

WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT THROUGH FARMER WOMEN GROUPS IN BUKIT BIRU VILLAGE, TENGGARONG DISTRICT, KUTAI KARTANEGARA REGENCY (CASE STUDY OF KWT SRIKANDI JAYA)

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Abstract

The agricultural program for the Srikandi Jaya Women Farmers Group / Kelompok Wanita Tani (KWT) represents a form of women's empowerment aimed at improving skills, creativity, and insight to provide opportunities for women to become more empowered. The purpose of this study was to determine the form of empowerment, the level of participation, and the benefits obtained by the Srikandi Jaya Women Farmers Group. The research was conducted in Bukit Biru, Tenggara District, Kutai Kartanegara Regency. The sampling method used was purposive and conducted by census. Respondents in this study were 29 people; the analytical method used was a descriptive qualitative method by measuring the attitude scale, Likert, using a scoring. The results showed that the empowerment program for the Srikandi Jaya women farmers' group took the form of a learning class, a cooperation unit, and a production unit. The participation rate of members of the Srikandi Jaya women farmers' group was high across all indicators. The monthly routine meeting indicator was in the high category with an average score of 10.07, the agricultural counseling/meeting indicator was also in the high category with an average score of 13.41, and the training program indicator was in the high category with an average score of 15.83. The benefits of the agricultural extension program included increased group income, enhanced roles of women, higher participation levels, and improved knowledge and insights among members.

Keywords: Empowerment; Participation; Kelompok Wanita Tani (KWT), Agriculture.

INTRODUCTION

Community empowerment aims to foster independence by enabling individuals to develop their potential, meet their own needs without reliance on others, and effectively address the problems they encounter. Community empowerment requires participation, creativity, and initiative from the community to manage existing resources in order to achieve prosperity for the community itself. One of these initiatives is the women's empowerment program, which is designed to enable women to grow and develop into empowered individuals with the capacity to address their needs and challenges by utilizing the resources available to them (Citra, 2017).

The participation of women farmers in agricultural development serves as a bridge between their existing practices and continuously evolving knowledge and technology. This participation is essential to enable women farmers to adopt practical approaches that effectively support agricultural activities. Farmers need information on innovation or direction in the field of agriculture. This information can be obtained by women farmers from field agricultural extension workers through the implementation of agricultural extension activities (Koampa et al., 2015).

The role of women in supporting agricultural development and supporting the family economy can be done in one of the ways that women can play an active role, including by forming an agricultural group or institution whose activities focus on the role of women in improving family welfare through family harmony and a supportive environment (Purnamasari, 2014). Tenggara District has 14 villages/sub-districts, namely Jahab, Bukit Biru Timbau, Melayu, Loah Ipuh, Maluhu, Panji, Sukarame, Baru, Mangkurawang, Loah Tebu, Rapak Lambur, Loah Ipuh Darat, and Bendang Raya, with a population of 108,539 people in Tenggara sub-district in 2019, consisting of 55,591 males and 52,948 females. The largest population is found in Bukit Biru Village, and the smallest population is found in Bendang Raya Village (Central Bureau of Statistics of Kutai Kartanegara Regency, 2020).

Bukit Biru Village has productivity and production, including food crops (paddy rice with an area of 391.5 Ha and horticultural with an area of 26 Ha), plantation crops (rubber with an area of 15 Ha), horticultural crops (rambutan, mango, papaya, guava, banana, kedondong, and longan with a total land used of 6.5 Ha) and livestock (free-range chickens, ducks, cows and goats). Bukit Biru Village, Tenggara District, has several farmer groups. Farmer groups in Bukit Biru Village consist of 21 farmer groups and 2 KWT. The farmers in the Bukit Biru area are trying to farm vegetables with spinach, kale, sausage, celery, processed foods and other agricultural crops and one of the KWTs in Bukit Biru village which is engaged in food processing such as pots based coconut coir, husks, compost, fried shallots, peanut sauce, sweet potato opak, rengginang, instant red ginger, and instant red ringer, and distributed to the market.

KWT Srikandi Jaya is a forum for women in the Bukit Biru Village to improve their abilities and increase their income. At first, the activities were carried out independently. However, as time went on, an initiative to form a women farmers' group emerged, leading them to realize their potential for further development and increased household income. KWT members also make this group a forum for friendship, a learning forum to gain insight and skills through monthly regular meetings, meetings or counseling programs, and training provided. Until now, KWT Srikandi Jaya has experienced changes for the better that are felt by KWT members and the surrounding environment. The purpose of this study is to find out the form of empowerment, level of participation, and benefits obtained by the Srikandi Jaya Farmer Women Group.

RESEARCH METHODS

Research Type and Design

This research is a case study on KWT Srikandi Jaya in Bukit Biru Village; the sampling method used is purposive, which is a deliberate sampling technique with certain criteria or considerations (Syarif, 2018). The samples in this study are all members of KWT Srikandi Jaya and 1 agricultural extension officer in Bukit Biru Village, Tenggara District, Kutai Kartanegara Regency, with a total of 29 members; sampling is carried out by Census (Saturated Sample).

Location and Time of Research

This research was carried out from December 2021 to February 2022, with the location of the research in the Women Farmers Group in Bukit Biru District, Tenggara District, Kutai Kartanegara Regency.

Data Analysis Technique

a. Qualitative Descriptive

The form of women's empowerment activities through KWT is analyzed with a qualitative descriptive method that aims to describe and analyze, and then explain by asking questions through questionnaires that have been provided to respondents by the Field Agricultural Extension Worker. In addition, the source of qualitative data is obtained from the words or speeches and statements of people taken in the study (Irawan et al., 2017).

b. Likert scale

The level of participation of members of the Srikandi Jaya Women Farmers Group was measured using several activity indicators. To interpret the participation scores for each indicator, class intervals were established based on the number of questionnaire items and the Likert scale used. The classification of participation levels is presented in **Table 1**.

Tabel 1. Class categories and intervals

No.	KWT Srikandi Jaya Activities	Participation Rates and Class Intervals		
		Low	Medium	Height
1	Monthly regular meetings	4,00 – 6,67	6,68 – 9,33	9,34 – 12,00
2	Meetings/counseling pertanian	5,00 – 8,33	8,34 – 11,66	11,67 – 15,00
3	Training programs	6,00 – 10,00	10,01 – 14,00	14,01 – 18,00

(Source: Primary Data Analysis, 2022)

c. Questionnaire

The benefits obtained by KWT were analyzed by a qualitative descriptive method that aimed to describe and reveal, then explained by asking questions through questionnaires that had been provided to respondents, and in-depth interviews with members of KWT Srikandi Jaya in Bukit Biru Village. In addition, the source of qualitative data is obtained from the words or speeches and statements of people taken in the study.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Agricultural extension officers in Bukit Biru Village have accompanied the Srikandi Jaya Farmer Women's Group, starting from the formation of the group in 2016 until now, KWT Srikandi Jaya has been in existence for 5 years. KWT Srikandi Jaya was formed with the aim of fostering and empowering women farmers to be more empowered by improving knowledge, skills, and attitude change. The existence of programs in an effort to foster and empower KWT Srikandi Jaya, from routine activities to training that is engaged in, is able to bring change to KWT Srikandi Jaya members. Empowerment aims to make women, especially members of KWT Srikandi Jaya, more empowered, independent, and not always dependent on men, by providing skills and knowledge through materials and training, so that KWT members can develop their potential, and they can work according to their skills. The forms of programs provided to the Srikandi Jaya Women Farmers' Group (KWT) are described as follows:

KWT as a Learning Class

This program was provided to enable KWT members to learn collectively about activities related to group guidance and empowerment. It serves as a forum for members to improve their knowledge, skills, and attitudes, as well as to foster and develop entrepreneurial independence, thereby increasing productivity, income, and overall welfare. This program was also implemented through the submission of training proposals to the government, and the KWT has received several training activities, one of which was catfish cultivation training.

Cooperation Unit

This program functions as a platform to strengthen cooperation among group members and with external parties. Through such cooperation, business activities are expected to become more efficient and better able to address threats, challenges, obstacles, and disturbances.

Production Unit

This program refers to business activities carried out by KWT members as an integrated production unit that can be developed to achieve economies of scale in terms of quantity, quality, and continuity. This program has been realized by members of the Srikandi Jaya KWT who possess skills in producing various products, such as instant ginger, instant turmeric, instant tiwul,

rengginang, opak, fried shallots, as well as selling plant seedlings, compost, coconut coir, and rice husks.

a. The level of participation of KWT Srikandi Jaya in the indicators of the monthly routine meeting

The average score for each indicator represents item-level participation measured using a Likert scale. The participation category was determined based on the class interval of the total mean score. The total mean score of 10.07 falls within the range of 9.34–12.00, indicating a high participation category (**Table 2**).

Table 2. Participation rate in the KWT Monthly Regular Meeting

No	Questions	Total Score	Average	Category
1	Attend KWT monthly meetings	80	2,76	Height
2	Convey ideas and suggestions about the KWT program	67	2,31	Height
3	Actively ask questions during regular meetings, KWT	58	2	Height
4	Attend KWT meetings from the beginning to the end	87	3	Height
Quantity		292	10,07	Height

(Source: Primary Data Analysis, 2022)

b. The level of participation of KWT Srikandi Jaya in the indicators of KWT/extension meetings by agricultural extension workers

The KWT/extension meeting by agricultural extension workers is held 1 time a month, and there are 5 question attributes given to respondents. The level of KWT participation in the meeting/extension indicator by agricultural extension workers is a total score of 389, with an average of 13.41 in the high category (11,67 – 15,00) (**Table 3**).

Table 3. Indicators of KWT/extension meetings by agricultural extension workers

No	Questions	Total Score	Average	Category
1	Attending the KWT meeting	81	2,79	Height
2	Actively inquire about processing Horticultural agricultural products	69	2,38	Height
3	Convey ideas and suggestions on the development of KWT	74	2,55	Height
4	Join the meeting from start to finish	84	2,90	Height
5	Actively ask extension workers about horticultural agricultural products	81	2,79	Height
Quantity		389	13,41	Height

(Source: Primary Data Analysis, 2022)

c. The level of participation of KWT Srikandi Jaya in the Training Program indicators

The level of participation in this training program is attended by member representatives and will be practiced again with all KWT members. More details can be seen in **Table 4**. It can be seen that the participation rate of the Women Farmer Group in the training program indicators is 459, with an average score of 15.73 in the high category (11,67 – 15,00).

Table 4. Training program indicators

No	Questions	Total Score	Average	Category
1	Following the practice of processing results Horticultural Agriculture	81	2,79	Height
2	Follow the practice of processing horticultural agricultural products from the beginning to the end	69	2,38	Height
3	Present in processing training Horticultural agricultural products	74	2,55	Height
4	Actively asking questions during the practice of processing horticultural agricultural products	61	2,10	Height
5	Training is easy to implement Out of Practice	87	3	Height
6	Implementing the processing of horticultural agricultural products	87	3	Height
Quantity		459	15,83	Height

(Source: Primary Data Analysis, 2022)

The participation rate with indicators of monthly regular meetings, agricultural meetings/extension, and training programs is in the high category. The indicators of meetings/extension by agricultural extension workers as a whole are included in the high category because most of the KWT members are active and consistent with the meeting schedule that has been determined together, take the initiative and are active in discussions between members and with extension workers when present at meetings and are enthusiastic, the existence of this meeting can establish a strong friendship between group members and with extension workers.

This research is comparable to the form of women's empowerment through KWT in the Sukorejo environment, Lempake Village, North Samarinda District. The results of this study are that the participation of the Lestari farmer women group with an average score of 39.61 is included in the high category and the influence obtained by the farmer women group in the implementation of agricultural extension programs, namely being able to increase members' income, the activities of farmer women groups are able to motivate women to be more active, creative and innovative and increase in insight from before and after joining 13 Lestari farmer women groups (Rina, 2021).

The participation of members of the Srikandi Jaya Farmer Women's Group in the meeting can be seen from the attendance, the activeness of asking questions, conveying ideas and suggestions, participating in meetings from start to finish, and the activeness of members in discussing with extension workers about the business managed by KWT members. The respondents participated in this meeting based on the need and realized that this agricultural meeting/extension had benefits for the members and the development of the Srikandi Jaya Farmer Women Group in the future.

CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

The empowerment of the Srikandi Jaya Women Farmer Group is carried out through its function as a learning class, a cooperation unit, and a production unit, with programs implemented through individual and group visits, training, demonstration plots, regular meetings, and exhibitions. The results show that member participation is classified as high, as indicated by the average scores for participation in monthly meetings (10.07), agricultural meetings or extension activities (13.41), and training programs (15.83). These empowerment activities provide tangible benefits, including increased income, improved skills and creativity,

and enhanced knowledge and insights among members after joining the group. Therefore, it is recommended that these empowerment and extension programs be maintained and further strengthened through continuous mentoring, expanded training opportunities, and enhanced collaboration with agricultural extension workers and relevant stakeholders to ensure sustainability and greater impact.

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