

# The Role of the Marine and Fisheries Office in Empowering Fishermen in Majene Regency

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**Abstract**—This research is based on the background of the stigma that the poor are always synonymous with fishermen and to see the extent of the role of the Marine and Fisheries Service in responding to poverty problems that hit fishermen in Majene Regency. This study aims to see how big the role of the local government, in this case the Department of Marine Affairs and Fisheries, and the inhibiting factors that can hinder the effectiveness of the role of the Department of Marine Affairs and Fisheries in empowering fishermen in Majene Regency. This writing uses a descriptive method. Data collection techniques using interviews, observation and documentation then the data obtained will be analyzed using qualitative techniques. The concepts used include the concept of local government and the concept of community empowerment. The results of this study indicate that; 1) The role of the Department of Marine Affairs and Fisheries in Majene Regency is manifested in several work programs, namely providing the capacity of small fishermen, Facilitating the Formation and Development of Small Fishermen Institutions, Implementing Facilitation for Funding Assistance, Financing Assistance, Business Partnerships, KUSUKA Registration and Fishermen Insurance. 2) Factors that hamper the role of the Marine and Fisheries Service in empowering fishermen, namely; budget, level of awareness of fishermen and fishing habits.

**Keywords**—*role, empowerment, fishermen*

## I. INTRODUCTION

In running the government system in Indonesia, one of the functions carried out by the government is empowerment that is to undertake various innovations by using human resources as a driving force supported by natural resources to meet the need to lead to independence. One of the government policies applied in implementing the empowerment function is to regulate the people's economy.

This is considerably important because with the existence of a mutual economic system of the people,

it is hoped that it can foster independence and freedom for the people to fulfill their daily needs and improve their welfare. There are still many fishing communities who live in poverty having not been able to improve their welfare.

Poverty has become a serious issue which up to now still becomes a problem for the life of the fishing community in particular. In the course of the decades of development, the general picture of the fishermen's life is poor with slum houses which is far from sufficient. Besides, the businesses tried to run by the fishermen which relate to marine sector have not happened well. This fact is of course very ironic, considering that poverty actually occurs amid the abundance of our fishery products.

The poverty afflicting fishermen's life is due to some ongoing complex factors. These factors are not only related to fluctuations in fishing seasons, limited human resources, capital and access, or exploitative fish trade networks for fishermen as producers, but also due to the negative impact of fisheries modernization which encourages excessive depletion of marine resources. The further impact caused by those factors felt by the fishermen is the decline in their level of education and difficulty in obtaining the fish. The results of studies on the level of living welfare among fishing communities have shown that poverty and socio-economic disparities or income inequality are crucial problems faced by fishermen and are not easy to encounter [1].

The modernization of fisheries, which is popularly recognized as the "blue revolution", has actually classified group of people into (1) the rich and very rich; and (2) the middle, poor and very poor groups. Quantitatively, the second group is the largest fishing community.

By heeding the structure of the fishing community, the most suitable way for the fishermen's welfare is to lift their dignity from their social structure as laborers

to become owners of the capital or market masters by compassing the existing social structure of fishing institutions such as: boats, fishing gear and boat crews as well as fishermen empowerment concepts that can be carried out.

Socio-economic disparities and poverty in fishing communities have formed stratification, although this does not lead to social popularization based on class lines because these gaps can still be bridged and neutralized strongly through existing traditional institutions.

It is difficult for them to escape from the shackles of poverty because they are plagued by several limitations in the quality of human resources, access and control of technology, markets and capital. Up to now, policies and implementation of development programs for people in coastal areas are still not optimal in breaking the chains of poverty and improving their welfare [2].

[3] Describes poverty as a condition that occurs as a result of situations of injustice, uncertainty, inequality, and dependence in the structure of society. According to Chambers, there are five elements that cause poverty which are powerlessness, vulnerability, physical weakness, poverty and isolation. The cause of poverty is then termed by the Chamber as a deprivation trap.

Majene Regency geographically is located in a coastal area where there are many fishing communities, therefore, the community is dominated by traditional fishermen or small-scale fishermen whose fishing facilities are mostly small motorized boats or coastal fishermen which most of them have no fishing gear. This greatly affects the catch and the income of the fishermen. These traditional fishermen only carry out fishing activities with the aim of meeting the necessities of life as so it can be inferred that they are not optimally empowered and play an important role in increasing regional income.

It is a homework for the local government, especially the Department of Marine Affairs and Fisheries of Majene Regency to empower the number of traditional fishermen who initially catch fish only to fulfill their daily needs by making fishermen or the marine and fisheries sector become one of the largest contributors to PAD (Local Government Revenue) in Majene Regency like the tourism sector and the other sectors.

The local government is actively and continuously prioritizing a program related to fishermen empowerment called blue revolution; one of which is by including at least 85 fish processing business actors in the Finishing Furniture training in 2019. In Regional Regulation No. 21 of 2015 of Majene Regency concerning the Protection and Empowerment of Fishermen, it is explained that the government is obliged to provide protection related to increasing

economic welfare. Economic protection regarded is a protection related to improving welfare by providing facilities for fishermen and fish cultivators to obtain physical assistance. This is to support the existence of people whose livelihoods are fishermen in Majene Regency as a place having a large coastal area. However, in its implementation, there are still many fishing communities who do not get physical assistance for fishing such as boats and the lack of information obtained by the fishing community regarding training activities and assistance programs held by the government. This case certainly remains a questions of the actual role played by the local governments, in particular Department of Marine Affairs and Fisheries of Majene Regency in empowering fishing communities.

Based on the background described above concerning on the issues occurred in the field, the writer was interested in conducting research in Majene Regency related to the Empowerment of the Fishing Communities.

## II. LITERATURE REVIEW

### A. *The Concepts of Local Government*

Based on Article 18 Paragraph (1) of the 1945 Constitution of the Republic of Indonesia, the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia is divided into provincial areas which are in further divided into regencies and cities. Provinces, regencies and cities have local governments which are regulated by Law no. 23 of 2014 on Regional Government.

Next, the Article 1 (2) of Law (23) of 2014 [4] on Regional Government states that regional government is the administration of government affairs by the Regional Government and the Regional People's Representative Council according to the broadest possible principle of autonomy in the system and principles of the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia as referred to the 1945 Constitution of the Republic of Indonesia.

Local governments, which are a sub-system of the national government administration system, have the authority to regulate and manage their own households. The authority to regulate and manage this household contains three main things, to wit: (1) giving assignment and authority to complete a task that has been submitted to the Regional Government; (2) giving trust and authority to think about, take the initiative and determine for themselves the ways of accomplishing the task; and (3), in an effort to deem to take initiatives and make decisions, the community must be involved either directly or through DPRD (Regional People's Representative Council).

### B. *Concept of Community Empowerment*

Conceptually, empowerment comes from the word 'power' which means ability to direct or influence someone's acts or behaviors. Power is often linked to

our ability to get others to do what we want, regardless of their wants and interests

In relation to the concept of community empowerment, there have been numbers of ideas discussed by distinguished experts. One of them is Payne, who argues that empowerment is primarily aimed at helping clients gain the power to make decisions and determine the actions they will take related to themselves, including reducing the effects of personal and social barriers in taking action. This is done through the confident phase to use the power he/she has transferred from his/her environment [13].

### *C. Characteristics and Culture of the Fishing Community*

Fisherman is a term for people who daily work to catch fish or other biota that live on the bottom of pond or surface of the water in which it can be fresh, brackish or marine waters. In developing countries such as in Southeast Asia or in Africa, there are still many fishermen who use conventional equipment to catch fish. Fishermen in developed countries usually use modern equipment and large vessels equipped with sophisticated technology [5].

In Indonesia, fishing communities are one of the groups of people who are considered to be absolutely poor, even the poorest among the poor (the poorest of the poor; [6]. Various studies have also shown that the condition of fishermen, especially small-scale fishermen in Indonesia, is at a marginal level [5,7-9].

In simple terms, fishing communities have different characteristics from other communities, including:

- Fishing communities are homogeneous in a sense of livelihoods, values and culture, as well as in attitudes and behavior.
- Tend to have a tough personality.
- Have tolerant characters towards others
- Have a relatively high sexual desire
- The relationship between members is more intimate and has a high sense of help.
- Tend to rise their voice when talking

Fishermen have their own characteristics in coping resources that are still open access. This such characteristics of resources cause fishermen to move around to get maximum results, which in turn creates a greatly high risk element. This risky resource condition makes fishermen have a tough, decisive and open character [10].

### III. RESEARCH METHOD

This research used a qualitative approach to analyze the role of local government in empowering fishing communities in Majene regency. This research had the characteristics of describing an actual situation. However, the report did not only include a form of report, but also an incident without a scientific interpretation. The data obtained was then examined to gain an understanding of the phenomena raised for in-depth research using descriptive methods.

Data collection techniques used were observation, interviews, and documentation which was subsequently analyzed using qualitative techniques. The informant in this study was a member of the participant group who acts as a director and translator of cultural contents or actors directly involved with the research problem. The heading informants were determined by employing a method of purposive sampling technique, to wit a subjective sampling technique with a specific purpose or purpose under a deep consideration that the informants taken have the required information for the research being carried out.

As for the informants in this study were the Head of the Marine and Fisheries Department, Head of the Facilities and Infrastructure Section of the Marine and Fisheries Department, Head of the Data and Information Section of the Marine and Fisheries Department, Head of Banggae Sub-District, Head of East Banggae Sub-District, Head of Pangali-Ali Village, Labuang and Baurung Village, fishing community and field extension workers. These informants would be added in accordance with the case flow developed by the snowball method, a method for identifying, selecting and taking samples in a network or a continuous chain of relationships.

The data analysis used was qualitative as an inductive method analyzing the data based on the data obtained. According to [11] the analysis consists of three streams of activity that occur simultaneously, including: data reduction, data presentation, drawing conclusions / verification.

### IV. DISCUSSION

#### *A. The Role of the Marine Affairs and Fisheries Department in Empowering Fishermen in Majene Regency*

The role of the Marine and Fisheries Department in an effort to realize the empowerment of fishing communities can be seen in the Regional Regulation of Majene Regency No. 21 of 2015 [12] on the protection and empowerment of fishermen which is stated in article 1 paragraph 7 that empowerment is an effort made by the government and private sector to increase the role of fishermen in the context of improve welfare and standard of living.

This indicates that the regional government is obliged to make an effort to assist fishermen in

improving their standard of living which is realized by the regional government through the main tasks and functions of the Marine and Fisheries Department, including: implementing guidance for increasing marine and fishery production, optimally utilizing marine fisheries infrastructure, guiding and developing the fishing infrastructure, implementing marine and freshwater fishing technology, as well as licensing services in the field of capture fisheries. The main duties and functions of the Marine and Fisheries Department are submitted to several work programs as follows:

TABLE I. TABLE LIST OF PROGRAMS AND ACTIVITIES OF REGIONAL APPARATUS WORK PLANS 2021

Program	Target	Activity	Target
Empowerment of Small-scale Fishermen in Regency / City	Increasing in capture fisheries production as of 7%	Providing capacity for small fishermen	Increasing the Capacity of Small Fishermen
		Implementation of Facilitation for the Establishment and Development of Small-scale Fishermen Institutions	The Formation and Development of Small Fishermen Groups
		Implementation of Facilitation of Funding Assistance, Financing Assistance, Business Partnership	Number of Groups that get Facilitated Funding Assistance and partner with Banking Institutions
		Registration of KUSUKA and Fishermen's Insurance	Number of e-KUSUKA Cards and Fishermen's Insurance Distributed to Fishermen

<sup>a</sup>. Source: the Department Marine and Fisheries

Based on the table above, it can be seen that those fishermen community empowerment programs carried out by the Marine and Fisheries Department are a form of effort of the government to improve the welfare of fishing communities. The program above is carried out in order to optimize the Blue Revolution program as a prioritized program of the Regional Government of the

Majene Regency for the 2016-2021 period in empowering fishing communities.

This was also expressed by one of the informants saying:

*"The first thing to be acknowledged is that the issue of maritime affairs has shifted to the province, so the district government gets limited information if related to maritime issues. The regency's authority is more focused on land fisheries such as freshwater cultivation, brackish water fish, sea water fish, and ponds. We are more focused on freshwater fish and brackish water fish farming because the 'karamba' system is still very small due to budget constraints. This situation gives a very significant impact to fishermen as the majority of our populations is fishermen. There is actually an empowerment program for fishermen, such as training focused on whether the fishermen themselves or fishermen's wives for fish processing; socialization regarding the policy or rules mainly concerned on the fishermen cards and fisherman insurance which are carried out every year; guidance for fishermen, and assistance for fishing equipment and infrastructure".*

(An interview with Head of Marine and Fisheries Department, Majene Regency, on 30th December 2020)

Based on the results of interviews with the Head of the Marine and Fisheries Department, there have been efforts to empower fishing communities from the local government, which are technically implemented by the Agency, such as conducting coaching and training of fishermen groups, training and coaching fishermen's wives in fish processing, socializing policies regarding fisherman identity cards and fisherman insurance cards, group guidance through extension workers and assistance for facilities and infrastructure whose budget is obtained through funds of APBD (Regional Revenue and Expenditure Budget).

As a regional apparatus unit, the Department of Marine Affairs and Fisheries realizes that the effort to empower fishing communities is not only the responsibility of the Department but also all stakeholders down to the sub-district level as the regional apparatus unit who understand the most the fishing community's condition in their area. Focusing on this reason, the involvement of the heads of sub-district, village, and extension workers is a supporting factor in optimizing local government efforts to empower fishing communities. As stated by one of the following informants:

*"The role of the government in initiating and exploring all government activities related to the blue revolution, considering fishermen is a part of the vision and mission of the Mejene Regency named Blue Revolution is how to empower and improve welfare in coastal areas. In relation to*

*this role, we, the sub-district government, certainly never stop coordinating and communicating with each stakeholder, especially in the area of the Banggae both sub-district and the village area. The positions of these 6 sub-districts and 2 villages are Pangali-Ali as a coastal area, new sub-district, Rangas village and Palipi soreang village, while the rest are on the mainland. What I mentioned earlier is that even though there are coastal areas where the stakeholder is included in the Department of the marine and fisheries, all program carried out are originated from the department. Whenever there are activities being carried out and there is notification coming in, we will directly give a response; we support the program, if necessary, we will be always ready to help. We really appreciate the programs that can revive the empowerment pattern and increase the economic status of the fishermen, especially in this current condition of covid-19 outbreak that extremely affects the fishermen's lives. Due to the demands of life, they still have to go to sea. There is still coordination if there are activities reported to the sub-district"*

(Interview with Head of Banggae Sub-district, 7th January 2021)

From the information aforementioned, it is obvious that the local government is moving all the stakeholders down to the village level to participate, as what had been done by the Head of Banggae Sub-district who provided support through responses and activities carried out by fishermen, one of which was by attending training events aimed at fishermen. Besides, it is also known, as explained, that the local government must also be present as a supporter as followed by Soharto in the empowerment approach like providing guidance and support so that the community is able to carry out its role and life tasks. Empowerment must be able to support the community so as it would not be getting weaker and marginalized. With the support from the local government, fishermen should be able to take advantage of all the assistances provided.

#### *B. Inhibiting Factors faced by the Department of Marine Affairs and Fisheries in Empowering the Fishing Community in Majene Regency*

In carrying out its main duties and functions, the Department of Marine and Fisheries experiences several obstacles which certainly hinder the implementation of its main tasks and functions. Some of these inhibiting factors include:

##### *1) Budget and binding rules*

Budgets and binding rules are the main obstacles for local governments to empower fishing communities in Majene Regency, as portrayed in this following interview:

*"In the East Banggae sub-district, the local government has been running the fishermen empowerment program even though it has not been maximized because of the refocusing of funds due to the Covid pandemic so that some budgets that should be maximum for all sectors including fishermen have to be slightly reduced, but God willing, the budget management will be optimized in the future. Due to a program called blue revolution, the government, through this policy, has paid more attention to fishermen".*

(An interview with secretary of East Banggae Sub-district, on 8th January 2021).

In accordance with the results of the interview described above, it is known that throughout 2020 amid the pandemic condition, several regional budgets that were previously devoted to empowering fishing communities have to refocus funds to deal with this covid-19 pandemic, which causes local government have less efforts for realizing the fishermen community empowerment program.

##### *2) Level of awareness of the Fishing Community*

The low level of awareness of the fishing community is also one of the causes of obstruction of the local government efforts to empower fishing communities, as quoted in the following interview:

*"There is also fisherman insurance provided, but many fishermen don't care; they will only look for it if there is an accident at sea. Actually, they have not yet fully understood the benefits of insurance; that it is provided for their own and their family safety. Besides, when it comes to deal with some stuffs related to the insurance arrangement at office, they'd rather ask their wives to come to the office; one of the most reasons is that they feel embarrassed, feeling inferior due to their financial condition (poor)".*

(An interview with Head of Facility and Infrastructure Section on 28th December 2020)

Considering the interview described, it is clear that there are still many fishermen who are not aware of the importance of a fisherman insurance card, fishing communities will seek fishermen insurance assistance if they have an accident which is too late. In addition, in matters of administrative management of the facility and infrastructure assistance proposal documents, fishermen usually only send their wives to go to the Marine Affairs and Fisheries Department without wanting to be directly involved with the local government. As a result, the fishermen get confused every time they deal with administrative issues regarding the aid proposals because they never try to involve directly with the mechanism. The hope of the local government to be more attached emotionally with the fishing community is hampered because fishermen are too indolent to come the office to

consult about problems they are experiencing and things they need.

### 3) *The habitual pattern of the fishing community*

The habitual patterns of the community intended is recurring routines that are often done by fishing communities. Several activities of the fishing community have apparently resulted in suboptimal efforts by the local government in implementing empowerment programs. As quoted in the following interview:

*"The obstacle that is often encountered by the government is usually when the fishermen go out to sea for long period of time, it usually delays group meetings. This, of course, gives a very significant impact to market their fishing product like shredded fish must be sold quickly to avoid the product spoil. Business development requires large capital and training".*

(An interview with the Secretary of Labuang Village, on 12th January 2021)

The interview result quoted above clearly shows the fishing community who go to sea outside the Majene Regency area which usually take months could potentially hamper the process of group deliberation which then affects the fishermen group in dealing with some matters like experiencing delay in proposals for assistance to be submitted to the Marine Affairs and Fisheries Department.

## V. CONCLUSION

The role of the Department of Marine Affairs and Fisheries in empowering the fishing communities is carried out based on its main tasks and functions, including the implementation of guidance for increasing marine and fishery production, optimally utilizing marine fisheries infrastructure, fostering and developing fishing infrastructure, implementing marine and freshwater fishing technology, licensing services in the capture fisheries sector that are then actualized through several empowerment programs such as training and fostering both for the fishermen

group itself and the fishermen's wives, mentoring extension workers in processing requests for proposal assistance and assistance for the provision of facilities and infrastructure.

Some of the inhibiting factors that become the control of the regional government in maximizing the empowerment program for fishing communities include budgets and binding rules, the level of awareness and the habitual pattern of the fishing community.

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