment is not merely about making women the objects of development projects. Instead, it should focus on empowering women to become the subjects of their own development. This involves fostering self-confidence, creativity, and the ability to navigate the world with poise, purpose, and pride.

Coastal women's groups require better handling and quality services towards empowerment programs. Recognizing this need, the government has implemented community empowerment programs aimed at enhancing public knowledge and skills in entrepreneurship. Based on data obtained from the 2019 DKBPPPA (Department of Women's Empowerment, Child Protection, and Family Planning), Sampang Regency has implemented several programs for coastal women, including technical guidance, support for business diversification, provision of production equipment for fish processing, and training in fisheries product processing.

However, these empowerment programs have not yet had a significant impact on the coastal community in Sampang Regency. Constraints include a lack of monitoring and evaluation, limited human resources, budget constraints, and shortcomings in program planning. This has resulted in the lack of sustainability of these programs within the community. Continued action and support from local agencies and public institutions as stakeholders are crucial for the successful implementation and sustainability of these programs.

Given the limited success of current women's empowerment programs in Sampang Regency, the government needs to prioritize efforts to ensure the sustainability of women's economic empowerment programs in coastal areas. This will require a concerted effort to address the challenges faced by these programs and ensure their effective implementation and success in resolving the economic problems faced by coastal communities in Sampang Regency.

Based on the above description, the researcher is interested in studying the sustainability of women's economic empowerment programs in coastal areas of Sampang Regency.

2. Literature Review

A. Gender Mainstreaming

The term "*Pengarusutamaan Gender*" (PUG), which translates to "Gender Mainstreaming" in English, originated at the Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing and is enshrined in the "Beijing Platform for Action." All participating countries, including Indonesia, and organizations explicitly committed to implementing Gender Mainstreaming within their respective spheres of influence.

Gender Mainstreaming is a strategic approach aimed at achieving gender equality and justice. It involves integrating gender considerations into all stages of policy and program development, from planning and implementation to monitoring and evaluation. This approach ensures that the experiences, aspirations, needs, and challenges of both women and men are fully considered and addressed.

The core objectives of Gender Mainstreaming are to ensure that women and men:

- a. gain equal access to development resources,
- b. participate equally in the development process. Including the decision-making process,
- c. have equal control over development resources, and
- d. obtain equal benefits from the results of development.

The implementation of gender mainstreaming includes both the fulfillment of practical gender needs and the fulfillment of strategic gender needs. Practical gender needs are short-term needs and are related to improving the conditions of women and/or men in order to carry out their respective social roles, such as improving the standard of living, improving health services, providing employment, providing clean water, and eradicating illiteracy. Strategic gender needs are the needs of women and/or men related to changing gender relations patterns and improving the position of women and/or men, such as changes in the pattern of role division, division of labor, power and control over resources. The fulfillment of these strategic needs is long-term, such as changes in legal rights, eliminating violence and discrimination in various areas of life, equal pay for the same type of work, and so on.

Basically, gender mainstreaming is to draw women into the mainstream of national and community development as citizens who have the same rights and obligations as men. Realizing gender justice and equality in the family, community, nation and state through planning, organizing, implementing, monitoring and evaluating national development program policies. Gender mainstreaming functions to create institutional mechanisms for the advancement of women in all areas of community and government activities and life. More concretely, the implementation of PUG is intended to achieve practical and strategic gender needs. Practical needs are short-term fulfillment, such as providing employment, health services, eradicating illiteracy and so on. Fulfillment of strategic needs is a long-term need, such as changing the subordinate position of women in various fields into an equal and fair gender position. The importance of implementing PUG in various fields of development aims to ensure whether men and women have truly obtained equal access to development resources, and obtained equal benefits from the results of development.

B. Community Empowerment

Community empowerment is a program aimed at fostering independent attitudes and behaviors within individuals and society. Independence encompasses various aspects, including independent thinking, decision-making, and problem-solving utilizing one's inherent potential.

Community empowerment has emerged as a key initiative of governments across the country to enhance the quality of life for citizens. It involves a deliberate effort by community members themselves to identify problems, formulate plans, and implement changes based on their own beliefs and perceptions. This process seeks to strengthen community structures and support systems.

Community empowerment is a social transformation process that involves the formation and organization of the community. This process cultivates a sense of responsibility, commitment, and the ability to address challenges and influence positive change within their environment.

In a broader sense, empowerment refers to an expansion of freedom of choice and action. It signifies an increase in an individual's or a community's authority and control over the resources and decisions that impact their lives. As stated in [2], empowerment is an effort to enhance the dignity and self-worth of communities that are currently unable to overcome poverty and underdevelopment. Ultimately, empowerment empowers individuals and communities to become self-reliant.

C. Coastal Women's Economic Empowerment

Women's empowerment in coastal and ocean development is intrinsically linked to concepts of independence, participation, network building, and social justice. Fundamentally, empowerment rests on the strength of individuals and their social networks. Empowerment embodies a powerful sense of self-worth and a resilient mindset.

From an empowerment perspective, empowering coastal and ocean communities signifies empowering these communities to effectively utilize and sustainably manage fisheries and maritime resources as a means to enhance their well-being.

According to Soesilowati in [3], several strategies can be employed to empower coastal communities:

- a. **Facilitative Strategy:** This strategy encourages the target group to become conscious of program choices and available resources. It's characterized by a cooperative approach where change agents work alongside the community to identify solutions to their challenges.
- b. **Educational Strategy:** This strategy focuses on providing knowledge and skills to the community members who are to be empowered.
- c. **Persuasive Strategy:** This strategy aims to induce behavioral change through persuasion. It is most suitable when the community is either unaware of the need for change or lacks commitment to it.
- d. **Power Strategy:** This strategy necessitates change agents with the authority to offer rewards or impose sanctions on the target group, as well as access to exclusive resources.

3. Research Methods

This study employs a qualitative research method with a descriptive approach. Descriptive research aims to describe phenomena as they occur. This study on the Economic Empowerment of Coastal Women in Sampang Regency seeks to gather information about the current situation and examine the relationships between relevant variables.

Qualitative research, as defined [4], involves collecting and analyzing non-numerical data, focusing on narratives and qualitative descriptions. Qualitative methods are particularly valuable for obtaining rich, in-depth information about specific issues or problems. Common qualitative data collection methods include focus groups, in-depth interviews, and observations.

According to [5], qualitative research is an exploratory process that seeks to understand the meanings and behaviors of individuals and groups, as well as to describe social and human problems. The research process encompasses formulating research questions, conducting data collection within natural settings, analyzing data through systematic inductive reasoning, identifying themes within the data, and interpreting the findings. The final stage involves producing a flexible, structured research report.

This study utilizes both primary and secondary data. Primary data is collected directly through interviews and observations conducted with the Women's Empowerment and Child Protection Service of Sampang Regency. Secondary data is obtained indirectly through a review of relevant literature, including policy documents, technical guidelines for women's economic empowerment programs in Sampang Regency, meeting minutes, and reports on women's economic empowerment activities in the region.

Data collection techniques in this study include observation, interviews, and document review. Data analysis in this study utilizes Miles and Huberman's interactive model, which

comprises several stages: data collection, data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing/verification [6].

4. Research Result and Discussion

Empowerment is a crucial process for ensuring the sustainability of any empowerment program and achieving its intended goals. Sustainability of women's coastal economic empowerment programs should not be limited to the program itself but should be continued by the program's beneficiaries, enabling them to improve their family's economic well-being. A program's sustainability can be evaluated based on four key aspects: government support, program relevance, the involvement of facilitators, and community participation. All four aspects are critical to the program's success.

In Sampang Regency, to enhance the welfare of its coastal communities, the government has implemented various economic empowerment programs for women. These programs include training in fish processing, packaging, and marketing, as well as initiatives to create new entrepreneurs (WUB) aimed at improving the economic well-being of coastal residents. Several stakeholders are involved in these programs, including the beneficiaries, the government as the program organizer and policymaker, and facilitators responsible for program implementation.

The concept of women's coastal economic empowerment in community development is closely linked to principles of independence, participation, collaborative work, and social justice. Fundamentally, empowerment focuses on strengthening individual and social capacities. Empowerment emphasizes the development of a strong and resilient mindset. Based on this empowerment concept, it can be argued that empowering coastal communities involves enabling them to optimally and sustainably utilize and manage fisheries and marine resources to improve their well-being.

According to Soesilowati (in [7]), several strategies can be employed to empower coastal communities:

- a. **Facilitative Strategy:** This strategy encourages the target group to be conscious of their choices and available resources. It is considered a cooperative approach where change agents work together with the community to find solutions to their problems.
- b. **Educational Strategy:** This strategy focuses on providing knowledge and skills to the community members who will be empowered.
- c. **Persuasive Strategy:** This strategy aims to bring about change through influencing behaviors. It is most suitable when the community is unaware of the need for change or has low commitment to change.
- d. **Power Strategy:** This strategy requires change agents to have the resources to provide incentives or sanctions to the target group and access to influence or control.

The following data was obtained from the Department of Social Affairs, Women's Empowerment, and Child Protection of Sampang Regency regarding the programs that have been implemented.

Table 1. Coastal Women's Economic Empowerment Program Data

No	Name	Address	Program Type
1.	Hatifah	Aengsareh Village, Sampang	Fish Processing
2.	Halimatus Sa'diyah	Dharma Camplong Village, Sampang	Fish Processing
3.	Nur Fadilahtus. Z	Plasah Village, Sampang	Fish Processing
4.	Mahfirotul Hasanah	Nepa Village, Banyuates	Fish Processing

Source: Job Training Center in Numbers 2022

Table 2. PEKA Program Data (Perempuan Kepala Keluarga)

No	Name	Address	Program Type
1.	Siti Alfiah Aziz	Pangarengan	Training making frozen fish
2.	Nidayatul Zulfiyah	Campnplong	Training making frozen fish
3.	Roudhtul Hasanah	Banyuates	Training making frozen fish
4.	Nur Hasanah	Sokobanah	Training making frozen fish
5.	Tanti	Ketapang	Training making frozen fish
6.	Nikmah	Mandangin	Training making frozen fish
7.	Siti Mahmudah	Sampang	Training making frozen fish

Source: Job Training Center in Numbers 2022

Based on interviews and documentation, it's evident that the "Woman Coast" empowerment program has been implemented with good intentions. However, the response from the underprivileged society to support the success of this program has not been as expected. This can be attributed to the program's limited reach, with a small number of participants, often fewer than ten individuals per group.

The role of the "Companion" is crucial as program facilitators. They assist Woman Coast members in understanding their potential, provide motivation, and offer insights into methods for enhancing their skills, particularly in the economic sphere. Companions also support the women's groups in identifying and developing economic opportunities.

Stakeholders play a vital role in the success and sustainability of women's economic empowerment programs. In the Woman Coast program, stakeholders include the government, the community, and the Companions. Each stakeholder has distinct roles and responsibilities.

- Government: Plays a crucial role by providing regulations, policies, program organization, and funding. They can also facilitate supportive training, counseling on business skills, and access to markets for coastal women.
- Community: As primary participants, coastal women are not only beneficiaries but also active contributors to the program's operation and development. With acquired skills, they are expected to manage their businesses independently, improving their family's and community's economic well-being.
- Companions: Provide training within the Woman Coast economic empowerment program.

Through the involvement of various stakeholders, the Woman Coast program has significant potential to increase the welfare of women, their families, and the community as a whole, creating a sustainable economic impact.

The sustainability of the Woman Coast program is a crucial determinant of the well-being of the coastal population in Sampang Regency. Its success depends on the effective roles of all three stakeholders. However, the current performance of stakeholders does not fully meet expectations. Research findings indicate several challenges, including a lack of sufficient motivation among coastal women to participate actively in the program. Furthermore, both the government, as program organizers, and the Companions, as trainers, have not consistently conducted monitoring and evaluation after program implementation.

Fundamentally, the sustainability of women's economic empowerment in Sampang Regency is threatened by potential failure. The program faces challenges such as limited access to equipment, insufficient public motivation for program implementation, and inadequate mentoring. This lack of sustainability hinders the realization of improved economic well-being for the coastal population.

This issue aligns with previous studies [8] that found NGOs providing training and income-generating opportunities to women. However, group participation in capacity development for empowered women remains suboptimal. Therefore, it's crucial to address three key aspects related to the sustainability of women's economic empowerment in the Woman Coast program, as suggested by economist Michael Toradi. Toradi identified three essential dimensions of development (empowerment):

- a. Supporting the continuity of life: This refers to the ability to fulfill basic life needs, ensuring that everyone can live a life that meets their fundamental needs for food, shelter, health, and security.
- b. Self-worth: This emphasizes the ability to become a whole person, feeling worthy and respected as an individual, and not merely as a tool for others.
- c. Independence from colonization and slavery: This signifies freedom not just in the political and ideological sense, but more fundamentally, emancipation from material deprivation, social colonization, and the exploitation of human nature by ignorance, other individuals, suffering, institutions, and dogmatic beliefs.

These three dimensions of development (empowerment) underscore the importance of sustainable development values. Sustainability in empowerment is crucial, even in the face of various implementation obstacles.

Furthermore, the sustainability of economic empowerment programs will accompany and provide strengthening, enabling coastal communities, especially women, to develop their endeavors with the results of their fishing activities, thus increasing the selling price of their catch. Additionally, for coastal women who do not currently own businesses, it is expected that they will open new businesses based on the available potential within coastal areas.

To ensure the sustainability of economic empowerment programs, the target group must recognize the potential that allows coastal communities to develop productively. According to Budiman (11), development must consider human beings as creative individuals. Creative individuals should experience happiness, feel safe, and be free from fear.

Similarly, the sustainability of economic empowerment programs for Woman Coast will only be maintained if empowered women consider the surrounding environmental conditions. Empowerment must address the enabling environment that fosters the economic growth and development of the community, leading to their independence and prosperity. The sustainability of Woman Coast economic empowerment programs is supported by the capacity and potential that the community possesses.

However, evidence suggests that Woman Coast economic empowerment has not effectively liberated coastal communities from helplessness. Society remains impoverished and disadvantaged in terms of economic empowerment. Empowerment programs should prioritize process-oriented approaches over material results. The most crucial aspect is how the process leads to the desired outcomes [9].

Since the subject of economic empowerment for Woman Coast is the coastal community, especially women who are not yet empowered, optimizing local resources should be prioritized. Human and natural resources within the environment or the location where empowerment programs are implemented must be utilized to the fullest extent for the welfare and independence of the coastal community. External resources are not entirely necessary for empowerment. In fact, it is more beneficial to utilize the potential and capacity of the local community. Utilizing local resources signifies empowering the local community. Conversely, if external resources are utilized and empowered, the empowerment program deviates from its core principle of community-based empowerment. As a result, the sustainability of the community empowerment program is jeopardized.

When an empowerment program focuses on the process rather than material outcomes, subsequent program continuation becomes easier and more feasible for continuous development. Furthermore, emphasizing the process over material outcomes in program sustainability benefits the community by providing them with valuable learning experiences from the existing process. This creates a learning environment where the community works while they learn.

The sustainability of a program, as defined by the Brundtland Report [10], is the ability to meet current needs without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. This definition implies that sustainability in empowerment must consider current conditions and strive for a better and more enduring future. This concept of sustainability should be a shared concern for the coastal community and the Sampang Regency government. The community must recognize that a sustainable social life ensures that the empowerment program benefits the coastal community in Sampang Regency.

In the Woman Coast economic empowerment program in Sampang Regency, sustainability is lacking. After training programs, there is no consistent evaluation and monitoring of stakeholders, human resources, budgets, implementation timelines, and program planning limitations. This lack of evaluation and monitoring results in a lack of program sustainability, hindering the ability of the coastal community to improve their economic well-being.

5. Conclusion

Sampang Regency has a significantly high poverty rate compared to other districts on Madura Island and in East Java. According to data from the Central Statistics Agency (BPS), the percentage of poor people in Sampang ranges from 20-25% of the total population, although this number fluctuates yearly. This indicates that nearly a quarter of Sampang's residents live below the poverty line.

The government has made efforts to achieve its objective of full commitment to gender equality, creating an equal environment for women and men to access opportunities and rights. This enables them to play an active role and participate in education, economics, politics, social affairs, culture, defense, and security, while receiving equal treatment in enjoying development benefits. To achieve this, a synergistic effort is required to integrate gender equality and justice policies into all aspects of development.

Based on data obtained from the 2019 DKBPPPA, Sampang Regency has implemented several programs for the empowerment of coastal women, including:

- a. Technical guidance and support for business diversification.
- b. Provision of production equipment for fish processing.
- c. Training on fish processing.
- d. Technical guidance on business diversification development.
- e. Improvement of young entrepreneurship in coastal areas

However, the impact of these empowerment programs on the coastal community in Sampang Regency has been limited. Some constraints include:

- a. Insufficient motivation among coastal women to participate in economic empowerment programs.
- b. Lack of monitoring and evaluation.
- c. Limitations in program planning, resulting in the discontinuation of Woman Coast empowerment programs.

Continued action by local agents such as local service agencies and public institutions, as key stakeholders, is crucial after training activities. The involvement of relevant services and stakeholders is essential for successful program implementation.

Based on the findings of this study, which revealed the limited success of the Woman Coast empowerment program in Sampang Regency, it is recommended that the government prioritize the sustainability of women's economic empowerment in coastal areas. This aims to ensure the effective implementation and success of the Woman Coast economic empowerment program, thereby addressing economic challenges in coastal areas of Sampang Regency.

Furthermore, this study recommends that stakeholders actively engage in monitoring and evaluation within the Woman Coast empowerment program in Sampang Regency. This will ensure the program's sustainability. Additionally, providing motivation to the program's recipients, particularly coastal women, is crucial for their economic prosperity.

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