



ADDRESSING STRUCTURAL POVERTY IN KLUWUT VILLAGE FOR FISHERMEN FAMILIES

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Article info	ABSTRACT
<p>Corresponding Author:</p> <p>Tangguh Pratysto tangguhpratysto@lecturer.undip.ac.id Diponegoro University</p>	<p>Brebes Regency is one of the areas with the highest poverty rates in Central Java. In Kluwut Village, although many residents have relatively high incomes as fishermen, poverty still occurs due to suboptimal household financial management and low awareness of children's nutrition and health. This community service program aims to identify the causes of poverty with a multidimensional approach based on Amartya Sen's theory, including fundamental inability, lack of freedom, and inequality. The methods include field observation, interviews with the community and village officials, and secondary data analysis. The results of the study show that the economic potential of Kluwut Village from the fisheries sector is quite large. However, unhealthy financial practices such as the habit of going into debt and high stunting rates are still a problem. Intervention programs such as providing healthy food and "Posyandu" are considered ineffective due to weak supervision and limited budget. Therefore, financial education is needed for fishing families, strengthening stunting interventions, and validating nutritional measurement tools. Continuous collaboration between academics, local governments, and the private sector is required in order to overcome structural poverty and improve the quality of life of the people in Brebes.</p> <p>Keywords: <i>Poverty, Fishermen's Economy, Stunting, Brebes, Community Service</i></p>
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INTRODUCTION

This community service is based on a multidimensional approach to poverty. As Amartya Sen states, poverty is not just a lack of income; it includes three main pillars: basic capabilities, freedom, and inequality. First, from the aspect of basic capabilities, poverty is understood as the inability of individuals to meet basic needs such as health, education, and nutrition. The focus is on the quality of life that not only depends on the material aspect but also on fulfilling essential needs. Second, the aspect of freedom highlights that poverty is not only about limited resources, but also limited social and political freedom to determine life choices. Examples include limited access to public services and decent job opportunities. Third, inequality emphasizes the importance of justice in the distribution of resources and opportunities. Social and economic inequality can worsen poverty conditions, even though the community's average income is increasing (Sen, 1999).

Brebes Regency was chosen as the location for community service because it has several characteristics that reflect the problem of structural poverty. Brebes is one of the regencies with the highest poverty rate in Central Java. Dependence on the unstable agricultural sector, limited rural infrastructure, and the continued use of traditional agricultural methods are the main contributing factors. In addition, the disparity between the more developed coastal areas and the less developed inland areas also exacerbates the socio-economic conditions of the community.

Data from the Central Statistics Agency shows that in 2022, the population of Brebes reached 2,010,617 people, making it one of the most densely populated districts in Central Java. However, the poverty rate is still relatively high, at 15.78% in the same year. From an economic perspective, Brebes' economic structure is dominated by the agriculture, forestry, and fisheries sectors, contributing 30.10% to the Gross Regional Domestic Product (GRDP) in 2022 (BPS Brebes Regency, 2023). The manufacturing industry and wholesale and retail trade sectors contributed 17.90% and 15.90% respectively. Although economic growth reached 5.61% in the same year, this increase has not significantly overcome the existing social and economic disparities. Education and health indicators also show serious challenges. The Average Length of Schooling in Brebes Regency increased from 6.18 years in 2017 to 6.4 years in 2023, but this figure is still below the average for Central Java Province of 8.01 years. Meanwhile, life expectancy increased from 68.61 years in 2017 to 69.74 years in 2022, but it remains the lowest in the province (BPS Kabupaten Brebes, 2023).

Through this community service program, the team aims to use a scientific approach to identify the main factors causing poverty in Brebes Regency. It is hoped that this program will increase understanding and formulate targeted policy recommendations to overcome poverty sustainably.

METHOD

This program will be implemented through three main stages: preparation, implementation, evaluation, and dissemination of results. First, the preparation stage begins with identifying the target study areas, namely, villages with high poverty rates in Brebes Regency. After the area is determined, the team will coordinate with local community leaders and related parties. Data collection instruments, such as interview guidelines and relevant questionnaires, will also be designed at this stage.

Second, the implementation stage includes primary data collection activities through direct interviews with local communities, including vulnerable groups and poor households. In addition, the team will complement primary data with secondary data from various trusted sources, such as the Badan Pusat Statistik (BPS), Central Java BAPPEDA, Brebes BAPERLITBANGDA, and previous research reports. The collected data will then be analyzed qualitatively and quantitatively to identify patterns and root causes of poverty in the study area.

Third, in the evaluation and dissemination stage, after the analysis is complete, the team will evaluate the program's success based on previously determined indicators, such as increasing community understanding of the causes of poverty or potential proposed solutions. The results of this activity will be documented and published in a community service journal as a form of scientific dissemination.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Finding

The arrival of the community service team from Diponegoro University (UNDIP) to Kluwut Village aims to better understand the village's socio-economic conditions. The activity began with a discussion with village officials and continued with direct dialogue with the local community. In this initial stage, the UNDIP team diagnosed various problems faced by the village and attempted to provide possible initial solutions. One of the main problems conveyed by the village officials was the need to change the community's mindset. Although Kluwut Village is categorized as poor, most residents have relatively large incomes because most work as fishermen.

The work patterns of fishermen in this village are long-term, with one voyage lasting between 20 and 70 days. Kluwut Village has around 100 large ship owners, with each ship worth more than 5 billion rupiah and having an engine capacity of over 50 Gross Tons (GT). Most of these owners are native residents of the village. Each ship is usually crewed by around 30 Crew Members, who come from residents and immigrants. For one voyage that can last more than three months, ship logistics require a minimum cost of 1 billion rupiah. The income of crew members varies greatly, with the potential to reach up to 50 million rupiah if the sea catch is abundant. However, their average income is around 15 million rupiah per month.

Despite its high economic potential, one of the social problems that has emerged is the habit of fishing families relying on a bond or debt system while their heads of families are at sea. Even for basic necessities such as rice, many families get it through a debt system to loan sharks, who are generally known to the community as "Batak people." This debt repayment is usually done after the husband returns from the sea.

Another quite serious problem is the high stunting rate in this village. According to the village apparatus, the main cause of stunting is not solely economic factors but also the lack of concern from parents about providing nutritious food to their children. Although there is a stunting handling program targeting 177 children, the results are still not satisfactory. In the initial stage, intervention was carried out on 20 children, but only three children managed to get out of stunting status. This is due to an ineffective intervention system, where healthy food is only sent to homes without any supervision of consumption by the children concerned. Efforts to deal with stunting have been routinely carried out through monthly "Posyandu" activities that monitor children's nutritional conditions.

The "Rumah Anak" program, supported by the "Tanoto Foundation", was once run, but did not last long due to budget constraints. The village government also provided additional food assistance, but the results were still not optimal. One of the proposals from the village apparatus was to check the stunting measuring instrument, because it was suspected that the instrument used was no longer accurate, or the validity of the measurement was less precise.

Discussion

The study results show that although Kluwut Village is administratively classified as a poor village, it has complex socio-economic dynamics. This condition strengthens

Amartya Sen's view that poverty is measured not only by income but also by the lack of freedom to determine life socially and politically, as well as limitations in access to public services and overall quality of life (Sen, 1999). Economically, the people of Kluwut Village, especially fishermen and boat owners, have high-income potential. However, uneven economic distribution and dependence on informal economic practices such as the "bon" debt system cause social vulnerability to remain high. This indicates a gap between economic potential and household economic resilience, which is often trapped in a cycle of debt.

This phenomenon is also found in studies of fishing communities in other coastal areas in Indonesia, which show dependence on the debt system and weak household financial management. One of the important findings in this study is the gap between income and quality of life, especially regarding child health. The high rate of stunting in Kluwut Village, even though some of its residents have sufficient income, indicates that nutritional problems are not only economic issues, but also a culture of consumption and concern for children's health. This finding aligns with research stating that stunting in developing countries is often caused by parental behavioural factors and weak monitoring systems for nutritional intervention programs (Akombi et al., 2017).

In addition, the failure of intervention programs such as "Rumah Anak" and village government assistance emphasises the need to evaluate the effectiveness of community-based programs. Lack of supervision of nutritious food consumption and the absence of a participatory approach in program implementation reduce the positive impacts that should have been produced. This is in line with findings that emphasize that the success of stunting management programs is greatly influenced by the active role of families, effective communication, and cross-sector support (Nisbett et al., 2014).

Village officials' concerns about the accuracy of stunting measurement tools also highlight the importance of data validity in policy making. Inaccurate measurements can lead to mistargeting interventions, making stunting management ineffective. In this context, the technical capacity of field officers and the quality of measuring instruments are crucial aspects that need to be considered in implementing public health programs (WHO, 2017).

Overall, the socio-economic problems in Kluwut Village show the need for an interdisciplinary and multisectoral approach in addressing poverty and stunting. Interventions cannot only rely on material assistance, but also need to include education, assistance, and sustainable strengthening of community institutions.

CONCLUSION

Diponegoro University (UNDIP)'s visit to Kluwut Village successfully identified several major problems the community faced, especially in economic and health aspects. Although this village is classified as poor, many of its residents have high incomes from the fisheries sector, especially as fishermen. However, weak household financial management, especially the habit of going into debt during the fishing season, is a serious obstacle that needs to be addressed immediately. The high stunting rate in Kluwut Village also shows that children's health problems are not only caused by economic limitations, but also by low parental awareness in providing adequate

nutritional intake. The nutritional intervention program that has been implemented has not been effective, partly due to a lack of supervision and budget limitations.

Therefore, financial education needs to be done through socialisation and training in family financial management, so fishermen and their families can manage their income better and reduce dependence on the debt system. The nutritional intervention program must also be equipped with strict supervision to ensure healthy food is consumed by children in need. To have a more sustainable impact, revitalisation of “Posyandu” activities also needs to be strengthened with support from various parties, including academics and private institutions. In addition, validation of stunting measurement tools needs to be carried out to ensure the accuracy of child nutrition monitoring data. Ongoing collaboration between village governments, academics, and non-governmental organisations is essential in designing long-term, sustainable solutions to improve the welfare of the Kluwut Village community.

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