

RESEARCH ARTICLE



Building awareness fisherman communities about the importance of marketing systems to reduce poverty

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ABSTRACT

The main problem of poverty in the fishing community is the fishermen's bargaining position which is quite weak in determining the selling price in the market. In addition, the role of intermediaries which is quite strong in the fishing community makes the selling price of fish commodities determined by intermediaries. The purpose of this activity is to provide knowledge to fishermen regarding good marketing so that they can reach a wider market, especially for fishing communities in Muncar sub-district, Banyuwangi Regency. The method used in this study is Participatory Action Research (PAR) to find out the problems of the fishing community and provide solutions to these problems based on community participation. The results of this study indicate that in the early stages of preparation it was known that the fishing community based on a strong socio-cultural basis was very dependent on intermediaries in marketing their catch. Based on the initial survey, the next stage was to provide marketing training and product packaging that could be accepted in the market. The results of the training showed that the fishing community experienced an increase in knowledge after the intervention in the form of marketing training and product packaging.

KEYWORDS

Poverty, quality improvement, fisherman welfare, middleman, marketing

ARTICLE HISTORY

Received: 26 January 2025

Accepted: 1 February 2025

Published: 14 February 2025

HOW TO CITE

Nuraini, S., Nirmala, D. & Millati, I. (2025). Building awareness fisherman communities about the importance of marketing systems to reduce poverty, 1(2), 85-93.
<https://doi.org/10.62941/irce.v1i2.97>

1. Introduction

Indonesia has a large potential for marine fisheries. Indonesia's marine fisheries potential reaches 12 million tons per year. Among the various regions in Indonesia, the Java Sea is one of the strategic areas with a very large potential for fish catches with a licensed fleet of more than 2,300 units (Trenggono, 2023). One of the areas in East Java with the second largest marine potential is Banyuwangi Regency. The total production of capture fisheries in Banyuwangi reached 97,046 tons with the center of fisheries activity in Muncar sub-district (Banyuwangi Regency Statistics Office, 2022). The results of an initial

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survey conducted in Muncar sub-district by interviewing two representatives of the fishing community showed a lack of understanding among fishermen regarding direct distribution to consumers. The results of the fishermen's fish will be sold directly to middlemen at a low price. In addition to fishermen not having access to the market, middlemen in Muncar sub-district also act as funders for fishermen, so that fishermen can borrow initial capital such as buying fuel from middlemen. The results of the initial survey are in line with the results of research conducted Mutiara et al., (2018); Rasni et al., (2022); Rosyidah & Erlina (2018) in Karangsang, East Sebatik and Indragiri Hilir which are fishing areas in Indonesia. The study shows that the obstacles experienced by fishermen in developing the potential of capture fisheries are the lack of institutions and access to capital, weak technology used, limited marketing access and the dominant role of middlemen in capital.

Another problem faced fishermen is that fish are sold directly without being processed and the lack of training to increase fishermen's capacity in fish processing, packaging and marketing (Mawardi et al., 2022; Ningrum et al., 2021). Lack of storage facilities, lack of storage space, lack of knowledge and awareness regarding storage of fishery products, lack of training for traders and fishermen, and limited storage space for fish (Issa et al., 2022). Fishermen in Muncar, despite of directly selling their fish to middlemen, will process it into dried fish that directly sold to consumers. The selling value of the dried fish is also not high, in addition to many sellers who have the same commodity, the marketing system also limited. A social marketing approach that focuses on culture is quite effective for fishermen, especially when adjusted to the demographics and challenges of each fishing community (Teske et al., 2022). Marketing in the distribution of cuttlefish market using social networks in Catalonia, Spain combines traditional values (tradition, cultural values and sustainability) with modern values such as online media is very important in influencing consumer preferences towards sustainability (Gómez et al., 2023). Fishermen are expected to have sufficient entrepreneurial skills to be able to improve their welfare, in addition to the sustainability of marine resource management being the main thing in improving the welfare of fishermen (Panjaitan & Panjaitan, 2020).

Strong traditional and cultural values make fishermen feel disinclined towards middlemen. Coastal communities in Kerala, India have low profits due to high intermediary costs, socio-cultural beliefs that limit fishermen's opportunities to sell in other markets, and high dependence on intermediaries. One solution offered is a logistics system that can help small fishermen transport their catch to the market (Enayati et al., 2024). Intermediaries also have considerable power in the market because they have more perfect information than producers. One of the government's policies to reduce poverty to subsidize trade organizations and producers who do not have

access to the market. So, they can have selling value in the market (Chau et al., 2016). Distribution and market activities are an integrated part of the chain from catching to consuming fishery products. The role of cooperative institutions in receiving fish catches and the government in maintaining prices is also very large in determining the welfare of fishermen (Dothy; et al., 2022). Interventions on these issues can be carried out by policy makers such as in the Amazon. Interventions by fishing communities in the Amazon region by increasing access to markets have shown quite encouraging results. Before the intervention in the form of fishing boats going directly to the market, in the Amazon they used intermediaries which could cause poverty for fishermen. After the boats went directly to the market, dependence on the community decreased and increased the price of fish received by the community (Bartkus et al., 2022).

Based on previous research and the results of initial interviews which stated that the biggest challenge for fishermen in marketing their fish due to the high dependence of fishermen on middlemen, the author wants to reduce this problem by providing training to the fishing community in Muncar sub-district, Banyuwangi Regency, Indonesia.

2. Methods

The method used to overcome social problems with researchers entering the community to solve problems directly, obtain data, and make recommendations for action is to use the Participatory Action Research (PAR) method with observation techniques, focus group discussions (FGD) and interviews. The participatory approach actively involves the community in planning, implementation and evaluation (Syahputra & Mardhani, 2024). Interviews are a research method that obtains data through individual perceptions and life experiences and provides flexibility in data collection and analysis (Bryman, 2011). Interview techniques consist of two, namely structured interviews and semi-structured interviews. Structured interviews are stricter and more rigid because researchers are guided by certain questions and answers. While semi-structured interviews have interview guidelines but researchers are able to explore the answers of the informants according to research needs (Bryman, 2011; Cresswell, 2013; Haniffa & Hudaib, 2006). To answer the initial problem formulation, a semi-structured interview will be conducted related to the concept that has been determined to approach a construction that is close enough to the main source (Fassin et al., 2011; Pérez-Elizundia et al., 2020).

The first step taken was to conduct initial observations by observing the study location, namely in the Muncar sub-district area including the fishing port and the fishermen's cooperative institution. The second step was an interview with the resource persons of the fishermen's partners. The three fishermen's partners who became the resource persons were (Mr. HD, who works as a fisherman), (Mr. SH, who works as a

collector), and (Mr. MW as the administrator of the Fishermen's Cooperative Institution). The third step was focus group discussion (FGD) for the fishermen's partners regarding the problems and follow-up actions that would be taken to overcome the fishermen's problems. After the FGD was conducted, capacity building training was carried out for fish packaging and marketing of fishermen's products. The success rate of the training was based on the results of the pre-test and post-test given before the training and after the fish product packaging training. Another change that can be seen is the increase in fishermen's knowledge about raw materials and the fish packaging process. The final stage is a reflection related to the capacity building training and fishermen's perceptions of fish packaging and marketing directly to consumers.

3. Discussion

This study used Participatory Action Research (PAR) approach to identify the problems of fishermen groups in Muncar sub-district, then provide solutions to solve the problems based on community participation. The PAR method in this study will be divided into five parts, social preparation, community social research, planning, action and reflection. The first step in the PAR method is social preparation, which is carried out to find out and understand the community. In this process, initial interactions are carried out in the form of field observations and understanding the role of groups that already exist in the Muncar sub-district fishing community. In the initial observation, in the form of active observation, the team observed and participated in the activities of the Muncar sub-district fishermen. After conducting active observations, the researcher conducted an initial interview with Mr. HD as a fisherman. In the initial observation, it was found that the fishermen's catch was directly sold to the middleman. While fish with poor quality will be made into dried fish or salted fish. According to Mr. HD, fishermen are forced to sell to middlemen because fishermen have capital debts, so the selling price is determined by the middleman. Fishermen do not know the selling price to consumers. This lack of information makes the fishermen's bargaining position quite low (Figure 1).

The second step, social research to identify problems with a smaller scope. For this stage, a focus group discussion (FGD) was conducted with several fishermen with the following criteria: fishermen who work as fishermen, fishermen who have boats or do not have boats, interact with middlemen, fishermen's wives and are members of a fishing community. The results of this identification resulted in 15 (fifteen) fishermen who were willing to participate in this social research. The next stage FGD, dividing into three groups with each 5 (five) members, paying attention to the representation of women in their groups. This FGD discusses the daily lives of fishermen, fishermen's problems and expectations from these fishermen's problems. This FGD uses a semi-structured

interview guide, where the FGD guide can develop a broader discussion and in accordance with the objectives of the problem to be achieved. The results of the FGD show that the fishermen's catch will be directly distributed to the middleman because the fishermen and the middleman have a debt agreement. When the fish caught by fishermen is not fresh enough, it will be sold directly to a salting factory or traditional market. Fishermen only rely on these sales because of the lack of understanding of how to properly package fresh fish so that it lasts and can be sold directly to consumers. Fishermen's wives will help in the process of making salted fish or dried fish. Marketing is limited to traditional markets around Banyuwangi Regency. While middleman access can reach outside Banyuwangi Regency.



Figure 1. Field observation with fisherman. Source: author documentation

The third stage in the PAR method is planning. In this stage, after the main problems are known from the results of the initial survey, observation and FGD, the author plans to provide training to increase the capacity of fishermen groups with fish packaging and marketing training. This training plan will involve 15 (fifteen) fishermen and 5 (five) representatives of the Fishermen's Cooperative Institution in Muncar sub-district. The next stage is Action. The action taken is to provide additional knowledge about how to properly package fresh fish using a vacuum sealer so that it can be sold to a wider market and for a longer time. The second training is Marketing techniques using applications

and online media that are already available so that fishermen can reach the consumer market directly.

The final stage in the PAR method is reflection. Reflection is carried out so that the shortcomings or successes of activities and changes in society can be identified. Before conducting the training, the author gave a pre-test to the training participants to determine the level of experience and knowledge of the training participants regarding the process and raw materials for fish packaging. After the training, a post-test was carried out to determine whether there was an increase in the participants' knowledge of the results of the training. The results of the pre-test and post-test showed that the training participants experienced an increase in the fish packaging system. The material presented by the resource person in the training was a good fish packaging system, how safe materials are used in fish packaging, and continued with the practice of fish packaging using a simple vacuum sealer. This practice aims to provide understanding and experience for fishing partners in packaging fish simply and for a long enough time to be sold to consumers with a wider reach (Figure 2).

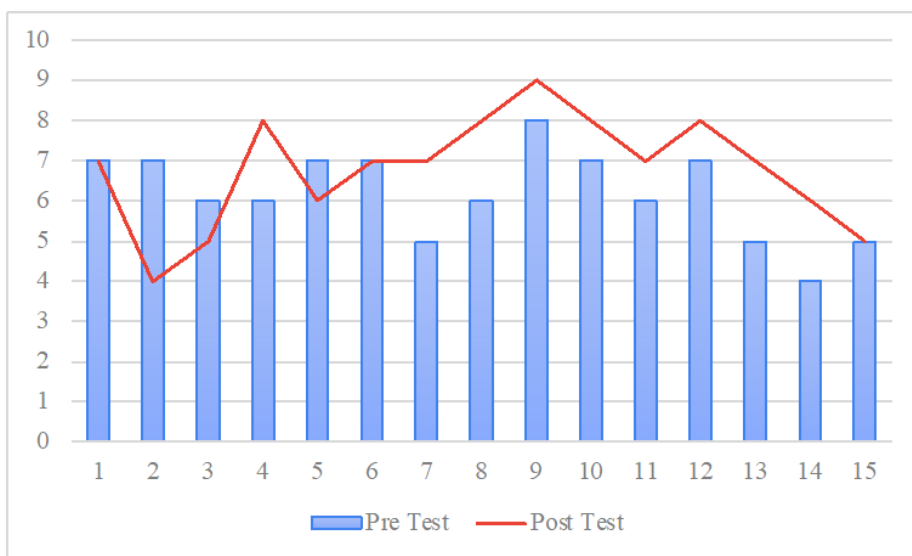


Figure 2. Pre-test and post-test results. Source: observation data

The results of the reflection show that the main problem experienced by the fishing community in Muncar sub-district is the lack of understanding of how to market the fish they catch so that they can be sold directly to consumers. The role of institutions in the fishing community environment is also able to provide capital support so that fishermen can gradually release their attachment to middlemen. The intervention and role of these institutions are also in line with the results (Bartkus et al., 2022; Dothy; et al., 2022). The maintaining the supply chain with the role of middlemen in it will reduce the welfare of

fishermen, so that it can increase poverty rates. The results of this study also support research Gomez et al., (2023) to utilize online media as a sustainable marketing platform for fishermen. This will be able to maintain sustainability for fishermen by following technological developments and will directly reduce the interaction of fishermen with middlemen.

4. Conclusion

The conclusion of this study is that the main problem of the Muncar sub-district fishing community is the lack of understanding of good and integrated packaging and marketing systems so as to reduce dependence on middlemen. In addition, the role of the Fishermen's Cooperative Institution is also limited to providing quite small capital, even the role of the institution is significantly reduced, especially when fishermen do not sell to the Fishermen's Cooperative Institution but directly to middlemen. The results of the study indicate that training to increase fishermen's capacity in fish packaging and marketing provides benefits and knowledge for fishermen. Strengthening fishermen's institutions is the main point for further researchers that can be developed. In addition, regulatory factors are the main concern that needs to be studied as policy variables that can strengthen fishermen's community institutions.

Disclosure statement

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest regarding the publication of this paper.

Acknowledgment

The authors would like to thank the Institute for Research and Community Service (LPPM) of Airlangga University for funding the Community Service activities of the Village Development Program (Advanced Batch II Assisted Village Development Program) 2024 in Indonesia with grants number 2501/B/UN3.LPPM/PM.01.01/2024.

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