

**COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION IN CORAL REEF CONSERVATION
THROUGH CORAL REEF REHABILITATION AND MANAGEMENT
PROGRAM IN THE VILLAGE OF BAHARI SOUTH BUTON REGENCY**

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Abstract

Community participation in coral reef ecosystem management through the Coral Reef Rehabilitation and Management Program (COREMAP) was crucial for the success of the project in the context of environmental sustainability and marine ecosystems. The importance of community participation in the conservation of coral reefs due to coral reef damage could not be separated from human actions that exploit coral reef. The method used is interview, observation and documentation. The results of this research showed that community participation in environmental conservation (coral reefs) is partial and tend to be mobilized. The communities only enthusiastic on participating in planning program while in the implementation phase, monitoring and evaluation they were apathetic. In addition, some people have not been fully informed about the coral reef conservation program. Villagers of Bahari Village of South Buton Regency were also aware of the importance of environmental conservation but they have been hanging his life on fishery and marine resources to providetheir economic needs, while the alternative provided by the Coral Reef Rehabilitation and Management Program (COREMAP) has not been able to divert the community profession from the fisheries and marine sector to the other sectors.

Keywords: *Participation, Coral Reef, COREMAP, Environmental Preservation, South Buton Regency.*

1. INTRODUCTION

Community participation especially in environmental conservation through the Coral Reef Rehabilitation and Management Program (COREMAP) was very important and interesting. The participation of community was very importance because of environmental sustainability will be determined by the behavior of the surrounding community and interesting because for the socio-economic sustainability of the community but the "society that destroys the marine environment", Zaelany in Nagib (2006) and the community must also be involved in environmental conservation. In addition, the community is regarded as the subject of the preservation of the coastal environment or as the spirit of environmental preservation. Haba (2016) said that community participation is an important element and still negated in the environmental rehabilitation program. Furthermore, Haba (2016) said that if the community as one of the stakeholders and put life on existing natural resources are excluded then the rehabilitation program will fail.

Due to the community participation was an element that must be considered in the process of environmental conservation. Community participation is expected to contribute positively to the Coral Reef Rehabilitation and Management Program (COREMAP) program. Although not as easy as expected, as Haba (2016) pointed out, if the community as one of the stakeholders and putting lives on existing natural resources are excluded, the rehabilitation program will fail.

In addition, the above reasons the community participation in the preservation of the marine environment was necessary because the coral reefs are increasingly damaged. In Indonesia in 1984 the condition of coral reefs was worrisome, where the good condition was about 5%, 29% good, and 25% bad and very bad 40%, <http://coremap.demodadu.com/coremap-cti/prfile/1> accessed 6 April 2016. In addition, the research results of the Center for Oceanographic Development (P2O) LIPI conducted in 2000, the condition of Indonesia's coral reefs 41.78% in damaged condition, 28.30% in the medium, 23.72% in good condition, and 6.20% in excellent condition, as in Chapter I, the attachment of the Minister of Maritime Affairs and Fisheries Decree Number: KEP. 38 / MEN / 2004 Concerning the General Guidelines for Coral Reef Management.

The Damage of coral reefs as found above could not be separated from human actions that do the exploitation of coral reefs as said of Zaelany (2007) in Nagib et al (2006) that the main cause of damage to the marine ecosystem is the human factor (anthropogenic impact) for example through over exploitation of seafood, the use of technology that damages coral reefs (potassium cyanide, fish bomb, tacked chart, poison, trawl, *bubu*, *muroami* and others), massive logging of trees on land, industrial pollution, and mismanagement in mining activities. All these activities have damaged coral reefs and killed fish, either directly or indirectly.

In another aspect of the damage of marine resources was triggered by the motivation of the actors, Hidayati in Nagib et al (2006). Motivation could be categorized in two things first; greed or poverty; second; knowledge, attitude and management practices and rehabilitation of marine resources that still less than the amount of the community (Nagib et al, 2006).

Therefore, the community participation as the subject of development needs to be promoted in order to preserve the special environment of coral reefs that increasingly concerned. Society was not seen as an object but as the subject of environmental preservation. This principle puts the community as one of the actors of empowerment. The activeness of the community as the subject of this empowerment was a manifestation of community capacity building efforts and community participation in development (Soetomo, 2006).

Basically, the coastal communities have great potential to be encouraged to participate in environmental conservation programs, this is seen from the socio-cultural aspects of rural coastal communities. This potential must be explored to benefit the welfare of the people. As Sedarmayanti (2012) said, "people have" powers "which when excavated and channeled will turn into enormous energy to overcome their problems" even more that will be the government's solution and energy in eradicating poverty.

In preserving the marine environment, communities were no longer mobilized to participate but have become an important part of the program planning process until the evaluation of a program. Ife and Tesoriero (2008: 285) said that "community development should always strive to maximize participation, with the aim of getting everyone in the community actively involved in community processes and activities, and to recreating the future of society and individuals. According to Moynihan (2003), "it is important to" pay attention to participation, but not partial participation that involves only interest groups that have

influence, whereas most societies do not have equal opportunity but full participation in the broad sense that the public is involved intensively with the government and co-empowerment, so that, the wider community knows the benefits of participation and the function of participation".

In the context of environmental conservation, the community participation was important because with participation allows the emergence of solutions that are quite telling of environmental problems especially coastal environment. As Hagul (1992) points out in Chalid (2005) that the publication of awareness, for clarifying the choice to be made, and for social consensus on the balance to be sought between economic development and environmental concern. This illustrates that community participation has a major impact on improving the quality of the environment. But behind the importance of community participation there was a problem in the process of community participation. As Sumarto (2003) notes, "citizen participation in Indonesia has often been done as" one-way socialization "or" mobilization "to involve citizens in a development program". "Participation is regulated in such a way as to give a false sense of involvement to a person" (Denhardt and Denhardt, 2013). The previous results of the research showed that "community participation in marine management was still often hampered by lack of information and human resources (Glaser, Breckwoldt, Deswandi, Radjawali, Baitoningsih, & Sebastian, 2014). In addition, "community participation was rarely implemented in community development projects in the Rivers State because their input was most often not involved prior to the start of the project (OloriandOkide 2014).

Real participation was certainly not the case. "Participation must be through procedures to be taken with the community systematically, planned and measured to achieve certain goals (Santosa, 2014). Community participation through the COREMAP program should start from planning activities, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the program. The community should take their own initiative freely without outside pressure (independent participation) suggestions that contributive to environmental conservation programs running well and get good results as well. In essence, community participation was an important element and becomes a necessity in order to preserve the environment, therefore it would describe and explore community participation in environmental conservation through Coral Reef Rehabilitation and Management Program (COREMAP) program in Bahari Village of South Buton Regency Indonesia.

2. RESEARCH METHODS

This research method was descriptive qualitative. The researcher used the qualitative method because of the problems or issues that need to be explored, the need to understand more detail and complete about research problems, want to empower individuals to be able to tell the event and the problems that exist, and the researcher wanted to understand the context or environment where participants face the problem and because the research problem formulation was more suitable to use qualitative method (Creswell, 2014).

In this research process, the researcher collected in three ways, namely observation, interview and documentation. Interviews conducted in depth with the informants were determined by purposive sampling techniques. The determination of Informant was purposively, it would easier to find the information needed. In addition, researchers have known earlier actors who play a major role in the coral reef conservation program through the Coral Reef Rehabilitation and management program (COREMAP). The activities in the interview activities were making interview notes, writing interviews, recording interviews, group discussions through face-to-face, Creswell (2014). Observation conducted directly in the research location by observing the events that occur, recording the observations obtained. In the process of observation researchers put themselves as participants and as observers, Creswell (2014). While the documentation was the process of collecting data from COREMAP II documents, journals or diaries during research, public documents (memos, minutes, recordings, archives and others), Creswell (2014). The data analysis techniques in this study were conducted with three strategies; first, prepare and organize data (ie. text data such as transcripts or image data such as photographs) for a second analysis, data reduction and third, presents data (Creswell, 2014: 251).

3. THE RESULTS OF RESEARCH

Coastal community participation in environmental conservation through coral reef rehabilitation management program is needed in order to create a sustainable environment to meet the socio-economic needs of people living in coastal areas. Through the Coral Reef Rehabilitation and Management Program (COREMAP), communities are expected to be subjects in preserving the coral reef environment and other existing ecosystems in COREMAP protection area. This is as a result of interviews with BW informants who said that; "Community participation at the beginning of the COREMAP program was enthusiastic, in which people were mobilized to attend meetings in order to plan COREMAP program activities. However, the community participation was decreasing while the implementation of environmental conservation activities. The community still conducts fish catching activities in COREMAP conservation area. Although some of them have been given a fine or sanction. People were still apathetic in preserving the coral reef environment and other ecosystems in the COREMAP marine protected area" (interviewed 7 September 2017).

Furthermore, the village motivator as the manager of COREMAP of Bahari Village of South Buton Regency, BA stated that; "Actually, in coral reef conservation initiative initiated by COREMAP, it was expected that community participation to be involved directly in the preservation of COREMAP region, but in fact it was from a more proactive manager to preserve the environment while the community has not fully participated in environmental conservation. There were still some people who do fish catching activities that affect the damage of coral reefs, such as netting, tapping, installing *bubu*, and archery fish" (interviewed July 7, 2017).

Another opinion as stated by BI that, public awareness to participate in environmental conservation was still low, this is evidenced by the existence of community activities that conduct fishing activities in the conservation area COREMAP. In fact people already know that the COREMAP marine protected areas are not allowed to conduct economic activities (sea) in the conservation area COREMAP. Even once some residents found by managers doing fish fishing activities by installing a net in the area COREMAP so direct companion trying to do the action but no one who knows the perpetrators (interview July 21, 2017)

The above information illustrates that the participation and awareness of the community in preserving the environment, especially the area of marine protected areas under COREMAP was still low. Such conditions would affect the results of the reef rehabilitation management program in Bahari Village, Sampolawa Sub-district, South Buton Regency.

On the other hand, based on the results of the observation showed that community participation in environmental conservation was still low. This could be seen from the activities of planning process and implementation of marine environment conservation program initiated by COREMAP, where the community was present because in the mobilization to attend the meeting and that only a small part is presented. It also found various community activities that exploit marine ecosystems in the COREMAP marine protected area by capturing fish, installing *bubu*, fish catch, and archery fish. This activity was routinely done by people in every day either day or at night. There was activity of sea people in COREMAP marine protected areas because the area is a fishing ground for the community.

Researchers also found that the apathetic attitude of the community was to participate in managing the marine environment specifically in the region COREMAP because the community has hung life in the marine and fisheries sector, while alternatives provided through COREMAP program has not been able to divert the community profession from fishery and marine resources to other productive sectors. Home Industrial and socialization has not been able to change the habits of the local community. While some other people lack information about the conservation of coral reefs because during the COREMAP program implemented the community was fishing for 2-3 months.

Thus, it could be concluded that community participation in environmental conservation (coral reefs) was partial and tend to mobilize. The society more enthusiasm at the time of planning program while at the stage of implementation, monitoring and evaluation program they were apathetic. Beside that some people have not obtained complete the information about the coral reef conservation program. The community of Bahari village also recognizes the importance of environmental conservation but they have relied on fisheries and marine resources to meet their economic needs, while the alternatives provided by the COREMAP program are less appropriate to divert the community profession from the fishery and marine sector to the sector others.

4. DISCUSSION

As the result of the research above, community participation in environmental conservation (coral reefs) was partial and tend to mobilize. The society more enthusiasm at the time of planning program while at the stage of implementation, monitoring and evaluation program they were apathetic. Beside the part of society have not get complete the information about the coral reef conservation program. The community of Bahari village also recognizes the importance of environmental conservation but they have relied on fisheries and marine resources to provide their economic needs, while the alternatives provided by the COREMAP program were less appropriate to divert the community profession from the fishery and marine sector to the others sector.

The apathy attitude of community and the lack of information on the conservation of coral reefs in the Bahari Village of Sampolawa District in the South as well as Glasser et al. (2015) found that "community participation in the management of marine resources is often hampered by the lack of information and dominance of community-based management processes by some influential individuals ". In addition, community participation has always failed to reach the top of the Arnstein participation ladder (Timney in Muluk, 2007: 166). This was also the case as Renee A. Irvin & John Stansbury's research in Muluk (2007) found that there is insufficient evidence to show the effectiveness of community participation in environmental management. In addition, "community participation was rarely implemented in community development projects in the Rivers State because their most often not involved before starting the project (Oloriand Okide, 2014).

The results of the above research indicate the same problem about community participation in the preservation of the marine environment. Lack of information obtained by the community of Bahari Village of South Buton Regency to participate in environmental conservation was inseparable from the activities of the community, where in the coastal community almost every day they go to sea so they do not get information or late getting information. This condition was supported by low public awareness to participate in preserving the environment. As Soetrisno said in Suryono (2010: 255) that community participation in the case of development in Indonesia is created by the lack of public awareness.

Due to the low awareness and partial participation of the community in environmental conservation through the COREMAP program, "it is necessary to build awareness and knowledge of the community consistently and continuously. So that the public can maximize participation with the aim of getting everyone in the community to be actively involved in community processes and activities and to recreate the future of society and individuals" (Ife and Teosiero, 2008). Building awareness of the community to participate in environmental conservation because the community is the subject of preservation of the coastal environment in addition to other stakeholders. This was as Haba (2016) said that community participation was an important element and still negated in the environmental rehabilitation program. Furthermore Haba (2016) said that if the community as one of the stakeholders and put life on existing natural resources are not included then the rehabilitation program will fail. In this case it can be interpreted that the community as the perpetrators who put life on marine resources become a necessity to be involved in environmental conservation. The community were damaging marine environment, Zaelany in Nagib (2006) and the community also must be involved in environmental conservation.

Some considerations why community participation in environmental conservation was important and should be implemented, "first participation can help fulfill citizens' expectations, second; participation can improve the quality of the policy (environmental preservation), third; participation in policy processes and policy implementation (environmental preservation) has a large share of success, fourth; participation more responsive to government transparency and accountability; fifth; high participation was likely to increase public confidence in the government, the sixth; greater participation could help meet community challenges of emerging information, the seventh; participation could create possibilities for new partnerships were being developed, eighth; participation could lead to better and ninth informed society literacy; a democracy, participation was really worth doing (Denhardt and Denhardt, 2013).

Denhardt and Dendhart's opinion above illustrated the importance of public participation because it includes policies and processes of policy implementation, fulfillment of community expectations and equally important was the participation is the part of the democratization process. However, we should not expect much participation if only on the level of symbolism, mobilization and tokenism. "The problem of tokenism was a problem in participation" Ife & Tesoriero (2008). We also did not need to expect much participation in

environmental conservation if the community is still found poverty and powerlessness, limited knowledge and isolation and community dependence on the environment or natural resources. Building awareness of the community to participate in environmental conservation requires adequate readiness, because we were dealing with the livelihoods of the people, especially coastal communities. Therefore, in the encouragement of people to participate in environmental conservation, there should be an appropriate alternative to divert the community profession from relying on the sector maritime to other productive sectors so that people can participate in environmental conservation.

As good as any community participation programs to conserve marine ecosystems and coral reefs without alternative ways, so that people did not rely on marine resources, the program has the potential to fail. This was as Haba's research (2016) where various efforts to strengthen coastal communities through mangrove conservation fail because of the dependence of community life on the resources of mangrove ecosystem. This condition was similar to coral reef conservation program through Coral Reef Rehabilitation and Management Program (COREMAP) program in Bahari Village of South Buton Regency, where people still have dependence on marine resources in COREMAP marine protected area so that the program could not succeed or fail.

This was where the problem of community participation in the preservation of the marine environment, where coastal communities are still dependent on marine resources, so that conservation areas that have been protected in the exploitation of the community to meet their needs. We also should not arbitrarily force the community to not conduct fishing activities in marine protected areas without providing other alternatives for the fulfillment of the needs of coastal communities. In principle, building community partition for environmental conservation should look at the various dimensions of the life of the coastal community, first; the need to pay attention to social, economic and ecological aspects. Second; it needs other stakeholder support to provide assistance, education and training. Third; it requires an alternative business community in meeting the needs of the household economy. The last (fourth) aspect was not less important is the participation of the community based on local wisdom. This is as the initiator of the theory ladder of empowerment Burns, Hambleton & Hogget in Muluk (2007: 167) mentioned that "The development of participation that is inconsistent with the local situation and conditions has the potential to raise more complex problems than their carrying capacity to solve the problem." Therefore, in encouraging public participation, it is necessary to consider local conditions (local wisdom).

In rural communities, of course, have local wisdom that when used and managed properly will support the growth of community participation. Customary institutions in rural areas have a habit of managing the environment such as *sasi* or *kaombo* as forbidden areas for fishing or logging activities in the forest of indigenous forest. This local wisdom was a potential that needs to be maximized in environmental conservation so that the community can participate and environment could be sustainable, sustainable and beneficial to coastal communities. As Sedarmayanti (2012) said that "people have" strengths "that when excavated and channeled will turn into enormous energy to overcome their problems" even more would be the government's solution and energy in eradicating poverty.

In addition, in the conservation of coral reefs through COREMAP program, the community should not be mobilized to participate but must arise from the private community or independent participation. Such independent participation was a participatory undertaking by the perpetrator to influence the policy that will create (Thoha, 2014: 117).

In this regard Ife and Tesoriero (2008: 285) said that "community development should always strive to maximize participation, with the aim of getting everyone in the community actively involved in community processes and activities, and to recreating the future of society and individual. According to Moynihan (2003), "it is important to" pay attention to participation, but not partial participation that involves only interest groups that have influence, whereas most societies do not have equal opportunity but full participation in the broad sense that the public is involved intensively with the government and co-empowerment, so that the wider community knows the benefits of participation and the function of participation". Paul (1987), Kannan (2002) in Ife & Tesoriero (2008) argues that participation should include the ability of the people to influence activities in such a way as to enhance their well-being.

In order to effectively participate the participation needed some requirements first; time was the time to understand the message conveyed by the initiator; second; the subject of participation should be relevant or related to the organization to which the individual belongs, third; participants must have the

ability to participate, fourth; participants must have the ability to conduct mutual communication, fifth; the parties concerned are free to participate (Keith Davis in Kurnia, 2007).

5. CONCLUSION

As the result of the research above, community participation in environmental conservation (coral reefs) was partial and tend to mobilize. The society more enthusiasm at the time of planning program while at the stage of implementation, monitoring and evaluation program they were apathetic. Beside the part of society have not get complete the information about the coral reef conservation program. The community of Bahari village also recognizes the importance of environmental conservation but they have relied on fisheries and marine resources to provide their economic needs, while the alternatives provided by the COREMAP program were less appropriate to divert the community profession from the fishery and marine sector to the others sector.

The results of research indicate the same problem about community participation in the preservation of the marine environment. Lack of information obtained by the community of Bahari Village of South Buton Regency to participate in environmental conservation was inseparable from the activities of the community, where in the coastal community almost every day they go to sea so they do not get information or late getting information. This condition was supported by low public awareness to participate in preserving the environment.

6. RECOMMENDATION

In order for coastal communities to participate properly in environmental conservation then first; program implementers need to pay attention to the social, economic and ecological conditions of coastal communities. Second; it was necessary to increase knowledge and awareness of the importance of environmental for the sustainability of ecosystem and local communities. Third; need an appropriate alternative to the economic fulfillment of coastal communities (independent of fishery and marine sector). Fourth; it needs other stakeholder involvement and need to build community participation based on local wisdom.

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