

The Portraits of Fisher Households in South Coast of Gorontalo: An Empowerment Approach

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ABSTRACT

This study aimed to describe the portrait of fishermen's households on the southern coast of Gorontalo using a community empowerment approach. Specifically, the researchers analyzed the ownership of fishermen, fishermen's problems, how to empower fishing communities on the southern coast of Gorontalo. Researchers in collecting data were divided into primary data and secondary data. Researchers obtained primary data using several methods, namely participatory observation, interviews, and Focused Group Discussion. In analyzing the data, the researchers did it qualitatively and the results were presented in an analytical descriptive manner. The results showed that the fishing communities on the southern coast of Gorontalo depend on their livelihood by utilizing coastal and marine resources, while only a small part of them have a sideline from farming. To raise the dignity of the fishing community from poverty, the community empowerment approach is very important. Several fishing community empowerment programs that can be implemented on the southern coast of Gorontalo are procurement of community fishing boats; strengthening human resource capacity; fishery technology development; development of fisherman information systems and market access; strengthening of fishermen's institutions; development of fishery supporting business facilities and infrastructure; and access to capital.

Keywords: Fisher Household, Empowerment, Poverty, Marine Resources

Article Info

Volume 9, Issue 2

Page Number : 147-155

Publication Issue

March-April-2022

Article History

Accepted : 20 March 2022

Published : 30 March 2022

I. INTRODUCTION

Many fishing communities in the southern part of Gorontalo are trapped in a very deep poverty rut. This condition is exacerbated by circumstances including very traditional fishing gear, many of which do not even have the fishing gear so they only rely on

income as fishing laborers, do not have adequate skills, and so on. In short, the fishing communities on the South Coast of Gorontalo are still far from being empowered.

Research related to poverty and powerlessness of fishing communities has been widely studied by

previous researchers. Tambunan et al. (2020) concluded that fishermen's powerlessness was caused by low education and lack of alternative jobs. Meanwhile, the vulnerability of fishermen in dealing with emergencies is caused by not having assets. Zulkifli et al. (2021) explain that fishermen's poverty starts in the catchment area. Each traditional fisherman has his fishing area and boundaries. The boundaries of the fishing area are marked by the presence of a lever, which also functions as a catch for incoming fish, some of which have been owned by previous generations.

Nazar et al. (2021) analyzed the root causes of poverty in coastal communities with a socio-ecological system approach, finding that an increase in community income followed by the provision of adequate educational, health, and worship infrastructure ultimately improves welfare and the community gets out of poverty. Goso and Anwar (2017) conclude that poverty that occurs in traditional fishermen is caused by three very influential factors, namely: i) the quality of human resources; ii) Economic factors; iii) institutional factors.

In contrast to previous studies, this study attempts to answer the following issues: ownership in fishing communities; fishing community problems; and the idea of empowering fishing communities.

Imron (2003) defines fishermen as a community group whose lives depend directly on marine products, either by catching or cultivating. They generally live on the edge of the beach, a residential area close to the location of their activities.

Tain (2013) explains that based on its constituent factors, poverty in fishermen's households can at least be grouped into three forms of poverty. The first is structural poverty. This poverty is suffered by a group of fishermen because the condition of the existing social structure makes them unable to participate in using the available sources of income, as well as due

to a policy arrangement that is more favorable to the capital owner group (big fishermen). Forces outside the small fisherman's household make them marginalized and live in the shackles of poverty. So, the problem is the inequality of access to resources due to the existing social structure. Second, cultural poverty sees poverty as occurring due to cultural factors such as laziness which originates from local values which are not conducive to progress. This poverty cannot be separated from the values adopted by the fishermen's household concerned in living their lives. Third, natural poverty occurs when natural conditions do not support them to carry out productive economic activities or unproductive production behavior due to the nature of the resources concerned.

Firth (1984) describes the characteristics that mark the life of poor fishermen, namely: a). Income is daily and uncertain every day b). The level of education is low which makes it difficult for the fishermen to find other jobs c). The nature of the product is perishable and must be marketed immediately, causing fishermen to have a high dependence on traders or catch collectors. d). A large amount of capital spending in the fisheries business causes fishermen to prefer to engage in small-scale fisheries. e). Poor fishing families are generally very vulnerable and easily fall into a bad debt trap.

Imron (2003) explains that dependence on middlemen is one of the many problems faced by fishermen. As a result, the bargaining position of fishermen is very low, so the catch sold by fishermen is also priced lower than the market price. Thus, the income received by fishermen is also low. Although in some places there are already fish auction places, it is hoped that this will be able to control the price of fish, but in practice, the existence of fish auctions is a burden for fishermen, because of the levy fees they do, even though the auction is not running. Various efforts have been made by fishermen to increase their

income. Unfortunately, their efforts to escape poverty often trap them in deeper poverty. This happens because there is no access to financial institutions so the need for funds can only be obtained through the owners of capital, who are none other than middlemen. As a result, they no longer have the freedom to sell fish to the middlemen they want, so their catch is bought at a lower price.

Fishermen in terms of ownership of fishing gear can be divided into three groups, namely: a). Labor fishermen are fishermen who work with other people's fishing gear. b). Skipper fishermen are fishermen who have fishing gear operated by someone else. c). Individual fishermen are fishermen who have their fishing equipment and do not involve other people in their operation (Mulyadi, 2005. Kusnadi (2003) stated that labor fishermen are the dominant poor community in fishing villages. This poverty factor encourages them to be involved in the network. complex debts in the community.

Classification of fisherman groups based on ownership of fishing facilities (Fishing Law): 1). Cultivating Fisherman. Cultivating fishermen are people who provide their energy in the business of catching marine fish, working with other people's fishing facilities. 2). Landlord or Owner. A person or legal entity who with any rights has power or ownership over a ship or boat and fishing equipment used in a fishing business operated by another person. If the owner does not go to sea, he is called a skipper or entrepreneur. If the owner simultaneously works at sea to catch fish, then it can be called a fisherman who is also the owner of the ship.

In line with that, Wahyuningsih et al. (1997) classified fishermen based on capital ownership into three parts, namely: 1). skipper fisherman. This fisherman is a fisherman who owns boats and fishing gear and can convert working fishermen into assistants in their efforts to catch fish in the sea.

There are three kinds of skipper fishermen, namely marine skipper fishermen, land-based fishermen who control their business from the mainland, and people who own boats, fishing gear, and money but are not real fishermen, called *tauke (toke)* or *cakong*. 2). Labor fishermen. Fishermen who do not have the means of production and capital, but who have labor are sold to skipper fishermen to help in the fishing business at sea, as laborers. 3). Individual fishermen Poor fishermen, these fishermen only have small boats for their own needs and simple fishing gear, therefore they are called individual fishermen.

Imron (2003) revealed that modern fishing businesses use more sophisticated fishing technology than traditional fishing businesses. The measure of modernity is not solely due to the use of motors to move the boat but also depends on the size of the motor used and the level of exploitation of the fishing gear used. The difference in the modernity of fishing gear technology will also affect their operational cruising capabilities. These differences have implications for the level of income and ability or socio-economic welfare of both large and modern fishermen or small and traditional fishermen, usually each of which is a relatively similar socio-economic category with different orientations and behaviors.

Mulyadi (2005) explains that the income of working fishermen is determined on a profit-sharing basis and is rarely received by a fixed wage/salary system received by fishermen. In a profit-sharing system, the part that is divided is the income after deducting the exploitation costs incurred during operation plus the cost of selling the results. In this case, including the cost of fuel oil, ice, and salt as well as food costs for the crew and the payment of user fees. In general, other costs that still include exploitation costs such as repair costs are the responsibility of the equipment and boat owners.

II. METHODS AND MATERIAL

The type of data obtained in this study consisted of primary data and secondary data. Primary data was obtained by using: (i) participatory observation method, namely the method with a participatory observation approach by studying and observing directly in the field; (ii) interviews, using an in-depth and independent question guide to respondents, to collect and complete data; and (iii) focused group discussion) (Sugiyono, 2009; Moleong, 2007).

The primary data source was the fishing community which is the subject of the research, while the secondary data was obtained from documentation data and reports or publications obtained from related agencies and supporting customs in the field). After all the data was collected, data analysis is carried out. The data that had been collected was processed systematically, starting from writing interviews and observations, editing, classifying, reducing, presenting data, to concluding.

Patton and Bogdan in Moleong (2007) define data analysis as a process of organizing and sorting data into patterns, categories, and basic units of description so that working hypotheses can be formulated as suggested by the data.

The data that had been collected was analyzed qualitatively and the results are presented in an analytical descriptive manner. The research data was first sorted, categorized, and grouped according to the needs of the analysis. Data sorting was done by completing and transforming the raw data written in field notes so that it becomes a systematic report, complementing the information collected with other supporting sources. The second step was to categorize the data. It was an action to group the edited information. The third step in the form of grouping was carried out based on the aspects studied, the level, and the type of information that could be collected. The data was then linked to the main problems

studied. Thus, the problem that was the focus of the study could be analyzed to produce a conclusion to be used as material for making fishing community empowerment programs.

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Fishermen Ownership on the South Coast of Gorontalo

Boats are the main tool for fishermen to catch fish. Fishermen will not be able to go to sea without this main tool. This very important tool is not owned by all fishermen. The results show that fishing vessels on the southern coast of Gorontalo are only owned by a small number of investors, while the majority of fishermen are only fishermen. The fishing boats on the southern coast of Gorontalo are not all owned by local investors, there are also boats whose owners are outsiders. The financiers only provide boats and are managed by fishing laborers on the southern coast of Gorontalo.

Alpharesy (2011) states that fishing communities, marine fisheries households, are distinguished between entrepreneurs and fishery workers. For entrepreneurs, household income comes from three sources, namely from the fishing business, wages for fishery workers, in this case by family members, and from other sources, such as agriculture, trading businesses, and other businesses, or sideline businesses. For fisherman worker households it is the same but there is no special post for fishery business. In line with that, Mubyarto (2002) classifies fishermen in the marine fisheries business, there are three types of fishermen, namely: entrepreneur fishermen, mixed fishermen, and full-fledged fishermen. Entrepreneur fishermen are capital owners who concentrate their investment in fishing operations. The mixed fisherman is a fisherman who also does other work besides his main job as a fisherman. Full fishermen are old or traditional fishermen.

The results of the study stated that the wage system between fishing workers and ship owners was mutually agreed upon between the two parties, namely the distribution of catches divided into three, consisting of 1) for ship owners; 2) working capital; 3) labor. The timing agreement for the distribution of the work is different for each ship, namely once every 6 months, some once a year. There is also profit-sharing done after reaching the target, for example, every time it reaches the target of 500 baskets, the distribution of results is carried out immediately.

The distribution of wages with a profit-sharing system has become a fisherman's culture on the southern coast of Gorontalo. Likewise, the distribution time is so long, it turns out not to be a problem for them. To meet the daily needs of the family, these fishing workers still get a daily distribution of fish. The fish from the daily distribution are sold individually and the proceeds are used for daily family shopping at home.

According to the fishermen's confession, being a fisherman is not always a burden, when compared to boat owners. Shipowners do not need to be tired of going to sea, just waiting for the money to come by itself. These fishing workers have the desire to have their boats, but because conditions do not allow them, they persist as laborers. Wages from work are spent on family needs, some are spent paying for children's schooling, some are spent for consumptive purposes, such as building houses, buying furniture, and so on. From the results of the study, it was found that there were only 2 fishing workers who changed their status to become ship owners, namely the owners of *KM Amugerah* and *KM Putra Laut*. The two owners of these boats managed to change their status from fishing workers after going through a hard struggle. Now the owners of these two ships no longer go to sea, they just have to arrange their crew every time they go to sea and when they come back from the sea.

In addition to fishing workers who work on large-scale fishing boats, there are also small fishing boats that can only accommodate three to five fisherman workers. Equipped with improvised equipment, such as a trawl, a deep engine, and a trawling machine to pull the trawl, this type of boat is used to catch tuna. The research data shows that the *pajeko* boat only lasts three to five days at sea. In addition, there were also types of fishing rods that used small boats. Fishermen of this class usually go to the sea in the morning and return home in the afternoon, or go home in the afternoon and return at night. This last type of fisherman, although the boats are usually owned by themselves, their economic condition is not better than that of other fishing classes.

Fishermen Problems

The fishing communities living on the southern coast of Gorontalo, like coastal communities in general, have complex problems. They are only able to work as fishermen, small fishermen, small-scale fish processors, and small traders because they have very little investment capacity. Those who become small fishermen are only able to utilize the resources in the coastal area by fishing, the catch tends to decrease due to competition with large ships and the quality of coastal resources continues to decline.

Another problem faced by small fishermen on the coast is that the fish caught are easily damaged, thereby weakening their bargaining position in selling. The fishing business is also seasonal and erratic, that is, there is a time lag that can be caused by weather factors or the influence of the season. This causes fishing communities in coastal areas to find it difficult to get out of poverty and debt bondage, both for traders and ship owners. This fact is in line with Mulyadi (2005) who states that the factors that cause fishermen's poverty are: 1) Problems related to ownership of fishing gear; 2) Access to capital, especially regarding credit requirements; 3)

Requirements for exchange of catches that are not in favor of fishing workers; 4) Fish storage facilities; 5) Capture concession rights; 6) destruction of the coastal community organization system.

The results of the study found that in addition to the problems mentioned above, other problems faced by fishermen are as follows. Low education; Education for fishing communities is not a priority. This has been passed down from generation to generation. From a young age, fishermen's children were introduced to looking for marine products, as a result, they missed school. Children for fishing communities are a family resource that helps their parents work. Usually, the children of fishermen go to sea with their parents, fish, or look for other marine resources. According to Muflikhati (2010), for traditional fishermen, the level of education is not too important for them to work fishing in the sea because working as a fisherman is a rough job that relies more on muscles and experience, so no matter how high the level of education of fishermen is, it will not affect their skills. they are at sea. The problem of the importance of education is usually only felt if a fisherman wants to move to another more promising job. With low education, it will be difficult for traditional fishermen to choose or get a job other than being a fisherman.

The quality of human resources is low; The low level of education of the fishing community has implications for the low level of human resources. The knowledge of small fishermen on the coast is limited to the expanse of the sea and waves and traditional fishing. Small fishermen have never thought of processing their caught fish into more economic value or even taking advantage of existing resource opportunities to improve the economy. Kusnadi (2003) revealed that the low quality of human resources of fishing communities which are reflected in the form of poverty is closely related to internal and external factors of the community. The

internal factors of the fishing community are rapid population growth, lack of courage to take risks, complacency, and so on. The external factors that lead to poverty in lower-class fishermen's households are, among others, the production process which is dominated by shipowners.

Low technology utilization; The fishing community, in general, is not able to process the existing resources optimally because of the inability to utilize technology. The data from the field research shows that fishermen in the research location only catch fish using trawls and traditional fishing rods. Similarly, the boat used is a traditional boat. As for fishing workers who work on larger boats, the fishing gear used is still on a simple scale.

The weather is erratic; The erratic weather factor is a problem for fishermen. When the weather is extreme, fishermen do not go to the sea. This condition forces fishermen to spend their savings to meet the needs of their families. Even when their savings run out, fishermen are forced to owe money to their closest relatives or neighbors. This makes it difficult for fishermen to get out of poverty. Fauzi (2010) stated that the fisheries sector is experiencing serious problems related to climate change and its impact on the sustainability of capture fisheries and aquaculture. Gradual changes in temperature increases that occur globally will result in changes in biophysical aspects such as extreme weather changes, sea-level rise, changes in food networks, and physiological changes in reproduction that will have an impact on the socio-economic aspects of fisheries.

Availability of fuel oil; The availability of fuel oil is also a problem for fishermen on the southern coast of Gorontalo. The unavailability of fuel oil specifically for fishermen forces fishermen to buy retail fuel oil at a very expensive price, IDR 10,000 per liter. The price of this expensive mineral fuel, causes the working capital to also be higher.

Ice factory availability; Ice factory for fishermen is an important factor that is included in the production component. Although fishermen can catch large quantities of fish, if there is no ice, it will not be profitable for fishermen. So far, the unavailability of sufficient ice causes the fish caught by fishermen to be damaged quickly so that they do not have an adequate price for fishermen.

Empowering Fishing Communities

For fishing communities, coastal and marine resources are the main basis of their livelihood. The results showed that the fishing communities on the southern coast of Gorontalo depend on their livelihood by utilizing coastal and marine resources, while only a small part of them have a sideline from farming. Sujana (1992) suggests that the total income from fishing businesses is around 71.58% of the total income of fishermen's households. The income from employment in the agricultural sub-sector is relatively small at 7.61%. Likewise, from the industrial, services, trade sectors, only about 0.55%.

The income of fishing communities directly or indirectly will greatly affect their quality of life, because income from marine products is the main source of income, even the only one for them, so the size of the income will greatly affect their lives, especially in their ability to manage the environment where they live.

Fishery resources can potentially be used to improve the standard of living and welfare of fishermen, but in reality, there are still quite many fishermen who have not been able to increase their catches, so the income level of fishermen does not increase (Sujarno, 2008). The income of fishing communities depends on the utilization of the potential of fishery resources in the ocean. Fishermen's income is highly dependent on the number of catches which fluctuates according to the season. During the famine season, it is not

uncommon for fishermen to get no results at all. On the other hand, during the fish season, the catch can be abundant so the income received is also large (Muflikhati, 2010).

Based on the analysis of the problems and potentials of fishing communities, several empowerment programs are formulated to realize the independence of fishing communities. Procurement of community fishing boats; Community fishing boats will be very helpful for small fishermen to increase their catch because so far they have only used small boats that can only be used for fishing on the coast. Community fishing boats are also very helpful in overcoming the problems of small fishermen who have only been fishing laborers for large boat owners. The presence of community fishing boats plays a very important role in liberating fishermen from the clutches of capital owners.

Strengthening human resource capacity; The problem of low education and low human resources in coastal communities needs serious attention from various parties to awaken the empowerment and independence of fishing communities. Strengthening the human resource capacity of fishing communities can be done by increasing management capabilities and knowledge of fisheries technology to increase productivity and competitiveness through training, counseling, and mentoring.

Fishery technology development; The development of fishery technology for fishing communities is very important to be more effective and efficient in time, energy, and working capital for fishing communities in catching fish. It is time for the traditional care that fishermen use in catching fish to improve to make fishing communities, especially small fishermen and fisherman workers, empowered and independent. The traditional fishing equipment used so far has made it difficult for small fishermen and fishing laborers to compete with capital owners.

Fishermen's information system and market access; the existence of an information system and market access will make it easier for fishing communities to sell products to local, regional, and national markets through partnerships with the business world and supporting service providers. Strengthening fishermen's institutions; Strong fishing community institutions are very important so that the process of technology and information transfer, production, distribution, and marketing processes are well institutionalized by local conditions. Development of fishery supporting business facilities and infrastructure;

The development of fishery supporting facilities and infrastructure will determine the success of fishermen. Based on field research data, fishing communities on the southern coast of Gorontalo have difficulty getting fuel oil and storage facilities for their catch. The fishing community also complained about the difficulty of getting ice to preserve the caught fish. The presence of fisherman's fuel oil and ice factory in the fishing community will greatly help overcome the problems of the fishing community. Access to capital; The provision of business capital for fishing communities through the distribution of aid funds and soft loans to developing productive socio-economic activities is very helpful for fishing communities who have often been trapped in debt to moneylenders and ship owners. The availability of business capital also has the potential to foster an entrepreneurial spirit among fishing communities.

IV. CONCLUSION

The fishing communities on the southern coast of Gorontalo are classified into fishing entrepreneurs as boat owners, labor fishermen who work for investors or ship owners, and fishing rods fishermen who use small boats to fish on the coast. Fishing communities utilize coastal and marine resources to meet their daily needs, from building housing on the coast to

making a living based on coastal and marine resources. Although coastal and marine resources are so abundant, the problem of fishermen's poverty has not been fully resolved until now. This is due to many complex problems faced by fishing communities, namely: low education; low quality of human resources; low technology utilization; erratic weather factors; unavailability of special fuel oil for fishermen; the problem of storing fish and ice cubes to preserve fish.

The empowerment approach can be used to raise the dignity of fishing communities from poverty and powerlessness. Several fishing community empowerment programs that can be implemented on the southern coast of Gorontalo are procurement of community fishing boats; strengthening human resource capacity; fishery technology development; development of fisherman information systems and market access; strengthening of fishermen's institutions; development of fishery supporting business facilities and infrastructure; and access to capital.

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Cite this article as :

Selviyanti Kaawoan, Hasan Ayuba, "The Portraits of Fisher Households in South Coast of Gorontalo : An Empowerment Approach", *International Journal of Scientific Research in Science and Technology (IJSRST)*, Online ISSN : 2395-602X, Print ISSN : 2395-6011, Volume 9 Issue 2, pp. 147-155, March-April 2022. Available at doi : <https://doi.org/10.32628/IJSRST229228>
Journal URL : <https://ijsrst.com/IJSRST229228>