

MEMBERS' PERCEPTIONS ON THE FUNCTIONS OF FARMER GROUP IN RICE RICE FARMING BUSINESS IN SYAMTALIRA ARON DISTRICT, UTARA ACEH REGENCY

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Abstract

The farmer group is a farme entity that directly organizes the function of farme in deloving their farming. Efforts to delelope farmer groups in playing their function in occordace with the direction of devoloping farme groups as their functoin. The high and law development of farmer group is influenced by the amount of group function given and the members perceptions of farmer group. This research was conducted to see members perception of the function of farmer group in law rice farming. This research was carried out in the Syamtalira Aron sub-district of north aceh regency in november 2018. This study uses a qualitative descriptive analysis with a scate of briquetes. The members perception of the function of farme group on wetland rice farming as a forum of cooperation with an index value of 76.31% with a good category. A container with a index value of 79.31% a good category. As a production unit with an index of 73.12% with catagor well. Therefore it can be concluded that in general farmers perception of the function of farmer group in lawland farming are categorized as good.

Keywords: *Perception, Farming, Farmer Group*

1. INTRODUCTION

Indonesia is one of the countries where the majority of the population lives in rural areas with a livelihood as farmers. Indonesia's history is inseparable from the agricultural sector (producing raw materials such as rice, corn, sago, etc.), especially during the Dutch colonial period, agricultural and plantation activities were the determinants of a person's social and economic level. Although agricultural activities only contribute an average of 4% of a country's GDP (Gross Domestic Product), agricultural activities are the largest provider of employment for each country (Carana, 2003).

The forms of agricultural land in Indonesia include rice fields, fields, yards, plantations and others. Agricultural products in Indonesia are also very diverse including rice, corn, coffee, rubber, onions, cloves, cocoa, coconut, palm oil, and others. In this case, the type of food crop commodity is the main priority for farmers in Indonesia because rice is the staple food for most people.

Rice is one of the agricultural commodities, the socio-economic potential of the plant is the strength as well as the basic capital for the development of rice production in Indonesia. This is because rice is a staple food for 95 percent of Indonesia's population. Rice farming is a part of life for farmers in Indonesia which can create wide employment opportunities and the contribution of rice farming to farmers' household income is quite large. As a staple food, rice will continue to have an increasing market demand, in line with population growth. From the farmer's point of view, in addition to growing rice for food security and as a family or household income, planting rice has become a part of life. Therefore, rice farming will continue to be carried out by farmers (Irawan, 2003).

Rice production in Indonesia in recent years has increased. The increase in rice production does not mean that food problems can be solved. Population growth that is faster than the ability to produce foodstuffs, especially rice, is a major problem in overcoming food shortages (Murzi, 2014). To support or encourage the implementation of food security in Indonesia, various efforts have been made, one of which is through fostering farmers in activities that are made in the form of farmer groups.

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Efforts to develop farmer groups really need and depend on the group's ability to play its function in accordance with the direction of developing farmer groups as mentioned in the Ministry of Agriculture. The high and low level of farmer group development is strongly influenced by the size of the group function given in developing the farmer group itself (Timbulus, GV, 2016).

Syamtalira Aron District is a sub-district located in North Aceh Regency. Most of the residents in Syamtalira Aron sub-district work as farmers. So far, Syamtalira Aron Sub-district has been conducting farmer development in groups, farmer groups in this sub-district are 32 groups with 1,130 members.

The number of extension workers who coordinate farmer groups in this sub-district is 7 people. The limited number of extension workers in Syamtalira Aron Sub-district makes it very easy for extension workers to train farmers in groups compared to coaching farmers individually. Through agricultural counseling held, the government has also tried to provide assistance by providing counseling on good and correct farming procedures to members of farmer groups in Syamtalira Aron District in the hope that independent farmers can develop their farming and continue to improve their welfare.

In Syamtalira Aron Subdistrict so far the function of farmer groups has been going well in coordinating each of its members, both in farmer development activities, information delivery, and innovation as well as distribution of assistance from the government to farmers. However, so far, farmers have only seen farmer groups as a place to receive aid. The lack of interest in participating in activities organized by farmer groups is influenced by the farmer's perspective on the farmer group.

Perception is one of the important aspects of psychology for humans in responding to the presence of various aspects and symptoms around them. Perception has a very broad meaning. According to Indonesian, perception is a direct response (acceptance) of something. The perception formed in the farmer will affect his perspective on the benefits of the function of the farmer group. Farmers' perceptions of the function of farmer groups can be one of the obstacles or incentives for farmers in farmer development. So interested in conducting research on how members' perceptions of the function of farmer groups in paddy rice farming in Syamtalira Aron sub-district, North Aceh district.

2. RESEARCH METHODS

The location of this research in Syamtalira Aron District, North Aceh Regency was determined by purposive sampling, the determination of the location with the consideration of the location that there are many farmers who join farmer groups. The types of data used in this study include primary data and secondary data. The primary data needed in this study were obtained through observation and interviews. Secondary data data obtained from BPP, previous research, journals, books that support this research.

The method used in this study is a qualitative descriptive method using a Likert scale.

To see the total score of each item and the total score of each question asked, use the following formula (Nasir, 2013):

$$T \times P_n$$

Where :

T = Total number of respondents who chose

P_n = Choice of likert score numbers

Furthermore, to get the results of the interpretation, it is necessary to know the highest score (Y) and the lowest number (x) for the assessment item with this formula:

$$Y = \text{highest Likert score} \times \text{number of respondents} \times \text{number of questions}$$

X = the lowest score likert x number of respondents x number of questions

Then the assessment of respondents' interpretation of the perception of lowland rice farmers towards farmer groups in the development of lowland rice farming is the % index value with the following formula (Natsir, 2013)

$$\text{INDEX VALUE \%} = \text{Total Score} / Y \times 100$$

To find out the location of the index value, first find out the interval (distance) and percent interpretation with the method of finding the Percent Score interval (1) as follows: $I = 100 / \text{total Likert score}$ (Natsir, 2013).

So :

$$I = 100 / 4 \\ = 25$$

In this study the score interpretation criteria are based on the following intervals:

25%	-	43.74% = not good
43.75%	-	62.40% = not good
62.50%	-	81.24% = good
81.25%	-	100% = very good

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 1 Distribution of Number of Farmers by Productive and Unproductive Age

No.	Age (Years)	Number (Soul)	Percentage (%)
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
1.	Earning (18 – 54)	32	80
2.	Unproductive (55 – 68)	8	20
Amount		40	100

Source: Primary Data (processed), 2018

Based on table 1 shows that most of the farmers have a productive age with a percentage of 80%. Only a small number of farmers already have an unproductive age with a percentage of 20%.

Table 2 Distribution of Number of Farmers by Education Level

No.	Education Level (Years)	Number (soul)	Percentage (%)
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
1.	Elementary School (0 – 6 Years)	21	52.5
2.	Junior High School (7 – 9 Years)	10	25
3.	Senior High School (10 – 12 Years)	8	20
4.	College (13 – 17 Years)	1	2.5
Amount		40	100

Source: Primary Data (processed), 2018

From table 2, it can be seen that in the research location, the level of education of farmers is mostly dominated by farmers who completed elementary school, with the highest percentage of 52.5%, followed by junior high school, then senior high school and only a small percentage of college graduates. Although farmers' education is dominated by elementary school graduates in the research area, farmers are willing to learn and adopt innovations and technology, this causes farmers to be more active in farming to increase production.

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Table 3 Distribution of Number of Farmers Based on Length of Farmer Group

No.	Length of Farmer Group (Years)	Number (soul)	Percentage (%)
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
1.	(<10 Years)	10	25
2	(11 – 20)	14	35
3	(> 20 Years)	16	40
Amount		40	100

Source: Primary Data (processed), 2018

Based on table 3 shows that the experience of farmer groups is very experienced. The duration of the farmer groups at the research site was carried out from generation to generation from the family. Thus, this experience becomes the basic capital in managing his farm. The level of experience in farmer groups at the research site is dominated by the large category with a percentage of 40%. The experience level of farmer groups in farming is said to be capable and more mature in managing their farming.

Table 4 Member Perception Index Value of Farmer Group Functions in Rice Field Farming in Syamtalira Aron District, North Aceh Regency

No.	Farmer Group Functions	Score	Percentage	Interpretation
1	Cooperation Forum	3.06	76%	Well
2	Learning Container	3.17	79%	Well
3	Production Unit	3.13	78.57%	Well
Average			77.85%	Well

Source: Primary Data (processed), 2018

3.1 Cooperation Forum

The forum for cooperation is a forum where farmer groups collaborate with fellow members of the farmer groups in meeting the need for information, subsidized fertilizer seeds and medicines in running a farming business. In addition, to carry out its role as a forum for cooperation in groups, group members must be able to strengthen, facilitate, and encourage the realization of mutually beneficial cooperation. This is very helpful for farmers in managing their farming. The forum for cooperation in farmer groups is a place for farmers to solve problems and find solutions to every problem and obstacle they face in managing rice farming. Problems and obstacles faced by farmers, such as during the rice seedling season, seeds eaten by golden snail pests, and the scarcity of urea fertilizer.

To overcome obstacles to the golden snail pest, farmers always take or spray the golden snail and its eggs in the rice fields with chemical drugs before the seeds are sown so that the golden snails in the fields die so that it can reduce the risk of the seeds being eaten by the golden snail. In addition to spraying the farmers, they also deal with the pest of golden snails in a natural way such as sowing leaves and climbing papaya into the fields, after the papaya leaves are sown, the golden snail eats the papaya leaves then in the morning the farmers take the papaya leaves along with the golden snails that are sticky on the papaya leaves, this is done so that farmers do not use too much chemical drugs.

Besides the golden snail pest, farmers are also constrained by the scarcity of fertilizers when the planting season arrives. To overcome this problem, farmer groups always try to seek assistance from the agriculture office to get subsidized fertilizer a month before the planting season, this has helped farmers in overcoming the shortage of fertilizers, even though the fertilizer distributed is not

able to meet all fertilizer needs for farmers. However, a few farmers have been helped by the subsidized fertilizer that is distributed so that farmers already have a supply of fertilizer for their farming activities, although only half.

The function of farmer groups as a forum for cooperation is to become a place for deliberation in farmer groups. Deliberations in farmer groups aim to develop group members' farming and find solutions to any problems they face, setting activity goals together. So that the implementation of activities and meeting the needs of the group can run well and in accordance with the needs of the group. So far, farmers have also used farmer groups as a place for discussion among group members, both in running farming and in the application of innovations such as the application of the *jajar logowo* and *mina padi* techniques for areas that have sufficient water, natural pest and disease control, manufacture and use of organic fertilizers and organic fertilizers. Farmer groups also routinely conduct evaluations for the development of their farms.

The results showed that the forum for cooperation had been used by members of the farmer group correctly. This can be seen from the index value of 76% which is in the good category. Thus, farmers in Syamtalira Aron District have a good perception of the function of farmer groups as a forum for cooperation. In the good category there are a few more percent who explain the shortcomings of the cooperation forum, namely there is no formation of RDKK (Definitive Plan for Group Needs) carried out by farmer groups, so far farmer groups have only received assistance provided by extension workers so that there is no cooperation in forming RDKK .

3.2 Learning Container

Farmer groups that function as a forum for cooperation have carried out their functions, the function of a learning forum is a learning class held by a farmer group for once a month, this learning class is carried out at the *meunasah* or *bale - bale gampong*, the material conveyed from the extension worker is related to the mechanism rice cultivation. Cultivation mechanisms include the procedure for planting *jajar logowo*, *mina padi*, harvesting, storage, and so on. The learning method used is the lecture and discussion method, the extension worker conveys the material, then the participants ask questions and there is a discussion between the extension worker and the farmer. The existence of a learning class that is held once a month makes it easier for farmer groups to access information and innovations about the farming they are running. But in reality,

In addition to learning classes held once a month, members of farmer groups also receive visits and assistance from extension workers who visit directly to where farmers run their farms, usually extension workers come once a week or every 2 weeks to control the sustainability of farming activities run by farmers and so far The extension worker will come directly to the field when the farmer contacts the extension worker to get guidance in managing his farm.

Learning classes held by farmer groups and visits by extension workers are aimed at enabling members to improve their skills in managing and developing farming which will have an effect on income. The results showed that the index value of the learning forum was 79%, meaning that farmers had a good perception of the function of farmer groups as a learning forum.

3.3 Production Unit

Farmer groups that function as providers of production units are the group's ability to provide facilities and infrastructure to support the activities of its members, so as to increase the economic scale of businesses run by groups and group members in increasing their income.

The role of the farmer group as a production unit illustrates that the farmer group has several times carried out production development in the fields of technology, production facilities. Information about the production facilities is obtained through outreach activities and interactions between group members. Farmer groups also function to formulate and implement the needs of farmer groups as a production unit. Farmer groups also make proposals to the Department of Agriculture in accordance with the directions given by the sub-district extensionist. The proposal is a submission of assistance to the government as a group effort, the assistance provided includes

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chili seeds, corn, soybeans, cucumbers, pesticides, insecticides. But in reality so far the assistance provided is not carried out as a group effort,

Farmer groups also function as intermediaries for production facilities, such as the facilities provided according to the needs of farmer group members. Facilities that are routinely distributed by the government through farmer groups are tractors for plowing fields which are given to the group, then the group that manages it, the tractor assistance provided is very easy and can accelerate group members in managing the land. Subsidized superior seeds, seeds distributed to farmers aim to make farmers use different superior seeds every planting season so that farmers do not use seeds from the previous harvest, superior seeds distributed later will be able to increase farmers' production. Subsidized fertilizers and drugs, so far farmers are still constrained by the scarcity of urea fertilizer when the planting season arrives, Subsidized fertilizer assistance distributed can overcome and reduce the burden on farmers in obtaining fertilizer during the growing season. The assistance provided by the government so far has greatly helped farmers in managing their farming.

The farmer group also connects extension workers from the BPP Sub-district and also related agencies with members of the farmer group to provide information, innovations in lowland rice farming in particular. The goal is for farmers to continue to receive information about the mechanism for managing rice farming. Based on the results of the study, it shows that the index value of the production unit is 78.57%, meaning that farmers have a good perception of the function of farmer groups as production units.

4. CONCLUSION

Based on the results of the research on the perceptions of members of the function of farmer groups in lowland rice farming in Syamtalira Aron District, North Aceh Regency, it can be concluded that: a learning forum with an index score of 79% with a good score category, as a production unit with a score index value of 78.57% in a good category. In general, farmers' perceptions of the role of farmer groups in lowland rice farming are categorized as good.

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