

**BASIC CAUSES OF HORTICULTURAL FARMER POVERTY (CABBAGE AND CHILLI) IN GISTING DISTRICT OF TANGGAMUS REGENCY**

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**ABSTRACT**

Poverty issue in Indonesia is one of fundamental problems in conducting development in Indonesia. Government's efforts are uniformed in alleviating poverty based on certain models that are less successful in alleviating poverty. Therefore, there needs a review on poor people data that would be a guide line to design programs and to reevaluate conducted programs. This research purposes to: 1) find out level horticultural farmer's poverty, 2) identify basic causes of horticultural farmer poverty, and 3) identify economic behavior pattern of horticultural farmer in dealing with poverty.

The research location was determined purposively in horticultural production center in Gisting district of Tanggamus regency in Lampung province during January – November 2009. The respondents were families of poor horticultural farmers that are located in the horticultural production center. Respondents and its number were determined by using *snow ball sampling* to the level of "redundancy". Deep interview and *focus group discussing* (FGD) were in collecting data. Data were analyzed using Miles and Huberman qualitative data analysis and SWOT analysis.

The results show that 1) horticultural farmer's poverty level is in poor and very poor level, 2) the basic causes of the poverty are the narrow field possession, the market institutions are ruled by parties outside of farmers, capital limit, habitual actions, dependency to brokers, low human resources, and consumptive life style of farmers, 3) the farmer economic behavior in dealing with poverty is conducting job diversification and reciprocity pattern with other society member.

Keywords: poverty, horticultural farmer

**INTRODUCTION**

Poverty issue in Indonesia is one of fundamental problems in conducting development. This results in developments that are unable to function maximally to improve people welfare (Sumodiningrat, 2003).

Despite of numerous programs for poverty alleviations, number of poor people in Indonesia, however, is relatively high. In 2006, the percentage of poor people in Indonesia increased to 17.75% compared with 3 years before, and the biggest increase was located in villages as much as 21.81%. This shows that poverty alleviation programs had not been succeeded to overcome poverty problems, including in Lampung Province.

Based on data collected in 2007, number of poor families is 785.000 families in Lampung Province. If a family contains of four people, then poor people in Lampung Province sum to 3.14 million people. The number is relatively high as 45% villages (765 villages) in Lampung are classified as poor villages. Based on the number, Lampung Statistical Bureau calls Lampung as the second poorest province in West Indonesia after Nagroe Aceh Darussalam. This is very ironical as Lampung is located near center of power in Indonesia and located at the gate of Sumatera Island that Lampung should have been fast developed province in all sectors, including its people welfare.

Based on conducted study, it seems that the failure of Lampung is caused by some factors. Firstly, Lampung government does not have complete poor people data so that the government is unable to have grand design for poverty alleviation based on characters of each region. Secondly, there is no grand design for continuing and integrated poverty alleviation programs, and finally, there is a need of bureaucracy reforms.

Government efforts in making uniformed poverty alleviation programs based on certain models were merely to be potentially having bigger failures in reaching their objectives. Therefore,

there needs a study to review poor people data that would be a guideline to design programs and to reevaluate previous programs.

The poverty phenomena can be found in farmer societies in Indonesia. However, the specific socio cultures are different among Indonesian farmer societies that the study should concerns with those differences. There should by some multidimensional considerations to accompany a comprehensive empowerment model formulation for poor farmer societies and need some complex thinking. Poverty should not be seen as a stereotype or uniformity, because every region has its specific and different problems. So that farmer society's poverty alleviating needs to find out factors causing poverty as materials in designing empowerment models that are suitable for their farming business patterns.

This research purposes to: 1) find out levels of horticultural farmer poverty, 2) to identify basic causes of poverty in horticultural farmers, 3) to identify horticultural farmer's economical behavioral patterns in dealing with poverty.

#### MATERIALS AND METHOD

The research location was selected purposively in horticultural production center in Gisting District of Tanggamus Regency in Lampung Province. The research was conducted from January until November 2009. The respondents were poor horticultural farmer families. The respondent numbers was determined with using *snow ball* sampling technique in "redundancy" level. The research used participation observation method and used deep interview and *focus group discussion* (FGD) in collecting data. The data analysis was conducted with using Miles and Huberman qualitative data analysis (Sugiono, 2005) and SWOT analysis.

#### RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Natural potential in horticultural center of the research location is classified as good because the soil is fertile, and the climate allows the development of horticultural plants. Besides, the availability of transportation and agricultural market is also good potentials. Those aspects are not obstacles in horticultural development in the years to come.

Related with factors of causing farmer's poverty, it seems that the poverty is caused by factors of structural and cultural of the society. The bond between farmers and agricultural product broker in conducting agricultural business from land processing until agricultural product marketing are factors that cause farmers not to have bargaining position in selling agricultural products. Beside selling their agricultural products to those brokers, farmers should also act to be "price taker" in selling their agricultural products. That is the way in which in one side the broker existence is to help farmers giving loans where farmers would able to pay at crop harvesting season. However, on the other sides farmers do not have freedom to select markets for their products.

The market structures tend to be ruled by some brokers and other outside parties that cause price levels go beyond farmer's expectation. This results in farmer's low income and it lowers farmer's ability to less saving money. That is why the existence of farmer groups in the research location is less helping farmers, because when farmers need loan for maintaining crop plants, the fastest way is to borrow some money to the brokers. One of the ways to improve farmers competing ability is to build a common market managed by farmer groups or clusters of farmer groups.

The market managed by farmer groups would be necessary for farmers to reach proper price levels. Besides, the capital loan of farming business needs to provide to reduce the farmer's dependency to the brokers. This is important because the cost of horticultural plant business is high and the risk of plant disease able to fail the harvest is also relatively high. Therefore, to improve farming business income and alleviate farmers from poverty, there should be availability in capital,

market for the product, and improvement of knowledge and skill in farming business; because farmers has just inherited habits from their parents in farming horticultural plants so far.

Based on research, the horticultural farmer human resources is relatively low, because their level of educations are mostly elementary school, and they also have consumptive life styles that make them difficult to go out from poverty. Besides, the habitual actions such as "punjungan" and "cleaning village" are another financial burden in their society life.

Viewed from aspect of subsistence safety and scldarity of society, the activities such as "punjungan" and "cleaning village" could be a social insurance to overcome disturbance of farmer subsistence (Scott, 1983). These habitual actions that are developed in society's life are representations of "reciprocity pattern" in farmer society. However, because the field selection owned by farmer is relatively narrow, this results in low productions so that the social obligations the farmer should bear may burden their financil condition. Therefore, Wolf's (1981) argument stating that the life of farmer is very dependent with surpiuses from farming products can be seen at the research location.

Considering the research's results, efforts of horticultural farmer empowering should be conducted from several aspects: the knowledge and skill improvements in horticultural farming business, loan capital providing for farming business, market institutions providing that are ruled by farmer, price policy that benefits farmers, farmer assistance to manage farming business, reducing social obligation burdens, and changes of farmer's consumptive life behavior. This is because the most dominant causes of farmer's poverty are structural and cultural aspects in their society.

#### CONCLUSION

This research results show that 1) horticultural farmer's poverty level is in poor and very poor level, 2) the basic causes of the poverty are the narrow field possession, the market insitutions are ruled by parties outside of farmers, capital limit, habitual actions, dependency to brokers, low human resources, and consumptive life style of farmers, 3) the farmer economic behavior in dealing with poverty is conducting job diversification and reciprocity pattern with other society member, 4) the economic and funding institution is still ruled by outside parties while the farmer social institution has not functioned maximally, 5) model of farmer empowerment by improving knowledge, attitude, and skill of farmers, giving ease in capital availability, forming marketing institution determined by government, giving assistance, and changing horticultural farmer's life style.

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