

---

## **The Role Of Forestry Extension Agents In Community Empowerment Farmers Group Pasar Village, Forest Management Unit Iv Balige District Toba Regency**

**Sarintan Efratani Damanik<sup>1)</sup>, TriAstuti<sup>2)</sup>, Rozalina<sup>3)</sup>, Aqsal Wibiandra<sup>4)</sup>**  
<sup>1,2,3,4,5)</sup> Fakultas Pertanian Universtas Simalungun

\*Corresponding Author

Email : [damanikintan@yahoo.com](mailto:damanikintan@yahoo.com)

---

### **Abstract**

*Empowerment is an effort to build community power by encouraging, motivating and awakening awareness of the potential possessed and trying to develop it. Means encouraging them to become more involved in decisions and activations that fulfill their work. Formulation of the problem in this study how the role of forestry extension agents in community empowerment and farmer group attitudes in the extension program in the Village Market Area Forest Management Unit IV Balige District Toba. The purpose of this study was to determine the role of extension workers in community empowerment and the attitude of farmer groups in forestry extension programs in Pasar Village, Forest Management Unit IV, Balige District, Toba Regency. The role of forestry extension and farmer group attitude to extension workers in community empowerment programs tend to be said to be moderate, because of some of the programs provided by extension workers are not in accordance with the wishes and needs of farmer groups, it is also influenced by extension activities are usually carried out outside the Village Market, and not all people can follow the extension activities and training provided by the forestry extension.*

**Keywords: Forestry Extension, Community Empowerment, Forest Management**

---

## **INTRODUCTION**

Forest is a growing field of trees which as a whole is a living Fellowship of nature and natural environment designated by the government as a forest (Dwi Erlina, 2007). Law No. 41 of 1999 formulates the definition of forest is an ecosystem unity in the form of a stretch of land containing biological natural resources dominated by trees in the natural communion of the environment, one with the other cannot be separated (Nasution ). Forest area is a certain area designated and or determined by the government to maintain its existence as a permanent forest. The Central Bureau of international statistics in 2011 released a total forest area in Indonesia of 884,950 km<sup>2</sup>. Although most of Indonesia's territory consists of the ocean, with a ratio of 46.64% of land and 50.34% of the ocean. This number makes Indonesia ranked 9th as the country with the largest forest in the world (Widowati et al., 2014).

Empowerment is an effort to build community power by encouraging, motivating and awakening awareness of the potential possessed and trying to develop it. Means encouraging them to become more involved in decisions and activations that fulfill their work. Thus, it means giving them the opportunity to show that they can give good ideas and have the skills to convert their ideas into reality (Sulistianik, 2018).

Forestry counseling is a learning process for the main actors and business actors so that they are willing and able to help and organize themselves in accessing market information, technology, capital and other resources in an effort to improve productivity, business efficiency, income, and welfare, as well as increase awareness in the preservation of environmental functions.

Before 2000 the role of government in extension was more dominant. Counseling tends to be linear from the government to the target community or more instructive. The Ministry of Forestry at that time defined Forestry counseling as an effort to transfer forestry technology

through out-of-school education aimed at farmer groups and other community groups to improve their knowledge, awareness, skills and abilities in utilizing their land, securing, and preserving natural resources. In line with the change of direction and development policies in the era of regional autonomy, since the beginning of 2003, the paradigm of forestry extension has been reoriented from being social engineering to being participative and is a process of community empowerment to realize sustainable forest management and equitable and sustainable community welfare. This means that communities that were originally positioned as objects and partners in forestry development activities are directed as the main actors.

The role of extension shifted from the function as a teacher/trainer to facilitator of the participatory extension process or as a companion. Batasa forestry extension shifted into the process of developing knowledge, attitudes and skills of the community so that they know, willing and able to play an active role independently in supporting forestry development and preservation of forest resources and the environment. Forestry extension should no longer be seen only as a launching factor, but rather as the prima donna of the forestry development process. Through counseling, it is hoped that the goal of sustainable forests for prosperous communities that are equitable and sustainable can be realized. It is equally important that forestry extension agencies should also position themselves as well as possible so as to act as an accelerator of development. Furthermore, forestry extension needs to continue to be an integral part of forestry development so that it becomes a necessity, planned, implemented and developed continuously.

Community empowerment through counseling is needed so that there is synergy between efforts to realize sustainable forests and efforts to realize community welfare. Forestry counseling has a very strategic role, namely empowering the community to be willing and able to help and organize themselves in accessing market information, technology, capital, and other resources, as an effort to increase productivity, business efficiency, income, and welfare, as well as increase awareness in the preservation of environmental functions.

Sustainable development clearly requires economic growth in places where the main needs have not been able to consistently reflect the principles of sustainability. However, the reality is that high production activity can occur along with widespread poverty. This condition can harm the environment. One of the important problems faced in development is between meeting development needs with efforts to maintain environmental sustainability (Damanik & Purba, 2020)

Empowerment is an effort to build community power by encouraging, motivating and awakening awareness of the potential possessed and trying to develop it. Means encouraging them to become more involved in decisions and activations that fulfill their work. Thus, it means giving them the opportunity to show that they can give good ideas and have the skills to convert their ideas into reality. Empowerment is a change in management philosophy that can help create an environment where each individual can use their abilities and energy to achieve organizational goals. An employee has the authority and initiative to do something that is deemed necessary, far beyond his daily duties (Damanik, 2019a).

Empowerment is a process by which workers are given an increased amount of autonomy and flexibility in relation to their work. Empowerment is a continuum between the state of workers who do not have the power to consider how to do the job, to the state where workers have complete control over what they do and how to do it. With empowerment, there has been a shift in power to a team of workers who are allowed to make their own decisions (Harahap, 2020).

Thus, empowerment is a process to make people become more empowered or more capable to solve their own problems, by providing trust and authority so as to foster a sense of responsibility. Empowerment can encourage people to be more involved in decision making in

organizations. Thus, it will increase the ability and sense of belonging, and increase the sense of responsibility so that performance increases. Empowered workers are expected to perform work beyond the responsibilities assigned to them (Rasjid & Maramis, 2017).

Empowerment is an aspect of development, the nature of national development is the development of Whole people and society as a whole, in other words empowering the community implies developing, independent, enabling, and strengthening the bargaining position of the lower layers of society against the forces of emphasis in all fields and sectors of life. In addition, it also implies protecting and defending by siding with the weak, to prevent unequal competition and exploitation of the weak. The importance of Community Development focuses on the economic sector so that people can improve the welfare of the population through the growth of this sector, without neglecting the role of other sectors, and at the same time can reduce the poverty level of the population (Rohman, 2019).

The basic concept of empowerment is basically the efforts of a community group to improve the ability and independence so that people can actualize the potential that they already have in order to live a more prosperous life. Empowerment desired by the community is empowerment that can build society in a direction that is more in accordance with the purpose of empowerment. Efforts to empower rural communities and overcome poverty and inequality is becoming an increasingly complex phenomenon, rural development in its development is not solely limited to increasing agricultural production. Rural development is also not only enough implementation of social welfare improvement programs through the distribution of money and services to meet basic needs. More than that, it is an effort with a spectrum of activities that touch on meeting various needs so that people can be independent, confident, and independent and can escape the structural shackles that make life miserable (Majid, 2020).

With the enactment of Law No. 6 year 2014 about the village has given space to be practiced on a new paradigm in rural development in Indonesia. To make it happen, efforts are needed so that the village has its own ability to build its village. The development paradigm carried out by the village itself is known as "Village Building". The paradigm of developing villages has been practiced by villages that have agent of change (AC), especially in the structure of village government. This is because AC can directly provide input or direction for the development of the village (Utami et al., 2019).

Forest area is a term known in the law of the Republic of Indonesia number 41 of 1999 on forestry, namely according to Article 3 that forest area is a certain area designated and or determined by the government to maintain its existence as a permanent forest (Supriatna, 2008). The determination of protected forest areas is based on the function of the forest as a provider of clean water reserves (water governance), erosion control, flora and fauna habitat, and other forest functions. Forest areas can be formed naturally or artificially with a large area and contain a variety of flora and fauna. Protected forests can be managed by the central government, local governments or communities that care about forest sustainability (Kodoatie, 2021).

According to Law No. 41 of 1999 on forestry (Article 1 Number 8), the definition of protected forest is a forest area that has a principal function as a protection of life support systems to regulate water management, prevent flooding, control erosion, prevent seawater intrusion and maintain soil fertility. The purpose of the use of protected forests is to improve the welfare of the people around the forest, as well as raise awareness so that the function of the forest is maintained and sustainable. Utilization is regulated in law No. 41 of 1999 article 26, namely utilization is done by not reducing the main function of the area and does not cause environmental damage (Gumilar, n.d.)

The farming community around the forest area has a certain lifestyle because it is very close and integrated with nature. The daily life of the community can not be separated from the pattern of life that is strongly influenced by the social community. Social community can be seen from the pattern of daily behavior that is from the work of farmers. Farmers who carry out their activities are very different from one community to another (Damanik, 2019a).

## RESEARCH METHODS

The research approach that will be used in this study is a quantitative approach. Research with a quantitative approach that basically uses a deductive-inductive approach. The type of research used is descriptive type of research, while the population taken in this study are all members of farmer groups Village Market Forest Management Unit IV Balige District Toba Regency as many as 10 families. Samples in this study were taken as a whole that is 10 families. Data collection techniques, questionnaires used in this study were used to determine how the role of forestry extension agents in community empowerment and the attitude of farmer groups in the extension program in the Village Market Area Forest Management Unit IV Balige District Toba Regency. Data analysis techniques descriptive analysis percentage

Descriptive statistical analysis is used to describe the characteristics of each indicator in each variable to make it easier to understand the measurements in the variables revealed. This analysis is done by giving a score on the questionnaire answers that have been filled by respondents (Sugiyono, 2010). Then arranged in the form of frequency distribution table that is by the way (Sugiyono, 2012):

1. Calculating the number of interval classes by the formula :  $K = 1 + 3,3 \log n$
2. Calculate the range of the largest data minus the smallest data
3. Calculating the length of the class =  $\frac{reach}{number\ of\ classes}$
4. Drawing up a class interval

After the preparation of the interval, each indicator is analyzed to get its presentation by the formula :

$$Percentage = \frac{score}{total\ score} \times 100\% \dots$$

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### The role of extension workers in Community Empowerment

Extension workers are tasked with encouraging farmers to want to change the way of thinking, working and living more in accordance with the times, the development of technology for more advanced Forestry. The percentages of each category are shown in Table 1.

Table 1. The role of forestry extension agents in Community Empowerment

No	Category extension role	Percentage (%)
1	Height	20
2	Medium	50
3	Low	30
	Amount	100

Table 1. Showed that 20% felt the High role of forestry extension, 50% felt the moderate role of forestry extension, and 30% felt the low role of forestry extension to community empowerment. Farmer groups feel that only 20% have a high eran due to the trust of the community farmer groups to experience and knowledge that love is lacking. Based on the research that has been done, the role of forestry extension in Community Empowerment tends to be moderate, the role of forestry extension to community empowerment is categorized as moderate because there is not maximum extension to the entire community, still a small percentage of people who follow the extension activities so that the role of extension to community empowerment

Forestry extension has the task and function of providing counseling to farmers through a farmer group approach so that farmers ' knowledge, skills and attitudes become better in managing farming in order to improve their welfare. In carrying out their duties in order to run effectively and efficiently, each forestry extension needs to do the stages : preparation, implementation, evaluation and reporting of extension activities and agricultural extension development.

Well-planned extension preparation will make it easier for Agricultural Extension workers to carry out extension in order to achieve the purpose of extension, namely changing the behavior, skills and knowledge of farmers. Preparation of counseling that has been done, such as the availability of data on potential areas, Activity Plans and needs of the group has been arranged. In its implementation, it is necessary to use the methods applied by extension workers in order to run effectively and efficiently. In principle, in determining the extension method, it is necessary to consider the goals to be achieved, the target audience (individual, group, general), and the available funds. Extension evaluation is needed to measure or assess the extent to which the success rate of extension activities that have been carried out. In the evaluation process, there are several aspects that need to be considered such as whether there is a change in knowledge, behavior, and attitudes of farmers; how facilities and infrastructure are available; is it appropriate to use extension methods; and so on. For this reason, before conducting the evaluation, it is necessary to establish the indicators related to what will be evaluated in the implementation of the extension.

Agricultural extension must improve their competence in order to become a professional agricultural extension. The form of professional development can be realized in the form of scientific papers in agriculture; translating/adapting books and materials in agriculture; and providing consultations in agriculture that are conceptual.

Empowerment is an activity to increase power to disadvantaged communities in a sustainable, dynamic manner, and strive to build that power to encourage, motivate, and arouse public awareness to participate in managing all existing potentials evolutively (Damanik & Purba, 2019)

Agricultural development is basically aimed at improving the welfare of the community, especially farmers. For this reason, in every stage of agricultural development activities, the welfare of farmers is always a goal and is in line with the concept of Forestry. Forest management in the FMU concept must be done so that sustainable forests and prosperous communities can be realized. Sustainable forest management is the main goal of FMU development, because sustainable forests are expected to provide benefits to parties interested in the forestry sector (Damanik, 2019b)

The empowerment process that occurs in Pasar village can be seen from the management of honey bee products that were once only for community consumption, now experiencing changes in marketing on a wider scale out of the village through counseling, new technologies and ideas, as well as field learning through training held by forestry extension

officers. Then the idea was adopted by society. For example, the cultivation of honey bees whose management and marketing have been carried out by the community itself.

Attitude of respondents in the Extension Program

Agricultural Extension Program is a series of agricultural extension activities that combine the aspirations of the community with the potential of the region and agricultural development programs that describe the current situation, goals to be achieved, problems and alternative solutions.

Table 2. Farmer group attitude in Extension Program

No	Category extension program	Persentase (%)
1	Height	30
2	Medium	40
3	Low	30
Amount		100

Table 2. indicates that 30% is in the high category, 40% is in the medium category, and 30% is in the low category. The attitude of farmer groups in high-category extension programs is only 30% because farmer groups that have a positive perspective are still few, namely people who realize the importance of extension programs in Community Empowerment Programs provided by the forestry through extension agents are still some members whose economy is increasing. This is because the members of farmer groups basically come from outside the Market Village area. So that only a few respondents can attend training and extension programs that have been in the program.

Forestry extension workers in Pasar village have provided breakthroughs and innovations that can support the addition of community income. In this study it is also known that the role of forestry extension has not been maximized implement forestry extension programs because extension activities are usually carried out outside the village market, so that only a small percentage of people who can follow the existing extension and training activities. Some respondents revealed that this is what causes the lack of maximum empowerment in Pasar Village.

The program provided by extension workers such as coffee roasting, the first extension program carried out in the Market Village was coffee management this program began before ,during the covid 19 pandemic, this program started from coffee planting, harvesting management to marketing. In this program, all the necessary equipment is facilitated by forestry extension agents, but coffee management activities are less attractive to the community because of the long management process, there are some requirements and stages that are a bit troublesome, so this program does not continue anymore.

## CONCLUSION

The role of forestry extension and farmer group attitude to extension workers in community empowerment programs tend to be said to be moderate, because of some of the programs provided by extension workers are not in accordance with the wishes and needs of farmer groups, it is also influenced by extension activities are usually carried out outside the Village Market, and not all people can follow the extension activities and training provided by the forestry extension.

## REFERENCES

- Astuti, P. B. (2013). Efektivitas dan pengaruh PNPM mandiri perdesaan, alokasi dana desa, pendapatan asli desa dan jumlah penduduk terhadap jumlah kepala keluarga miskindi kabupaten kebumen tahun 2009-2011. *Fokus Bisnis: Media Pengkajian Manajemen Dan Akuntansi*, 12(2).
- Damanik, S. E. (2019a). Pemberdayaan Masyarakat Desa Sekitar Kawasan Hutan. *Uwais Inspirasi Indonesia*.
- Damanik, S. E. (2019b). Perencanaan Pembangunan Kehutanan. *Uwais Inspirasi Indonesia*.
- Damanik, S. E., & Purba, S. (2019). Perencanaan Pola Kemitraan Dalam Peningkatan Kesejahteraan Petani KPH XIII Kawasan Dolok Sanggul Kabupaten Humbang Hasundutan. *Sebatik*, 23(2), 582–591.
- Damanik, S. E., & Purba, T. (2020). Peran Penyuluh Kehutanan Dalam Menunjang Keberhasilan Pembangunan Kehutanan (Studi Kasus Desa Pondok Bulu Kabupaten Simalungun). *Jurnal Akar*, 2(1), 1–14.
- Dwi Erlina, Ita. (2007). *Pengaruh Konsentrasi Larutan ZPT Rootone-F dan Dosis Urea Terhadap Pertumbuhan Stump Gamal (Gliricidia sepium (Jacq) Steud) Umur 6 Bulan*. University of Muhammadiyah Malang.
- Gumilar, D. A. (n.d.). *Sistem Tata Kelola Dalam Perlindungan Hutan Sebagai Upaya Mencegah Kebakaran Pada Hutan Produksi (Berdasarkan Pada Undang-Undang Nomor 41 Tahun 1999 Tentang Kehutanan)*.
- Harahap, M. E. U. (2020). Manajemen Pemberdayaan Masyarakat. *Tadbir: Jurnal Manajemen Dakwah FDIK IAIN Padangsidempuan*, 2(1), 189–204.
- Kodoatie, R. J. (2021). *Tata ruang air tanah*. Penerbit Andi.
- Majid, N. (2020). *Pemberdayaan masyarakat melalui pengembangan sayur organik di Desa Blederan Kecamatan Mojotengah Kabupaten Wonosobo*. Universitas Islam Negeri Walisongo Semarang.
- Nurdiani, N. (2014). Teknik sampling snowball dalam penelitian lapangan. *ComTech: Computer, Mathematics and Engineering Applications*, 5(2), 1110–1118.
- Rasjid, E., & Maramis, D. R. S. (2017). Pengaruh pemberdayaan dan Kepuasan Kerja Dalam Meningkatkan Kinerja Pegawai di Lingkungan Politeknik Negeri Manado. *Prosiding Sentrinov (Seminar Nasional Terapan Riset Inovatif)*, 3(1), EB72–EB83.
- Rohman, E. A. (2019). *Peran Garuda Institute dalam pemberdayaan perekonomian kampung Buricak Burinong: Studi deskriptif “Kampung Buricak Burinong” di Kampung Cisema, Desa Pakualam Kecamatan Darmaraja Kabupaten Sumedang*. UIN Sunan Gunung Djati Bandung.

Saraswati, E. (2015). *Keanekaragaman Ordo Coleoptera diperkebunan kelapa sawit dan hutan sekitar area perkebunan kelapa sawit, PT. Agro indomas Terawan Estate kab. Seruyan. IAIN Palangka Raya.*

SULISTIANIK, Ika Ayu. (2018). Pemberdayaan Ibu Rumah Tangga Dalam Usaha Mikro Kecil Menengah (Umkm) Pada Kopwan Arum Sari (*Studi Kasus Pada Kopwan Arum Sari Desa Mojoarum, Kecamatan Gondang, Kabupaten Tulungagung*).

Supriatna, J. (2008). *Melestarikan Alam Indonesia*. Yayasan Obor Indonesia.

Utami, E. R., Iqbal, M., Widiastuti, H., & Rahmawati, E. (2019). Manajemen Rumah Data Dan Peningkatan Ekonomi Berbasis Potensi Desa. *Prosiding Seminar Nasional Program Pengabdian Masyarakat*.

Widowati, D. A., Luthfi, A. N., & Guntur, I. G. N. (2014). *Pengakuan dan perlindungan hak atas tanah masyarakat hukum adat di kawasan hutan*. STPN Press, Yogyakarta.