

Indonesian Zakat Initiative (IZI) Farmer Empowerment Program in Increasing Food Security (Study in Gempol Sari Village, East Sepatan District, Tangerang Regency of Banten Province)

Nana Suidiana*

Director of Akademizi

Email: nana.suidiana@izi.or.id

** Corresponding Author*

Abstract

Purpose: Indonesian Zakat Initiative (IZI) Farmer Empowerment Program in Increasing Food Security (Study in Gempol Sari Village, East Sepatan District, Tangerang Regency of Banten Province) Food Security is a significant and strategic matter. Law Number 18 of 2012 on food mandates that the government, together with the community, achieve food security for the entire Indonesian people. IZI, as a zakat management institution, is called to participate in achieving food security through a farmer empowerment program based on ZIS funds called Smartfarm Academy IZI, especially in Gempol Sari Village, East Sepatan District, Tangerang Regency of Banten Province.

Design/methodology/approach: This study used a qualitative research method with a descriptive approach conducted through observations, interviews, and documentation.

Finding: The results of this research are about the empowerment of farmers based on ZIS funds called IZI Smartfarm Academy Program in Gempol Sari Village, East Sepatan District, Tangerang Regency of Banten Province. The main supporting factors for the success of this farmer empowerment program are the presence of support from the local government, police, and TNI, as well as the intensive support of farmers from the Tangerang Regency Agriculture Department, in particular the involvement of agricultural extension worker in the farmer empowerments program conducted by IZI.

Research limitations/implications: The obstacles that occurred stem from the poor quality of human resources and the limited agricultural tools and marketing capabilities of agricultural products that need to be enhanced to continue supporting farmers' empowerment programs to improve food security.

Practical Implication: This food security program has proven successful, by increasing farmers' income compared to before the implementation of the program. In addition, there has been an increase in farmers' knowledge and skills in farming, also the establishment of farmer community institutions assisted by IZI.

Keywords: Farmer empowerment, ZIS for empower, smartfarm academy IZI, food security, empowerment program synergy

Introduction

Indonesia is known early as an agricultural country. Most of the Indonesian people work in the agriculture sector. However, this country's status as an agrarian country does not necessarily mean that farmers can prosper. Currently, the lives of many farmers are below the poverty line. We know that every day, we feel the results of farmers' harvests and as the

population increases. However, currently, Indonesia is facing crucial problems in food matters. Among other needs, food is the primary need for humans. These needs are also basic needs that must be satisfied for human survival.

The need for food is one of the basic needs besides shelter. As long as there is life, humans will always need food. However, Food security in Indonesia remains lacking. It occurs due to the imbalance in the composition between food groups in society, where consuming rice remains too high when consuming animal foods, vegetables, and fruit remains low. To address the issue, one needs to collaborate with several parties in an integrated manner.

In this aspect of food, rice has an essential position because rice is the main food commodity of Indonesian society. Unfortunately, in some areas, there has been a shortage of this food. The funny is that Indonesia has long been one of the developing countries that is still famous for the livelihood of its residents, some of whom are farmers or farming. And there is no doubt about the size of agricultural land. When Indonesia faced food problems, the main reason for this shortage would not have happened if the government had allowed the population not to consume rice in the first place. In several areas, their main foods are different, such as sago, corn, Etc. With uniformity of policies, finally, all residents are “forced” to consume rice. This shortage should not occur when several regions in Indonesia do not only consume rice. This shortage because all areas in Indonesia now consume rice, whereas primary food in several regions of Indonesia are different. However, all these things changed after the New Order government established its rice self-sufficiency policy.

Standardizing rice as the primary food source indirectly forces people who can consume non-rice food to consume rice. What happened next was the emergence of a spike in national rice consumption or demand until now, forcing the government to import rice. If each region continues to stick with its primary food, there will be no shortages or imports of the staple food, rice.

By looking at the situation above, we can say that there are still several serious agricultural problems. Also, the impact on food security issues. The other side also shows that agricultural development has not affected improving the welfare of farmers. The existing reality shows that the majority of farmers in Indonesia fall into the category of small farmers who have low incomes and are classified as poor. Of the poor population of 29.89 million people (12.36 percent), 19.93 million live in rural areas, and 13.5 million are small farmers with poor health and nutritional status, low education, and a large number of family responsibilities, unproductive land and small land holdings.

Even though there are still several crucial problems in the food and agricultural sectors, the agricultural sector is still essential. The agricultural sector remains one of the priorities that receives government attention. This is because the growth and development of the agricultural sector is one of the keys to national development. In this regard, agriculture is still considered very important because it is related to food. Therefore, through Law Number 18 of 2012 concerning Food, the government carries out food management. Administration Food is a planning, implementation, and monitoring activity in the provision, affordability, and fulfillment of food consumption and nutrition, as well as food safety, by involving coordinated and integrated community participation.

According to FAO, the poverty conditions of small farmers in developing countries (including Indonesia) can have an impact on the problem of food insecurity. This situation requires the government to take sides with weak farmers by starting to identify a reduction in input subsidies, weak agrarian policies and market protection, provision of information and innovation, low development of farmers' human resources, and lack of agricultural infrastructure.

In its development, this situation could result in farmers having difficulty accessing production inputs, information, innovation, markets, capital, and infrastructure to support farming businesses. This worrying condition will make it increasingly difficult for dry-land farmers. So far, agricultural development carried out by the government has mostly focused on irrigated rice fields. Of course, most of the rice fields like this are on the island of Java. And like this, at the same time, it can also mean ignoring the development of dry land and the productivity of farmers producing other food crops outside the land in Java.

One of the efforts to achieve farmer welfare has been focused on several specific activities, for example, efforts to facilitate increasing farmer income through empowerment, increasing access to agricultural business resources, institutional development, and protection of farmers. In achieving this goal, several sub-programs are further explained, including farmer empowerment, institutional development, increasing farmers' access to productive resources, developing business diversification, assessing and accelerating the dissemination of agricultural innovation, and poverty alleviation.

As one of the agricultural efforts based on ZIS funds (Zakat, Infaq, and alms) as well as to strengthen food security, the National Zakat Amil Institute (Laznas) Indonesian Zakat Initiative (IZI) is encouraging the birth of a strategic agricultural program called Smartfarm Academy IZI. This program is in Banten Province, specifically Gempol Sari Village, East Sepatan District, Tangerang Regency. IZI has made this area an agricultural barn, especially a barn for horticultural vegetables, as its superior product.

Tangerang Regency is one of the buffer areas for the National Capital (DKI Jakarta). In this area, there is still quite a lot of agricultural land, and most of the population still earns their living as farmers. However, due to the welfare of farmers here, it is said that they are still not prosperous and prosperous. In addition, the selling price of the harvest obtained is often not balanced with the working capital spent. Apart from that, the skills and knowledge of farmers need to be improved.

Seeing this, Laznas IZI took the initiative to develop community agriculture by empowering farmers, especially young people in Tangerang Regency. The farmer empowerment program started in Gempol Village, East Sepatan District, Tangerang Regency. This village borders several villages, namely: the north with Kiara Payung Village, to the south with West Kedaung Village, to the west with Sangiang Village and Jati Mulya Village, and the east with Pondok Kelor Village and Kampung Kelor Village. Gempol Saria Village consists of 20 Neighborhood Units (RT) and eight Neighborhood Units (RW). Meanwhile, the Rawa Banteng farmer group is located at RT 03 RW 02.

The empowerment carried out by IZI here is to strengthen the capacity of farmers so that they have better skills and abilities. In this program, IZI will teach and also encourage the best abilities of farmers from upstream to downstream, from determining quality seeds, land

management, plant quality care, making organic anti-pests and making their organic fertilizer, as well as determining market prices according to the quality of the plants resulting from.

Through institutional strengthening of farmer groups, IZI collaborates with many parties to provide information about new technology and how to grow crops in a better way for farmer groups or the Association of Farmer Groups (Gapoktan) together with PPLs (Field Agricultural Instructors) from the Department of Agriculture. The facilitators who work accompanied by agricultural extension workers encourage efforts to increase the abilities and skills of IZI-assisted farmers in running their farming businesses to get better and more varied results. These better results can support the realization of food security.

Method

Research Method of this research is qualitative using a descriptive approach. According to Narbuko, descriptive research is research that attempts to explain the solution to current problems based on data, so descriptive research also presents data, analyzes, and interprets. The reason for choosing to use qualitative research with a descriptive approach is because of the phenomena in the field; the researcher attempts to describe the phenomena related to Farmer Empowerment to increase food security in Gempol Sari Village, East Sepatan District, Tangerang Regency.

The use of this qualitative approach is also to analyze whether the farmer empowerment carried out by IZI in collaboration with several stakeholders can fulfill the goal of realizing increased food security for the community. This research was conducted in Tangerang Regency, Banten Province. Meanwhile, the designated research site is Gempol Sari Village. This research uses 2 data sources, namely Primary Data and Secondary Data. Primary data is obtained and collected directly from respondents through interviews with related parties. Secondary data was obtained from various sources around IZI's target groups.

The focus of this research is (1) Empowering farmers in efforts to increase food security in Gempol Sari Village, Sepatan Timur District, Tangerang Regency, which consists of: a) Micro level: strengthening and motivation, b) Level mezzo: direct training and field practice, c) Macro level: food security strategy, which consists of the subsystems of food availability, food distribution and food consumption; (2) Inhibiting and supporting factors that occur in efforts to empower farmers in increasing food security.

Findings

Empowerment of Farmers in Efforts to Increase Food Security in Gempol Sari Village, East Sepatan District, Tangerang Regency. Empowerment is a process and a goal. The empowerment carried out here consists of three levels, namely:

Micro level

In this micro level, empowerment is carried out through strengthening and motivation. Strengthening capacity and motivation aims to ensure farmers are willing and able to become good farmers and are willing to help and make sacrifices for others and organize themselves in smart farm farmer empowerment groups.

IZI-assisted farmers are also taught how to access market information, technology, capital, and other resources to increase productivity, business efficiency, income, and welfare, as well

as increase awareness of preserving environmental functions. Strengthening capacity and motivation carried out in Gempol Sari Village also aims to provide broader knowledge and skills to main actors and business actors in increasing their productivity and income. Counseling to strengthen capacity and motivation is carried out by providing information about the latest programs and technology and the problems they face.

Mezzo-Level

According to Suharto, stated that empowerment is carried out on a group of clients by using the group as an intervention medium. Education training and group dynamics are usually used as strategies to increase the awareness, knowledge, skills, and attitudes of clients so that they can solve the problems they face. In practice, the concept or theory above in Gempol Sari Village is applied in the form of empowerment through direct training and field practice. First, training directly, where this activity includes a skills education process and training. Education is intended to deepen material, deepen theory, and deepen procedures for implementing a program or activity. This training is aimed at applying material, theory, and strategies obtained from education as a form of actual practical simulation in the field.

Second, Field Practice, in Gempol Sari Village itself, field practice is guided by expert and certified facilitators. Through this field practice, those assisted by IZI, which consists of farmers, will receive counseling before actually implementing it in the field, whether in the form of programs that have been successfully implemented in other areas or programs that have been around for a long time but have not yet been optimally cultivated. It is very clear that the existence of field practice is a cultural guide for farmers to implement the program.

Macro level,

According to Suharto, this approach is also called a large-system strategy because the target of change is directed at a wider environmental system. Big Systems Strategy views clients as people who have the competence to understand their situations and to choose and determine appropriate strategies for action. Some strategies in this approach are policy formulation, social planning, campaigns, social action, lobbying, community organizing, and conflict management.

Understanding this macro-level approach in empowerment efforts to increase food security in Gempol Sari Village, East Sepatan District, Tangerang Regency is carried out through a strategy, namely the food security strategy. The food security strategy itself is divided into three main components, namely, food availability, food distribution, and food consumption.

First, Food availability, Food availability is food reserves for a society that are managed in such a way as to provide balanced food, both in quantity and type, and stable in distribution even though food production is uncertain (seasonal), limited, and spread between regions. Food availability in Tangerang is available in food barns. Meanwhile, in Gempol Sari Village, to meet food availability, a Bumdes was formed, as well as Warung SmartFarm, to accommodate farmers' production. However, these food barns are still underutilized, because some of the barns do not contain food but fertilizer.

Second, Food distribution, after the food is available, then food distribution is carried out. Food distribution here is the distribution/spread of food to the community, which includes not only physical aspects, namely food available in locations where it is needed, but also economic affordability through prices and purchasing power that are evenly distributed for the community. The food distribution system in Tangerang itself is a delayed sale system. Delayed selling is an effort made by individuals/groups of farmers to arrange the time to market the results of their farming business through processing, storage, and marketing processes to obtain a bargaining position and high selling value.

Meanwhile, in Gempol Sari Village, food distribution is carried out by selling directly to consumers and distributors of agricultural products to make it easier for farmers to distribute food to all sectors. Access to food distribution is carried out evenly; this has been proven by the relatively high level of people's purchasing power; this is because the people of Gempol Sari Village are farmers, and this food distribution helps them to resell their production, especially in the form of vegetables.

Third, food consumption, food that is available and evenly distributed, then consumption can be carried out by the community. This consumption does not necessarily mean any food that can be eaten, but some aspects are nutritious, healthy, safe, and varied. Therefore, there is a need for outreach to the community so that people understand and comprehend nutritious, healthy, safe, and diverse food.

In Gempol Sari Village, in seeking diversity in food consumption, there are two strategic steps taken, namely the use of the yard and a menu creation competition. The use of the yard is aimed at food diversification; at the same time, the menu creation competition is a stimulation for the community to maximize the diversity of food available in the village. Apart from that, this effort is intended so that people do not depend on the production of one type of plant. By implementing good food availability, distribution, and consumption, food security will also be realized well.

Inhibiting and supporting factors that occur in efforts to empower farmers in increasing food security.

Internal Inhibiting Factors

The quality of human resources in Gempol Sari Village itself is considered to need improvement. There are still many human resources, especially the farming community here, who need more knowledge both on how to plant and better care for it. Many farming communities here still use old methods of running their farming businesses. Apart from human resources, the lack of agricultural machinery is also an inhibiting factor. Gempol Sari Village itself feels that agricultural machinery still needs to be improved. The farming community here still needs help to run their farming business because they still use traditional agricultural tools. This lack can make production results less good, and on the other hand, it can also reduce their income, considering that the results obtained could be better.

External Inhibiting Factors

Apart from human resources and agricultural equipment, weather also influences running a farming business. Uncertain weather can affect the crops that farmers will or are currently planting. Plants to be planted must first look at the weather; this aims to choose what plants are suitable for planting. This situation is an obstacle for farming communities in carrying out their farming businesses. If the type of plant is not suitable for the existing weather, the production that will be produced will also be less than expected. Apart from that, insufficient agricultural resource capacity is also an external obstacle.

Agricultural resources in the form of water have a very important role in agriculture, especially in farming. In Gempol Sari Village itself, irrigation relies heavily on one source of water, namely from the river; this is, of course, very lacking because of the large amount of agricultural land that must be irrigated. Apart from that, the distance between springs and agricultural land is also quite far. Meanwhile, many existing irrigation channels have also been damaged.

Internal Supporting Factors

The existence of a farmer empowerment program is one of the factors that can support the development of agriculture, as is also in Gempol Sari Village. The empowerment program provided makes farmers more skilled and knowledgeable, and this can influence farming results to be better than expected to create food security. Apart from that, the support provided by the Regional Government helps improve the quality of farmers' production. The support provided can be in the form of assistance or knowledge and skills given to farmers to run better farming businesses.

External Supporting Factors

Carrying out programs provided by the Government requires supporting aspects so that they run well and smoothly. One of these aspects is the assistance provided by the Government to farmers. This assistance can make it easier for farmers to run their farming businesses. This program helps the farming business that is carried out to get maximum results, where maximum results can also create food security in Gempol Sari Village, East Sepatan District. Micro level: reinforcement and motivation; b) Mezzo level: direct training and field practice.

Discussion and Conclusion***Farmer Empowerment Program to Increase Food Security in Gempol Sari Village, East Sepatan District, Tangerang Regency*****Micro Level**

At the micro level of farmer empowerment, what is carried out is strengthening capacity and motivation. The capacity strengthening carried out in Gempol Sari Village aims to provide broader knowledge and skills to main actors (communities in and around forest areas, farmers, planters, breeders, fish cultivators, and their nuclear families) and business actors (individual Indonesian citizens or corporations formed according to Indonesian law that manage agricultural, fisheries and forestry businesses) in improving their productivity and income. Counseling is carried out by providing information about the latest programs and technology and the problems they face.

Mezzo-Level,

empowerment is aimed at improving the quality of the main actors and business actors. As a strategy to increase the awareness, knowledge, skills, and attitudes of clients so that they can solve the problems they face, Tangerang Regency carries out direct training and field practice. This activity was carried out in Gempol Sari Village.

Macro level,

The understanding of this macro-level approach in empowerment efforts is to increase food security in Gempol Sari Village, Nganjuk Regency, which is carried out through a strategy, namely the food security strategy. The food security strategy here consists of three subsystems, namely food availability, food distribution, and food consumption.

Inhibiting and supporting factors that occur in efforts to empower farmers to increase food security in Gempol Sari Village, East Sepatan District, Tangerang Regency

- a. Internal Inhibiting Factors: low quality of human resources and lack of agricultural machinery.
- b. External Inhibiting Factors: unpredictable weather and limited agricultural resource capacity.
- c. Internal Supporting Factors: the existence of farmer empowerment programs and support from IZI and other stakeholders.
- d. External Supporting Factors: the existence of assistance that can ease the burden on farmers.

References

- Achmad, S. (2003). *Kapita Selekta Evolusi Pemikiran Kebijakan Ketahanan Pangan*. Yogyakarta: BPFPE.
- Adi, F. (2009). *Pemberdayaan Partisipasi & Penguatan Kapasitas Masyarakat*. Bandung: Humaniora.
- Aminah, S., Sumardjo, Lubis, D., & Susanto, D. (2015). Strategi Peningkatan Keberdayaan Petani Kecil Menuju Ketahanan Pangan. *Sosiohumaniora, Volume 18 No. 3*, 253-261.
- Cholid, N., & Achmadi, A. (2007). *Metodologi Penelitian*. Jakarta: Bumi Aksara.
- Dekasari, D. A. (2016). Pemberdayaan Petani dalam Meningkatkan Ketahanan Pangan di Desa Sambiroto, Kecamatan Padas, Kabupaten Ngawi. *Jurnal Analisa Sosiologi*, 38-50.
- Edi, S. (2010). *Membangun Masyarakat Memberdayakan Rakyat*. Bandung: Refika Aditama.
- Indonesia, R. (2012). Undang-Undang Nomor 18 Tahun 2012 Tentang Pangan. Jakarta, DKI Jakarta, Indonesia: Menteri Hukum dan Hak Asasi Manusia.
- Laily, S. F., Ribawanto, H., & Nurani, F. (n.d.). Pemberdayaan Petani dalam Meningkatkan Ketahanan Pangan; Studi di Desa Betet, Kecamatan Ngronggot, Kabupaten Nganjuk. *Jurnal Administrasi Publik (JAP), Volume 2 No. 1*, 147-153.

Syarief, R., Sumardjo, Kriswantriyono, A., & Wulandari, Y. P. (2017). Pengembangan Ketahanan Pangan Melalui Pemberdayaan Masyarakat di Kawasan Rawan Konflik Timika Papua. *Jurnal Ilmu Pertanian Indonesia, Volume 22 (3)*, 163-171.