



## **MODEL OF WOMEN EMPOWERMENT IN THE FISHERMAN AREA OF BILAH HILIR LABUHANBATU REGENCY**

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### **Abstract**

This study aims to describe the model of women's empowerment in fishing areas. This research method uses a qualitative approach. The research was conducted through interviews, field observations, and Focus Group Discussions (FGD) to collect the required data. Informants in this study were representatives from the Department of Marine Affairs and Fisheries and the Office of Cooperatives and Small and Medium Enterprises, as well as women in the fishing area of Bila Hilir. The research location is Bilah Hilir Village, Labuhanbatu Regency, North Sumatra Province which is one of the fishing villages with the community's economic level far below the poverty line. The results showed that low income caused many fishermen's children to drop out of school, and become entangled with moneylenders. The government's lack of attention to developing the fishermen's economy has made women in this fishing area just give up. This study concludes that there has been no empowerment carried out by the Labuhanbatu Regency government for women in the Bila Hilir fishing area.

**Keywords:** *Empowerment, Women, Fisherman*

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## INTRODUCTION

As a country that has a strategic location and is surrounded by waters that connect directly with other countries, Indonesia should use the sea and coastal areas to improve the welfare of its people. In addition to connecting regions and countries with one another, the sea owned by Indonesia also has abundant potential and natural resources.

However, the irony is that despite being close to the potential of resources that should be able to support and improve the economy of the community, many coastal communities or fishing communities still live below the level of eligibility. The fishing community is synonymous with poverty. According to Prof. Dr. Tridoyo Kusumastanto (in Arif Satria 2009), fishermen are the poorest and marginalized groups in the social strata of Indonesian society. This is in line with what Dault (2008) said, that coastal communities are so poor that they are often called the poorest of the poor.

This situation requires women to have a dual role in maintaining the survival of the household and the economic activities of the community. The KIARA Data and Information Center (2015) noted that at least 56 million people are involved in fishing activities. These activities range from catching, and processing, to marketing the catch. Of that number, 70 percent or around 39 million people are women fishermen in Indonesia. The average income of fisherwomen is Rp. 610,000 per month. With this income, fisherwomen contribute 30% to help their family's life (Krishna, 2016).

The same thing is also felt by fisherwomen who are in Bilah Hilir, Labuhanbatu Regency. Labuhanbatu Regency is one of the regencies in the province of North Sumatra, Indonesia. The district capital is located in Rantau Prapat. Labuhanbatu Regency is famous for its oil palm and rubber plantations. Labuhanbatu Regency has a strategic position, which is located on the eastern route of Sumatra and is at the junction to the Provinces of West Sumatra and Riau, which connects regional development centers in Sumatra and Java and has adequate access to foreign countries because it is directly adjacent to the Malacca Straits.

Ironically, although this district has a strategic position and has palm oil and rubber plantations, in the village of Bilah Hilir, there are many fishing communities whose lives are far below the poverty level. There is a significant economic disparity in society. Women fishermen in these places must have a

dual role so that the needs and survival of their families can run properly. It is appropriate for women fishermen to be considered valuable social capital for coastal community development. In addition, the opening of space for women is expected to improve the welfare of their families through empowerment programs

In 2015 a plan was formed based on the Nawacita with a focus on Indonesian maritime affairs. The purpose of this plan is to improve the level of the economy and improve the welfare of the Indonesian people, especially coastal communities and fishermen. In addition, it is hoped that the economic sector will not only be on land but also come from the ocean which is owned by Indonesia.

In addition, to support growth in the community, especially the fishing community, the Minister of Women's Empowerment and Child Protection No. 01 of 2015 issued a strategic plan for the 2015-2019 RPJMN which has been established and ratified by the Indonesian government. As an effort to alleviate poverty from the blue revolution program, several programs were formed, namely; Economic Empowerment of Coastal Communities, National Marine and Fisheries Independent Community Empowerment Program (PNPM - MKP), as well as other programs implemented by local governments through the Social and Employment Service, such as business capital assistance programs within the framework of joint business groups (KUBE). and so forth.

The government has made various programs for coastal communities, but all of them only focus on increasing income (income generation) and pay less attention to the role of poor women as subjects of development. Poverty alleviation with efforts to empower women is expected to provide benefits. First, being able to reduce poverty in coastal areas, considering that the number of poor households headed by women as heads of households continues to grow. More than that, women have an important position in the family, both as wives, mothers of children, and even as economic support for the family.

Second, being able to awaken coastal communities who depend on the sea for their lives so that in the future these people will no longer be left behind and there will be no economic inequality in the community. With an increase in the economy, it is also hoped that the attitude and lifestyle of fishermen's families from time to time will be for the better. In addition, by empowering women fishermen, it is

hoped that women fishermen can understand their roles, as well as their rights and obligations as citizens. That way, fisherwomen can pass on their political knowledge to their families so that in the next generation there will be a change in views about politics in fishing communities.

Third, by empowering women fishermen, it is hoped that women fishermen in the Bilah Hilir area can have skills that can later be managed so that they can create jobs for other communities in the area.

Fourth, by empowering women, it is hoped that the independence of the fishing community, especially women, will be created. So that when the situation gets worse, people don't have to worry even though the fish catch is decreasing.

## **RESEARCH METHOD**

The object of analysis in this research is the Women's Fishermen in the village of Bilah Hilir, Labuhanbatu Regency, North Sumatra Province. With the qualitative method, the data were collected using interview and observation techniques to groups of women fishermen, the poor, and those who do not have independent businesses. To strengthen the data, a Small Discussion (FGD) was also conducted with resource persons from women's groups and the Labuhan Batu government.

## **RESULT AND DISCUSSION**

### **Fishermen's Conditions In Bilah Hilir**

Fisherman's Village in the District of Bilah Hilir is one of the villages where almost all of the people work as fishermen. There are 225 fishermen in this village. In addition to being fishermen, the fishing village people work as household assistants and as plantation workers. However, according to Mrs. Siti Nuriah (42), household assistants and plantation workers are not their livelihoods, this work is only additional work for them because they do not work every day. needed. So they work as household assistants and plantation workers only when needed. The wages they get by working as household assistants are Rp. 50,000 per day. While the wages of plantation workers cannot be ascertained but range from Rp. 45,000 - Rp. 60,000 per day.

The main job of the fishermen's village community is to be a fisherman. The fishing village community uses paddle boats or machine boats to look for river products such as

fish and shrimp. The results of this river will be sold to the reservoir. One of the fish collectors/collectors in this fishermen's village is Dewi's mother. Ibu Dewi (45) will buy fish caught by fishermen, then she will go to the town of Rantau Prapat to sell the catch. Although Dewi's mother is a fish collector in the fishermen's village, her husband also works as a fisherman. The monthly income of Dewi's family cannot be ascertained but usually, they can get Rp. 3,000,000 per month.

If there is a high tide, then Dewi's mother's husband works as a loading and unloading porter. All of this is done to fulfill household needs and school fees for their 6 children. All of Mrs. Dewi's children are still in school today. Even one of his children who is currently studying at one of the Islamic boarding schools is promoted as one of the representatives of the boarding school who will be given the scholarship to continue his education in Egypt on the condition that he must memorize the AlQuran.

### **Empowerment of Bilah Hilir Fishermen**

According to Dewi's mother, the situation in the fishermen's village is sad, they have never received any assistance from the local government. The fishermen's village community only depends on sea catches every day. If the tide occurs then there is nothing to do but wait for the tide.

According to Dewi, when the tide occurs, fishermen cannot predict how many days the tide will recede. The existence of settlements in the fishermen's village which is passed by the river further exacerbates the situation when the tide occurs. When the tide occurs, the fishermen's village will be submerged around the knees of adults. And this can last more than a month. Because when the tide occurs, the high tide will submerge the residents' houses, and when the tide is low, the water does not completely recede, if it is assumed that the tide occurs it will submerge the residents' houses for about 1 meter and the ebb and flow of the tide is only reduced by about 15 centimeters so that when the tide is high, come back, it will soak the residents' houses again. Mother Goddess thinks that

Apart from not being able to go to sea, the main problem faced by fishermen is that when the tide is in, the fishermen do not have the money to buy and fulfill their daily needs. In the end, they have to borrow money from their

neighbors or owe money to the stalls around their house to meet their daily needs and they will pay their debts when they have got their catch from the sea. They cannot find and catch fish longer distances again due to limited transportation and also simple fishing gear.

Capital is another problem that must be faced by fishermen when going to sea. According to the confession of Ina Koto's mother, who is a widow of a husband who has worked as a fisherman from 1985 to 2018, when going to sea, capital is needed for eating, smoking, and also oil for the engine canoe. Apart from that, capital is also needed to buy fishing equipment such as fishing nets, Bolat, and Sampan. The capital needed for this fishing equipment is not small. It takes a minimum of IDR 7,000,000 - IDR 10,000,000.<sup>16</sup> If you don't have this equipment, the fishermen in the fishermen's village will only get 1 kilogram or 2 kilograms of fish and the type of fish they get may not be entirely sold. Some fish don't sell because people don't want to eat them.

If you have complete equipment for fishing, the number of fish you will get is up to 5 times the usual. Then the catches that are obtained are not only fish but also shrimp. If you get shrimp, according to Mrs. Ina, the income you get is decent because the shrimp per kilo can be almost Rp. 50,000 compared to the fish caught.

Mrs. Ina (50) has only worked as a housewife since her husband left her. Her husband died in March 2018. Since then she has never been to see again. Mrs. Ina has 5 children, among these five children two children do not get the formal education. The main reason is that Mrs. Ina and her husband are no longer able to pay for the cost of education which is getting more expensive every year. During this time she and her husband went to sea together. According to Mrs. Ina, if there is assistance from the government for women in the fishermen's village, she will not stay at home. She will choose to be a fisherman as she used to do with her husband before.

In 1985 when she and her husband went out to sea a day he could get about 30 kg of fish per day. But year after year the number of catches decreases. In the last five years, her husband's catch is only about 1 - 3 kilograms. If converted to rupiah, the income earned in a day is only around IDR. 20,000 - IDR. 50,000. And since her husband died there is no longer any income from fishing. Therefore, if the

government assists with tools to catch fish, this 50-year-old mother is ready to go to sea again.

Bilah Hilir has a distinctive fish. Typical fish originating from Bilah Hilir are Terubuk fish and Gamak fish. These two fish are characteristic of the Bilah Hilir area. Unfortunately, these two fish are currently difficult to find, this is due to pollution and siltation in the river area in the area. Blade Hilir.<sup>17</sup> Besides that, Gamak fish are difficult to find because these fish are seasonal. So when the Gamak fish season has entered the community, people flock to catch this fish along the river. The price of this fish in the market reaches IDR. 30,000/Kg.

Mr. Sofyan (48) is one of the active fishermen in the Nelayan village. According to him, this Gamak fish ten years ago was not as expensive as it is today. This Gamak fish is shaped like an anchovy but is smaller in size and almost invisible if you don't pay close attention. In addition, this Gamak fish has a taste that is not too salty and also tasty even though it does not have meat. The fishing village community itself usually cooks Gamak fish by mixing it with wheat flour and then cooking it in hot oil. So it will be like a market snack, namely Bakwan but contains Gamak fish. The fish, which should be the hallmark of the Bilah Hilir area, cannot be served to the visitors who come to the Hilir. Because only at certain times can Gamak fish be found in the market.

Terubuk fish is also a typical fish of the Lower Blade whose existence is very rare. Terubuk fish itself is very expensive. So that the fishing village community said "If a guest comes to the house of the residents of Bilah Hilir and is served with Terubuk fish, the guest is likened to a royal guest". This statement was made considering that Terubuk fish are very rare and the price is also more than Rp. 100,000 per kilogram. Terubuk fish have soft meat, usually, the people of Bilah Hilir cook Terubuk fish using Steam (Cooked like Soup).

### **Bilah Hilir Community Education**

Economic conditions that are getting worse and worse have an impact on the education of the fishing village community, especially the fishermen's children. Many children in the fishing village of Bilah Hilir have dropped out of school. One of them is Mr. Sofyan's son. In addition to limited funds, some fishermen's children also do not want to continue their studies because no motivation encourages them to continue their education.

The wives of fishermen in the fishing village also do not have permanent jobs. This is because they do not have any skills. Fishermen's wives every day just wait for their husbands to come home and the catch will then be sold to fish collectors/collectors. After getting money from selling fish, the money is used to buy rice and daily necessities. So if the husbands come home without bringing any catch, then there is nothing to cook for the family because there is nothing to sell and produce as money. Mr. Sofyan thinks. It is ironic to see the area surrounded by seven palm oil companies namely (PT. Sembada, PT. Pandawa, PT. Socfindo, PT. Bilah Estate, PT. HSJ, PT. DLI, PT. Cisadane Sawit Raya) and is also crossed by rivers and streams. directly adjacent to the sea, it turns out that people's lives are below the poverty line.

The lack of money to buy rice and other basic needs forces fishermen to get used to living with debt. In addition, to survive by working as fishermen, the fishermen are willing to pawn their house certificates to the bank to buy fishing equipment. This also causes the fishermen's life to never be separated from poverty. When they have money, they have to pay their debts to moneylenders, banks, and stalls.

Mrs. Hasnah (43) mother of 5 children is the wife of a fisherman who has lived in the fishermen's village for a long time. All of her five children go to school. Her youngest child is now in junior high school. Ibu Hasna every day can only wait for her husband to come home from fishing and then sell the seafood so that she can buy groceries that day. Ibu Hasna can't work too hard because she has diabetes, so she requires her to stay rested and not be allowed to do many activities that can make her happy. interfere with his health.

Ibu Hasna also has debts to moneylenders and bank. According to Mrs. Hasna, the money borrowed from the bank was used to buy equipment for fishing such as canoes, Bolat, and nets. There are still 6 years left to pay off their debt at the bank. According to him, the loan installments should not be that long, but because the family is unable to pay the monthly installments of IDR. 750,000, they finally have to bear the burden of debt and interest which makes them take longer to owe to the bank. Every day Mrs. Hasna's husband brings 2 kilograms of caught fish, and the money from the sale is used to finance the basic

needs of the house. If she doesn't get any product from the sea, Mrs. Hasna borrows from one of her children who is already working as cleaning service at a private bank in Bilah Hilir. She no longer wants to borrow from moneylenders, he said "I'm sorry for these moneylenders, ma'am, my wealth has run out, my livelihood has run out, so I am now praying that my debt at the bank will be paid off soon". Mrs. Hasna is just one of the fishermen's wives who can only wait for her husband and is unable to help the family's economy. They do various ways to increase family income, one of which is by trading in small businesses such as snacks for children, fried foods, drinks, and so on. However, opening a business in their area will not last long, this is because the neighbors around their neighborhood have a standard of living below the poverty line so there is no purchasing power if a business is opened in the area. In addition, to open a business requires large capital, this is also an obstacle for fishermen's wives to open and try new businesses that can help the family economy.

### **Empowerment Of Women Fishermen In Bilah Hilir**

With all the complexity of the problems experienced by fishermen's families in Bilah Hilir, the government in Labuhanbatu Regency has not assisted in the form of fishing equipment such as nets, Bolts, canoes, and empowering women fishermen to the community in the Fisherman's Village, Bilah Hilir sub-district. The discussion meeting focused (Focus Group Discussion) on related agencies and also women's groups in Labuhanbatu on April 24, 2018.

The statement given by Ms. Zakiyah as a representative of the Labuhanbatu Province fisheries and marine service showed that the assistance provided by the Labuhanbatu government was not right on target. This is because fishermen need assistance in the form of fishing tools such as Bolat and also machines for their canoes so that they can find fish with longer distances and get more catches compared to the improvised tools owned by fishermen from the previous Fisherman village.

Women fishermen in Bilah Hilir, especially those in the fishermen's village, have the potential to be developed and empowered. Because the number of women fishermen in the fishermen's village is quite a lot. And most

of them are at productive ages so they can be empowered. Then in the fishermen's village area which borders the sea and is passed by the river many marine resources can be used as basic ingredients for processed food.

Then the high market demand for the fishery sector is a way for women fishermen in the fishermen's village to carry out the latest innovations that have never been created or make food with basic ingredients derived from the sea. the results of their innovation to the stalls or sold online.

These are the latest innovations that should be carried out by the Regional Government, in this case, the Cooperatives and UKM Service, to make innovations in the field of fish marketing or the like whose policies touch women fishermen, but these innovations or policies have not existed until now. According to the statement of one of the staff, Mrs. Suryani, who was present in the Focus Group Discussion (FGD).

In addition to processing seafood into other foods that have more economic value, the empowerment that can be done for women fishermen in the fishermen's village is to provide lessons about fish cultivation that can be developed in their area. Considering that almost all of the women fishermen in the fishermen's village work as housewives, it is very suitable to be given lessons about fish farming, so that they can fill their spare time by breeding the existing fish.

The benefit to be gained by doing this fish cultivation is that they no longer have to rely on their husband's catch. If the fish farming is harvested, they can sell it and get capital to go back to business and even do other new businesses such as raising ducks behind the house considering that on average the back of the fishermen's village houses is directly opposite the river. By keeping the ducks, they can resell the ducks or the meat and eggs produced from the ducks that have been kept. In this way, the economy of the fishing village community will increase slowly.

From the results of research conducted in the fishermen's village, a SWOT analysis will be born. The SWOT analysis can be seen in table 1. This SWOT analysis can be used as material for consideration and evaluation for the Labuhanbatu government, thereby making it easier for the Labuhanbatu Regional Work Unit to take and make decisions related to

empowerment that will be carried out in the Fisherman's village, Bilah Hilir.

Figure 1.  
Swot Analysis

| Matriks Analisis SWOT untuk Diagnosis Masalah Perempuan Nelayan Bilah Hilir Kabupaten Labuhan Batu Sumatera Utara |   |   |
|---|---|---|
|   | STRENGTH  | WEAKNESS  |
|   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Memiliki Sumber Daya Alam melimpah yang berasal dari laut.</li> <li>Memiliki Jumlah tenaga kerja yang besar karena sebagian masyarakat berusia produktif.</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Tidak memiliki skill maupun kemampuan untuk mengolah sumber daya alam yang berasal dari laut</li> <li>Adanya Keterbatasan Modal, Teknologi dan Informasi.</li> <li>Tingkat Pendidikan Masyarakat Rendah</li> <li>Jumlah Tangkapan yang rendah</li> <li>Jenis ikan hanya sedikit ( Tidak Bervariasi)</li> </ul> |
| OPPORTUNITY   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Masyarakat pesisir Bilah Hilir Labuhan Batu termasuk yang terbuka dengan dunia luar.</li> <li>Permintaan Pasar yang cukup tinggi terhadap sektor perikanan. Adanya keinginan untuk memajukan usaha.</li> <li>Potensi Sumber Daya Manusia yang besar</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Kurangnya Pembinaan dan rangsangan untuk peningkatan hasil produksi perikanan.</li> </ul>  |
| THREAT  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Keterbatasan hasil perikanan yang bersifat musiman</li> <li>Pencemaran yang disebabkan oleh limbah sawit.</li> </ul>   |   |

Source: Research Data, 2020

The relevant Regional Apparatus Work Units, as well as Regional, Owned Enterprises in Labuhanbatu, have the responsibility to train and empower fisherwomen in the fishermen's village to realize plans based on Nawacita to improve the economic standard of coastal communities. In addition, if the local government empowers women fishermen, the knowledge that is transferred (transfer of knowledge) can continue to be taught from generation to generation.

### The Ideal Model Of Empowerment Of Women Fishermen in Bilah Hilir

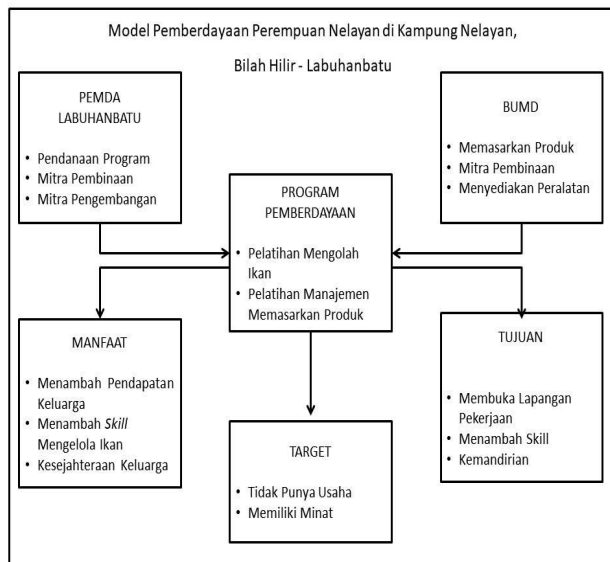
The government implements the involvement of women in development through Presidential Instruction No. 9 of 2000 on gender mainstreaming in national development (PUG). PUG includes program planning and implementation. The intended program refers to the RPJMN/RPJMD, RKP/RKPD, and RAPBN/RAPBD.20.

At the Labuhanbatu Regency Government level, the empowerment of women in the fishing village should be the responsibility of the district government related to women's empowerment, for example, the Women's Empowerment Section, Village Community Empowerment, Fisheries Service. Although the Minister of Women's Empowerment and Child Protection No. 01 of 2015 issued a strategic plan by the 2015-2019 RPJMN which has been established

and ratified by the Indonesian government, as an effort to alleviate poverty, it turns out that in the Labuhanbatu district government no program touches the empowerment of fisherwomen in particular. in the fishing village.

However, the Labuhanbatu Regency Regional Work Unit related to women's empowerment commits to support efforts to develop women fishermen from the Fisherman village, Bilah Hilir. Various considerations and inputs have been given by the FGD (Focus Group Discussion) participants and have become an important part of preparing a model of empowerment of women fishermen. The following is described in the description of the ideal model of empowering women fishermen in the village of fishermen of Bilah Hilir.

Figure 2. Model of Empowering Women Fishermen in Bilah Hilir, Labuhan Batu.



Resources. Researcher Analysis, 2020

Caption:

- The actors of the empowerment program are the Office for the Protection of Women and Children, Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs), Regional Owned Enterprises, the Office of Community Empowerment, the Department of Fisheries and Marine Affairs, and the district government. Bar Hilir is based on the need to carry out coordinated cross-sectoral empowerment activities.
- The selection of Regional Owned Enterprises as program actors is based on the need for the role of business institutions that are not only profit-oriented or profit-oriented.
- Determination of objectives, benefits, and forms of program activities is based on the stages of understanding local characteristics and knowledge of the community, input and

considerations from the Office of Women and Children Protection, the Office of Community Empowerment, the Department of Fisheries and Marine Affairs and the Kec. The Downstream Bar is at the same time the stage of awareness and the formation of citizen confidence.

- The program targets women fishermen in the village of Bilah Hilir Fishermen who do not have a business and have an interest.

The fishing community in Labuhanbatu Regency has waited too long for the local government's attention. From the model developed, the Labuhanbatu government can start by making fishermen's wives become coaching partners, development partners, and funding empowerment programs. In addition, local governments can optimize the work of Regional Owned Enterprises to help fishing communities by being a coaching partner, and providing equipment to marketing products.

With the government's attention and assistance in community empowerment, it is hoped that it can lift fishermen from the economic downturn and massive ignorance. This means that the goals of the empowerment program will become real (opening jobs, increasing skills and independence). If the government is serious about helping its people out of poverty.

## CONCLUSION

Fisherman's Village, Bilah Hilir sub-district, Labuhanbatu district is an area where almost all of the people work as fishermen. The irony is an appropriate word to see the situation in the fishermen's village considering that the area is surrounded by rivers and directly adjacent to the vast ocean which has abundant natural resources but life the people are at the poverty line. Moreover, the issuance of a plan based on Nawacita that focuses on the Indonesian maritime focus aims to improve the standard of the economy and improve the welfare of the Indonesian people, especially coastal communities and fishermen.

The findings in this study are that there is no empowerment carried out by the Labuhanbatu district government for fisherwomen in the fishermen's village, Bilah Hilir sub-district. The findings of this study also explain that to create an ideal model for empowering women fishermen for women fishermen from the village of Bilah Hilir Nelayan, it is necessary to have cooperation between institutions such as the women and children empowerment service, the community empowerment office, the fisheries, and marine service, the Bilah Hilir sub-district government and also business entities. Owned by the Region in the area, thus empowerment can take place which aims to prosper the fishing community.

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