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Social Forestry And Poverty Alleviation In Sigi

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ABSTRACT

Most communities living in the Forest Estate are poor. This condition is caused by limited access to forest resources. Access restriction is claimed to be a way to reduce deforestation and land degradation allegedly caused by illegal community activities. The government, through the Social Forestry (SF) Program, aims to protect the forest while providing welfare to the community. This research attempts to explore in more depth how SF contributes to the welfare of communities living in forest areas in Sigi Regency, especially in the Community Forest Scheme in the Uyu Singgani Forest Farmer Group (FFG) of Sigimpu Village, Palopo Subdistrict and the Village Forest Scheme in the Integrated Village Forest Management Institution (VFMI) of Oo Village, Kulawi Selatan Subdistrict. The method used was Qualitative with a case study approach. Data was collected through observation, survey, and in-depth interviews. The results showed that the communities in both villages were in the prosperous category. However, the contribution of the SF program to community income is actually fairly low, especially in the HKm area. This is because land tenure is not owned by group members but by people outside the village. Meanwhile, the group business that was formed has not been consistent in carrying out production activities so it has not been enough to provide economic benefits to the community.

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INTRODUCTION

Forests are an important source of livelihood for the poor in developing countries, including Indonesia. Forests are utilized as a source of food, building materials, and other needs for poor people around the forest. The existence of forests is the main support for the family economy where the sale of forest and agroforestry products is used to fulfill household needs such as education, health, and agricultural production equipment (Angelsen et al., 2011; Fisher, 2004; Wollenberg et al., 2004). However, this dependence is considered by some parties as a threat to the sustainability of the forest. Communities living in forest areas are often accused of being the main perpetrators of forest destruction. Especially if population growth continues to occur in the region, which has the potential to trigger even more severe deforestation. Poverty is considered one of the factors causing deforestation and forest degradation. Agricultural land clearing and *illegal logging* are suspected to be the community activities that most reduce forest areas (Miyamoto, 2020). This argument ultimately gives legitimacy to the state to determine how forest governance is carried out (Winarwan, 2011).

The Indonesian government continues to make efforts to alleviate poverty for people living in forest areas. The Social Forestry (SF) program is one example. SF is a sustainable forest management system implemented by local communities or customary law communities as the main actors to improve their welfare, environmental balance, and socio-cultural dynamics (KLHK, 2022). Currently, 5,087,752.07 Ha of forest area has been included in the SF scheme from the target of 12.7 million Ha[1]. As is known, the implementation of this program uses the *Community Based Forestry* (CBF) approach where the community has the main role in managing the forest in addition to remaining sustainable, as well as a source of their income. Through this program, the

community is expected to be more prosperous. SF schemes include Village Forest (HD), Customary Forest, Community Forest (HKm), Community Plantation Forest, and Forestry Partnership.

Central Sulawesi Province including Sigi Regency is one of the PS implementation areas. It is known that as of October 2022, the forest area included in the SF scheme is 214,723.69 hectares, where 1251 decrees of permits/utilization rights have been issued covering 33,448 heads of families (KK). However, despite having been implemented for more than a decade, the poverty status in Sigi Regency has not yet shown significant changes. Based on data from the Regional Statistics of Sigi Regency, the number of poor people is 31.51 thousand people or around 13.05 percent (BPS, 2022). Sigi is even categorized as an underdeveloped region in Indonesia. This fact seems to contradict various findings that the CBM approach can contribute to improving community welfare (Angelsen et al., 2011; Fisher, 2004; Gao et al., 2020; Kaskoyo et al., 2014; Schusser et al., 2013). Other findings even suggest that SF implementation is ineffective and creates conflicts (Golar et al., 2022; Maring, 2022). Meanwhile, information related to the impact of SF implementation in Kabupaten Sigi is also still very limited (Amu et al., 2022; Golar et al., 2017). This research is important to find out how the Social Forestry program contributes to poverty alleviation of communities in forest areas in Sigi Regency. By taking case studies in two SF implementation areas, namely Sigimpu and O'o Villages in Sigi Regency, researchers hope to provide a detailed picture of the contribution of SF to changes in people's lives, especially from the aspect of welfare.

Conceptual Framework

The development of the concept of Social Forestry by involving communities in its management has been widely implemented in various countries in the

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world. In the US state of California, a similar program is known as *Collaborative Natural Resources Management* (CNRM) (Walker & Hurley, 2004). In continental Europe, *Community Based Forestry* is the most commonly used name (Skulska et al., 2020), *Collective Forest* (CF) in China (Ren et al., 2018) and *Community Forestry* in Nepal (Thoms, 2008). Although different terms are used, these programs basically have the same goal of providing space for communities to manage forest resources independently and empowered. The expected end result is that the forest remains sustainable, and the community continues to benefit.

In Indonesia, the process of involving communities in forest management has been seriously implemented since 1995 through the Social Forestry Program. This movement was marked by the issuance of the Minister of Forestry Decree No. 622/kpts-II/1995 on Community Forest Guidelines. Although it attempted to distribute some of the state's authority to the community, many parties considered that the time given was too short at only 2 years with activities limited to intercropping and non-timber products. In the following years, there were several developments of regulations such as 677/Kpts-II/1998, 31/Kpts-II/2001, then expanded Government Regulation (PP) Number 6 of 2007, amended to PP Number 3 of 2008. After long dynamics mainly related to regional autonomy policy, the Government through the Minister of Environment and Forestry then issued the latest regulation number P.83/MENLHK/SETJEN/KUM.1/10/2016 on Social Forestry (KLHK, 2022).

Social Forestry is defined as a sustainable forest management system implemented by local communities or customary law communities as the main actors to improve their welfare, environmental balance and socio-cultural dynamics in the form of Community Forests, Village Forests, Community Plantation Forests, and Customary Forests, as well as

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Forestry Partnerships. In its realization, this program is divided into four main schemes, namely Village Forest (HD), Customary Forest, Community Forest (HKm), Community Plantation Forest and Forestry Partnership.

The Social Forestry Program has one of its objectives to improve welfare and reduce poverty. Here, the World Bank defines poverty as *"a pronounced deprivation of well-being related to lack of material income or consumption, low levels of education and health, vulnerability and risk exposure, lack of opportunity to be heard, and powerlessness*" (World Bank Organization, 2000). Poverty is seen not only from the low level of income but also the level of access a person has to certain things related to their empowerment. (Sunderlin et al., 2005) called poverty *alleviation* through forest utilization as *Forest Based Poverty Alleviation* (FBPA). FBPA is seen as a process of utilizing forest resources to reduce welfare deprivation either temporarily or permanently. They also divided two types of poverty alleviation methods at the household level related to forest resource utilization, including First, *Poverty Mitigation/Avoidance (PM).* PM is an effort to use forest resources to fulfill basic household needs, a resilience network during a crisis, and to function as a *"fill the gap"* when the famine arrives to anticipate not falling into deeper poverty. Second is *Poverty Elimination* (PE), which is the use of forest resources to help lift households out of poverty by serving as a source of savings, investment, accumulation, development, and sustainable increase in income and welfare.

There are at least four ways to indicate that FBPA is implemented, namely 1) permanent conversion of forests to non-forests such as agriculture, 2) Ensure or restore access to forest resource utilization to communities, 3) Pay directly to communities that protect forests in lieu of services, 4) increase the value of forest products through the use of technology that can increase the quantity

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of output; increase prices including market access including new product development.

Methods

This research was conducted in two Social Forestry groups consisting of Village Forest Management Institution (VFMI) in O'o Village, South Kulawi District with HD Scheme and Uyu Singgani Group, Sigikota District with HKm Scheme in Sigi District. This research started from July - November 2023. Data were collected through household surveys, stakeholder interviews, direct observation and literature review. The survey was conducted to 100 household heads who are members of SF groups in the two study villages. Meanwhile, respondents were determined *purposively* to see the economic impact generated during SF implementation. To measure the economic impact, a comparison of respondents' income with the 2022 poverty line in Sigi Regency was conducted.

Results and Discussion

Poverty in Kabupaten Sigi

Sigi Regency is the youngest regency in Central Sulawesi Province. This region was formed based on Law Number 27 of 2008 and is the result of expansion from Donggala Regency with an area of 5,196.02 km^2. In 2022, the total population was recorded at 266,812 people of which 12.3% were poor. In the last five years, the percentage of poverty in Sigi tends to fluctuate where post-COVID-19 in 2021 was recorded as the highest reaching 13.05 percent (see graph 1).

Graphics 1 Poverty Percentage of Kabupaten Sigi in the Last 5 Years

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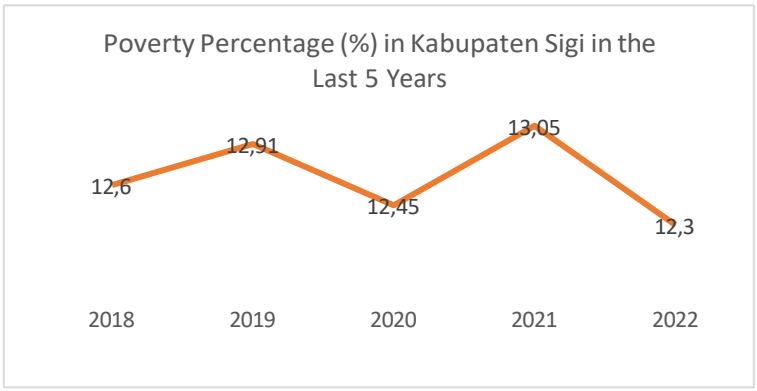

Source: Sigi Regency in figures

However, poverty is concentrated in village areas directly adjacent to forest areas. People who live in these areas tend to depend on forest products and agricultural land for their livelihoods.

Implementation of Social Forestry Program in Sigi District

The implementation of the Social Forestry Program has been running for a long time in Sigi Regency. Referring to the official social forestry website https://goSFBG.menlhk.go.id/, the program was first implemented in 2012 through the HKm scheme in Pipikoro District as stipulated in SK.522.3/210/B.SIGI/2012. To date, the total area of SF is recorded at 31317 hectares consisting of Village Forest 11,012 hectares, HKm 4. 411 hectares and Customary Forest 15,894 hectares. This area is spread across several sub-districts, including Dolo Selatan, Kulawi Selatan, Kulawi, Lindu, Kinovaro, Sigi Kota, Palolo and Nokilalaki. Meanwhile, for SF in the study location, the HD Scheme in Oo Village covers an area of 409 Ha and the HKm Scheme in Sigimpu Village covers an area of 933 Ha (See Table 2).

Table 1. Social Forestry Area in Sigimpu and O'o Villages

Group Name	Village	Number of Me	Area (H	Total Ar	Potential

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		mbers	a)		ea (Ha)	
			HPT	HL		
HKm Uyu Singgani (SK.4157/MENLHK-PSKL/PKPS/PSL.0/6/2018)	Sigimpu	130	199	734	933	Candlenut, Palm Sugar, Coffee, Rontan and Timber
HD Integrated VFMI (SK.4070/MENLHK-PSKL/PKPS/PSL.0/6/2020)	O'o	263	150	259	409	Bamboo, Rattan, Honey, Coffee and Waterfall Ecotourism

Source:https://goSFBG.menlhk.go.id/

SF establishes Forest Farmer Groups (FFG) for the HKm scheme and Village Forest Management Institutions (VFMI) for the Village Forest Scheme as implementors of the designed program. These groups are authorized to form business units known as Social Forestry Business Groups (SFBG) following the potential of forest products owned by the village. The main objective is rural economic development by utilizing renewable natural resources so that it can contribute to the inequality of utilization/control of state forest areas, create jobs, improve community welfare, and reduce greenhouse gas emissions. As

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for SFBG in the study location, there are 8 groups as illustrated in the following table:

Table 1. Profile of Social Forestry Business Groups in Sigimpu and O'o Villages

Group	Entrepreneurship Institution	Business Products	Ket
FFG Uyu Singgani	SFBG Kunau	Aren Sugar	Active
	SFBG Biau 1 (Agroforestry)	Candlenut	Active
	SFBG Biau Husbandry)	Cow	Not active
	Environmental SFBG	Waterfall ecotourism	Not Active
Integrated VFMI	Ecotourism SFBG	Waterfall ecotourism	Not Active
	Craft SFBG	Bamboo	Not Active
	Honey Bee SFBG	Trigona Honey	Not Active
	SFBG Totina	Totina Coffee	Active

Source: Primary Data

The table above shows that each village has four SFBG that utilize various potential forest products. FFG Uyu Singgani utilizes the abundant potential of nira water and candlenuts in Sigimpu Village as the main base of the business. This business even has a palm sugar production house, complete with production equipment. Meanwhile, VFMI Terpadu relies on coffee products that have been successfully marketed within the sub-district. However, not all group businesses consistently produce and generate benefits for their members.

Economic Condition of Social Forestry Management Group Members

To describe the economic situation of the community in both villages, especially the members of the two social forestry groups can be seen through the composition of age, education, land tenure, and average monthly income.

Table 2 Socio-economic profile of the community in the study area

No.	Description	Group Propor

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		tion (%)	
		FFG Uyu Singgani	Integrated VFMI
1.	Age (%) a. 25 - 50 Years b. > 50 Years	34 (68.00) 16 (32.00)	28 (56.00) 22 (44.00)
2.	Formal Education (%) a. Not graduated b. Elementary School / Equivalent c. Junior High School / Equivalent d. High School / Equivalent e. > S1	4 (8.00) 24 (48.00) 8 (16.00) 14 (28.00) -	7 (14.00) 24 (48.00) 4 (8.00) 12 (24.00) 2 (4.00)
3.	Tribe a. Kaili b. Bugis c. Java d. Bali	46 (92.00) 3 (6.00) 1 (2.00) -	48 (96.00) 1 (2.00) - 1 (2.00)
4.	Land Tenure Area (%) a. < 1 Ha b. 1 - 2 Ha c. .> 2 Ha d. Not HKM/HD Area	- - 3 (6.00) 47 (94.00)	- - 8 (16.00) 42 (84.00)
5.	Average Income per month a. Ma	-	1 (2.00)

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	x 1 M ill io n H K M / H D Non HKM/HD		

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	b. 1 - 2 Million		-		-
	HKM/HD				
	Non-HKM/HD		3 (6.00)		1 (2.00)
	c. > 2 Million		6 (12.00)		-
	HKM/HD				
	Non-HKM/HD		-		6 (12.00)
			41 (82.00)		42 (84.00)
6	Plant Type	HKm	Non-HKm	HD	Non-HD
	a. Candlenut	2	48	-	-
	b. Corn	-	2	-	2
	c. Cocoa	2	10	14	34
	d. Durian	-	-	12	18
	e. Avocado	-	10	-	-

Source: processed by secondary data

Most of the age groups participating in managing social forestry in both villages are in the productive age category. This will certainly contribute positively to group business development in the future. Meanwhile, the highest level of education attained by group members is mostly limited to junior high school graduates. Furthermore, for land tenure, there are only three members of the Uyu Singgani FFG group who own land in the HKm area, apart from being claimed by other parties from outside the village, some areas are also still constrained by access which is quite far and difficult to reach. Similar conditions are also found in VFMI members where only eight people own land in the HD Area. This condition then contributes to the average income of group members where only a small portion earns income from the two social forestry areas. However, the amount of income generated is above the average per poverty line of Sigi Regency, which is Rp 445.106 per month.

Challenging Factors of the Social Forestry Program

The existence of the SF Program has not yet had a significant impact on the groups of the two villages. Several fundamental reasons are considered to be obstacles. First, production management in SFBG has not been running optimally. SFBG Konawi, which

is engaged in the palm sugar business, is constrained in meeting the needs of raw materials. The

distant access and difficult terrain to get nira water are considered to be the fundamental factors why this happens. In addition, the initial process of processing nira water is considered complicated and time-consuming. The average time needed to prepare the raw materials reaches three months using special techniques and skills. The problem is that not all group members have these skills, which has resulted in decreased motivation. The lack of raw materials ultimately prevents the group from producing and benefiting economically. On the other hand, the sale of raw nira water is considered more competitive when compared to palm sugar. Meanwhile, for SFBG Totina, the challenge was the highly competitive market price, which resulted in shrinking group income.

Another issue is the status of SF land ownership. Based on SK.4157/MENLHK-PSKL/PKPS/PSL.0/6/2018, FFG Uyu Singgani has been granted a permit for 734 hectares of Limited Production Forest Area to be managed and utilized. This policy allows for each member to manage ± 2 Ha of land. However, this expectation does not match the fact that the area has been partially claimed by other communities outside the village. When referring to the results of Preparation of Land Productivity Improvement in Social Forestry Area, it was recorded that only 3 out of 130 members could utilize the area. Several factors caused this to happen, such as the sale and purchase of the area that took place before the area determination letter was issued, while this issue was not fully resolved when the initial mapping of the area was carried out. As a result, group members chose not to access the area to avoid friction that might arise. Meanwhile, other areas that are still available cannot be utilized because of the difficulty of access and terrain to the location. Therefore, most members choose to cultivate their land or look for

employment options that can provide instant income.

Conclusion

The Social Forestry Program has not been able to contribute to poverty alleviation in the study areas. At least several challenges need to be underlined, first, the overlapping status of area ownership is still a serious problem that must be resolved so that the community can benefit from the SF program. Business groups also need to review business plans ranging from raw material needs to market potential. Careful planning will open up greater opportunities for success. If these two issues can be resolved, the SF program may provide economic benefits for every group member involved.

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