

EMPOWERMENT OF BUMDES GANTAR BUSINESS PARTNERS IN IMPROVING COMMUNITY WELFARE

Makmuri^{1*}, Harmono², Sigit Gunawan³

Faculty of Law, Gunung Jati Swadaya University, Cirebon, Indonesia
uyimakmuri@gmail.com^{1*}, harmono@ugj.ac.id², gunawansigit037@gmail.com³



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Abstract: This research aims to analyze the empowerment of BUMDes Gantar Mitra Usaha in improving the welfare of the people of Gantar Village, Gantar District, Indramayu Regency. The problems of this research: (1) What is the impact of regulations on the establishment of BUMDes on the level of community welfare in Gantar Village before and after the existence of BUMDes Business Partners in Gantar Village? (2) What are the challenges and obstacles faced by BUMDes in efforts to improve the welfare of the people of Gantar Village? The focus of the research includes the impact of regulations on the establishment of BUMDes on the level of community welfare before and after the presence of BUMDes as well as the challenges faced in managing them. This research uses a descriptive qualitative method with a socio-legal approach. Data was collected through interviews with key informants, observation, and document analysis, then analyzed through a process of reduction, data presentation, and drawing conclusions. The research results show that the establishment of BUMDes Mitra Usaha Gantar Village has improved community welfare by supporting the fulfillment of basic needs and self-actualization through business diversification based on local potential, according to Maslow's hierarchy of needs. Challenges such as limited human resources, business competition and market access require strengthening regulations and adaptive strategies so that BUMDes can become professional, inclusive and sustainable economic drivers, in line with Roscoe Pound's view of law as a social engineering tool.

Keywords: BUMDes, Community Welfare, Empowerment

I. INTRODUCTION

BUMDes (Village-Owned Enterprises) are the support for economic activities in villages which function as social and commercial institutions. As a social institution, BUMDes supports the interests of the community through its contribution to providing social services. As a commercial institution, its goal is to make a profit by providing local resources (goods and services) to the market. In running a company, the principles of efficiency and effectiveness must always be prioritized. BUMDes was established as a legal entity in accordance with applicable laws and regulations and based on an agreement made within the village community. Therefore, the BUMDes format may be different in each village in Indonesia. These different forms correspond to the local characteristics, possibilities and resources of each village.

The priority of developing rural human resources is intended to provide superior human resources in rural areas of Indonesia who are able to manage village development resources in a quality manner, including the use of village funds. In order for this goal to be achieved, village efforts are needed to have their own capabilities in developing their villages. The development paradigm carried out by the village itself is known as "Village Building". The Village Building paradigm has been practiced by villages *have an agent of change* (AC) especially in village government structures. This is because AC can directly provide input or direction for the development of the village.

Reflecting on this, other stakeholders are needed who can also function as AC. Therefore, community development efforts are needed to bring out village empowerment in an effort to improve the quality of life and economy of the community. Community empowerment efforts carried out do not only rely on the government but also other stakeholders such as *Non Governmen Organization* (NGO), regional government, village government and village communities themselves. In accordance with Law Number 6 of 2014 concerning Villages, General Provisions Article 1 number 12, Village Community Empowerment Regulations are efforts to develop community independence and welfare by increasing knowledge, attitudes, skills, behavior, abilities, awareness, as well as utilizing resources through the establishment of policies, programs, activities and assistance that are in accordance with the essence of the problems and priority needs of village communities.

The idea of the rule of law (*Rule of law*) which is based on the principles of democracy and the value of social justice, requires a balanced state administration, as well as the existence of a judicial institution that is free, independent and impartial and not under the influence of the executive, which is then expected to be able to guarantee human rights, which turns out to not be an important thing according to the regime. current ruler.

Regional governments do not run alone, because villages also have an obligation to realize the goals of village regulation, including improving public services for village residents in order to accelerate the realization of general welfare, advance the economy of village communities, overcome national development gaps and strengthen village communities, as the subject of development. To realize this goal, villages need to implement strategies. This strategy is important so that the allocation, potential and existing resources in the village can be made effective to support the realization of village development. Where village development is sought to improve the quality of life and life for the greatest welfare of village communities.

One of the strategies for developing villages is to build Village-Owned Enterprises (BUMDes). Where the establishment of BUMDes is tailored to the needs and potential of the village. The establishment of BUMDes can be used as a strategy that is worth considering in village development efforts. Because in several other village areas, this BUMDes has been operating and providing profits and increasing income for village finances.

Community empowerment is an effort to improve community welfare, through several activities including increasing community initiative and self-help, improving the environment and housing, developing village economic businesses, developing Village Financial Institutions, as well as activities that can increase the community's ability to increase their production output. . Empowering society is an effort to increase the dignity of the lower levels of society (*grass root*), who in the current conditions are unable to escape the trap of poverty and backwardness. In other words, empowerment (*empowering*) is to enable and make poor people more independent.

Empowerment not only includes strengthening individual members of society but also its institutions. Instilling modern cultural values such as hard work, thrift, openness, responsibility, is a key part of this empowerment effort. Likewise, the renewal of social institutions and their integration into development activities and the role of society in them. Community empowerment is a social action where residents of a community organize themselves to make plans and take collective action to solve social problems or fulfill social needs according to their abilities and resources. Poor people are often a group that is powerless both because of internal obstacles from within themselves and external pressures from their environment. Therefore, community empowerment is one of the most important pillars of poverty reduction policies. Community empowerment policies are considered an effective recipe because the results can last a long time. Poverty issues are always suitable to be resolved at the root of the problem through a community empowerment approach.

Community empowerment in social development requires careful planning. Planning is a very basic thing in the implementation of development, because with proper planning, development goals can be achieved. After looking at several main points as stated above, with the existence of BUMDes it is hoped that there will be empowerment in a rural community structure, so in this case BUMDes has an important role in the lives of village communities.

Natural resources are utilized for the greatest prosperity of the people while still paying attention to sustainability and the function of the environment. Thus natural resources have a dual role, namely as capital for economic growth (*resource based economy*) and at the same time as a support for living systems (*life support system*). BUMDes can emerge as regional and village development agents, which are the driving force in the cooperative sector, but do not involve other parties in the financing process.

Government Regulation Number 11 of 2021, requires the presence of BUMDes as a center for developing community economic programs by prioritizing the principles of openness and responsibility. The presence of BUMDes as a center for developing economic programs for village communities requires empowerment. In the field, there are still many villages in Gantar sub-district, Indramayu Regency, who are confused about establishing and developing it as a means of economic empowerment for village communities. This can be seen from the year the BUMDes was founded in Gantar Village, Gantar District, which was only established on November 1 2021. Since the founding of the BUMDes, Gantar Village has only had one business, namely capital cooperation for the mango buying and selling business with local village entrepreneurs. Meanwhile, participation or socialization of BUMDes programs for community empowerment has not been carried out much by BUMDes administrators.

II. Research methods

The type of research that researchers use in this research is empirical legal research (*empirical legal research*) with a legal sociology or socio-legal approach. Empirical legal

research is a legal research method that studies social phenomena in society, by examining how law works in society.

This research uses a qualitative descriptive method, where the qualitative method is a research approach that produces descriptive data in the form of words, either written or verbal, from sources and observed behavior. Descriptive research methods are procedures used to solve problems by describing or explaining the conditions of research subjects, such as individuals, community institutions, and so on, based on existing facts or in accordance with actual conditions. The aim of descriptive research is to prepare a systematic, factual and accurate description, picture or presentation of the facts, characteristics and relationships between the elements being studied.

The research focus is determined to limit the scope of research according to the core problem, so that it is hoped that data can be sorted out which are relevant and which are not relevant to the research objectives. The focus of this research is directed at "Empowering BUMDes Gantar Business Partners in Improving Community Welfare" whose main object is BUMDes in Gantar Village, Gantar District, Indramayu Regency, West Java.

Data sources refer to anything that can provide information related to the data used in research. In this research, the data used comes from primary and secondary sources. The data collection techniques used in this research consist of observation, interviews and documentation. In this research, researchers used qualitative data analysis methods.

III. RESEARCH RESULT

A. Impact of Gantar Village Community Welfare Regulations Before and After the Establishment of Gantar Village Business Partner BUMDes

BUMDes (Village-Owned Enterprises) Gantar Village Business Partners are present as a concrete manifestation of the implementation of government policies in encouraging the economic independence of village communities. As a village economic institution based on local potential, BUMDes is expected to be a driving force for inclusive and sustainable economic development. However, the effectiveness of the policies and regulations governing BUMDes operations is an important factor that determines the extent to which the programs implemented are able to improve people's standard of living.

Before the existence of BUMDes Mitra Usaha Gantar Village, the welfare of village communities, especially farmers, was still fluctuating and dependent on personal capital. Farmers often face difficulties in selling their crops due to the lack of stable marketing partners. Apart from that, businesses such as cultivating mangoes or rice are only carried out individually without systematic support from village institutions. Dependence on collectors outside the village means farmers do not have strong bargaining power, so the selling price of their harvest is often not optimal.

After the establishment of BUMDes Mitra Usaha in 2014, there was a change in the economic pattern of the Gantar Village community. BUMDes facilitates farmers by providing business capital and acting as collectors of the mango harvest. With the existence of BUMDes, farmers get market certainty at standard market prices, thereby reducing their worries about selling their crops. This has a positive impact, especially for mango farmers who previously had difficulty accessing capital and marketing.

Apart from helping mango farmers, BUMDes is also trying to diversify its business, such as cultivating Peking ducks. Even though the program only ran for one year because it was considered less profitable, this initiative shows BUMDes' efforts to expand its economic impact. In the end, BUMDes' focus returned to the mango buying and selling business, which was more stable and profitable. The profit sharing system regulated

through an MOU between administrators, village government and other related parties shows transparency in business management.

The existence of BUMDes not only makes it easier for farmers to sell their crops but also encourages people to take advantage of empty land by planting mango trees. The program to provide mango seeds and training on planting patterns from BUMDes provides additional opportunities for the community to increase their income. Even though this business is still seasonal, it has a positive impact in encouraging people to be more productive and utilize local potential.

The success of BUMDes also lies in sound financial management. BUMDes capital is used carefully to ensure the business does not suffer losses. In addition, BUMDes profits contribute to Village Original Income (PAD), which is used for village activities such as Mapag Sri celebrations and cultural events. Profit sharing also provides incentives to BUMDes administrators, even though they only get paid if profits are earned, thereby encouraging more responsible management.

Overall, although BUMDes business is still limited to the seasonal mango buying and selling sector, its impact on community welfare is already starting to be felt. The existence of BUMDes helps farmers overcome marketing and capital challenges, as well as providing new economic opportunities through business management based on local potential. However, to improve welfare in a sustainable manner, more innovative business diversification and closer synergy between BUMDes, village government and the community are needed.

Regulations on the establishment of Village-Owned Enterprises (BUMDes) in Gantar Village have brought about significant changes in the level of community welfare, especially after the presence of BUMDes Gantar Village Business Partners. Before the existence of BUMDes, people's basic needs, such as access to work and income, were often not met optimally. This is in accordance with Maslow's theory, which states that fulfilling physiological needs is the first step to achieving well-being. With limited sources of income and business opportunities, many people are still at the initial stage of Maslow's pyramid, namely basic needs.

After the regulations for establishing BUMDes were implemented and the Gantar Village Business Partner BUMDes began operating, the positive impact began to be felt, especially in meeting security needs. Through business management based on local potential, such as agricultural products, village communities have better access to employment opportunities and stable income. This creates a sense of economic and social security, so that society begins to rise to the next stage in Maslow's pyramid, namely the need for security.

The existence of BUMDes also opens up opportunities for the community to establish broader social relationships through joint business activities. The need for a sense of belonging and social relationships, as explained in Maslow's theory, can be fulfilled through community participation in various programs initiated by BUMDes. An example is entrepreneurship training, which strengthens relationships between residents and improves their ability to manage businesses.

At a higher level, the impact of the existence of BUMDes can also be seen in increasing people's self-esteem and self-actualization. With the opportunity to contribute to village business management and receive recognition for their work, people begin to feel increased self-confidence. Some residents are even able to create new innovations that support the sustainability of BUMDes. This shows that the regulations for establishing BUMDes not only support the fulfillment of basic needs, but also encourage people to achieve a higher level of welfare according to Maslow's hierarchy of needs.

The regulations for the establishment of Village-Owned Enterprises (BUMDes) in Gantar Village are clear evidence of the application of law as a tool of social engineering, as stated by Roscoe Pound. Before the existence of the Gantar Village Business Partner BUMDes, the social and economic conditions of the community were relatively stagnant. The absence of an organized forum for managing local potential makes it difficult for people to improve their standard of living. In this context, the law through BUMDes regulations aims to design social change by creating institutions that can empower village communities through managing local potential.

After the implementation of these regulations, BUMDes Mitra Usaha Gantar Village began operating as a catalyst for change. This BUMDes manages agricultural product businesses which have a positive impact on the community's economy. This is in line with Pound's view that law can change social structures by creating mechanisms that enable society to be actively involved in productive activities. BUMDes regulations provide a clear legal framework for building institutions that support economic growth at the village level, thus encouraging a change in people's mindset from being passive to being more proactive.

Apart from the economic impact, regulations on establishing BUMDes also bring about significant social changes. BUMDes functions as a forum for strengthening cooperation between residents through programs that involve active community participation. This supports Pound's theory that law as a tool of social engineering must be able to encourage social solidarity and integration. In Gantar Village, the presence of BUMDes creates space for more intensive interaction, both through entrepreneurship training and other joint activities, thus strengthening a sense of togetherness and collective identity.

The impact of this regulation can be seen in long-term changes in people's lifestyles. With the organization of various village businesses, the community began to show increased awareness of the importance of innovation, education and business sustainability. This phenomenon reflects the success of law as a social engineering tool capable of directing society towards better structural change. Roscoe Pound emphasized that the law is not only tasked with regulating, but also to create conditions that enable society to achieve higher prosperity, as happened in Gantar Village with the existence of BUMDes Mitra Usaha.

Regulations on the establishment of Village-Owned Enterprises (BUMDes) in Gantar Village, especially through BUMDes Mitra Usaha, have been a catalyst for significant change in community welfare, both economically and socially. Before the existence of BUMDes, people faced difficulties in meeting basic needs and lived in conditions of economic stagnation. However, the implementation of this regulation creates new opportunities through managing local potential, which increases income, a sense of security and social solidarity. In line with Maslow's theory, the presence of BUMDes helps people move from fulfilling physiological needs to self-actualization. On the other hand, Roscoe Pound's theory of law as a tool of social engineering shows how this regulation succeeds in changing the social structure and mindset of society, creating sustainable changes towards higher prosperity.

B. Challenges and Obstacles Faced by BUMDes in Efforts to Improve the Welfare of the Gantar Village Community

1. Human Resources (HR) Constraints

The main challenge in managing BUMDes Gantar Village Business Partners in Gantar District is the weak competency of human resources at the management level.

Many village heads (kuwu) recruit managers who are less competent or easy to control, so that BUMDes Mitra Usaha Gantar Village is unable to fulfill the government's vision. The lack of synergy between the village head, the management of BUMDes Mitra Usaha Gantar Village, and the central government is making the situation worse. Although sub-districts have provided guidance, their limited authority prevents in-depth intervention. This situation shows the need for reform in the recruitment process and increasing human resource capacity to support village development goals.

2. Obstacles to Buying and Selling Mangoes

The mango collecting business by BUMDes Mitra Usaha Gantar Village faces external challenges such as bad weather, pests and market price fluctuations. These factors cause income instability, especially when crop yields decline. To overcome this, BUMDes provides education to farmers regarding pest control techniques and fertilization. However, late payments from the market are also an obstacle that affects cash flow. In this context, business success depends on cooperation between farmers, BUMDes, and buyers, as well as more effective marketing strategies.

3. Competitive Constraints

Tight competition with other traders is a significant challenge for BUMDes in the mango collecting business. The strategy to face this competition involves cash and timely payments to farmers, which increases the trust and reputation of BUMDes Gantar Village Business Partners. Apart from that, expanding operational areas to other villages and sub-districts is a strategic step to maintain business continuity. This approach shows the importance of innovation and flexibility in dealing with market dynamics.

4. Marketing Constraints

Limited market access is the main obstacle for BUMDes Gantar Village Business Partners in marketing local products, both from farmers and MSMEs. The lack of strategic marketing management and distribution networks means that the village's economic potential is not optimal. District or sub-district governments can play an important role by providing training and building market networks. BUMDes Gantar Village Business Partners can also be intermediaries who help market local production, creating mutually beneficial relationships between farmers, breeders and BUMDes.

The obstacles faced by BUMDes Gantar Village Business Partners include HR, business technical, competition and marketing aspects. The proposed solution involves increasing human resource competency, strengthening technical and marketing strategies, as well as synergy between the government, BUMDes and the community. By implementing these steps, Gantar Village Business Partner BUMDes has the potential to become a sustainable driving force for the village economy and contribute significantly to community welfare.

According to Zubaedi, empowerment is an effort to build community independence by utilizing existing potential and abilities, so that people are directed to recognize and choose things that are beneficial to them. According to Soetomo, empowerment is an activity to change the situation of people with low living standards, both from economic and socio-cultural aspects, to be better than before. Meanwhile, Soetomo defined empowerment as an effort to change the conditions of people with a low standard of living, both from an economic and socio-cultural perspective, towards a better situation. Meanwhile, Darwanto described empowerment as an effort to increase community strength in carrying out economic activities through motivation, encouragement and exploring potential. This step aims to change the condition of society from being previously powerless to being

empowered, with concrete actions that increase economic prosperity and dignity, as well as freeing them from backwardness and poverty.

Darwanto stated that empowerment is an effort to increase the capacity or strength of the community in carrying out economic activities by providing encouragement, motivation and utilizing existing potential. This process aims to change the situation of people who were previously less empowered to become more independent and strong, through concrete actions that can improve their economic welfare and elevate their dignity, while freeing them from conditions of backwardness and poverty.

Community welfare is the main goal of various development efforts, including business management through Village-Owned Enterprises (BUMDes). BUMDes acts as a facilitator for local entrepreneurs by providing access to capital which is very important for business growth. In Maslow's perspective, prosperity can be achieved by fulfilling human needs in stages, starting from basic needs to self-actualization. BUMDes Mitra Usaha Gantar Village is an example of how this concept is implemented, with a focus on increasing farmers' income, creating a sense of security through business stability, building social collaboration, providing rewards for contributions, and encouraging innovation and sustainable management. By understanding these stages of need, BUMDes can become a driving force for sustainable village prosperity.

1. Physiological needs

Physiological needs are the basis of Maslow's pyramid which includes basic needs such as food, water, clothing and shelter. In the context of the BUMDes Mitra Usaha Gantar Village, this need is realized through a mango collecting business which aims to increase farmers' income. By providing solutions for managing harvests collectively and selling them to the market, BUMDes helps farmers meet their basic needs. However, the success of this business is very dependent on production stability, mitigating risks such as pests and bad weather, as well as the ability of BUMDes to maintain a stable income flow for farmers.

2. Need for security

After basic needs are met, humans need a sense of security, both physically and financially. The challenges faced by BUMDes Gantar Village Business Partners, such as fluctuations in market prices and delays in payments from buyers, create uncertainty for farmers and business managers. BUMDes can play a role in creating stability by providing education to farmers regarding agricultural techniques that can increase crop yields and develop more effective marketing strategies. Apart from that, building a more secure payment system will provide a sense of security and trust to farmers and business managers.

3. Social needs

Humans also have social needs in the form of a sense of belonging and being accepted in a community. In Gantar Village, collaboration between farmers, BUMDes managers and the government is the key to creating synergies that support the success of local businesses. Inclusive management and good communication between these parties can build trust and solidarity in the community. With close collaboration, efforts to improve the welfare of village communities through BUMDes management can be realized more effectively.

4. Reward needs

Esteem needs include recognition of one's contributions and self-confidence. In managing BUMDes, this need can be realized by giving rewards to farmers in the form of timely payments and good service. Professional management will also improve the reputation of BUMDes, which in turn will create greater trust from the community.

Apart from that, developing human resource capacity through training and education will give a sense of appreciation to BUMDes managers and increase their contribution in advancing village businesses.

5. Self-actualization needs

At the highest stage, humans need self-actualization, namely the ability to realize their maximum potential. In the context of Gantar Village, this need can be achieved through innovation in marketing and sustainable management of BUMDes businesses. By utilizing technology, expanding market networks, and creating superior village products, BUMDes can become an inspiring business model for other communities. This step not only empowers village communities but also increases their pride in their local identity and potential.

The law facilitates community empowerment by ensuring a legal framework that supports education, accessibility, and social relations. In the context of BUMDes, law can be the foundation that ensures village business management runs professionally and sustainably. With regulations that support human resource recruitment, economic empowerment, market protection, and increased distribution access, the law creates a fair and innovative framework. This approach not only provides legal certainty for all parties involved, but also opens up opportunities for the development of a more inclusive and highly competitive village economy.

1. HR recruitment regulations

The law can be used to create more professional HR recruitment standards in BUMDes. Clear regulations regarding qualifications, training and supervision for BUMDes managers will ensure that the individuals responsible have adequate competence. In this way, village business management can run more effectively and support the achievement of the development vision.

2. Economic empowerment policy

The law also functions as a basis for implementing village economic empowerment policies. By providing incentives such as easier access to financing or technical support through regulations, the government can strengthen the role of BUMDes in improving the community's economy. This policy can also provide protection to farmers from unexpected economic risks, such as market price fluctuations.

3. Market protection

Collaboration between farmers, BUMDes and buyers needs to be regulated within a legal framework that ensures the rights and obligations of each party are protected. Regulations regarding payment systems, cooperation contracts and risk management can reduce the uncertainty faced by farmers. With this protection, farmers will feel safer in collaborating with BUMDes, and local businesses can run more stably.

4. Increased market access

Regulations that support the development of marketing infrastructure and development of distribution networks are very important to maximize village economic potential. The government can create policies that encourage investment in marketing and logistics technology to facilitate access for village products to wider markets. In this way, BUMDes can be an effective intermediary in marketing local products while improving the welfare of village communities.

IV. CONCLUSION

The existence of the Gantar Village Business Partner BUMDes has supported the fulfillment of the community's basic needs as reflected in Maslow's hierarchy of needs. Before the establishment of BUMDes, society was at a stage where physiological needs and a sense of security were not yet stable, especially in terms of income and market access. After the establishment of BUMDes, the community was able to fulfill higher needs, such as a sense of security in the economy, social needs through joint participation, and self-actualization through business diversification based on local potential. Thus, the establishment of BUMDes not only improves the material welfare of society but also supports the development of individual and community potential.

In accordance with Roscoe Pound's view of law as a tool of social engineering, regulations on the establishment of BUMDes are instruments that encourage social change and increase welfare. However, challenges such as limited human resource competency, business competition, and suboptimal market access indicate the need to strengthen regulations and implementation strategies. With adaptive legal support and increased community capacity, BUMDes can continue to function as a professional, inclusive and competitive economic driver, strengthening sustainable socio-economic development.

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