

Chapter 3

The Role of Institutional Assistance and Information Source on Food Security Policy Analysis: An Indonesian Perspective

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ABSTRACT

The chapter analyzes the role of institutions, sources of funding/assistance, and source information in terms of food security and extension policies. The result of the research shows the information on problematic areas in policy implementation with respect to food security and extension policies in terms of poverty reduction. The role of the institution, assistance, and source information are useful in the implementation of other policy sectors in the future, because similar issues or problems may be avoided by taking precautions not to repeat the same mistakes or by applying measures that address the implementation issues. In this way, policy implementation can be carried out effectively, and the outcomes will meet the policy objectives.

INTRODUCTION

The growth in agriculture has been a guiding source of poverty reduction in most developing nations, particularly in the case of rural poverty. The agriculture sector contributes to poverty reduction in terms of employment generation to the poor and supports the development of non-agricultural employment generation in rural fields. Development in agriculture also contributes to a larger supply of food and lower food prices benefiting both rural and urban poor (Grewal et al., 2012).

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Agricultural development is important in a developing country for achieving industrialization and food security. Farming is the backbone of economic growth in many growing countries, because it provides food security, food self-sufficiency, diversification, and value-added enhancement of competitiveness of exports. Moreover, it increases the wellbeing of farmers and leads directly to poverty reduction.

Indonesia has shifted from an agricultural economy to an industrial one. Nevertheless, the agriculture sector remains a key sector for millions of those who depend directly on agriculture for their livelihood. The agriculture sector has been playing a key role in improving living standards and alleviating poverty. Poverty in rural areas, where most people depend on agriculture for their livelihoods, is one of the immense problems in Indonesia. The poverty level indicates that 16.56% of people in rural areas are poor (CBS, 2010). The increasing numbers of poor people are due to the fact that the bulk of the people cannot satisfy their basic needs and survive at the subsistence level, and therefore ensuring household food security via affordable agricultural workplaces and sustainability scheme policies on the basic demands of the farming sector is vital, especially in terms of food security policy.

According to Darwis and Rusastra (2011), the Food Self-Sufficiency Village Programme (Desa Mandiri Pangan) implemented by community groups was supported by agricultural and non-agricultural capital programmes, as well as by rural financial institutions. It was facilitated by agricultural extension workers and expert consultants. This programme is directed at several other objectives: raising the availability of foodstuffs, growing the family unit entitlement, recovering the efficiency of food supply and access programmes, enhancing the local marketplace availability for selling and buying food products, raising capital and industrial options through the introduction of high-yielding varieties of seeds that agriculture community in rural area can develop to increase income, as well as improving the quality of food consumption handling at the household level, and so forth.

The reasons for choosing the Food Self-sufficiency Village Programme (Desa Mandiri Pangan {DMP}) as the subject of the study are that: 1) The programme has a comprehensive scheme and assistance; 2) The programme has a direct or an indirect beneficial impact on poverty alleviation and food security efforts; 3) This programme is aimed at resolving the existing problems at the grassroots level; 4) It is expected to contribute importantly to rural growth; and, 5) The programme has been implemented in most of Indonesia's provinces.

Active institutions play a very important role in supporting the DMP Programme. There were institutions in the village sites before the introduction of the DMP Programme, such as the village leader, village councils, farmer groups, rice milling units, a village health station unit, a school, a mosque, a church, private lenders, village shops and traders. New institutions introduced by the Programme are affinity groups, food village teams, rice barns and microfinance institutions. In Kedungdowo, the village leader is serving his second elected term. This shows the trust that villagers have for the village head. The relationship of village leader and village council should be harmonious in order to ensure good consultation with the village council, which typically advises and monitors every village activity.

METHOD

This research is focused on the existing food security policy in Indonesia with regard to the DMP Programme that has been implemented since 2006. The methodology used in the study was mainly quantitative, but a qualitative approach was also used to enrich the findings of the quantitative study. Primary data were analysed using Microsoft Excel and Statistical Program for Social Science (SPSS).

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