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Empowerment Of Rice Farmers Based On The Asset Based Community Development Approach In Burneh District, Bangkalan Regency

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Abstract

Background In an effort to reduce poverty, particularly in rural areas, the government is empowering farmers by increasing production capacity, economic access, utilizing digital technology, and diversifying agricultural businesses. Bangkalan Regency, as an agricultural region in East Java, has significant rice production potential, with Burneh District being the area with the highest rice production in the regency. This condition indicates that Burneh District has strategic potential that needs to be developed through farmer empowerment based on an Asset-Based Community Development approach to improve community welfare and reduce rural poverty.

Methods This study aims to analyze the empowerment of rice farmers through the Asset Based Community Development (ABCD) approach in Burneh District using a qualitative descriptive method. Data were collected through observation, in-depth interviews, and documentation, then analyzed using the Miles Huberman model.

Results The findings show that farmer empowerment has been implemented through five ABCD stages: discovery (identifying local assets), dream (formulating a shared vision), design (program planning), define (strengthening community assets and participation), and destiny (sustainable implementation). The process is supported by government assistance, agricultural extension, and institutional strengthening. However, challenges remain in asset optimization, technology adaptation, and improving farmer capacity.

Conclusion Based on these conditions, it can be concluded that the empowerment process has been carried out by utilizing local potential owned by the community, both in the form of natural resources, farming experience, farmer group institutions, and social capital that has developed in the farmer environment.

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Keywords
Key words: Farmer Empowerment; Asset Based Community Development; Community Independence; Indonesia

Introduction

Poverty is a problem faced by nearly the entire world. According to data from the 2024 World Population Review, Indonesia is listed as one of the poorest countries in the world out of the 100 countries surveyed. The causes of poverty can be grouped into four categories: 1) Infrastructure and Facilities, 2) Natural Resources and Technology, 3) Human Resources, and 4) Institutions and Organizations. Poverty issues can be categorized into several types, including absolute poverty, relative poverty, vulnerability to poverty, and poverty caused by geography (rural and urban poverty) (Nuryanto et al., 2022).

In response to these conditions, the government is also prioritizing youth development, women's empowerment, and social protection for vulnerable groups to ensure inclusive and equitable development. Prabowo Subianto's policy direction regarding the National Medium-Term Development Plan (RPJMN) positions human resource development as the cornerstone of Indonesia's transformation into a developed nation. This policy is oriented toward strengthening human capital from early childhood through working age through an integrated approach that combines improved nutrition, education, health, and the enhancement of job skills. The Prabowo administration believes that economic progress and national resilience depend heavily on a population that is healthy, educated, disciplined, and productive; therefore, investment in human capital is prioritized on par with physical infrastructure development (Bappenas, 2025; Perpres Nomor 12 Tahun 2025 Tentang Rencana Pembangunan Jangka Menengah Nasional Tahun 2025-2029, 2025).

Based on data published by the Central Statistics Agency or BPS (2025), it is evident that Indonesia's Human Development Index (HDI) showed a consistent upward trend during the 2020–2025 period. In 2020, the HDI stood at 72.81, then rose to 73.16 in 2021 and increased further to 73.77 in 2022. The upward trend continued in 2023, reaching 74.39, and 75.02 in 2024. In 2025, the HDI reached 75.9, the highest value in that period. This trend reflects continuous improvement in the key dimensions of human development: health, education, and a decent standard of living. The relatively stable annual increase indicates that the quality of life for the population is steadily improving in terms of access to basic services, increased years of schooling, and rising purchasing power.

Meanwhile, the state of human resources in East Java reflects an improvement in the quality of life and the overall capacity of the population, although challenges related to regional disparities remain. According to data from the Central Statistics Agency, East Java's Human Development Index (HDI) has continued to rise year after year: from approximately 73.48 in 2021, 74.05 in 2022, 74.65 in 2023, 75.35 in 2024, to 76.13 in 2025, indicating positive progress in the dimensions of a long and healthy life, education, and a decent standard of living. The East Java Governor's policy direction in addressing the condition of human capital quality which continues to improve but still exhibits disparities across regions and is linked to poverty is focused on three main strategies: equitable human capital development, strengthening community economic resilience, and reducing development gaps at the regency/city level. These policies are designed to ensure that improvements in the HDI are not only concentrated in urban areas but also extend to rural communities and underdeveloped regions that still face challenges related to institutional capacity, access to basic services, and opportunities for productive employment (BPS Jawa Timur, 2025b; PERATURAN DAERAH PROVINSI JAWA TIMUR NOMOR 3 TAHUN 2025 TENTANG

RENCANA PEMBANGUNAN JANGKA MENENGAH DAERAH TAHUN 2025-2029, 2025).

Given the steadily improving quality of human resources, which is still accompanied by rural poverty, the government has undertaken various efforts to empower farmers as a strategy to improve community welfare and reduce structural poverty. Farmers are the primary target group because the majority of the poor live in rural areas and depend on the agricultural sector for their livelihoods. Therefore, empowerment efforts are focused on increasing production capacity, strengthening economic access, and protecting farming businesses so that farmers' incomes can grow sustainably. Furthermore, the government has expanded the role of agricultural extension workers in providing education on modern cultivation techniques, post-harvest management, and farm business management. Farmers are also encouraged to utilize digital technologies such as weather information, online marketing, and technology-based planting systems to improve production efficiency and expand market access. The government is also promoting the diversification of farming operations so that farmers do not rely solely on a single commodity. The development of agricultural processing businesses, integrated livestock farming, and agritourism offers alternatives for increasing the value added of agricultural products. This diversification strengthens the economic resilience of farming families against the risks of crop failure and commodity price fluctuations (Desiana & Aprianingsih, 2017; Rokhani et al., 2021; Rosnita et al., 2017; Satria et al., 2025).

Based on data from the East Java Central Statistics Agency (BPS Jawa Timur, 2025a), It is known that, out of the 38 regencies and cities in East Java Province, Bangkalan Regency ranks 20th in terms of rice production capacity in 2025, with an estimated output of 223,789 metric tons and a rice crop productivity of 47.71 per hectare across a total harvested area of 46,903 hectares. Given these conditions, it is evident that Bangkalan Regency possesses significant agricultural potential as one of the agrarian regions on Madura Island, East Java. Furthermore, after assessing the rice production potential in Bangkalan Regency, the analysis of rice production was broken down to the subdistrict level. The data also reveals that Burneh Subdistrict is the largest rice supplier compared to other areas in Bangkalan Regency, with a projected production capacity of 38,800 metric tons of rice in 2025, followed by other areas such as Geger Subdistrict with 33,500 metric tons, Blega Subdistrict with 32,400 metric tons, Tanah Merah Subdistrict with 30,500 metric tons, and several other areas in Bangkalan Regency. This situation highlights the significant potential of Burneh Subdistrict as a rice-producing region, making it necessary to give it greater attention to preserve and develop its existing potential. Based on the background described above, the researcher was motivated to conduct a more in-depth analysis of rice farmer empowerment using an asset-based community development approach in Burneh Subdistrict, Bangkalan Regency.

A number of previous studies have employed the Asset-Based Community Development (ABCD) approach in community empowerment, emphasizing the identification, mobilization, and strengthening of local assets as the foundation for development. ABCD is a development approach that shifts the focus from identifying community deficiencies to recognizing and mobilizing local assets and capacities. Furthermore, the effectiveness of ABCD is greatly influenced by social relationships, trust, participation, and an institutional environment that supports community capacity building. In the context of the local economy, research has shown that an asset-based approach can promote sustainable

economic development through the utilization of individual, social, institutional, and physical assets, as well as community connectivity. In Indonesia, ABCD has been applied to empower rubber farmers by leveraging local potential to enhance community self-reliance, and there is potential for implementing ABCD in asset-based community empowerment within the context of tourism villages. More specific research also shows that the ABCD approach can be used to increase environmental awareness and the income of forest farmer groups by strengthening local resources. Meanwhile, other studies have examined the application of the asset-based approach in the development of social innovations in villages on Madura (Harrison et al., 2019; Kamelia & Pawhestri, 2021; Kammer-Kerwick et al., 2022; Kretzmann & McKnight, 1996; Mathie & Cunningham, 2003; Putra & Septiarti, 2026). Although these studies have demonstrated the relevance of the ABCD framework in community empowerment and the strengthening of local assets, there remains a limited number of studies that specifically analyze the process of empowering rice farmers by linking the five stages of the ABCD (discovery, dream, design, define, and destiny) proposed by Kretzmann & McKnight (1996) to changes in farmers' capacity, institutional strengthening, government support, and rice production trends within a major rice-producing region. This study addresses this gap by analyzing the empowerment of rice farmers in Burneh Subdistrict, Bangkalan Regency the region with the highest rice production in Bangkalan Regency thereby ensuring that the ABCD framework is not only understood as an asset-based empowerment approach but is also analyzed in terms of its relationship to the strengthening of farmers' capacity, self-reliance, local institutions, and the sustainable development of agricultural production potential.

Methods

This study employs a descriptive qualitative research method aimed at identifying and describing the empowerment of rice farmers based on the asset-based community development approach in Burneh Subdistrict, Bangkalan Regency (Creswell & Poth, 2018). The data collection technique involved conducting interviews with five respondents including government officials and farmers to generate primary data. Primary data were collected using purposive sampling, in which the informants in this study were individuals with in-depth understanding or expertise (expert sampling) regarding the research objectives. These included two government officials: the head of the Village Empowerment Division and the head of the Agriculture Division. Meanwhile, the researcher also gathered research information from three farmers (Miles & Huberman, 1994).

Results and Discussion

a. Discovery

Based on the overall results of interviews conducted with local government officials, technical agencies, extension workers, and the farming community, it is evident that the process of empowering rice farmers in Burneh Subdistrict has shown significant progress—in terms of institutional development, community capacity, and agricultural production. From the initial identification stage, the government, together with relevant agencies, has sought to map the potential and actual conditions of the village community through various approaches, ranging from village data collection and the strengthening of farmer groups to the development of village economic institutions through village-owned enterprises (BUMDes).

The results of the identification process indicate that the study area possesses considerable agricultural potential, supported by fertile soil, farming expertise passed down through generations, and a high level of community engagement in agricultural activities. However, despite this potential, various fundamental issues still exist in the field, such as pest infestations, limited irrigation, relatively small plot sizes, and the need to improve some farmers' capacity to adopt agricultural innovations. These conditions indicate that while the community possesses substantial assets, these have not yet been fully supported by optimal technical assistance and infrastructure.

b. Dream

In terms of planning and development direction, the interview results indicate alignment between the government's vision and the expectations of the farming community. Local governments, through relevant agencies, are focused on promoting the economic self-reliance of rural communities by strengthening the agricultural sector and local institutions. This aligns with farmers' hopes for increased crop yields, stable unhusked rice prices, and the sustainability of farming operations capable of meeting their families' needs. Interestingly, farmers' aspirations are no longer focused solely on short-term needs but are beginning to shift toward the development of more advanced and sustainable agricultural enterprises. Their hopes for the construction of dams, improved irrigation systems, facilities for drying crops, and post-harvest processing indicate that farmers are adopting a broader business perspective that extends beyond the production process alone.

c. Design

In terms of program planning, the interview results also show that the government has created opportunities for community participation through farmers' groups, village deliberations, and other development planning forums. Farmers' involvement in these forums indicates that the development model being implemented is shifting toward a participatory approach, where the community is not merely a beneficiary but is also engaged in articulating their needs and providing input regarding the programs to be implemented. This situation serves as a positive indicator that community empowerment is beginning to take shape through two-way communication between the government and the community. At the implementation level, various assistance programs have been carried out, ranging from the provision of seeds, fertilizers, and agricultural machinery to extension services, as well as efforts to strengthen the legal and institutional frameworks of farmers' groups and village-owned enterprises (BUMDes). The presence of agricultural extension workers is also considered to play a very important role, not only in providing technical assistance but also in helping farmers resolve administrative issues such as the registration of aid recipients and access to government programs.

d. Define

The impact of these various interventions is beginning to be felt tangibly by the farming community. Based on interview results, farmers acknowledge that there has been an increase in crop yields, improved production cost efficiency, and a shift in work practices from traditional systems toward the use of more modern agricultural technology. The use of agricultural machinery has helped accelerate the production process, reduce operating costs, and increase crop intensity. Some farmers have even begun to demonstrate the courage to develop their businesses more independently, including purchasing high-quality seeds and

agricultural equipment, and making production decisions without relying entirely on government assistance. This indicates that the empowerment process is beginning to successfully foster self-reliance, self-confidence, and an entrepreneurial mindset among farmers. Nevertheless, the interview findings also reveal that several challenges still require further attention, particularly regarding pest control, the sustainability of irrigation systems, the validity of data on aid recipients, as well as limitations in post-harvest facilities and market access.

Based on data on harvested area, rice production, and productivity for 2020–2026, it can be seen that the rice farming sector has experienced significant growth year over year. The harvested area shows a consistent upward trend, from 46,850 hectares in 2020 to 74,390 hectares in 2026. This increase reflects both the expansion of agricultural areas and the optimization of land used by communities for rice cultivation. The largest increase in harvested area occurred during the 2024–2025 period, rising from 51,100 hectares to 65,858 hectares. This trend indicates a push for agricultural sector development, driven by government programs, increased planting intensity, and greater community participation in rice farming activities.

e. Destiny

In line with the increase in harvested area, rice production has also seen a significant rise. In 2020, rice production stood at 149,920 metric tons, then gradually increased to reach 230,021 metric tons in 2026. This increase in production demonstrates that the agricultural sector remains one of the strategic sectors capable of supporting the local economy. The rise in rice production also reflects support for agricultural activities, such as the use of high-yield seeds, assistance with production inputs, the development of agricultural infrastructure, and increased farming activities by farmers.

However, when viewed from the perspective of productivity levels, a different pattern emerges. During the 2020–2024 period, rice productivity increased from 3.20 to 3.36. This indicates that yields per hectare have improved, leading to greater efficiency in agricultural land management. This increase in productivity may be attributed to the use of agricultural technology, extension services for farmers, the use of better fertilizers and seeds, and farmers' improved ability to manage their farming operations.

However, from 2025 to 2026, productivity actually declined to 3.12 and then to 3.09. This decline indicates that the increase in production was driven more by an expansion in harvested area than by an increase in yield per hectare. This situation may suggest that the expansion of agricultural land has not been fully offset by optimal land management practices. In addition, the decline in productivity may also be influenced by various factors, such as limitations in agricultural technology, uneven irrigation quality, climate change, pest infestations, and the continued dominance of traditional farming systems used by farmers.

From the perspective of community empowerment based on Asset-Based Community Development (ABCD), the data indicate that the region possesses significant agricultural assets, including farmland, a farming workforce, and a steadily increasing potential for rice production. However, this potential still needs to be strengthened through more effective community empowerment, particularly by enhancing the capacity of farmers' human resources, strengthening farmer group institutions, utilizing agricultural technology, and optimizing the local assets owned by the community. Thus, the ABCD approach is relevant

because it encourages the community to leverage local strengths and potential in a participatory manner to sustainably improve farmers' productivity and well-being (Harrison et al., 2019; Kammer-Kerwick et al., 2022; Kretzmann & McKnight, 1996).

When analyzed more deeply using the Asset-Based Community Development (ABCD) approach, the data on the increase in rice harvest area and production indicate that farming communities actually possess sufficiently strong community assets to be developed. The ABCD approach views communities not as weak groups dependent on aid, but as communities with potential, capabilities, and resources that can be optimized to achieve self-reliance and well-being. In the context of rice farming, the increase in harvested area to 74,390 hectares by 2026 indicates the presence of substantial physical assets in the form of agricultural land with great potential for sustainable development.

Conclusion

Based on the results of a study on the empowerment of rice farmers through the Asset-Based Community Development (ABCD) approach in Burneh Subdistrict, it can be concluded that the empowerment process has been carried out by leveraging the local potential of the community, including natural resources, farming experience, farmer group institutions, and the social capital that has developed within the farming community. Through the five stages of ABCD (discovery, dream, design, define, and destiny), the community has begun to identify its assets, build a shared vision, develop participatory plans, mobilize community strengths, and implement sustainable empowerment programs. Government support through extension services, institutional strengthening, and assistance with agricultural infrastructure has further reinforced this process. However, several challenges remain, such as limited access to technology, working capital, the strengthening of farmers' organizations, and the optimization of community asset management.

Based on the research findings, the following recommendations can be made: local governments should increase policy support and implement farmer empowerment programs based on local potential to ensure the sustainability of these programs. The Department of Agriculture should expand technical assistance, provide training on agricultural innovations, and promote the use of modern technology to boost farmers' productivity. Farmer groups should strengthen their institutional capacity, enhance cooperation among members, and optimize the use of community assets to support economic self-reliance. For the farming community, active participation in every empowerment program must be increased so that local potential can be utilized to the fullest and in a sustainable manner. For future researchers, this study can be expanded with a more specific focus, such as the effectiveness of agricultural technologies, the strengthening of village-owned enterprises (BUMDes), or the economic impact of community-based farmer empowerment.

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