

Research Article

Irrigation Management from Good Governance Perspective in Wegil Village, Pati Regency

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Abstract.

This study examines the role of the village government in managing water resources for irrigating rice fields in Wegil Village, Pati Regency. Before each planting season, villages hold consultations to determine an irrigation management committee for rice fields, a process facilitated by the village government with the active participation of farmers. This governance approach is analyzed using the framework of Good Governance to explore the relationship between the village government, farmers, and market interests. A qualitative case study method was used, with in-depth interviews conducted with key informants, including village government officials, members of the irrigation committee (P3A), and local farmers. The study presents several key findings. First, irrigation management in Wegil Village operates through a discussion-based political mechanism. Second, Good Governance serves as a collaborative space for various actors in irrigation management and agricultural marketing. Finally, the village government plays a central role in ensuring synergy between the village government, P3A, farmers, and market interests.

Keywords: good governance, irrigation, management

1. Introduction

The village government has quite a unique authority. Because, socio-culturally, the village is a unique region with traditions that are still sustainable. However, the barrier of village progress is often the lack of initiative by villagers to participate in village management to be prosperous. In many cases, only the village government moves (Kindangen, 2020). The result is that village management is mono loyalty and homogeneous. Initiatives and creativity are often hampered so that the village can be advanced and competitive.

An interesting case occurred in Wegil Village with the tradition of the village forming a committee that manages irrigation for rice fields at every planting to harvest time. The task of this committee is quite complex, such as taking care of water sources, costs,

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labor costs, and so on. All becomes the responsibility of the committee that is formed from democratic meetings with citizens.

The village government has the main task to ensure that the community meeting forum is held, and the residents can channel their aspirations properly. At this point, the topic of the role of the village government is aimed at understanding the role of the village government in the present. In addition, this research is expected to enrich discourse on democracy and local politics.

2. Literature Review

The village, as the lowest entity in the Republic of Indonesia's government structure, has its own mechanism based on local culture in managing its resources. This mechanism is an accumulation of relations between various local actors related to resource management in synergy with extra-village parties, such as the private sector and the government. The inclusion of various actors in the management of village resources and assets is a positive thing because it is impossible for villagers to professionally manage the assets that are owned optimally with their own abilities. Especially in the era of globalization as it is now, it requires the integration and synergy of ideas, energy and capital from the plurality of actors involved to manage assets and form marketing networks for village development towards a better and prosperous direction. The state must open itself to the actors (Mas'ood, 2003; Abrahamsen, 2004; Winarno, 2008).

Village development is a combination of local village community independence with programs from the government in collaboration with the third party to support progress and independence for the village itself. Since the main target is the village, then the development that should be carried out should be based on and rely on the strengths, characteristics and independent initiatives of the village (Maskun, 1994). The aim is to explore and enhance the natural and human potential of the village to support development in the village. The village is really used as the subject of development, not just an object of development.

When the village is confronted with the post-reform context in Indonesia, the village will automatically be affected by two main reform agendas, namely democratization and decentralization. Speaking of democratization in this country, there is a paradigm shift that occurs, especially from the perspective of institutionalism. Namely from paradigm government towards good government. Thus, the paradigm of good governance in

village development and governance of village resource management independently and collaboratively becomes inevitable.

So, at this point, the village should be placed as an entity that has local culture and uniqueness. Thus, developing villages should emphasize the perspective of village independence based on local culture. Not to impose the will of the formal state so that the village loses its local culture and uniqueness as it did during the New Order era. The character of managing the power of the New Order was much studied by Indonesians such as socio-historical studies in understanding the Indonesian political elite by Benda, 1964); Feith, 1965); Anderson, 1972; and King, 1979; with a study of state patrimonial politics, Ruth T. McVey, 1977; regarding state bureaucratization politics (*beamtenstaat*), and so on.

If good governance is understood not only to include relations in government but to include synergistic and parallel relations between markets, government and civil society (Dwipayana, 2003; then collaboration with all parties in managing village resources especially to improve the lives of village communities is necessary. Therefore, the government as an institution that has political legitimacy in maintaining the harmonization, must be able to play its role in maintaining the balance and protection of the interests of village communities.

The concept of governance can be synchronized with the perspective of communitarian governance, which sees that governance places society on a political basis and community as an economic basis. The practice is that good governance at the village level includes village autonomy which includes the use of decisions and authority of local culture at the village level. While from the economic side is the management of economic resources based on community participation (Dwipayana, 2003).

The above description explains village development in a frame of good governance, with the hope that the presence of the state in this concept will be able to protect the interests of village communities without having to turn off the market. Whereas in the economic context it is expected to be able to encourage the growth of a healthy market so that the actors involved in it gain profits in accordance with their bargaining position (Dwipayana, 2003). For example, fair profits for villagers who own land, farm laborers as workers, investors as investors, and for the village government itself.

Therefore, examining the role of the village government in realizing the prosperity of the village community is very important and interesting. In other words the principle of communitarian governance, which sees that governance puts society as a political basis

and community (collectivity) as an economic basis can be proven to be implemented with local culture in the village. This study will also examine and discuss collaboration between village governments and villagers in managing the village resources. In the context of this research, these resources are natural resources that are managed independently and democratically by all components of the Wegil Village Pati Regency based on existing local culture.

3. Research Methodology

This research is a type of qualitative research using a case study method. Case studies view the object being studied as something unique that needs to be explored further to find a deeper explanation. This research was conducted in Pati Regency, one of the regencies in Central Java, precisely in Wegil Village. The method of obtaining data is done by interview, documentation, and field observation. The data consists of primary and secondary data, primary data is the result of interviews with key informants. The sources for obtaining data in the field are the managers of the irrigation system for rice fields, farmers in Wegil Village, and several community leaders who were interviewed in depth to obtain accurate data. While secondary data is the result of a literature review. From these two sources, the data is then processed and analyzed. To maintain data validity, source triangulation is carried out in the study.

4. Research Result and Discussion

In the management of water resources in Wegil Village, there are Perkumpulan Petani Pemakai Air (P3A) consisting of; Sari Tani 1; Sari Tani 2; Sari Tani 3; Sari Tani 4; Sari Tani 5; Sari Tani 6; Farmers Group Gurem; and Farmers Group Mbeton. This name is not a periodic name but is based on the division of plots of rice fields. It can also be said as a plot name as well as being the name of a P3A institution. If the members of the committee change, the name of the P3A institution remains the same.

The P3A mechanism of work uses an auction system. In the context of water management for irrigation, the first step is to hold discussion by arranging a meeting between the prospective auctioneer and the farming community at the village hall. Normatively, the four P3A institutions in Wegil have the same management period, which is three years. However, the working period of each plot is different. Therefore, the discussion

between the four blocks in the village hall was not held simultaneously. But it only involves prospective auctioneers and the farming community in the plot area.

In addition, this work period also depends on the needs to be designed, such as large road construction projects and the construction of a large secondary river flow, which may not be completed in one period. As a solution, the committee's work contract will be more than one period (three years). For example, the project was not completed in three years, and the village still needed it, which caused the expiration of the auction contract period to not coincide.

After that, each harvest will be collected by the management and will be auctioned at the Village Hall. At this point, the auction process is carried out by middlemen who come a lot even from outside the village or region. After the agreement, the transaction is carried out. Then, the funds will be disbursed and the management's wages of 10% are dedicated to the village treasury. Some of the wages were also used to fund operational management for one season in the future. Then the rest will be used as profit for each member of the management that is used to repay their capital when the initial auction funding was made. Fortunately, the management's investment depends on the service and seriousness in protecting the farmers. Because of this, it affects the harvest later. If the harvest does not come out, it is likely that the wages for the management cannot cover the contribution money they have to spend at the beginning of the auction so that it impacts mutual losses. Such is the cycle of water management and yields transactions. It is from farmers, by farmers, and for farmers.

In addition, the management must guarantee and protect the farming communities in their plots, such as: dealing with tertiary irrigation water networks. The management must arrange that when the low rice fields have been filled with water, the high rice fields will not get water, it will be the responsibility of the management so that all are flowed according to the portion. In addition, the guarantee of agricultural irrigation facilities and infrastructure, the construction and maintenance of irrigation channels, machinery services to plow the farmers' fields in their plots, machine services such as blowers or combi to harvest the farmers in their plots, as well as guarantees of peace from pests. For example, if there is a rat pest attack, the management together with the farmer will do a mouse capture activity to overcome it.

Then the wages to the committee members of Sari Tani 1-6 were agreed to be 1/20 of the harvest of the farming community. Because access to water management is relatively easier. Wages for the Gurem Farmers Group are 1/15 because they must use a hose to

drain water from Kali Jeratun (there is no exit from the primary to secondary drainage), so they have to use a manual hose. For Mbeton Farmers Group is 1/14 because Mbeton requires a hanging channel that passes through a special field. From this difference factor, the base price and wages are considered.

The money from the management of the farmer group goes to the village income budget (called APBDes). The formal use of the budget is used as much as 60% for physical development (roads for access to rice fields) in the plot of each farmer group area, 20% for the management of the administrators, and 20% for village development (village administration and village development supporters). If there is a village event that is short of apitan funds, for example the puppet response event at the village hall and ketoprak on August 17, usually the shortfall is taken from the 60% physical development quota earlier.

From the dynamics of water management that are full of local culture, the village government has several crucial roles in managing water management for irrigating rice fields. First, the village government agreed that the management of the committee “at a minimum” must have eight people for the work of the committee to be optimal. Because rice field plots in Wegil are relatively large with an average of about 100 hectares each. Secondly, the village government also made a regulation, that private parties or people entitled to auction or who were administrators of irrigation management were farmers who owned land in the plot / area of the group. Third, the person on the committee must be a resident of Wegil. This rule was made because many owned lands in Wegil but were not residents but residents of Kudus and Grobogan

The fourth role of the village government is that the village government along with the BPD make a decree regarding the composition of the committee in each work period. The management structure was then formalized by the Pati regency government. Management in farmer groups is also notarized during this period, which is assisted and facilitated by the village government. The main reason for the existence of legality in each committee management is to facilitate the submission of program proposals and assistance by the respective irrigation management and the peasant community that it supports to the district government or related agencies. Because the assistance and certain programs will be clear and can be reduced if the management in the committee is formal legal.

Fifth, the village government becomes a facilitator who continues to submit assistance to the regency government. The mechanism is that the farmer group submits a proposal

that contains the needs related to certain farming tools or programs. Proposals that contain these needs must be known by the village government, then recommended by the District BPP (agricultural extension center), then enter the Department of Agriculture at the Pati Regency government level.

Sixth, the village government is a facilitator and mediator who mediates the differences of opinion in each of the discussions for water management. Both in large meetings at the village hall to discuss the formation of the committee in general, the committee and farmers' internal discussions in each plot and when becoming a facilitator that connects with assistance from the regency government to the drafting of rules to protect the interest of farmers in the Wegil village when marketing of agricultural products.

The six roles of the village government of Wegil explained how the management of irrigation for rice fields is based on collaboration between the village government, farmers, the community, and the market. The meeting point in this collaboration explains the practice of good governance, especially the concept of communitarian governance at the village level. Namely the occurrence of collaborative and synergistic relations between state, society, and the market in managing joint affairs (irrigating rice fields) collectively and creating a healthy market. In line with what UNDP (Pasolong, 2019) has determined that good governance can be seen from the active participation of community group members that can be seen in irrigation management, namely; the transparency built by the group, so that any information about irrigation management can be achieved; there is responsiveness from various parties, in this case the irrigation system managers in Wegil village; there are rules that are obeyed together; and this is a consensus that protects common interests in society; fair, beneficial for all farmers; and contains effectiveness and efficiency that provide the best benefits to everyone; accountability; and has a strategic vision.

The strategy to make this happen is by increasing the bargaining position of the local community, which is assisted and supported by the village government, so that the local community, in this case the farmers, get the benefit economically through their agricultural products. And local culture overshadows every collaboration practice that has become a breath and of the characteristics to answer the daily problems of villagers (Fajarini, 2014), including for residents of Wegil Village, Pati Regency.

5. Conclusion

Building a village is a key word in the effort to realize the common good at the local level. The village government is the main actor who legally has the authority and legitimacy to manage public affairs and local resources for the good of the local community. In the context of this research, the management of local resources in the form of water for irrigating rice fields is carried out based on local culture in Wegil Village. The village government of Wegil also participates in providing support and strengthening water management for irrigating rice fields through six roles for the benefit of villagers and farmers in Wegil Village. Interestingly, the role was carried out while continuing to emphasize collaboration and synergy between the state (village government), society (P3A), and market (middlemen) so as to create to good governance practices at the village level, specifically the practice of communitarian governance based on local culture in Wegil Village Pati Regency.

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