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Strategies for Realizing Independent Villages in Wajo Regency: Identification of Supporting and Obstacle Factors through SWOT Approach

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Abstract

Village development is an important part of Indonesia's national development policy, with the aim of improving community welfare through village empowerment and self-reliance. Wajo Regency, which has abundant natural resource potential but still faces a number of challenges, is the focus of this research. This research aims to identify the factors that support and hinder the implementation of independent village development in Wajo Regency, as well as formulate appropriate strategies to improve village independence. The method used in this research is a descriptive qualitative approach with a case study, where data was collected through in-depth interviews, field observations, and document analysis. Data analysis was conducted using descriptive qualitative techniques and SWOT analysis, which examines the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats in the implementation of independent village development. The results showed that supporting factors such as natural resource potential, government policy support, and active community participation, while inhibiting factors include the limited quality of human resources, dependence on village funds, and limited infrastructure. Based on these findings, the proposed strategies include strengthening the quality of

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human resources, diversifying village income sources, and improving infrastructure and technology to support the sustainability of independent village development in Wajo Regency.

Keywords: Strategy; Independent Village; Wajo Regency; Inhibiting Factors; Supporting Factors

INTRODUCTION

Rural development is one of the main focuses in Indonesia's national development policy. With more than 80% of Indonesia's population living in rural areas, rural development has a strategic role in improving the welfare of society at large.(Tanjung et al., 2024). . In this context, the Indonesian government has established various policies aimed at accelerating village development, one of which is through the implementation of Law No. 6/2014 on Villages. This law provides recognition, authority, and resources for villages to manage development independently, which includes governance, development implementation, community development, and community empowerment based on local initiatives (Undang-Undang Republik Indonesia No. 6 Tahun 2014 Tentang Desa, 2014).

The Village Law also supports efforts to eradicate underdeveloped villages and accelerate the achievement of independent villages. In order to support the implementation of this law, the central government allocates village funds from the State Budget (APBN), with the hope that these funds can be utilized to improve the quality of life of rural communities through infrastructure development, economic development, and social empowerment. Positive developments can be seen from the upward trend in the number of independent villages at the national level, which reflects an overall improvement in village conditions.

In realizing the conditions of a prosperous, just and independent village community, in Permendes No.2 of 2016 through the Village Development Index that the progress and independence of the village can be classified into five statuses, namely the status of Independent Village or can be referred to as Sembada Village, Advanced Village or can be referred to as Pre-Sembada Village, Developing Village or can be referred to as Intermediate Village, Underdeveloped Village or can be referred to as Pre-Madya Village and Very Underdeveloped Village or can be referred to as Primary Village (kurniawan,

2015). The Village Development Index is one of the important performance indicators used by the Ministry of Villages in measuring the success of village development programs nationally.

The Village Development Index captures the development of village independence based on the implementation of the Village Law with the support of the Village Fund and Village Facilitators. The Village Development Index directs the accuracy of intervention in policy with the correlation of appropriate development interventions from the Government in accordance with community participation which correlates with the characteristics of the village area, namely typology and social capital (Arina et al., 2021). . Based on the Village Development Index (IDM), the status of village progress and independence is explained with a classification that is expected to facilitate understanding of the current situation and condition of the village, as well as how policy steps should be developed to support the improvement of village life to become more advanced and independent (Peraturan Menteri Desa, Pembangunan Daerah Tertinggal Dan Transmigrasi Nomor 2 Tahun 2016 Tentang Indeks Desa Membangun, 2016)

However, the challenges in realizing self-reliant villages are still very real, especially in areas that have unique characteristics, such as Kabupaten Wajo in South Sulawesi. This district has unique social, economic and cultural characteristics, with the majority of the population relying on the agricultural sector as their main source of livelihood. Local potential such as agriculture, fisheries, and typical handicrafts such as silk weaving have great opportunities to support village independence, but their utilization is still limited (Faisal & Rahman, 2023). Based on the Village Development Index (IDM) data, Wajo District has experienced an increase in the number of independent villages from 8 villages in 2023 to 24 villages in 2024. Most of these independent villages are located in Tanasitolo Sub-district, indicating that a special strategy is being implemented in the area. However, overall, Wajo District is still ranked 216 out of 434 districts in Indonesia in terms of village independence status, indicating that there is still much work to be done to improve the condition of other villages (Kementerian Desa, 2024).

Factors that hinder the achievement of independent village status in Kabupaten Wajo include limited infrastructure, low quality of human resources, and suboptimal management of village funds. These issues hinder villages' efforts to effectively utilize local potential, thus slowing down the achievement of village independence. Conversely,

supporting factors such as abundant natural resources, local values, and opportunities for technology-based innovation, if managed well, can be the main drivers in realizing independent villages. In this context, an in-depth understanding of the constraining and supporting factors is important to design a more effective development strategy. Each village has different characteristics and needs, so the approach used should be tailored to local conditions. Research that focuses on identifying and analyzing these factors in Kabupaten Wajo is expected to provide new insights in developing development strategies that are relevant and contextual.

Therefore, this research is directed at examining how various factors influence the implementation of independent village development in Wajo District. By understanding the existing barriers and supports, this research seeks to provide recommendations for strategies that can help accelerate village transformation towards sustainable self-reliance.

METHODS

This research uses a descriptive qualitative approach to understand the phenomenon and formulate strategies for independent village development in Wajo Regency. Qualitative research is conducted holistically by describing phenomena based on words in a natural context (Maleong, 2012). The research design used is a case study that aims to explore the background, circumstances, and interactions that occur related to certain phenomena. This research analysis focuses on the Village Development Index (IDM) indicators, as well as SWOT analysis. The data collection techniques used include interviews, observations, and document studies.

The data collection process was conducted using in-depth interviews with relevant informants, such as the Community and Village Empowerment Agency (DPMD), village facilitators, village heads, and village communities. These interviews were designed to gather information on challenges faced in program implementation, local potentials that support development, and opportunities and threats from the external environment. In addition, direct observations were made in the field to observe the condition of the villages that became the research locus, both independent and developing villages. Document studies were also used to complement the data, including program reports, village development data, and related policies. This research was conducted in Kabupaten Wajo.

Data obtained from various sources were analyzed using descriptive qualitative techniques, with the SWOT analysis approach as the main framework. Each dimension in the SWOT analysis was grouped and examined in depth to gain a holistic understanding of the factors influencing the implementation of independent village development. To maintain data validity, data from interviews, observations, and documents were triangulated. This triangulation aims to ensure consistency of information from various sources and data collection methods. The results of this SWOT analysis are the basis for providing strategic recommendations that can optimize supporting factors and overcome inhibiting factors in achieving the objectives of independent village development in Wajo Regency. The SWOT approach is used to develop long-term strategies so that the direction and goals of the company can be achieved clearly and can be immediately made decisions (Wiswasta et al., 2018).

RESULTS

The inhibiting and supporting factors in the implementation of independent village development in Wajo Regency can include various things. Based on the results of the research conducted, it is known that the inhibiting factors consist of limited quality of resources, lack of infrastructure, dependence on village funds, lack of effective collaboration, climate change and natural disasters, social and cultural barriers, and lack of community participation. On the other hand, supporting factors can include the availability of local resources, active community participation, and local government support. Efforts to build self-reliant villages will be heavily influenced by these two factors, and it is important to understand their dynamics for effective village development. To analyze the inhibiting factors of independent villages in Wajo Regency, we can use SWOT analysis (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats) (Fatimah, 2016). The following is an overview of the inhibiting factors faced:

Strengths

Natural Resource Potential

Kabupaten Wajo has abundant natural resources, particularly in the fisheries, agriculture and plantation sectors. This potential can be optimized to create superior local products that can increase village income. Wajo district has abundant and diverse natural resources, especially in the fisheries, agriculture and plantation sectors, which provide great

potential for local economic development (badan Pusat Statistik kabupaten Wajo, 2024). The region is rich in fishery products thanks to its proximity to lake and river waters, allowing the community to develop a sustainable fishing industry. This potential can be further developed through good management, as well as diversification of processed fish products, such as dried fish, which can expand the market and increase community income. Sustainable fisheries management is also very important to maintain the sustainability of this natural resource for future generations. In addition, the vast and fertile agricultural land allows the management of various types of food crops, such as rice, corn and vegetables, which are local superior commodities.

Government Policy Support

Funding through the Village Fund enables villages in Wajo to allocate financial resources for sustainable development, including economic development, infrastructure, and basic services.The government provides tangible support for villages in Wajo District through the Village Fund policy. This fund provides villages with a stronger financial capability to fund various development needs, ranging from local economic development, infrastructure improvement, to the fulfillment of basic services for the community. With the Village Fund, village governments have the opportunity to design and implement programs that directly support the welfare of residents, such as building village roads, improving health facilities, and increasing access to education. For the community, this policy is very meaningful because it brings fundamental positive changes in their daily lives. For researchers, the existence of the Village Fund demonstrates how government policies can accelerate sustainable development at the local level and provide villages with greater opportunities to achieve independent village status

Community Participation

Community involvement in village meetings shows enthusiasm and awareness of the importance of participation in village development. This participation creates a strong foundation for community collaboration in implementing village programs (Tanjung et al., 2024).

Weaknesses

Limited Quality of Human Resources

The abundance of natural resources without the support of the quality of human resources will lead to inequality in the process of finding progress in improving welfare. The limited quality of human resources in some villages limits their ability to manage local businesses and innovations based on village potential (Nursetiawan, 2018). The limited quality of human resources (HR) in some villages is an obstacle in efforts to advance local economic potential. In many areas, villagers face challenges in terms of the skills and knowledge needed to effectively manage village potential-based enterprises.

This low quality makes it difficult for residents to carry out innovations, manage finances, and apply simple technology that can support business productivity. As a result, many potentials are not optimally utilized and businesses are underdeveloped. This condition creates dependency on outsiders to provide training or technical guidance, so village development programs often only last as long as there is external support. To achieve true independence, it is necessary to improve the quality of human resources through continuous training and mentoring, so that village communities are able to run and develop local businesses independently.

Dependence on Village Funds

This dependency creates challenges for village financial sustainability, especially if the Village Fund allocation changes or decreases. Dependence on the Village Fund is one of the main challenges in creating village independence. Most villages rely on this funding allocation to finance various development programs, ranging from infrastructure, community empowerment, to local economic development. However, this dependency creates vulnerability to changes or decreases in the budget received by villages. If the Village Fund allocation is reduced or diverted to other needs, villages will find it difficult to continue the planned programs.

Furthermore, without adequate alternative revenue sources, villages will face difficulties in managing and funding long-term initiatives. Therefore, it is important for villages to develop other sources of revenue, such as local potential-based businesses, to reduce dependency on external funds and improve village financial sustainability. In addition, strengthening the capacity of village officials in developing programs oriented towards improving business management capabilities, such as through the development of

BUMDes, is essential to reduce dependence on the Village Fund (Suparman & Setyanto, 2021).

Lack of Infrastructure

In some areas, infrastructure such as roads, health facilities, and internet access are still limited, which hinders mobility and access to markets or basic services. The limited infrastructure in some villages in Wajo District is one of the major obstacles in the effort to achieve self-reliant villages. Many villages still lack basic facilities such as proper roads, adequate health facilities, and fast and stable internet access. This makes community mobility limited, making it difficult to access markets or other essential services, such as education and healthcare. In addition, infrastructure limitations also hinder the development of local businesses that require smooth access to markets or suppliers. For example, farmers or fishermen find it difficult to sell their produce due to damaged roads or limited access to markets. Similarly, people who need health services have to travel long distances to get treatment.

Opportunities

Local Entrepreneurship Development

Wajo district has a great opportunity to develop entrepreneurship based on local potential. This includes agricultural products, handicrafts, and fisheries, which can provide added economic value to the village. Wajo Regency has great potential in developing local entrepreneurship that can be the driving force of the village economy (Amalia, 2021). With the abundance of natural resources, such as agricultural products, fisheries, and handicrafts, there are many opportunities to create new businesses based on local products. For example, agricultural products such as rice, corn, and vegetables can be further processed into processed products that have a higher selling value, such as flour, chips, or ready meals. Similarly, abundant fishery products can be developed into processed fish products, such as smoked fish or packaged fish that are ready for consumption. In addition, handicrafts based on local materials, such as woven bamboo or weaving, can become superior products that are attractive in local and export markets.

Innovation Based on Local Wisdom

In addition, the use of natural raw materials that are abundant around the village, such as herbs or local fishery products, can be processed using traditional methods that

have proven effective, but combined with modern technology to improve quality and competitiveness. These innovations rooted in local wisdom can also introduce village products with unique characteristics, attracting the attention of markets that increasingly value authenticity and sustainability. By utilizing the richness of local culture and traditions, villages in Wajo District can create products that not only meet local needs, but also have appeal in wider markets, including national and international markets

Private Sector and External Institutions Support

Cooperation with the private sector or non-governmental organizations can bring additional resources in the form of funds, training, and technology that can accelerate village development. Support from the private sector and external institutions can play an important role in accelerating village development in Wajo District. Cooperation with private companies or non-governmental organizations opens up opportunities to obtain much-needed additional resources, such as funds, training, and technology. Funds channeled by the private sector or philanthropic institutions can be used to fund various village development programs, ranging from infrastructure to local economic sector development.

Threats

Climate Change and Natural Disasters

Climate change has a direct impact on the agriculture and fisheries sectors, which are the economic backbone of Wajo villages. The risk of natural disasters such as flooding can also disrupt people's lives. Climate change and natural disasters pose a serious challenge to villages in Wajo District, especially those dependent on the agriculture and fisheries sectors. Increasingly extreme changes in weather patterns, such as long dry seasons or unpredictable rains, can affect agricultural yields and the sustainability of the fisheries sector. This of course puts the income of farmers and fishermen at risk, which is the main livelihood for many families in this area.

In addition, the threat of natural disasters such as floods or strong winds is also increasingly frequent, damaging agricultural land, village infrastructure, and even threatening the safety of residents. These conditions require serious attention in an effort to manage potential losses due to climate change and natural disasters, and the importance of strengthening disaster mitigation systems and adaptation to climate change so that villages in Wajo can continue to develop and achieve economic independence.

Socio-Cultural Barriers to Innovation

Some communities still have mindsets or values that are less supportive of change and innovation. This can hinder the adoption of new technologies and entrepreneurship development. In some villages in Wajo district, there are socio-cultural barriers that hinder progress in terms of innovation and change. Many communities still uphold traditional values and have a conservative mindset, which makes them hesitant to accept new ideas. Unpreparedness to adapt to new technologies or more efficient production methods often hinders progress in the entrepreneurial sector and the development of local potential. Furthermore, this difficulty in changing perspectives can also slow down the adoption of innovations needed to improve the competitiveness of village products and create new economic opportunities. Therefore, it is important to build awareness and educate communities on the benefits of change and innovation, and provide support to make them more open to new technologies and approaches that can improve their well-being.

Fluctuations in key commodity prices

Fluctuations in the prices of key commodities in Kabupaten Wajo, such as agricultural and fishery products, have the potential to hamper efforts to achieve self-reliant villages. Independent villages are expected to have a stable economy and be able to manage local resources independently. However, dependence on market prices for commodities such as grain and corn makes village economies vulnerable to drastic price changes. When prices fall, farmers' and fishermen's incomes drop sharply, which can affect their ability to meet basic needs and invest in other productive ventures.

DISCUSSION

Plantation commodities, such as coconut, corn and cocoa, can also be a potential source of additional income if managed optimally. These potentials provide opportunities to create superior local products that not only fulfill the daily needs of the community, but also have competitiveness in broader markets, including domestic and export markets. With proper management, this natural wealth can significantly increase village income, support community welfare, and contribute to the achievement of independent village status in Wajo District.

Community involvement in village meetings reflects their enthusiasm and understanding of the importance of active participation in the village development process. When villagers participate in discussions and planning, they are able to convey their needs and ideas directly to the village government, making the programs designed more relevant and in line with community expectations. This participation not only strengthens the social ties among residents, but also encourages a sense of ownership of any development activities undertaken. With strong collaboration, village programs have a greater chance of success, as residents feel more responsible and involved in running and maintaining the results of the development.

Therefore, the improvement of equitable infrastructure across villages is essential so that people can more easily access economic opportunities, basic services, and technology, which will ultimately accelerate the development process and realize self- reliant villages. The development of entrepreneurship based on this local potential not only provides added economic value to the community, but also creates new jobs and improves the welfare of villagers. With the right support, such as entrepreneurship training and access to markets, this potential can transform villages in Wajo District into independent and sustainable entrepreneurial hubs.

Local wisdom such as traditional knowledge, culture, and local processing techniques can inspire unique and relevant innovations, making village products more competitive in the market. Indigenous innovations have great potential to create products and services that are more valuable and competitive in the marketplace. Local wisdom, which includes traditional knowledge, culture, and processing techniques that have been passed down through generations, can be a rich source of inspiration for innovations at the village level (Tumphasuwan & Areeprayolkij, 2022). For example, traditional food processing techniques that are environmentally friendly and have high nutritional value can be developed into more modern processed products while maintaining local cultural values.

In addition, training provided by external parties will improve the quality of human resources in the village, equipping them with new skills that are relevant to market needs and the times. Technology introduced by the private sector can also help improve the efficiency and quality of local products, making them more competitive in the market. Such collaborations not only strengthen village infrastructure and economies, but also encourage the creation of new business opportunities, expand market access, and accelerate socio-

economic transformation at the village level. Thus, the involvement of the private sector and external institutions is very strategic to support the realization of independent villages in Wajo District.

This can exacerbate their dependence on external or government assistance, which should be minimized in the concept of independent villages. In addition, these price fluctuations also add uncertainty in planning sustainable village economic development. Independent villages should be able to optimally develop local resources without depending on external factors that cannot be controlled, such as changes in commodity prices in the market (Standsyah & Ramadhan, 2024). If prices continue to fluctuate, rural communities may find it difficult to plan for their economic future, whether in terms of investment in agriculture, education, or micro-enterprise development. Therefore, these price fluctuations are a serious threat that could hinder villages from achieving true economic independence.

CONCLUSION

This research reveals that the development of independent villages in Wajo Regency is influenced by supporting factors such as abundant natural resource potential in the fisheries, agriculture, and plantation sectors, as well as Village Fund support that enables infrastructure development and community empowerment. Active community participation in village meetings, development of local entrepreneurship, local wisdom-based innovation, and private sector support are also significant strengths. However, weaknesses such as the limited quality of human resources, dependence on the Village Fund, lack of adequate infrastructure, socio- cultural barriers, and the threat of climate change, natural disasters, and fluctuations in the price of key commodities are still one of the causes of obstacles to the village becoming an Independent Village.

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