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Level of Participation of Salassae Rural Swabina Community

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Abstract

Natural farming is an agricultural system that does not use external inputs in the implementation of its farming. This study aimed to determine the level of farmer's participation at each stage of planning and decision making, implementation, evaluation and utilization of the results. The research method was a qualitative case study method. Data collections were triangulation methods, namely in-depth interviews, observation and focus group discussions. Key informants included the Salassae Rural Swabina Community (SRSC) founder, chairman, active members and new members. The results indicated that the level of farmer's participation at the planning and decision making was at self-participation level where farmers decided willingness to participate in natural farming activities by themselves. Farmers planed their farming according to the resources they have and were guided by SRSC instructors. At the implementation stage, farmers carried out natural farming independently and are guided by extension workers or other farmers who have already adopted natural farming firstly. At the evaluation stage, the farmer evaluated every activity that had been carried out. Evaluation was not only at the end of the activity, but continuously activity, the farmer also conducted an evaluation together with more advanced farmers. At the yield utilization stage, farmers' income and the ability to do natural farming increased as they become increasingly involved in activities in SRSC.

Keywords: Natural farming, swabina, participation, qualitative

INTRODUCTION

Natural farming can be interpreted as a process of farming that does not use external inputs but only use internal input and reuse all the organic matter to the soil as natural fertilizer (Winarno *et al.*, 2002; Migliorini and Wezel, 2017). Natural farming is a solution for sustainable agriculture with healthy and quality production.

On the other hand the hope of realizing natural farming is still limited to expectations. The low interest of farmers to switch from conventional agriculture to natural farming is an obstacle

in its application. Some livestock-farmers who are concerned with natural farming also have not shown maximum results (Thornton, 2010)

It is different from the Salassae Rural Swabina Community (SRSC) which is able to realize natural farming as a concept of empowering. The basic concept developed by SRSC is how to influence people to participate in natural farming without feeling forced and on the basis of self-encouragement. Every member of the SRSC is those who want to switch from conventional agriculture to natural farming. Utilization of local resources as the main raw material in natural agriculture is something that must be done by members of the SRSC. One of the resources used is animal feces and bamboo root microbes for compost raw material.

A strong commitment to the application of natural farming as an effort to provide quality products and a healthy environment is a form of seriousness of the SRSC. The various challenges that must be faced are not easy work to involve farmers in participating. The strong strategy must be a choice in influencing farmers to participate in this activity. This is done in the SRSC so that it can develop and survive as an independent community that initiates natural agriculture. The objective of this study was describes the level of farmer participation in SRSC program.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Time and place

This research was carried out in August - October 2019 at the SRSC, Salassae Village, Bulukumpa District, Bulukumpa Regency, South Sulawesi. SRSC is one of the farmer communities that develop of natural farming in Indonesia.

Research Focus

This studies used a qualitative analysis with a case study approach that focuses on research to find at the level of farmer participation in the natural farming carried out in the SRSC. The level of participation was measured based on the stages of participation from planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation, and utilization of results.

Data Collection Technique

Data collection was used deep interview with key informant and observation and documentation techniques. In addition, researchers become the subject of research in which the main characteristic of qualitative research was that researcher play an important role in the entire research process, including in data collection (Moleong, 2002)

Data Analysis

Data analyze that used in this research was the triangulation method. The triangulation method was how to make the data or information that has been collected presented in the form of a description and at the same time provides meaning or interpretation so that the formation has a scientific or theoretical significance.

Key Informant Profile

1. Mr. Ar S is the originator of natural farming and also acts as a coach in the SRSC. Mr. Ar is also actively building networks with stakeholder and develop the market of SRSC product.
2. Mr. Nr was a farmer who was the first interested and joined the SRSC. Currently Mr. Nr is appointed as a deliberative body that functions to receive input from members.
3. Mr. Wh was a natural agriculture instructor as well as the first person to teach natural farming methods. The main task of the KSPS is the training coordinator who plays a role in educating farmer members or groups outside the SRSC.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Farmer involvement was not just a presence at every meeting or training. Participation is the active involvement of farmers in every activity in the group. Broadly speaking the stages of participation according to Yulianti (2005), were the planning stage, the decision making stage, the implementation and the evaluation phase and utilization of the result (Northridge *et al.*, 2019).

Planning and Decision Making Stage

Participation in planning can be showed by proposed the idea by SRSC members. Their experiences in the field in identifying problems were discussed in planning activities. Giving a big responsibility in planning was a form of participation in the KSPS. This was in line with the opinion of Shaner *et al.* (2018) that in the planning stage, involving farmers in deciding on planned activities is very important in order to ensure the suitability of activities with the needs of farmers.

This was stated by Mr. Ar that *each member was an important part in planning activities. Members were direct actors who know and understand the conditions in the field. To find an activity that can represent all the interests of members was to involve members as the main actors of the activity.*

Implementation Stage

At the implementation stage the activities were carried out together without exception. Each member will take on their respective roles according to their abilities. Participation was not limited to the contribution of the mind but also energy and finance was carried out by members. This happens because it started from the planning stage until the decision making phase always involved all members so that the activities carried out were their own needs. This was in accordance with the opinion of Nasdian (2006) that, the actual manifestations of participation at this stage were classified into three, namely participation in the form of thought contributions, material contributions, and action as group members.

This was expressed by Mr. Nr that *participation was carried out in community activities on the basis of togetherness to achieve goals. We never felt that this activity belonged to SRSC or the chairman. All was done sincerely because this activity was the result of a joint discussion.*

Evaluation Stage

At the evaluation stage it was possible for each member to evaluate the activities carried out. In general, activities carried out by giving members the freedom to develop ideas without leaving the basic principles of natural farming. The evaluation was carried out by each member was taken into consideration for further development of the activity. This was consistent with the exposure of Maryati *et al.* (2018) that, evaluation was considered important because community participation at this stage was feedback that can provide input for the improvement of subsequent project implementation.

This was stated by Mr. Nr that we can directly evaluate the activities carried out because there are no fixed rules in natural agriculture. in principle, when we don't use materials other than natural, agricultural activities are said to be natural and can be developed according to their own needs and needs. In this development process, it is demanded to immediately evaluate its activities as an improvement in the implementation process.

Utilization of the Result Stage

The benefit derived from participation in groups was the creation of strong kinship relations between members. On the other hand the effectiveness of management of agriculture and animal husbandry was easier because it was done together and increased of the income. This was according to what was conveyed by Irene *et al.* (2011) that, Participation in the use of the results of participation was related to three things namely material or economic, social and personal benefits. Material or economic benefits in the form of increased business scale, income, savings, business productivity and other economic benefits.

This has been said by Ms. Hsm that before I joined STSC, *I was only active at home or helped my family in rice field. After I got involved in SRSC and learned a lot in it, I seemed to have been considered in a number of government activities; even today I work as a staple in the Salassae village office.* Thus Mr. Nr stated that since *“I joined SRSC, there has been an increase in income for the family. if seen before the SRSC I was a migrant who returned nothing, walked with time with SRSC, to this day I have been able to build my own house and recently I have bought a garden for IDR. 80 million”.*

CONCLUSION

The stages of participation of SRSC members starting from the planning and decision-making stages, the implementation of activities, evaluating the results of activities and taking benefits were very high. This is evident from the involvement of each member in each stage by giving suggestions, thoughts, energy and material assistance regardless of their position in the organizational structure. The level of participation of farmers in natural agriculture at each stage of participation was at the level of self mobilization.

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