COORDINATION AMONG LOCAL AGENCIES IN DECENTRALISED FISHERIES EXTENSION: COMPARATIVE PERCEPTION OF EXTENSION OFFICERS IN JAVA, INDONESIA

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ABSTRACT

This study is intended to describe the conditions of coordination among local agencies involved in the implementation of decentralisation policy in fisheries extension in Java, Indonesia. In addition, this study is also aimed at assessing the effectiveness of the policy implementation, and determines its relationship to coordination among local agencies involved.

Population of this study comprised all fisheries extension officers attached with Rural Extension Centres (RECs). A multi-stage random sampling method was utilised for selecting the subjects for the study. A total of 50 officers at 10 districts in three provinces were covered in this study. Data were collected during January to March 1998 by using interview and self-administered techniques. Descriptive statistics and correlation analyses were used in the study.

The majority of officers confirmed that the RECs were not coordinated with related agencies involved in implementation of the policy. This indicates that policy implementation is not effectively done. Coordination among agencies involved was found to correlate highly to the effectiveness of policy implementation. Intensity of coordination among agencies involved in the policy implementation needs to be improved. A clearer directive for functions, responsibilities and relationships among agencies involved might help in strengthening the current coordination functions.

Key words: coordination, local agencies, fisheries extension, officers, and perception.

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INTRODUCTION

Since the release of the State Regulation No. 5 of 1974 concerning Basic Principles of Regional Government, Indonesian administrative policy thrust has been to support the goal of greater regional autonomy. The regulation was also applied to the fisheries sector. Under the joint decree of the Minister of Agriculture and the Minister of Home Affairs in July 1991, a major step was taken to decentralise fisheries extension and to extend the roles of district governments and fisheries-line agencies to manage fisheries extension. Based on the decree, Rural Extension Centres (RECs) and extension officers (EOs) were shift to and put under the responsibility of district governments.

The agreement in 1991 was further revised in April 1996. The purpose of the latest agreement was related to transferring some tasks and responsibilities to the district governments, and providing more emphasis on direction and objectives of decentralised fisheries extension. In

implementing the policy, it was necessary to harmonise the extension works at the implementation level based on the national-wide policy (Zachri and Mutiara, 1996). This approach was purposely designed to set up a comprehensive link between extension programmes at the centre and the local levels. The revised version of the decree, therefore, provides a stronger role for district government in managing fisheries extension activities. Under the new decree, Agency for Agricultural Information and Extension or *Balai Informasi dan Penyuluhan Pertanian* (BIPP) was established in each district. This institution is in charge of overall management of extension resources, development and recurrent activities at the district administration. In addition, all RECs and EOs previously administered under the sub-sector agricultural agencies in the district were transferred subject to the management of the BIPP (GOI, 1997).

Decentralisation policy has been recognised as an important element in building a good government with a greater accountability. The policy promotes greater participation in decision-making and makes the government structure more flexible. Decentralisation facilitates coordination among implementing agencies by giving them authority and autonomy in programme planning, and making them accountable to the people. It also makes delivery of public services more effective. In many developing countries, however, factors that influence policy implementation were not given sufficient attentions because many of those who formulated the decentralisation policies hold the compliance view of administration (Rondinelli et al., 1989). They assumed that once the development policy is revealed, it will be implemented by the subordinate administrators and the intended results might be achieved. Furthermore, they also assumed that the policy would achieve its intended goals without due consideration to the political set-up and the competency of development resources.

Consistent to other developing countries in implementing decentralisation policies, there are problems associated with the process and implementation of a decentralisation policy in fisheries extension in Indonesia. Initial studies conducted in a number of districts indicated some problems in implementing the policy (GOI, 1995). Some have shown gradual progress in the policy execution, while others experienced declining roles in the RECs and EOs as well as a decline in quality of management and operations of the services. These were related to the lack of capacity of the implementing agencies in financial and personnel management. Apart from that, there were ambiguities in policy directions and guidance from higher-level authorities and also weaknesses in coordination among local agencies involved.

Recognising these conditions and problems in implementation of decentralised fisheries extension in Indonesia, a number of pertinent questions were posed. Why was the implementation of a decentralisation policy in fisheries extension not fully effective in spite of its potential benefits? How local agencies involved in the implementation were coordinated each other? In relation to these problems, this study is intended to: (1) describe the existing conditions of coordination among local agencies involved in the implementation of decentralised fisheries extension as perceived by extension officers at the RECs, (2) describe effectiveness of the current implementation of the policy, and (3) determine the relationships between coordination among local agencies and effectiveness of implementation of decentralisation policy in fisheries extension.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Decentralisation includes several concepts and it means different things to different people. Bienen et al. (1990) define decentralisation as an administrative form of sharing power and allocating resources. It is basically a mechanism involving reallocations of authority and resources. It entails a transfer of powers and functions as well as activities from national to sub-national levels such as regions, districts and other local administrative units (Maro, 1990; Oquaye, 1995). Decentralisation is regarded as a mechanism for facilitating planning of socio-economic development and ensuring greater coordination between the range of relevant agencies and more effective use of the available resources (Gilson et al., 1994). It is justified as a key element in building good government and interpreted as greater accountability and transparency (Crook and Manor, 1995; Slater, 1997). Overall, decentralisation has the general objectives as follows: (1) to facilitate local participation in making development plans more relevant to local conditions and needs; (2) to increase efficiency, effectiveness and flexibility in programme implementation and coordination among agencies involved; and (3) to strengthen national unity by giving autonomy and accountability to the local authority (Maro, 1990; Bienen et al., 1990; Davis et al., 1994).

Two major approaches to analysing decentralisation policies are based on neo-classical economic theory of public choice (Russel and Nicholson, 1981), and public administration and finance approach (Cheema and Rondinelli, 1983; Conyers, 1983; Rondinelli, 1987). The public choice theory has been developed largely on the basis of economic reasoning. According to Boyne (1997), authors working in the public choice

approach share two assumptions concerning local government. The first is the self-interest axiom that implies that policy makers will pursue their private interests rather than the public interests. Secondly, politicians and officials can be redirected towards the public interests if they are constrained by the pressure of competition. This theory views local government as an industry in which there are buyers and sellers in the market for local public services (Rondinelli et al., 1989).

While policy analysts using public administration and finance approach take a different perspective on decentralisation policy than the public choice theory, the neo-classical economic approach is usually concerned with macro economic issues based on equilibrium model. On the other side, policy analysis using public administration and finance approach is concerned with specific decisions usually, but not always, which focuses on micro analytical issues. According to Rondinelli et al. (1989) the analysis strives to place in a broader context and takes into account the political, behavioural, administrative and other related factors that influence the policy implementation.

According to the administration and finance approach, organisational-related factors conducive to decentralisation include the allocation appropriateness in planning and administrative functions among levels of government organisations with each set of functions suited to the decision-making capabilities of each level (Rondinelli et al., 1989). Decentralisation needs laws, regulations and directions that clearly outline the relationships among different levels of government and administration, the allocation of functions among them and the roles as well as responsibilities of organisations at each level (Vengroff and Salem, 1992). Factors related to organisation, hence, would influence the

outcomes of decentralisation efforts. The factors include the clarity and simplicity of structures and procedures used in the organisation and the degree to which the components of decentralised programmes are coordinated among others.

Coordination is defined as a process whereby two or more organisations create and/or utilise existing decision rules that have been established to deal collectively with their shared task environment (Osuji, 1986). The notion of coordination therefore, refers to synchronisation of the activities of various agencies and organisations involved in the programme achievement. There are two major dimensions of coordination, vertical and horizontal. Vertical coordination takes place between different hierarchical levels within an organisational set-up. It is viewed in terms of the relation between the top and lower level of government institutions engaged in development activities. While, horizontal coordination involves individual, groups or organisations at the same operational levels.

There are advantages inherent in achieving greater coordination between government agencies at the local level. These are to reduce duplication of any programme or activity between different agencies; to plan and implement programmes or projects involving more than one agencies in an easier way; it is easier to prepare integrated plans for the development of the area consisting of no more than a collection of individual department plans; and to utilise financial and physical resources more efficiently and flexibly since it is easier to transfer resources from one agency to another within the area (Conyers, 1986). Coordination is perceived by many as not only a means for increasing the quality of public-service delivery system, but also as a way to improve the efficiency of the government's functions. Coordination among development agencies might be

accomplished for programme planning, action and evaluation of action.

Decentralisation is often accompanied by a desire to improve the integration and coordination of public services at the implementation level (Mills, 1994). It is often felt that local coordination is easier to achieve than at higher level, where each agency is a rival for economic and financial resources and may jealously guard its autonomy. At the local coverage, relationships among agencies involved in policy or programmes implementation could be less formal. However, achieving this benefit depends on some extent on whether the functional principle is followed.

In some cases, there were barriers in achieving good coordination for some development programmes. Davis et al. (1994) found that there was a general lack of coordination among agencies involved in the implementation of decentralisation policy in African countries. Accordingly, those who were supposed to coordinate the development activities of all the ministries at the provincial level were not supplied with copies of such programmes and had little knowledge on what other agencies were doing. The same author found that the local capability in programme planning was weak due to the weaknesses in inter-agencies relationships. Hence, there was a problem in accomplishing coordination among organisations involved in the programme implementation. In Nigeria, problem with respect to local developmental activities was that it created institutional machinery for coordination. The planning and development committees did not make any appreciable important in matters of coordination among the different participating functionaries and groups.

Several decentralisation studies (see, for instance: Conyers, 1986; Rondinelli, 1987; Vengroff and Salem, 1992; Mills, 1994; Davis et al., 1994; and

Gilson et al., 1994) also emphasised the importance of linkages between the central and local organisations. Linkage is the key concept in development efforts, such as in rural administration and development. In providing a hierarchy of services and to improve the quality and reliability of public service delivery, a number of institutions involved in programme implementation must be linked to among others. To overcome weaknesses in administrative capacity at the local level governments, supporting linkages must be created between the central and local governments to produce more positive local responses to priorities of the national development.

METHODOLOGY

Population of this study comprised fisheries extension officers attached with the Rural Extension Centres (RECs) in Java, Indonesia. A multi-stage random sampling method was used for selecting the subjects for this study. At the first stage, three provinces in Java were randomly selected after observing the condition of fisheries extension and the duration of the policy implementation. This resulted the three provinces of West Java, Central Java and East Java. At the second stage, 10 districts were randomly selected, four in Central Java and three each in West and East Java. The third stage of the sampling procedure involved the selection of three to six fisheries extension officers (EOs). A total of 50 fisheries EOs in 12 RECs in the study area were covered in this study.

Coordination among agencies involved refers to the degree to which agencies or institutions involved in implementation of decentralised fisheries extension functioned together. It was determined by the knowledge and understanding of officers with regards to the degree of coordination existing among related agencies or institutions at the implementation level. Meanwhile, effectiveness of implementation of decentralised fisheries extension refers to the degree to which the objectives of the policy could be achieved by the implementing agencies. It was determined by the knowledge and understanding of extension officers pertaining to the RECs' functions in setting-up programme planning, making decisions, utilising resources, and providing benefits to the fishers.

To measure the level of coordination among agencies, extension officers at the RECs were asked to express their knowledge and understanding on seven statements on a six-point Likert-like scale as the following: (0) none, (1) very low, (2) low, (3) medium, (4) high and (5) very high. The minimum and maximum scores were zero and 35, respectively. A low score indicated that agencies involved in implementation of the policy were not coordinated, and otherwise. In measuring the effectiveness of implementation of decentralised fisheries extension, officers were solicited to express their knowledge and understanding on a six-point Likert-like scale concerning the effectiveness level. There were six items each being used to measure effectiveness in the aspects of programme planning, decision-making, and resources utilisation. Meanwhile, effectiveness in the provision of benefits utilised nine items. In each aspect, the minimum score was zero and the maximums for the first three aspects were 30, whereas for the provision of benefits was 45. A total score for items was used to measure the overall effectiveness with the maximum of 135.

Data collection procedure for this study utilised a cross-sectional survey design. Data were collected during January to March 1998 by using an interview

technique to fisheries extension officers (EOs) and two contact fishers (fisher's leaders) in each RECs. Self-administered questionnaires were delivered to the head of RECs (HRECs) to be filled in. The statistical procedures used to analyse the data were descriptive and correlation analyses.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

A Brief Characteristics of RECs

Two-thirds (66.7%) of the RECs in the three provinces had four to five fisheries extension officers. Overall, 16.7% of the RECs had merely three officers or less. The average number of EOs in each REC was 4.6 (West Java), 4.4 (Central Java) and 4.0 (East Java) with a maximum of 6 officers. More than one-half (56.0%) of the officers were adjunct extension officers and merely 16.0% were extension officers. The officers' ranks were related to their education. The majority (90.0%) of the officers had Senior High School's education (12 years schooling). The number of officers who had diploma and bachelor degrees was small, comprising 8.5% and 1.5%, respectively. Number of villages and groups of farmers or fishers covered by RECs showed that two-thirds (66.7%) of the RECs have provided services to 11-20 villages. On the average, the number of villages serviced by each REC was 17.5 with the minimum and maximum of 8 and 25, respectively. In addition, more than one-half (58.3%) of the RECs provided services to about 20 farmer groups.

Coordination Among Agencies

The scores for the variable of "coordination among agencies involved in policy implementation" were aggregated from scores obtained from questions demanded from EOs and HRECs. The minimum and maximum scores were zero and 35, respectively. **Table 1** exhibits that 41.7% of HRECs indicated that the RECs were highly coordinated with other agencies involved in implementing the policy, but none for the case of EOs. On the opposite, 56.0% of EOs confirmed that the RECs were lowly coordinated whereas only 8.3% of the HRECs responded the similar thing. The means' scores for the EOs indicated that coordination among agencies involved in policy implementation was low. A relatively high coordination was achieved between the RECs and BIPPs. These were stated both by EOs and HRECs. It is because the BIPPs are coordinators of the RECs in accomplishing fisheries extension functions at the district level. However, coordination with other related institutions and organisations, other RECs within the districts, agencies at sub-district level, village offices and contact farmers ranged from low to moderate.

There were differences in understanding and knowledge between both groups in determining conditions of coordination among agencies. With the respective means' scores of 16.2 and 22.4, there was significant difference in the mean score of the variable both for the EOs and HRECs (t-value = 14.37). This might be attributed to differences in their education, work experience, training opportunities and other information obtained by both groups of officers. The study found that most of the HRECs have longer work experiences and training as compared to others. They generally had better access to knowledge acquisition and experience related to their jobs and functions.

Table 1. Coordination among Local Agencies as Perceived by Extension Officers

Scores	EOs [1] %	HRECs [2] %
Low ($"$ 17.50)	56.0	8.3
Moderate (17.51 - 24.50)	44.0	50.0
High ($\geq$ 24.51)	-	41.7
Total	100.0	100.0
Mean	16.2	22.4
Std. Deviation	2.1	4.2
Minimum	12.0	13.0
Maximum	21.0	28.0

Note: 1) Scores from extension officers (EOs)
            2) Scores from heads of RECs (HRECs)

Effectiveness in Implementation of Decentralisation Policy

More than one-half (62.0%) of EOs stated that effectiveness of decentralisation policy implementation in programme planning at the RECs were low. In contrast, however, only 25.0% of HRECs provided similar responses. According to the HRECs, about one-half (58.3%) of them confirmed that the RECs was highly effective in the policy implementation. With a mean score of 20.3, effectiveness of implementation of the policy in the aspect of programme planning was verified as high. However, only 6.0% of EOs provided a similar response. To this group, with a mean score of 15.6, effectiveness of the policy implementation was low. The EOs revealed that effectiveness of the policy at the REC was low.

Programme planning at the REC usually could not be completed on time. It was because the RECs wait for guidelines from the higher-level agencies to harmonise and accommodate a national and regional-wide extension policy. However, the guidelines were usually lately received at the implementation level. There was insufficient knowledge of extension officers in planning programmes due to limited training for them. Another problem was deficiency of fishers' involvement in arranging extension programme to make the programme suitable to local conditions and needs. As mentioned in earlier parts, coordination among agencies involved was also not accomplished well. This might resulted programme planning could be formulated in an integrated manner due to the lack of communication and sharing experience among officers. As a result, these obstacles had made extension programme planning at the study area was not effectively designed.

Nearly one-half (41.7%) of the HRECs indicated that effectiveness of policy implementation at the RECs in relation to decision-making was high. Nevertheless, only 8.0% of the EOs gave similar response. About two-thirds (68.0%) of EOs stated that effectiveness in decision-making at the local level was low, even only 16.7% of HRECs answered the same responses. Nearly one-third (32.0%) of EOs and 41.6% of HRECs indicated that the RECs were moderately effective in decision-making. With a mean score of 20.7, on the HRECs' opinions,

effectiveness in decision-making was moderate. However, a mean score for GFEWs (15.8) was closer to low level.

There were problems in achieving effective decision-making at the local level. Unclear direction and guidance from the higher-level agencies hampered officers at the lower level to make decision faster. Slow coordination among agencies and organisations involved at the implementation level had also made accomplishment of decisions not based on local conditions, problems, and needs. As in planning the extension programmes, another hindrance in making decision at the REC level was the low level of officers' education and experience. Most of them have no appropriate training pertaining to making decision and other management issues. They also mostly depend on guidelines from top officers. Decision making at the REC level, therefore, could not be accomplished on time due in part to these obstacles.

One-half (50.0%) of EOs verified that effectiveness of implementation of the policy in the aspect of resources utilisation at the RECs was low. On the opposite, however, merely 8.3% of HRECs provided the identical answers. According to HRECs, 41.7% of the RECs were highly effective in resources utilisation compared to only 6.0% of the EOs' responses. Nevertheless, from the average scores of both groups, it can be concluded that implementation of decentralisation policy in terms of resources utilisation moderately effective. About one-half of officers (comprising 46.0% of EOs and 41.6% of HRECs) indicated that the RECs were moderately effective. With mean scores of 15.3 and 19.3, it could be indicated that effectiveness of policy implementation was moderate. However, the score for EOs demonstrates that effectiveness of the policy implementation at the RECs was closer to low level.

More than one-half (58.3%) of contact farmers confirmed that effectiveness of policy implementation in the provision of benefits aspect was low. Nevertheless, only 16.0% of the EOs responded similar answers. Nearly one-half (41.6%) of the HRECs and 14.0% of the EOs replied that effectiveness in the provision of benefits was high, while it was true for only 16.7% of contact farmers. Decentralised fisheries extension is aimed at making extension services to be implemented based on local conditions, problems and needs. Therefore, utilisation of local resources and technology that appropriate to local conditions and needs would be taken into considerations.

More than one-half (58.0%) of the EOs expressed that the overall effectiveness of policy implementation at the RECs was low. Nevertheless, merely 8.3% of the HRECs provided the same response since 50.0% of them stated that the effectiveness of policy implementation was high. More than one-third of the extension officers (36.0% of EOs and 33.3% of HRECs) confirmed that the overall effectiveness of decentralisation policy implementation was moderate. To the EOs, with a mean score of 73.8, the overall effectiveness of the policy implementation was low. The low level of effectiveness of the policy implementation was also the case for contact fishers. There were significant differences in the means' scores of the effectiveness of the policy implementation and its four aspects between the EOs and HRECs. This means that there were differences in understanding and knowledge of officers in determining conditions on effectiveness of decentralisation policy implementation and its aspects existing at the RECs.

This study found that most of HRECs were officers who have higher rank or longer work experiences at the respective RECs as compared to others.

They have also attended courses and training sessions more frequent than other officers. Therefore, the HRECs have more experiences since they had more opportunities and access to obtain information related to their works and responsibilities as compared to the EOs. These might influence their responses concerning the issues on the implementation of decentralised fisheries extension services conducted in their areas. However, there was a tendency among officers, especially the HRECs to express a higher response on the issues that were solicited even though it was not reflected the real conditions.

Relationships between Coordination among Agencies and Effectiveness of Policy Implementation

In determining the relationships, Pearson product-moment correlation at 0.05 significance levels (one-tailed) was used. The findings as shown in **Table 2** indicated that for EOs, "coordination among agencies involved in policy implementation" had stronger relationships with effectiveness in decision-making, provision of benefits and programme planning with the respective r-values of 0.526, 0.486 and 0.458. Meanwhile, for the case of HRECs, it was the most significantly correlated variable to effectiveness of policy implementation in the aspect of programme planning and decision making with the r-values of 0.542 and 0.431, respectively. It can be discerned

that as the agencies involved become more coordinated, the policy implementation tends to be more effective. Based on the results, both groups of extension officers expressed that this variable was important in achieving the effectiveness of implementation of the policy. The positive correlation between coordination among agencies involved in any policy or programme and the success of their implementations were also reported by some researchers (see, Ingham and Kalam, 1992; Mills, 1994; Davis et al., 1994). These findings indicated that the level of effectiveness in implementation of the policy or programme tends to improve as the agencies and/or organisations involved become more coordinated in their works.

By coordination, duplication of any development programmes and activities between different agencies could be avoided. This resulted the utlisation of financial and physical resources at the implementation level become more efficient and effective. Coordination might also facilitate programme planning and its implementation can be conducted in an easier way. Overall, quality of public services delivery system such as fisheries extension services would be improved. As a salient point, based on the previous findings, positive correlation between "coordination among agencies involved in policy implementation" and the effectiveness of implementation of decentralisation policy in fisheries extension services was expected.

Table 2. Relationships between Coordination among Agencies and Effectiveness of Policy Implementation

Variables	Correlation Coefficient (r)	
	EOs	**HRECs**
Coordination among Agencies and:		
Effectiveness in Programme Planning	0.458*	0.542*

Effectiveness in Decision Making	0.526*	0.431*
Effectiveness in Resources Utilisation	0.369*	0.317*
Effectiveness in Provision of Benefits	0.486*	0.380*
Overall Effectiveness	0.521*	0.479*

[*] Significant at the 0.05 level

CONCLUSION

The majority of the extension officers confirmed that the RECs were moderately coordinated with other related agencies involved in implementing decentralisation policy in fisheries extension. There were more HRECs that indicated high coordination among agencies involved as compared to EOs. The opposite was true for the EOs, where almost one-half of them affirmed that coordination among agencies was low. The low coordination implied that policy implementation is not effectively accomplished, as experienced in some developing countries in Asia and Africa. A number of studies found that successful policy implementations were influenced by how well the agencies involved in the implementations were coordinated.

There were more EOs who stated low effectiveness in implementation of decentralised fisheries extension in the aspects of programme planning, decision-making, resources utilisation and provision of benefits as compared to HRECs. Overall, there were more HRECs who indicated higher responses towards questions related to the existing conditions of coordination and effectiveness of decentralisation policy implementation as compared to EOs. With regards to these conditions, the study found that there were differences in understanding and knowledge on conditions existing at the RECs between the HRECs and EOs. Coordination among agencies involved was found to correlate highly to the effectiveness of policy implementation.

Implementing public policy, such as decentralisation, is not an easy task. It takes time to achieve the predetermined objectives of the policy. Nevertheless, some practical recommendations are suggested. The intensity of coordination in policy implementation needs to be improved. A clearer directive for functions, responsibilities and relationships among agencies and organisations involved might help in strengthening the current coordination function. Communication, cooperation and sharing of experience and information among related institutions or organisations, would be necessary. Sectoral interests and jealousy should be reduced in order to integrate the extension works and other development programmes. These could be done through regular meetings and other communication channels among agencies.

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