

# FISHERS' PARTICIPATION IN POVERTY ALLEVIATION PROGRAMME: A case study in two less-developed villages in Pemalang District, Central Java<sup>\*)</sup>

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## ABSTRACT

*This study was aimed to assess the level of fishers' participation in poverty alleviation programme in two less-developed villages at the coastal area in Pemalang District, Central Java. The study found that to a certain extent, the poor fishers have participated in the four phases of the programme accomplishment: in decision-making, implementation, sharing benefits, and evaluation. However, the intensity of participation in each phase was low. Several efforts to improve fishers' participation in the programme such as providing appropriate technical and management advisory supports and sufficient information to the target members were recommended.*

## I. INTRODUCTION

The emphasis on grassroots participation in several developing countries was foreshadowed in the 1960s and 1970s by development strategies which saw rural projects as a way of reducing large-scale poverty (Ingham, 1993). It was believed that through participation, development policies would better grasp the practical realities of rural development. Participation came to be seen as a means of promoting democracy by enfranchising the poor people who economically weak. It is a manner of breaking into what Chambers (1983) term as the "deprivation trap", a mutually reinforcing situation of powerlessness, vulnerability, poverty and isolation into which the majority of poor people are locked. The philosophy which

underlies the approach is that local people know to a far greater degree of sophistication than does the government on what problems they face and how best to solve these problems (Rigg, 1991; Bruns, 1993).

Several studies on rural development have emphasised the importance of participation in development programme (see, for instance: Cohen and Uphoff, 1980; Reddy, 1987; United Nations, 1990; Bahaman, 1992; and Burkey, 1993). People's participation in development efforts is to create sense of awareness and involvement, increase level of aspiration, and mobilise local resources for productive purposes. The process whereby people learn to take charge on their own lives and solve their own problems, is the essence of development (Burkey, 1993).

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## II. BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

At the early of the Sixth *Repelita*, a special programme was launched as a supplement to the existing development programmes in Indonesia. It is called the IDT or *Inpres Desa Tertinggal* (the Presidential Instruction on poverty alleviation) programme. The programme was started in April 1994, with the purpose of promoting efforts for alleviating poverty in less-developed villages within the country. It was carried out by community groups, assisted by local-level government agencies and is supported by social organisations at the village level (GOI, 1994).

In addition, the programme is aimed at strengthening the capabilities of poor people to improve their standard of living and directed for developing socio-economic activities. The programme puts mutual co-operation, self-supporting and participation principles into practice (GOI, 1994). As a movement, it must be capable of implanting fellowship empowering various parties, especially the poor people to participate as adequately as possible. They should be approached with an attitude of not treating them as objects but as subjects who play an important role in development programme. In this process, the IDT programme could play a signal role in evoking the enthusiasm and involvement of the rural masses. Participation of rural people is intended just not to enable them to involve in development process but also to let them to share the benefits of development. Successful implementation of the programme, hence, to a certain extent, depends on the intensity of interagency co-ordination and co-operation. On the other side, the programme implementation also depends on the level and intensity of people's participation in the entire programme.

Although the need of incorporating people's participation in development effort, in practice however, this is not easy to be realised. The colonial heritage of subordination continued to exist in the rural society and this lead to a dangerous phenomenon of dependency among rural poor (Reddy, 1987). Rural elite, formal and informal leaders and middle ranking groups have more say in decision making of sharing of benefits, while the poor are seldom involved in policy matters and in decision making (Burkey, 1993). The phenomena were also existed in the case of Indonesia. In relation to these descriptions, this study posed the following questions: what was the understanding and response of fishers towards IDT programme? and what was the level of their participation in the programme accomplishment?

## III. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The general objective of the study was to determine the level of fishers' participation in IDT programme. The specific objectives of the study were to: (1) identify demographic and socio-economic characteristics of the fishers, (2) determine the fishers' attitudes towards the IDT programme and personnel, and (3) assess the level of fishers' participation in the IDT programme.

There are commitments from the government and people to further reduce the number of poor people, especially in less-developed villages. In relation to the commitments, the findings of this study would provide a more understanding to the form and extent of the poor-fishers' participation in IDT programme. The findings

might also be useful to various agencies and related organisations involved in planning, implementation, and evaluation of the programme.

## IV. METHODOLOGY

### 4.1. Locations of the Study

The study was conducted in Pemalang District, Central Java on November 1997, covering two coastal less-developed villages in two sub-districts. In Taman sub-district, the study was carried out in Asem-doyong village, whereas in Ulujami sub-district it was conducted in Mojo village. The selection of the district was due to a reason that Pemalang is one of the important fisheries area in Central Java. By using simple random sampling procedure, the number of respondents in this study was 60 fishers.

### 4.2. Measurements of Variables

A total of eight demographic and socio-economic characteristics was included in this study. There were: age, gender, marital status, education, size of household, primary occupation, total income, and length of stay. Meanwhile, fishers' knowledge comprised general knowledge on the IDT programme. Likert scale type of questions was used to measure fishers' attitudes by using combination of positive and negative items. In assessing the fishers' participation, this study had utilised an approach based on the four types of participation as suggested by Cohen and Uphoff (1980) and indicators as postulated by Oakley (1991) and Bahaman (1992). These included measurements in frequencies and intensities of involvement in the programme.

### 4.3. Data Collection

Data collection procedure for this study used cross-sectional survey design. It entailed the collection of data at a point in time in the study area. Data were collected through personal interviews using a set of questionnaire. The frequency's statistical procedure was used to compute frequency counts and basic statistics for describing characteristics of the variables of the study.

## V. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

There are five landing places (TPI) in Pemalang District, namely: Tanjungsari, Widuri, Asem-doyong, Mojo, and Ketapang. Fishers in Asem-doyong and Mojo operate small-scale multi-gears such as gillnets, small *payang*, drift-net, and long line. Most of the fishers in the two coastal villages at the study area comprised of small fishers and fish traders. The credit scheme under the IDT programme usually allocated for capital improvement of fish traders and also for additional costs for boat operations.

### 5.1. Demographic and Socio-economic Profiles

Demographic and socio-economic profiles describe in this study are as follows: (1) age, gender, and marital status, (2) education, (3) size of household, (4) occupation and income, and (5) length of stay. Table 1 as the following presents a number of characteristics relating to the demographic and socio-economic conditions of the respondents.

Table 1. Demographic and socio-economic characteristics

Description	Mean	S.D.	Min	Max
Age (year)	53.9	5.6	39.0	63.3
Formal education (year)	4.0	2.0	0.0	8.0
Size of households (person)	5.2	1.4	2.0	8.0
Total income (Rp. 000)	110.8	30.5	60.0	180.0
Primary income (Rp. 000)	80.1	21.7	30.0	120.0
Additional income (Rp. 000)	43.6	15.4	20.0	60.0
Length of stay (year)	44.5	4.5	8.0	63.0

About three-fourths (77.5 percent) of the fishers in each village were above 50 years of age. The 41 to 50 years age group made the second largest distribution (20 percent). Furthermore, only 2.5 percent of them were less than 40 years and there was no respondent on less than 30 years of age. The study found that 2.5 percent of the fishers were male and all of them were the head of households.

Less than ten percent of fishers did not have any formal education. A large percentage (85 percent) of fishers had some primary or elementary education. The study found none of them had a level of formal education more than junior high school (nine years schooling). The low education level of fishers would have an implication on the nature and level of their participation in development programme.

About one-half (47.5 percent) of the fishers had at least five members in their family. In fact, 35 percent of the fishers in both villages (Asemdayong and Mojo) had five to six members. Although there were some variations in family distribution between villages, the average family members was close each other. A relatively large labour-force in these villages might be used

in activities under the programme for improving their socio-economic conditions.

Fish traders and fish processors were the main occupation of 85 percent of fishers in Asemdayong village and 80 percent Mojo village. They bought fishes from local fishermen, make them become *pindang* and salted fish, and usually they sell the fishes to local market at the nearer towns. Other people were attached with other activities such as farming, food-retail, and construction sectors.

Fishers in Asemdayong village obtained higher average monthly-income of Rp. 84,500 compared to other (Rp. 75,800). Eighty-five percent of fishers in Asemdayong and 95 percent in Mojo received Rp. 100,000 or less per month. None of fisher accepted more than Rp. 120,000 per month. The average monthly-income from primary source was Rp. 80,100. More than one-half (65 percents) of fishers had income from other sources or occupations. The percentage varies from 60 to 70 percent, and ranged between Rp. 30,000 to Rp. 75,000. The average additional-income was Rp. 40,800 for Asemdayong and Rp. 51,100 for Mojo. Most of them had received from irregular works or from family members who worked at outside villages.

Total income that was computed from primary and secondary sources dispersed from Rp. 60,000 to Rp. 180,000. In Mojo, the average total-income was Rp. 109,300, ranged from Rp. 60,000 to Rp. 180,000. Meanwhile, fishers from Asem-doyong village received Rp. 112,300, varied from Rp. 60,000 to Rp. 170,000. The average monthly-income was Rp. 110,800. The "poverty line" according to Sajogyo as cited by Booth (1994) is equal to 430 kg of rice per person a year. In 1996, it was equal to Rp. 387,000 per year or Rp. 32,250 per month. According to the Central Bureau of Statistic (BPS), a person belongs to below the "poverty line" if his income is equal or less than Rp. 27,500 for rural area and Rp. 47,500 for urban area. The average number of households in the study area was 5.2. Based on the criteria, a household belongs to poverty level if the total monthly income is equal or less than Rp. 167,700 for urban area and equal or less than Rp. 143,000 for rural area. Hence, all the fisher households in these two villages were under the "poverty line".

Ninety percent of fishers in the two villages lived for more than 10 years. The percentage for Asem-doyong and Mojo was 95 and 85 respectively. None of them had stayed for less than 5 years. The length of stay supposedly would provide a positive effect in co-operating with their surrounding neighbours, and in helping each other to improve their better living in the future.

## 5.2. Knowledge on IDT Programme

Measurement for fishers' knowledge and understanding towards the programme consisted of three sub-scores, namely: (1) general knowledge on the IDT programme, (2) the IDT objectives and functions, and (3) agencies involved in the programme implementation.

More than 50 percent of fishers had understood the name or terms of IDT programme varied about 60 percent in both villages. Oakley (1991) highlights that knowledge on project's organisation is an important indicator of participation. Thus, knowledge and understanding on the name might indicate fishers' participation in the programme. More than three-fourths (77.5 percent) of fishers expressed that sources of knowledge about the programme were from local government officers, ranged from 75 to 80 percent respectively. The second source of the respondents' knowledge was from the organisation's committee involved in the programme.

Furthermore, fishers were solicited to verbalise the objectives of IDT programme. The most mentioned were to increase their income and also as the government project. These were noted by 65 percent of respondents in Asem-doyong and 60 percent of respondents in Mojo, respectively. The second objective was the IDT as a means for providing working capital to them, as noted by 60 percent of the respondents in both villages. The knowledge and understanding could contribute to higher commitment of the fishers in helping to realise the programme's objectives. Another measurement was related to the agencies involved in the programme. The highest mentioned agency was village office (100 percent) and sub-district office (65 percent).

## 5.3. Attitudes Towards IDT Programme and Personnel

An instrument comprised 16 items was used to measure fishers' attitudes towards programme, consisted of each 8 positive and negative-statements. A similar number of statements were also used to measure attitudes towards personnel. These instruments utilised a five-point Likert scale.

Fishers' attitudes towards the IDT programme and personnel were reflected on their responses. Favourable attitudes provided agree or strongly-agree responses towards positive-statements, and disagree or strongly disagree towards negative-statements. Unfavourable attitudes, on the other, provided the opposite responses.

Using this measurement, this study found that fishers in Mojo village seemed to have a better attitude towards the IDT programme. More than a half (53.3 percent) of fishers in Mojo village moderately

favourable towards the programme, compared to only 43.3 percent in other village. Consequently, they would participate more than others and they might be expected to have a higher level of intensity in participating on the four phases in the programme accomplishment. Additionally, the study found that fishers in these two villages seemed to have no difference in their attitudes towards the IDT personnel. Overall, fishers in both villages were unfavourable towards the programme and personnel.

Table 2. Composite Scores of Fishers' Attitudes Towards IDT Programme and Personnel

Composite Scores	Programme		Personnel	
	Asemdayong	Mojo	Asemdayong	Mojo
Unfavourable ( $\leq 40$ )	50.0	40.0	56.7	60.0
Somewhat Favourable (41-56)	43.3	53.3	36.6	33.3
Favourable ( $\geq 57$ )	6.7	6.7	6.7	6.7
<b>Total</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>
Mean	36.9	38.8	36.4	36.2
Std. Deviation	7.8	8.4	7.9	7.7
Minimum	23.0	24.0	23.0	24.0
Maximum	57.0	59.0	57.0	59.0

Minimum and maximum possible scores were 16 and 80, respectively.

#### 5.4. Participation in IDT Programme

##### a). Decision-making

The percentage of poor-fishers that actively involved during decision-making process was quite low. Usually, fishers that involved in this phase were community-group committees. They attended meetings such as group meetings, meeting with

facilitators and agencies involved in the IDT programme. None of them had attended meetings more than twice last year. There were no inter-group meeting and field trip during the preparation time. Meanwhile, in group-meeting and meeting with personnel of agencies involved, the intensities were low. As presented in Table 3, about three-fourths (73.3 percent in Mojo village and 76.6 percent in Asemdayong village) had

participated, even though only at the very low level.

The level of fishers' participation in decision-making phase was also measured by frequency of having ideas pertaining to activities proposed during accomplishment of the programme at the early stage. The result indicated that only a few people

proposed their ideas during the meetings conducted in the initial stage of the programme. Almost all respondents have very low level in having ideas or proposals relating to the programme execution. Consequently, there was no fisher in both villages that moderately participated in decision-making process.

Table 3. Composite scores of participation in decision-making

Composite Scores	Asemdayong		Mojo	
	Frequency	%	Frequency	%
Very low ( $\leq 12$ )	46	76.6	44	73.3
Low (13-20)	14	23.3	16	26.7
Moderate (21-28)	-	-	-	-
High (29-36)	-	-	-	-
Very high ( $\geq 37$ )	-	-	-	-
<b>Total</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>100.0</b>
Mean	10.9		11.3	
Std. Deviation	2.7		2.6	
Minimum	8.0		8.0	
Maximum	18.0		19.0	

Minimum and maximum possible scores were 8 and 40, respectively.

### b). Implementation

The percentages of fishers' involvement in group meeting and interaction with facilitators were moderate. However, their involvement in meeting with other groups was low, in which 80 percent of them had attended more than once. Participation in field trip was very low. In general, their features did not differently much. Relating this condition, the level of fishers' participation in IDT programme confined from very low to moderate. Three-fourths of them involved in the group meeting for three to

four times during the implementation phase, even less frequent for inter-group meeting. There was low level of interaction between fishers and facilitators and agencies involved in the programme. Less on frequencies of involvement in IDT activities would manifested low level of intensity in participation. Thirty percent of fishers in Mojo village and nearly one-fourth (23.3%) in Asemdayong village were moderately participated in the implementation phase.

Nevertheless, the rests were at the low level as presented in Table 4.

Table 4. Composite scores of participation in implementation

Composite Scores	Asemdayong		Mojo	
	Frequency	%	Frequency	%
Very low ( $\leq 15$ )	12	20.0	8	13.3
Low (16-25)	34	56.7	34	56.7
Moderate (26-35)	14	23.3	18	30.0
High (36-45)	-	-	-	-
Very high ( $\geq 46$ )	-	-	-	-
Total	60	100.0	60	100.0
Mean	19.3		19.8	
Std. Deviation	4.6		4.9	
Minimum	13.0		13.0	
Maximum	28.0		29.0	

Minimum and maximum possible scores were 10 and 50, respectively.

### c). *Sharing Benefits*

Some activities implemented in IDT programme were diverse, ranged from fisheries sector to paddy-farm and trade sectors. The majority of respondents (85 percent in Asemdayong village and 80 percent in Mojo village) confirmed that the fishery sector was one of the main activities implemented in the programme. As mentioned earlier that IDT programme constitutes a strategy for poverty alleviation by implementing social and economic development at less-developed villages. After implementing the programme's activities, the poor people would be expected to obtain beneficiaries from the programme. Relating to these objectives, the

fishers were solicited to identify advantages or benefits of the programme for them.

Three-fourths of the fishers had responded that the IDT programme was helping them in getting working capital. These helped the poor fishers in increasing their production as well as in marketing their products. Apart from that, technical and managerial assistance had also help people in improving the fishers' skills and knowledge as found in the two villages. More than one-half of them verified that their income have increased after joining the programme's activities. As shown in Table 5, less than 15 percent of fishers had participated at the moderate level. However, the remainder fishers were lowly participated.



Table 5. Composite Scores of Participation in Sharing Benefits

Composite Scores	Asemdayong		Mojo	
	Frequency	%	Frequency	%
Very low ( $\leq 15$ )	16	26.7	10	16.7
Low (16-25)	36	60.0	42	70.0
Moderate (26-35)	8	13.3	8	13.3
High (36-45)	-	-	-	-
Very high ( $\geq 46$ )	-	-	-	-
<b>Total</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>100.0</b>
Mean	18.8		19.3	
Std. Deviation	4.3		3.8	
Minimum	13.0		14.0	
Maximum	27.0		28.0	

Minimum and maximum possible scores were 10 and 50, respectively.

#### d). Evaluation

The percentage of fishers involved during evaluation phase was quite low. As existed in programme planning phase, fishers involved in the evaluation phase were merely the groups' committees. They

had attended group meetings, meetings with facilitators, and with agencies involved in IDT programme. There was no fisher involvement in inter-group meeting and field trip. This study found that the majority of fishers did not actively involved in the programme evaluation.

Table 6. Composite scores of participation in evaluation

Composite Scores	Asemdayong		Mojo	
	Frequency	%	Frequency	%
Very low ( $\leq 12$ )	52	86.7	50	83.3
Low (13-20)	8	13.3	10	16.7
Moderate (21-28)	-	-	-	-
High (29-36)	-	-	-	-
Very high ( $\geq 37$ )	-	-	-	-
<b>Total</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>100.0</b>
Mean	10.3		10.4	
Std. Deviation	1.9		2.1	
Minimum	8.0		8.0	
Maximum	16.0		17.0	

Minimum and maximum possible scores were 8 and 40, respectively.

## VI. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

Fishers' knowledge and understanding on IDT programme was commonly fair. They had some sources in knowing this type of knowledge. Whereas, their knowledge and understanding on the IDT objectives and functions were low. They had provided inappropriate responses pertaining to questions demanded, however, their knowledge on agencies involved in the programme was moderate. Poor-fishers' attitudes were measured separately, either towards the programme or personnel. Overall, fishers had unfavourable attitudes towards the programme as well as personnel which attitudes on programme being somewhat favourable.

Judging from the findings, fishers in these two coastal-villages were found to have participated, to a certain extent, in the phases of programme execution (decision-making, implementation, sharing benefits, and evaluation). Nevertheless, the level of participation in each phase was very low. The poor-fishers' participation in the IDT programme conducted in these two villages seemed to be essentially passive. It was appeared that some factors such as a low level of education and income, insufficient knowledge on the programme, and unfavourable attitudes on the IDT programme and personnel. These had influenced the level of participation.

Related to the findings of this study, the following recommendations were made. Intensive efforts should be taken by committees and agencies involved in IDT programme to encourage greater participation. Apart from that, organisations and/or agencies involved should continue to provide technical and management advisory supports to further enhancing rural people's participation in development efforts. Finally, villagers' knowledge and understanding on IDT programme was found very low. Hence,

to improve the intensity of participation, the organisations involved need to deliver sufficient information to the target members.

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