

Community Empowerment Construction towards Independent Rural Areas

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Abstract: This research attempted to identify the causes of rural areas dependency on government and formulate the construction of community empowerment towards independent rural areas. The research was conducted in *Garut* District because this district has the lowest life expectancy rate and the highest amount of under-developed rural areas in West Java. The research was using the constructivism research method through an in-depth interview with informants, focus group discussion and an observation as well in research site. The informants of this research were: Head of Community Empowerment Agency (BPMD) *Garut* District and staffs also sub-district heads and village heads in several under-developed rural areas. The analysis was conducted by adopting *Saemaul Undong* community empowerment model in South Korea. The reason of rural areas dependency on government in terms of rural development are; the community empowerment program is still partial; rural development indicators are changing; the large number of rural government superiors; fund policies reduce community initiatives and roles in rural development. The construction of rural community empowerment towards independent rural areas in *Garut* regency is carried out by the establishment of community economic institution in the form of *BUMDes* (village-owned enterprise).

1 INTRODUCTION

Joko Widodo and Jusuf Kala's election as President and Vice President of Republic of Indonesia in 2014 gave new hope for rural development in Indonesia by the enactment of nine priorities called *Nawa Cita* program. One of *Nawa Cita* program is developing Indonesia by strengthening the regions and villages within the Republic of Indonesia's framework. This program was implemented by forming Ministry of Village, Development of Disadvantaged Regions, and Transmigration, the main duty of this ministry is to facilitate rural development through community empowerment in order to reach independent villages.

The village existence as a whole community which has the right of origin to manage its property based on customs and can manage its own household is regulated in Law No. 6 of 2014 concerning Village. Clause 18 of Law No. 6 of 2014 states the village authority includes the village administration authority, the implementation of village governance, village community development, and empowerment of village communities based on community initiatives, the

rights of origin and the village customs. Based on this, all villages are enabled to make policy and implement policies that have been made at the same time for the development in the village which is concerned by exploring and utilizing development resources owned by the village.

In order to carry out those authorities, villages should have allocation, and the allocation is obtained from village revenues. On clause 72 (1) law number 6 of 2014 states that village revenues are sourced from: (a) village original income consists of business results, assets, self-help and participation, mutual cooperation, and other village original income, (b) allocation of State Revenue and Expenditure Budget, (c) part of local taxes and district/city retribution fees, (d) the allocation of village funds which is part of the balancing funds received by the district / city, (e) Provincial, District/City Revenue and Expenditure Budget, (f) grants and non-binding donations from third parties, and (g) other legal village income.

Indonesia has more than 74,754 villages (Regulation of the Minister of Home Affairs 56/2015), and some of them are classified as disadvantaged villages (26 % or 19.436 Villages). In Presidential Regulation No. 131 of 2015 concerning

the Determination of Disadvantaged Regions, *Garut* District and *Sukabumi* District in West Java Province are still classified as disadvantaged regions. Another indicator whether a region is disadvantaged or not is can be seen from the life expectancy of the area's people. *Garut* regency is the district that has the lowest life expectancy in West Java Province in the period of 1996-2013. In addition, the number of disadvantaged villages in *Garut* District is considerably high, so this research will be more focused on *Garut* District of West Java Province.

As a follow-up to Law No. 6 of 2014 and the implementation of point 3 of the *Nawa Cita* above, the government has provided financial assistance to villages throughout Indonesia that come from the State Budget Revenues totalling 20 trillion (2015), 46.98 trillion (2016) and 60 trillion (2017). The funding is intended as a stimulus for infrastructure development and economy so the development activities in the village can grow and develop in terms of physical and non-physical. Hence, a strong and independent village will be achieved in turn as the basis of national development.

The efforts to empower rural communities through financial assistance from the government have actually begun since the beginning of the Five Year I Development in 1969 during the *Soeharto* regime with the *BANDES INPRES* program (Presidential Instruction on Village Assistance), *IDT* (Presidential Instruction on Increasing Poverty Reduction) and other programs. Those efforts have carried out in the context of empowering and self-reliance of village communities through and among other things, transforming the structure of community social activities, economic and institutional which was originally traditional and agrarian patterned towards a modern patterned economic structure.

Contrary with description above, the construction of a community-based society empowerment model is needed to achieve an independent and sustainable village community structure particularly in the economic field. In particular, this research will answer these questions: (1) Why is there still a dependency of village government to government and local government in execution of village development especially on economic aspect? (2) How is the suitable community empowerment construction in order to create an independent society?

2 LITERATURE REVIEW

The research on community empowerment within its relation to create independent village actually has been done by many government observers and academics in Indonesia, such as (Fuad Muchlis, 2009), (Abdul Wahid, 2006), (Sony Kristanto 2009), (Erizal Jamal, 2009), (Valerina Darwis dan I Wayan Rusastra, 2011), and (Agus Sugiyono, 2012). Several main issues which are often becoming the theme of research namely Sectoral Empowerment, Empowerment Strategies, and Empowerment Policy Implementation.

Based on previous literature view, there are several main issues which are often becoming the theme of the research namely Sectoral Empowerment, Empowerment Strategies, and Empowerment Policy Implementation. There is also a difference from the results summary of previous research which can be seen that most of the research was conducted on empowerment strategy aspects. The position of this research is in the same aspect. However, what makes the difference is when the previous research constructing the village community empowerment strategy was carried out using a top-down approach where empowerment was carried out based on the regional government perspective. While on this research, construction of community empowerment of village in *Garut* District based on input from society then constructed by researcher as recommendation for local government even become model of village community empowerment to independent village.

3 METHODOLOGY

This study uses a constructivist descriptive method, which is an approach that confirms the assumption that individuals always try to understand the world in which they live and work. The constructivism approach is used in this study due to the complexity of the view and the understanding of the meaning of the rural community empowerment towards the independence of the village. So it is demanded to seek meaning more broadly than to narrow the meaning through categorization and ideas, explaining and illustrating why and how the research problem takes place.

The informants of this study were officials and the community determined by purposive sampling consisting of:

- (1) Head of the Village Community Empowerment Agency (BPMD) of Garut District;
- (2) Head of Banyuwesmi Sub-district, sub-district with the most disadvantaged villages;
- (3) Head of the Division of Institutional Strengthening and Community Participation Development;
- (4) Head of the Division of Indigenous Empowerment and Community Social Culture Development;
- (5) Head of Community Economic Business Empowerment Division;
- (6) Head of the Division of Village Government;
- (7) Head of Community Empowerment Village Section;
- (8) Head of Social Welfare Section;
- (9) Head of Sub-division of Community Participation and Village Profile Data Stabilization;
- (10) Head of Sub-division of Socio-Cultural Development;
- (11) Head of Sub-division of Economic Business Development and Financial Institutions;
- (12) Head of Sub-division of Production Development and Marketing of Business Results;
- (13) Head of Sub-division of Village Government Facilitation;
- (14) Head of Sub-division of Village Financial, Asset and Development Management;
- (15) Some Village Heads which become locus of research;
- (16) Civilian whose determination uses snowball techniques.

Data were collected through in-depth interviews of the informants as mentioned above either individually or collectively (focus group discussion), while data analysis was carried out by triangulation.

4 ANALYSIS

4.1 Reasons behind Village Dependency to Local Governments in Economic Aspects

In this study, the reason for the village dependency on the government in the economic aspects will be analysed based on the opinion of (Adisasmita, 1999) who stated that community empowerment is an effort to use and manage rural communities more effectively and efficiently, based on:

- a. Input aspects (Human resources, fund, infrastructure, data, plan, technology);
- b. Process aspects (implementation, monitoring and supervision);
- c. Output aspects (goal achievement, effectiveness and efficiency)

Based on in-depth interview with informants, valuable information related to these three aspects was obtained. The high number of responsible parties in community empowerment, instead of raises some fundamental problems that ultimately lead to villages becoming more dependent on the government, both central and regional. There is a pattern error that is applied, so the number of parties and the amount of budget disbursed are not proportional to the welfare of the village community. One of the reasons is that the village community empowerment program is carried out by many components and institutions which are implemented partially, without seeing the unique potential in each village. Village supervisors in implementing community empowerment are: Ministry of Home Affairs, Ministry of Village, Development of Disadvantaged Regions, and Transmigration, Provincial Government, District/City Government, Village Community Empowerment Agency, and Head of Sub-district. Overlapping programs and policies often occur in the village community empowerment process, so village policy is eroded by central policy. The village is only used as the object, for the sake of certain parties. In the end the village remained independent and heavily dependent on government assistance. The concept of independent village is just a discourse and finished on paper alone.

Even indicators of independent villages are set by many standards (self-sufficient villages, independent villages, developed villages) by different components. There is also a new nomenclature, namely the village building. The concept of village building is directed to the village authority which benefits the village and its people, in the sense of entering into villages such as village roads, village bridges, village infrastructure, and touching the village community. The role of the government present in the village is included in the concept of building villages. The development of rural areas was born. The parties who can cooperate in realizing a building village, including the province, or the Regional House of Representatives, can be private sector, it can also be from the local government. Coordination is needed here, so that the ideals of realizing a building village can be achieved and in accordance with the mandate of the Law.

The concept of village building is in line with the village fund program distributed by the central government to all villages in Indonesia. With this village fund, it actually raises new problems, for example, the assumption that the central government is stronger and more powerful. It seems that villages are much less powerful. The community is increasingly distant in the presence of village funds. Some cases occur such as village roads here already planned with village funds. All of sudden, aspiration comes from local government, so the village succumbed because village planning can be easily adjusted and directed to other programs. This case shows how powerless the village is, whereas the village building will be actualized if the village has become more empowered. It cannot be denied that there are several people who think that village funds already exist so that the community does not need to help, just to see the development in the village without being able to participate in the development. Still, society is just an object, yet it cannot be a subject that determines the success of development.

Another problem that arises is the readiness of the village to receive this huge amount of fund. Need human resources who are reliable and accustomed to managing village funds. The biggest difficulty that will often be felt is when accountability and facing the examiner, in this case is the Supreme Audit Agency (*BPK*), related to the allocation of village funds received from the central government. Meanwhile, like it or not, village funds are in the form of money that the village has to spend, according to the planned needs. The village cannot receive aid in the form of goods because of the difficulty of accountability. Even if in the form of goods, it must be in the form of a grant from a legal entity.

4.2 Rural Community Economic Empowerment Construction towards Independent Villages in Garut District

By now, the government is incessantly embarking on the fourth point of *Nawa Cita*, which is development starting from the village. Economic aspects, community empowerment in village are carried out by local government and government through the forming of village-owned enterprise (*BUMDes*) assisted by village government with the expectation can be a stimulation of community economic movement in village.

The eagerness to create independent village constrained by these rules: one of the criteria of independent village is to have *BUMDes*. Aside from infrastructure grant, there must be community empowerment through *BUMDes*. In practice, the management of *BUMDes* involves many parties, such as: *BPMPD*, official, *BPD*, position of village head as a coach, Chairman of *BUMDes* and *BUMDes* supervisory board, and head of sub-district. The forming of *BUMDes* formally on paper have been actualized in most villages in Indonesia, but the implementation is still far from expectations. Legal entities have been formed, but *BUMDes* cannot yet run as an economic wheel in the village. The classic problem encountered is the lack of reliable human resources in the village. Need solutions and guidance from various parties so that *BUMDes* not only formed, but also able to become an engine of economic driving in the village.

The figure of the village head as the leader seems not enough to be able to move the community to become more empowered and independent. Let alone to move the economy, in terms of mutual cooperation, it sometimes still depends on the leadership of the village head. If the village head figure is good, then it is a way. It is similar with other mutual assistance. The community's response is still highly dependent on the leadership of the village head. Similarly, to mobilize *BUMDes*, aside from the human resources that must be reliable and the aspects of leadership of the village head is also a determinant of the way *BUMDes*.

The data show that from 15 villages in *Banyuresmi* Subdistrict, 9 *BUMDes* have different characteristics and readiness. Furthermore, the construction of a community empowerment model in *Banyuresmi* sub-district focuses on villages which do not have *BUMDes*, namely:

- (1) *Sukaratu* Village
- (2) *Sukasenang* Village
- (3) *Sukaraja* Village
- (4) *Cipicung* Village
- (5) *Bagendit* Village
- (6) *Karyasari* Village

Based on data above, *Karyasari* Village is a disadvantaged village from the Village Build Index. Moreover, the development of *BUMDes* should follow the vision and mission of the village concerned and the potential of the village as has been disclosed in the previous sub-section. So, the formed *BUMDes* is not solely formed by the government and local government but the formation of villages on the aspirations of village communities

instead. The development of *BUMDes* can be seen in Figure 1 below:



Sources: processed by researchers, 2016

Figure 1: Direction of *BUMDes* Establishment

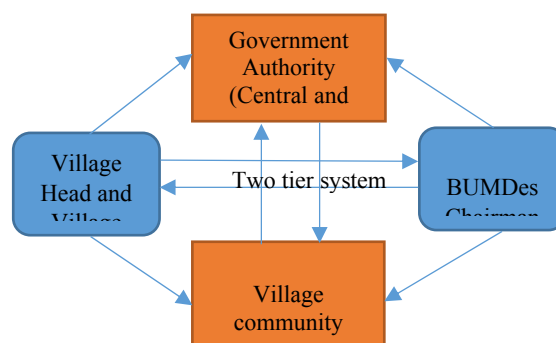
The figure above shows that village potency is the most considerable aspect in terms of establishing *BUMDes*. After all, *BUMDes* is an established village institution to improve the economy of the community. Thus, the potential of the village which can be developed and can be added values for the economic improvement of society can be managed together in a *BUMDes*.

Some aspects that determine the independence of village communities through *BUMDes* as revealed in the previous sub-section are leadership, financial governance, participation, supervisory institutions and institutional structures of *BUMDes* itself. In terms of the leadership of the village head, it was mentioned in the previous sub-section that the activities of community participation in voluntary development activities are highly dependent on the leadership of the village head. This shows that voluntary community participation in each village varies according to the figure of a village head. Therefore, government and local government interventions are required in establishing the leadership standards of village heads through training of village heads. It is as revealed by (Choe, 2005) that:

... Accuracy in choosing leaders at the village level, which are those who want to sacrifice their time and thoughts for the prosperity of the community, also determine the success of Saemaul Undong. The selection of the right people as leaders of the Saemaul Undong movement at the village level is a determinant of success in addition to continuous support from the government.

In addition, a special institution should be set up to manage *BUMDes* whose devices are not from village government apparatus but those who have been trained by the government in the management

of *BUMDes*. Thus, there are two leaderships that can work in synergy, a village head and the *BUMDes* chairman. Both will include synergy in coordination and assistance by the government and local governments. This model can be called a two tier system. The communication model of this system in the management of *BUMDes* can be seen in Figure 2 below:

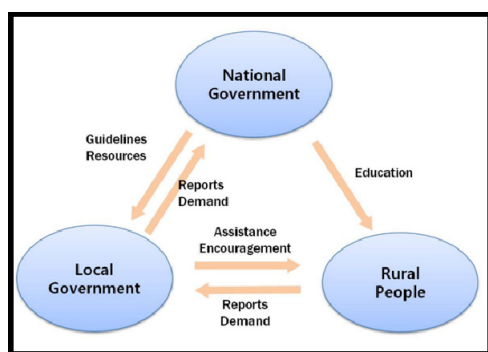


Source: adapted from Yi (2016) and modified by researcher

Figure 2: Integration Two Tier System Model of *BUMDes*

Based on figure above, it is obvious that the authority of the government and regional government is in the context of village community mobilization through Village Head as *BUMDes* chairman. Prior to the deployment, leadership training was carried out by the government and local government to the village head and the chairman of the *BUMDes*. So hopefully the role of society will bring its position close to the government in the next development policy.

Associated with the supervision system, supervisory model can be divided into two, which are macro surveillance system and micro surveillance system. Macro monitoring system is a supervisory relationship formed by the implementation of a two-tier system in the communication process. This system can be generally accepted in a unitary state. The village which is a unit of the legal community based on the rights of origin and customs is the object and subject of development. In addition, there are other stakeholders namely the government and local governments. So, the pattern of macro supervision in the management of *BUMDes* in Garut District can be seen in Figure 3 below:



Source: adapted from Yi, 2016

Figure 3: Macro Surveillance Pattern

Based on figure above, the government provides education to the village community (Village Head and its Device and Chairman of *BUMDes* and its Devices) for the management of *BUMDes*. After that, accompaniment is carried out by local government (can be carried out by Sub District Head or BPMD) after obtaining training from former government. In addition, micro-supervision can be established by a supervisory agency whose structure may be included in the Village Consultative Agency (*BPD*) or as it is now with the supervisory Agency of *BUMDes*. The structure of *BUMDes* surveillance agency consists of community representatives of *BUMDes* users, village government representatives, local government representatives, representatives of *BPD*, as well as private representatives (if the management of *BUMDes* cooperates with the private sector).

5 CONCLUSIONS

- (1) The reason behind the village and village community's dependency on the government in village development is due to the partial implementation of the village community empowerment program by many implementers. In addition, the indicators of village development are still structured by different agencies with different indicators that have different standards and will result in confusion among village governments. The large number of village government superiors coupled with village fund policies reduces community initiatives and roles in rural development.
- (2) The construction of rural community empowerment towards independent villages in Garut District is carried out by establishing

community economic institutions in the form of *BUMDes* (village-owned enterprise) which is a national program. The formulation of *BUMDes* is carried out by a two-tier system (village and government/local government) mechanism in which village government assistance, training and education can be effectively implemented. In addition, *BUMDes* are arranged based on village potential, vision and mission of village head. While supervision is carried out by the local government and government as well as *BUMDes* supervisory institutions consisting of stakeholders from *BUMDes* itself.

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