

DECORATIVE PLANT COMMODITIES AS THE MAIN LIVELIHOOD OF SIDOMULYO VILLAGE COMMUNITIES

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Abstract - Sidomulyo Village has great potential in agriculture and tourism. However, like many other rural villages, Sidomulyo also faces various challenges in providing livelihoods for its residents. One of the potentials owned by Sidomulyo Village is its natural beauty and climatic conditions that support the growth of decorative plants as well as being an object for tourists. This study aims to find out research, including exploring the potential of decorative plants as a solution to improving the welfare of the Sidomulyo village community. With this exploration, we can find out the problems and potential that exist in Sidomulyo Village. The results of this study indicate that strategy that can be done to increase the commodity and marketing of decorative plants is through strengthening social capital (bonding, bridging, and linking), utilization of technology, especially information technology, training, capacity building, and business development assistance to decorative plant farmers, as well as coordination between farmer groups and stakeholders in the supply chain.

Keywords: Commodities, Agriculture, Decorative Plants, SWOT.

1. INTRODUCTION

A tourist village is a rural area that has been developed and managed in such a way as to become an attractive tourist destination for tourists. This area highlights various aspects of the culture, tradition, nature, and lifestyle of the local community. (Masita, Itah, 2019) Tourist villages usually offer tourists an authentic and immersive experience, allowing them to interact with residents, get to know rural life, and enjoy a variety of distinctive and unique tourist activities. The main objectives of the tourism village are to develop the local economy, preserve cultural and natural heritage, and promote sustainable rural development (Aditya Eka Trisnawati, Hari Wahyono, Cipto Wardoyo, 2018).

Sidomulyo Village is one of the villages located in Batu District, Batu City. Sidomulyo Village has great potential in agriculture and tourism. However, like many other rural villages, Sidomulyo also faces various challenges in providing livelihoods for its residents. Limited fertile agricultural land and intense competition in the conventional agricultural market make it important to find alternative income.

One of the potentials owned by Sidomulyo Village is its natural beauty and climatic conditions that support the growth of decorative plants as well as being an object for tourists. decorative plants are commodities that have high economic value and can be an attractive opportunity for the people of Sidomulyo village. However, appropriate development, training, and marketing efforts are required (Pamela Dinar Rahma, Rifky Aldila P, 2017).

Therefore, based on this background, it is necessary to research Sidomulyo Village, which has research objectives, among others, to explore the potential of decorative plants as a solution to improving the welfare of the people of Sidomulyo Village. With this exploration, we can find out the problems and potential that exist in Sidomulyo Village. So in the future, it can make it easier for farmers to develop their commodities, increase their understanding of community skills in decorative plant cultivation, and assist them in developing markets for decorative plant products produced in the future. Thus, this project can not only provide additional income for the people of Sidomulyo Village but also contribute to the diversification of the local economy and improve their quality of life.

2. METHODS

The approach used in this study is qualitative. The research was conducted from 10 July to 25 August. The research location is located in Sidomulyo Village, Batu District, Batu City. Data collection was carried out by interview method, Focus Group Discussion, observation, documentation, and journal. The FGD was carried out with the Gapoktan routine meeting on July 26 2023 together with the management. Interviews were conducted using an open interview guide to the administrators of the Association of Farmers Groups (GAPOKTAN) Dewi Murraya in the village of Sidomulyo. Observations were carried out by going directly to the field to examine the potential of decorative plant commodities in Sidomulyo village to

then be described descriptively, while the documentation was in the form of photos and video profiles aimed at promoting Gapoktan so that it would be known to the wider community.

3. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

A. The Advantages of Decorative Plant Commodities

Decorative plant commodities in Sidomulyo Village, Batu City have been started since 1990 to be the main livelihood. One of the factors that is the reason for people to choose decorative plants is supported by a very suitable place and temperature. Then, to achieve a common goal, the community formed a combined farmer group or called GAPOKTAN, whose members were farmers, especially the people of Sidomulyo Village. The Association of Farmers Groups (GAPOKTAN) is named Dewi Murraya which means Goddess, which stands for tourism village, while Murraya is another name for the yellow flower which is interpreted as a symbol of happiness and love. In addition, Murraya means Mbah Kemuning, which the community believes is the ancestor of Sidomulyo Village (Pamela Dinar Rahma, Rifky Aldila P, 2017).

Plants that become community commodities are vegetables, decorative plants, and plant seeds. Meanwhile, decorative plants are the main commodity of farmers in Sidomulyo Village. Several groupings of decorative plants are divided into three types, namely decorative flowers, landscape flowers, and cut flowers. First, decorative flowers. Decorative flowers are flowers that tend to be small in size and are usually placed in the house as decoration. Examples include cacti and orchids. Second, landscape flowers. This type of flower is different from decorative flowers because these flowers must be placed outside the house. The reason is, that this flower must get enough sunlight. Examples of types of landscape flowers namely red shoots, lotea bananas, and pine trees. Third, cut flowers. This flower is a decorative plant whose stems are cut to take flowers, and are usually used as gifts and flower arrangements. Examples of cut flowers are chrysanthemums, roses, and peacocks.

Decorative plants are one of the most prominent business factors in the community's economy because of their creative and dynamic dynamics. The people of Sidomulyo Village do not only prioritize decorative plants but also look at market segments and choose plants to be harvested and plan harvest times. The location of Sidomulyo Village which is in the highlands is at an altitude of 1,500 meters above sea level (meters below sea level) on the slopes of Mount Arjuna, Mount Panderman, and Mount Welirang with an average rainfall of 3000mm/year and an average air temperature of 23 degrees Celsius. So it is suitable for producing several commodities such as fruit and vegetables. Meanwhile, the main commodity of Sidomulyo Village is decorative plants. Decorative plants, which are the main commodity of farmers in Sidomulyo village, do not just become the superior product of the village. In the 1900s, farmers' commodities were vegetables and green apples. Green apples are even

crowned as landmark stone city. Several buildings, such as bus stops, public telephones, and the Batu town square office, have green apple-like constructions. Then, in 1998, commodities switched to decorative plants. The main reason is that the green apple fertilizer subsidies from the government have started to stop, which has resulted in the inability of farmers to buy non-subsidized fertilizers. Commodities have turned into decorative plants due to easier maintenance, self-made fertilizers, and stable marketing. Decorative plants have a market ranging from within the country to foreign countries which then grows people's interest in cultivating decorative plants in Sidomulyo Village. Visits of domestic and foreign tourists, especially in Sidomulyo Village, are increasing and a lot of infrastructure has begun to be repaired.

B. Problems in Decorative Plant Farming in Sidomulyo Village

As a village that has decorative plants as its main commodity, Sidomulyo Village certainly has problems that must be solved together. The existing problems are related to business capital, farmer groups, agricultural land, and dependence on middlemen. So far, the community has tried to solve the existing problems but has not found common ground for solving each of these problems.

One of the problems that arise is related to venture capital. Indirectly, decorative plant farmers are divided into two groups. The first group is those who have even more than sufficient business capital and are already able to manage their agriculture in an orderly and successful manner. The other group is those who lack business capital for their agriculture, so they cannot manage their business properly. This problem arises due to business competition among farmers. The business competition of farmers in Sidomulyo Village is intense. Because almost every house has decorative plants that become their livelihood. They want their decorative plants to be sold so they can support their families. Therefore, among the peasants emerged individualism. The results of successful businesses that have been felt cannot be shared with farmers who lack capital, so in the end, there are differences between groups who have capital and those who do not (Arif Purbantara, Emma Rahmawati, Varenna Faubianty, Taufan Daniarta Sukarno, 2019).

The next problem is the awareness of the farmers' organization which is still low. The existence of a combined farmer group in Sidomulyo Village has not been felt by some farmers as a vessel that can shelter them. One of the reasons is because they individually are satisfied with their income, and do not need help or a place to shelter them. Many benefits can be obtained when they are aware and participate in organizing with other farmers. Such as assistance from the government, a common agenda that can strengthen solidarity, and the exchange of information and education about agricultural knowledge.

Limited agricultural land is another problem for farmers in Sidomulyo Village. The lands in Sidomulyo village are monopolized by a few people who have more wealth. Because of this, many farmers use land outside Sidomulyo

Village, because it no longer fits. Moreover, farmers who cannot afford to own land can only rent to people who have a lot of land and cannot even be sure whether they can pay off the rent or not (Arif Purbantara, Emma Rahmawati, Varena Faubianty, Taufan Daniarta Sukarno, 2019).

One final problem that is felt is the dependence of many farmers on middlemen. Middlemen on the one hand indeed act as sellers who buy up decorative plants from farmers in very large quantities. However, the price of decorative plants is determined by the middlemen. The farmers cannot bid on prices, because if the middlemen do not agree, in the end, they will not buy the decorative plants. This makes the decorative plants of the farmers unsold, and there is no income for these farmers.

C. Decorative Plant Commodity Strengthening Strategy

		Strength	Weakness
External Factors		1. Favorable geographic conditions	1. Limited venture capital
		2. Supportive climate	2. Organizational capacity is still low
Internal Factors		3. Commodities that are always available	3. Limited agricultural land
		4. The existence of farmer groups to establish cooperation in supporting the community's economy	4. Depends on the middleman
Opportunity		S-O	W-O
1. Development of technology and information		1. Utilization of farmer groups to increase social capital of farmers	1. Training and assistance in developing a financial system for farmer groups
2. Business expansion/expansion		2. Utilization of information technology in expanding business networks and increasing sales of decorative plants	2. Establish a work program that aims to increase the capacity of farmer group members
3. Building a network with stakeholders			
4. Government support in the field of decorative plant farming			
Threat		S-T	W-T
1. Global warming		1. Coordination between farmer groups and all stakeholders so that cooperation can be established.	1. Creating independent distribution channels and expanding channels so that they are not only stuck with middlemen as the main consumers.
2. Some farmers are not members of GAPOKTAN			
3. Land monopoly by a few people		2. Minimizing the monopoly of agricultural land.	

Based on the research results, several factors were identified, both internal and external factors that influence the development of decorative plant commodities. Internal factors include 1) Geographical Conditions, 2) Supportive climate, 3) Commodities that are always available, and 4) There are farmer groups to establish cooperation in supporting the community's economy. After being identified there are weaknesses from the advantages of these internal factors, including: 1) Limited business capital, 2) Low organizational capacity, 3) Limited agricultural land, 4) Dependence on middlemen. External factors that become strategic opportunities for developing decorative plants include 1) Development of technology and information, 2) Expansion/expansion of business, 3) Making innovations in selling decorative plants, 4) Support from outside parties/institutions in developing decorative plants 5) Building a network with stakeholders. The threats in marketing plant commodities are: 1) Global Warming, 2) Some farmers are not members of GAPOKTAN, 3) Land monopoly by some people.

Based on the above matrix, a strategy for strengthening decorative plant commodities is obtained, including: The first strategy is SO (Strengths-Opportunities), namely the use of farmer groups to increase the social capital of farmers, and the use of information technology in expanding business networks and increasing sales of decorative plants. The formation of farmer groups is aimed at improving the management of decorative plants by paying attention to resources, natural potential, and social dynamics in the decorative farming community of an area.

The second strategy is WO (Weaknesses - Opportunities), namely training and assistance in creating a financial system for farmer groups, innovation, marketing, organization, and post-harvest knowledge and working with stakeholders in the supply chain for equipment assistance and access to capital. The problem, in this case, is to be able to tidy up the financial system of the farmers of the Sidomulyo Village community so that equitable financial stability can be created and there is no monopoly by several parties.

The third strategy is ST (Strengths - Threats) by coordinating between farmer groups and all stakeholders so that cooperation can be established, minimizing the monopoly of agricultural land. This is by the opinion (purbantara) which states that coordination between farmer groups can create price stability for all farmer groups. The importance of establishing cooperation with stakeholders as a way of expanding the sales network. In addition, there is coordination between farmer groups to prevent land monopoly or price monopoly carried out by one farmer group.

The last strategy is WT (Weakness - Threats) Creating independent distribution channels and expanding channels so that they are not only stuck with middlemen as the main consumers. With this distribution channel, farmers can expand their market reach so that they are not only stuck with middlemen and get maximum profits. The four strategies have keys that become strategies

for strengthening decorative plant commodities as the main livelihood of Sidomulyo Village, namely, utilizing farmer groups to increase farmer social capital, utilizing information technology to expand networks, as well as coordination between farmer groups and stakeholders so that collaboration can be established and minimizing monopoly agricultural land. Through this strategy, it is hoped that it can become a reference in improving the decorative plant farming system in Sidomulyo Village. Thus, superior and highly competitive agriculture can be created.

4. CONCLUSIONS

Strategies that can be implemented to increase the marketing of decorative plant commodities in Sidomulyo Village consist of 4 strategies, namely SO (Strengths - Opportunities), WO (Weaknesses - Opportunities), ST (Strengths - Threats), and WT (Weaknesses - Threats). It was concluded that the strategy that can be carried out to increase the commodity and marketing of decorative plants is through strengthening social capital (bonding, bridging, and linking), utilization of technology, especially information technology, training, capacity building, and business development assistance to decorative plant farmers, as well as coordination between farmer groups and stakeholders in the supply chain. This strategy is expected to present the characteristics of Sidomulyo Village as the largest producer of decorative plants in Indonesia. So that the identity of decorative plants is getting stronger. Suggestions that can be given based on the results of this study are the need for good coordination between the Central Government, Regional Governments, and Village Governments in aligning programs for the development of superior agricultural product commodities. Institutions in the cultivation of village decorative plants are also very important because there are farmer groups that must be managed.

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