

Concept and Methodology of People's Participation in Agricultural Extension

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ABSTRAK

Dalam penyuluhan pertanian, terdapat perubahan berarti, antara lain, adanya desentralisasi kewenangan pelaksanaan dari pusat ke daerah, pergeseran pendekatan dari orientasi komoditas ke orientasi agribisnis yang terintegrasi. Namun, intinya tetap sama: membantu para petani untuk menolong dirinya sendiri dalam upaya mengatasi berbagai persoalan. Untuk keberhasilan suatu program dalam penyuluhan, diperlukan adanya partisipasi. Partisipasi yang sejati adalah melibatkan masyarakat petani dari perencanaan hingga pengambilan keputusan.

Introduction

During the last five years, agricultural extension in Indonesia has undergone substantial changes with regard to its basic operational organization and policy. These changes have been pushed by the increasing demand for establishing a more effective agricultural extension system that can keep abreast with the fast growing agricultural development. The following are some of the significant changes:

- (1) Decentralization of extension operational authority from the central to the local (district) government, including the authority of the administration of extension workers.
- (2) Shifting of approach from commodity-based to integrated, agribusiness-oriented extension system.
- (3) Establishment of a structured research-extension linkage at the local level.

In spite of these organizational changes, the mandate of agricultural extension remains the same, that is to promote a non-formal education for farmers (including fishermen) and their families. The mission is to assist farmers to help themselves in solving their problems by facilitating their learning and action through the provision of technical

information, access to development facilities, and legal support for farming and business activities.

The agricultural extension in Indonesia is an entirely government-administered system. Although some private extension works are in operation. Their existence is very limited and has never considered as a part of the national agricultural extension system. The government sets up and controls the extension organization and provides all facilities, funds, man power, and logistic support needed.

Farmers' group, including farmer associations, commodity groups, cooperatives, credit societies, young farmer clubs, and so forth, are effective institutional devices in the creation of a demand driven agricultural research and extension system. Extension can play an important role in helping to organise these farmer groups, which then become important mechanisms in accelerating technology dissemination and imparting technical and managerial skills and knowledge to farmers who participate in these organizations.

What is People's Participation?

Theoretically, the most effective channels for people's participation are the organizations set up

for this purpose, but the literature makes a distinction between the "standard" or the top-down and the "participatory" rural organizations.

The former refers to those organizations involved more in the implementation of already planned programs than in planning them and deciding on the allocation of the consequent resources and gains. The involvement of residents in community programs is mainly along implementation and maintenance. The programs being implemented at the village level are packaged programs whose planning and decision-making processes were done by high level policy makers from the different agencies and brought to the community for implementation.

The standard procedure is to organize groups at the village level to carry out these programs, hence, it is not unusual to have an organization, a group or a brigade for each program designed at the national level. Quite often, there are overlapping, multiple membership and leadership positions in the community.

In the usual organizations, the following types of participation can be observed at the local level:

- (1) Membership in community organizations set up for the mobilization of the community vis-à-vis agency programs (note that the term used here is mobilization).
- (2) Contribution of personal labor, materials and monetary assistance to infrastructure, health and sanitation projects etc.
- (3) Patronage of agency-initiated institutions such as nursery schools, credit and consumer cooperatives.
- (4) Attendance at community assemblies called to disseminate information on program implementation plans and attendance at skills-training seminars.
5. Cognitive participation in terms of being recipients of information about community activities.

In these instances, people have limited access to decision-making before a planned program is ready for implementation. If at all, their only participation in the pre-planning stage is probably as

respondents to a survey on their needs and problems. During program implementation, only community leaders have anything to say about the allocation of resources emanating from community programs.

From the points of view of people participation advocates, the above-mentioned "involvement" are not genuine participation. Hollnsteiner (1979) identifies six different modes of people's participation representing different degrees of direct exercise of power by the people:

- (1) Local elite decision-making mode: (a) solid-citizen educated groups appointed by outside authorities (people are minimally involved, if at all, in decision-making); (b) appointed local leaders in the governments bureaucracy (although people involvement is still minimal, official character of leaders' authority encourages people to join in program activities as followers or recipients of the benefits entailed).
- (2) People acting in an advisory capacity to elites in authority: (a) planners in ex post facto consultation with people's groups (people's involvement in discussion of plan after they have been formulated allows few genuine options; participation exists but only in token fashion); (b) planners in consultation with people's groups from the beginning of plan formulation (this gives people a significant share in decision-making but planners still control the process).
- (3) People sharing in or controlling local political decisions affecting their lives: (a) people have one or two minority representatives on a decision-making board (people's participation is significant because they share in decision-making by having an official vote on a local government board); (b) people have the majority representation on a decision-making board (people have attained full participation in controlling the actions of the official decision-making body).

Throughout the world, there is growing evidence that when rural people organize for their own benefit, much can be achieved. The Participa-

tory Approach to agricultural extension takes advantage of this principle, and emphasises significant participation by those who are to be affected by the agricultural extension system. At its best, this includes participation by personnel of agricultural research and service organizations, as well as farmers.

Implementation of Farmer's Participation in Agricultural Extension

As a result of the large number of farm families (about 27 million) and the limited number of extension workers, it is impossible to approach farmers on individual basis. Group approach is therefore used as basic extension strategy. This approach is effective because the Indonesian community is very group-oriented in many aspects. Community actions are very much determined by group decisions.

In 1998 there are administrated 354,881 Farmer Groups (Kelompok Tani), and the total of members of those groups are 11,797,644 farmers. They are now in existence throughout the country. Those Farmer Groups classified into: (1) the starting farmer's group (Pemula) 123,793 groups; (2) the first developing farmer's group (Lanjut) 119,971 groups; (3) the second developing group (Madya) 73,814 groups; and (4) the developed (established) group (Utama) 23,016 groups. The rest are still new and non-certificate Farmer Groups.

The Farmer Group, which is initiated and formed by the farmers, usually consists of 20 to 50 members and led by a chairman – referred to as Contact Farmer (Kontak Tani)– who is elected by and from among the group members. A Contact-Farmer is usually a successful, progressive and better-educated member of the group who is viewed as a partner of the extension worker and is informally considered as a voluntary change agent. As a community leader, the Contact-Farmer (Kontak-Tani) plays an important role in mobiliz-

ing the group members to implement extension activities and to integrate them in rural community development programs.

Farmer groups and Contact-Farmers are the essential social institutions within the agricultural extension framework in Indonesia. They are considered to be the foundation of agricultural extension activities. For this reason I should like to expose and elaborate several methodologies or approaches which related to the implementation of people's participation, which have being already implemented in Indonesia i.e.: (1) Pusat Pelatihan Pertanian dan Pedesaan Swadaya (P4S) or Farmer's Agricultural and Rural Training Center (FAR-TC); (2) Sekolah Lapang Pengendalian Hama Terpadu (SLPHT) or Integrated Pest Management (IPM); (3) Pembinaan Peningkatan Pendapatan Petani-Nelayan Kecil (P4K) or Income Generating Project for Marginal Farmers and Landless (IGP); (4) Desentralisasi Penyuluhan Pertanian dan Kehutanan (DPPK) or Decentralized Agricultural and Forestry Extension Project (DAFEP); and (5) Latihan dan Kunjungan (LAKU) or Training and Visit System (T&V). ●

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