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Women's Empowerment to Support Public Health and Poverty Reduction as Community Development (Herbaman Program) by PT Perusahaan Gas Negara (Sales and Operation Region III) in Tambak Kalisogo Village, East Java

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abstract

Efforts to reduction poverty and reduce social inequality in Indonesia, especially in East Java, still face major challenges, such as the high level of poverty that has an impact on public health. In Tambak Kalisogo Village, Sidoarjo, the establishment of the Family Medicinal Plants Self-Help Group (Asman Toga) by the local government and the support of PT Perusahaan Gas Negara through the HERBAMAN programme aims to improve health and economic welfare through women's empowerment. This qualitative study used purposive sampling to understand the impact of the programme on family health and economy. The results show that the HERBAMAN programme succeeded in increasing household income, reducing fire risk, and improving the environment. This success was supported by the co-operation of various parties, showing that community synergy and innovation can bring sustainable positive change.

***K*eywords: Women Empowerment, Poverty Reduction, Public Health, Herbaman Programme**

INTRODUCTION

Efforts to alleviate poverty and reduce social inequalities among people are among the biggest challenges faced by developing countries around the world. This is particularly relevant for countries in the Southeast Asian region, as of the eleven countries in the

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region, only Singapore has made it into the developed country category, while the other ten countries, including Indonesia, are still in the developing country category. According to a report published by the International Monetary Fund in 2023, this situation highlights the need for more intensive efforts to improve social and economic welfare in the region (International Monetary Fund, 2023).

The number of people in the poor category in Indonesia has recorded a decline over time. However, according to data released by the Central Statistics Agency (BPS) in March 2023, not all provinces in Indonesia experienced a decrease in the poverty percentage. The report entitled Poverty Profile in Indonesia March 2023, which was published in July last year, revealed that the number of poor people in Indonesia currently stands at 25.90 million (Statistics Indonesia, 2023).

In line with the previously mentioned data, the Ministry of National Development Planning/National Development Planning Agency (Bappenas) in 2023 also stated that until now there are still 16 out of 38 provinces in Indonesia that have relatively high poverty rates. For example, on the island of Java, there are still three provinces that fall into the category of having the highest poverty rate. One of these provinces is East Java, which ranks second as the region with the highest poverty rate in Indonesia, particularly in Java Island, with a poverty percentage that ranges from 8.50 per cent to 8.90 per cent. This data shows that despite progress in poverty alleviation in some regions, there are still disparities among provinces in terms of poverty reduction as well as significant challenges to be faced in reducing poverty rates, especially in areas with large populations such as Java Island (National Development Planning Agency, 2023).

East Java, which was previously mentioned as one of the provinces with the highest poverty rate in Indonesia, is home to 38 municipalities and districts consisting of 29 districts and 9 cities, with 15 of the highest poverty rates in East Java, one of which is Sidoarjo (Badan Pusat Statistik Jawa Timur, 2023). The high level of poverty in the region has an impact on public health conditions that are also threatened. This is evident from the disease diagnosis data in the Kalisogo Tambak Village area, as follows:

Disease Diagnosis	Number of Cases
Myalgia	957 People
Ispa	288 People
Hypertension	279 People
Diabetes Militus	156 People
Gastritis	153 People

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Dermatitis	128 People
Capalgia	92 People
Urticaria	77 People
Diarrhoea	76 People
Asthma	66 People

Source: Posbindu and Posyandu Elderly Data Tambak Kalisogo Village Year 2022

In an effort to improve the health and welfare of the community, the government of Sidoarjo Regency, East Java, through the Health Office, instructed the formation of Asman Toga (Independent Care of Family Medicinal Plants) groups in each village with women as the driving force. Minister of Health Regulation No. 9/2016 on the Development of Traditional Health through Independent Care Utilisation of TOGA and Skills states that the implementation of independent care in the community needs to be carried out in stages and continuously. The development of traditional health care through the use of family medicinal plants and skills is carried out jointly between cross-ministerial programmes and cross-sector ministries in accordance with their respective roles, duties and functions through the assessment of traditional health care groups, including by the PKK Movement Team.

One of the villages that successfully implemented the programme in Tambak Kalisogo Village called the Asman Seger Waras Group, formed on 28 December 2022. This group was formalised by Decree of the Head of Tambak Kalisogo Village, Jabon Sub-district, Sidoarjo Regency No. 10 of 2023. This decree contains the establishment of the Independent Care Group Utilisation of the Seger Waras Family Medicine Garden and Acupressure. The sustainability of the programme is supported by PT Perusahaan Gas Negara SOR III (Sales and Operation Region III) as a form of corporate social responsibility through community empowerment under the name HERBAMAN (Herbal Independent Care) programme.

Based on the above problems, this research will elaborate more deeply on public health and poverty alleviation in Tambak Kalisogo Village and its relation to women's empowerment as the main supporting factor.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Women's empowerment, which is the main object of this research, is the process by which women who previously did not have the ability to make choices and decisions in life, eventually acquire this ability. Empowerment involves the ability to choose differently, using aspects of power, where initially powerless, then become empowered to make many choices in life. Because women and men have different abilities to choose,

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women need alternative abilities. Women need a transformation that allows them to demonstrate decision-making ability, which refers to their ability to act on life choices with motivation and purpose, and against the patriarchal structure that is often portrayed in life (Kabeer, 2005: 13-15).

One of the goals of women's empowerment is to improve the status and role of women in national development, as well as the quality of the role and independence of women's organisations. Daulay revealed that women's empowerment programmes in Indonesia have actually started since 1978. Over time, these efforts have resulted in real improvements in various aspects, such as the condition, degree, and quality of life of women in strategic sectors such as education, employment, economy, health, and participation in family planning programmes (Kuncoro & Kadar, 2016).

There is a link between women and poverty conditions, where patriarchal culture indirectly restricts women, and injustice and inequality further link women's identity with poverty. Women's and men's experiences of poverty are different, with women lagging far behind men in accessing the economic resources that are essential to eliminating inequities in society. Efforts to reduce poverty must promote women's participation and well-being. If women are not targeted in poverty alleviation programmes, these programmes will not effectively reach the majority of women who have limited access to public spaces. The World Health Organisation (WHO) 2018, supports women's empowerment as an important effort to improve public health, which affects the human development of each country.

Poverty affects health in a variety of ways, undermining individual capabilities, opportunities and possibilities. Evidence from around the world shows the link between poverty and health. Poor family health results in limited access to education and careers, which in turn makes it difficult for them to secure good jobs and support their families in the future (Müller, O., & Krawinkel, M., 2005).

Reduction poverty is a major development challenge that involves multiple dimensions, ranging from local, national, to global challenges. Because of this complexity, effective assistance programmes should focus on productive economic development. One way to do this is by providing unsecured business capital assistance to the poor, as well as providing skills training that can foster entrepreneurship and self-reliance. With this approach, people can gradually reduce their dependence on government assistance (Atma Ras, 2013).

Poverty cannot be separated from the factors that cause it, which are divided into two aspects: internal and external. In an effort to overcome poverty, the motivation and work ethic of individuals is needed so that they strive to get out of poverty. Alleviating poverty also requires synergistic cooperation between the government and the community. Poverty alleviation cannot be done only through a separate sectoral

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approach, but must be done comprehensively by involving various elements, including the government, related institutions, and the community as the subject and object of change. According to the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UNESCAP), poverty reduction strategies include handling money poverty, economic, social, and cultural access, as well as access to power and information (Yulianto, 2005).

Chambers (1984, p. 109) identifies poverty as an integrated concept with five dimensions:

1. Poverty (Proverty): A condition in which income does not meet basic needs, applicable to both the unemployed and low-income earners.
2. Powerlessness: Low income reduces social power, affecting the ability to obtain justice and the right to a decent life.
3. Vulnerability (State of Emergency): Poor people are unable to cope with emergency situations that require income allocation, such as natural disasters or high health costs.
4. Dependency: Limited income and social power lead to high dependency on the assistance of others to fulfil income needs.
5. Isolation: Remote locations keep poor people away from economic centres and welfare facilities, lowering their standard of living.

Based on the literature study above, it can be seen that women's empowerment is one of the keys to overcoming poverty and improving public health and that joint efforts from various parties are needed to realise women's empowerment.

RESEARCH METHOD

Based on the context of the problem and the research objectives, which aim to provide an overview of women's empowerment programmes that have an impact on public health and poverty alleviation in Tambak Kalisogo Village, Jabon, Sidoarjo. This research uses a qualitative approach. According to Denzin and Lincoln (2005), qualitative research is a process for understanding social phenomena in depth through direct interaction with research participants. This approach involves flexible and reflective data analysis, using a variety of techniques appropriate to the research context. The aim of qualitative research is to gather new data and insights, with the focus evolving gradually throughout the research. The advantages of this flexible approach allow the researcher to narrow the focus of the research as the data is accumulated and analysed. In qualitative research, the main focus is on understanding social processes and cases by emphasising interpretation, which is how individuals create social understanding and meaning. Unlike

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quantitative research, qualitative research does not use variables, test hypotheses, or convert social life into numbers (Neuman, 2014).

The determination of informants in this study uses non-probability sampling techniques, where the researcher does not need to determine the sample size at the beginning and has limited knowledge about the sample population. To achieve the research objectives and consider the situation and needs during the research process, purposive sampling method was applied. According to Neuman (2014), purposive sampling is part of non-probability sampling. This technique allows researchers to select informants based on certain considerations and objectives. With purposive sampling, researchers can select informants who have knowledge or experience relevant to the issue under study, or who represent certain groups relevant to the research question. This allows the researcher to gain insights and perspectives that suit the research needs.

This research followed a multi-stage process according to the data analysis guidelines described by Creswell (2012). The analysis process began by identifying two types of data: text data such as interview transcripts, and visual data such as images or photographs. After that, the data was sorted and analysed by creating codes as markers, which were then used to summarise the information in the form of tables, diagrams, or discussion sections.

RESULT

Women's empowerment through the Seger Waras Self-Help Group initially emerged as a response to the increasing number of illnesses in Tambak Kalisogo Village, such as Myalgia, Dermatitis, and Stunting in children, which occurred alongside the exploitation of land for industry. This exploitation causes a decline in the quality of soil, water, and air around Tambak Kalisogo village. This programme is based on several strategic issues faced by the village community, such as the uncontrolled growth of wild plants, the risk of fire in the dry season, and the untapped potential of nature. In addition, the high number of lightning strikes in East Java, especially in Sidoarjo Regency, also increases the risk of fire. Tambak Kalisogo village, which is close to the Lapindo mudflow site, has experienced an increase in ambient temperature, which is a major concern. This increased heat can exacerbate fire risk, making wild plant management an urgent priority. The village has abundant natural resources, including a variety of plants that can be processed into high-value products, but many of these plants grow wild and unmanaged, disrupting the aesthetics of the village and increasing the risk of fire.

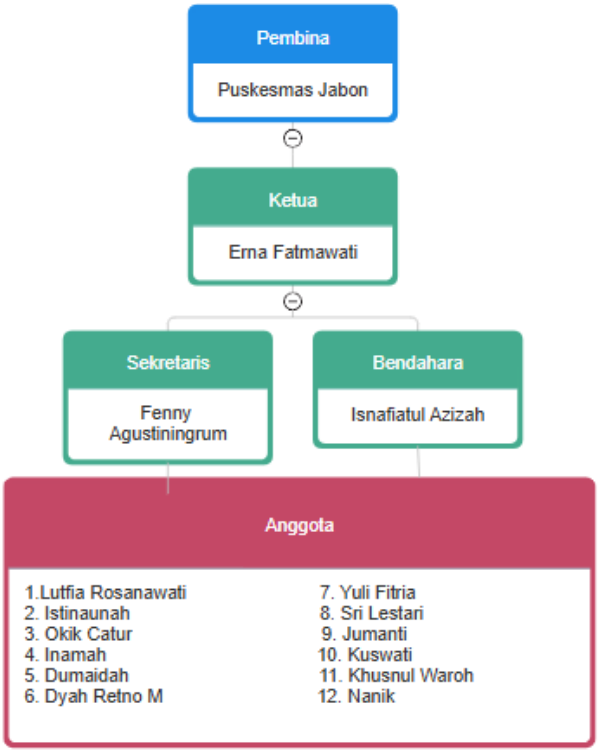
The HERBAMAN programme aims to transform wild, neglected plants into useful resources through the planting and processing of family medicinal plants (TOGA). Some

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of the TOGA plants include; ginger, turmeric, lemongrass, as well as plants that are widely available in Tambak Kalisogo Village, namely turi flowers and moringa leaves. With an innovative approach, the programme not only aims to reduce the risk of fire and improve the aesthetics of the village environment, but also to empower the local community through improved skills and economic opportunities. The main targets of the programme are housewives who previously had no income and relied solely on their husbands' small incomes. With active involvement in the programme, housewives are expected to earn additional income and improve their family's welfare.

Member Structure



Source: ASMAN 2023 group profile

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Source: ASMAN 2023 group report

TOGA plants were chosen as a form of community resilience in terms of health that can be resold to improve the economy. Family Medicinal Plants (TOGA) are useful plants grown in the home yard by families to fulfil the need for traditional medicines that can be produced by themselves. TOGA, which stands for Family Medicinal Garden, serves as a source of medicine while providing aesthetic value to the garden. TOGA supports preventive (disease prevention), promotive (health improvement), curative (disease cure), and rehabilitative (health recovery) health efforts. In addition, TOGA also contributes to family welfare by improving nutritional status, increasing family income, improving environmental health, and preserving medicinal plants and local culture (TOGA Handbook, Ministry of Agriculture, 2015).

Through the independent use of herbal plants, the HERBAMAN programme is expected to improve the welfare of rural communities, create high-value products, and promote environmental sustainability. With this background, the main objective of the HERBAMAN programme is to create a sustainable solution that can solve environmental and social problems in Tambak Kalisogo Village, as well as utilise local potential to improve the economic welfare of the community. The programme's objectives include community empowerment through training and mentoring, improving the quality of the village environment, and developing herbal products that have high economic value.

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The HERBAMAN programme in Tambak Kalisogo Village has shown significant progress over the past two years. Starting with a solid initiation phase, the programme continues to grow and produce various useful innovations. One of the key breakthroughs lies in the transformation of wild plants into products of economic and health value. This approach not only improves the welfare of village communities (groups), but also contributes to fire risk reduction and improved village aesthetics. For example, the processing of ginger, turmeric, lemongrass (empon-empon) into herbal drinks and kebang turi into kembang turi chips. Entering the stabilisation phase, the HERBAMAN Programme continues to spur innovation through optimising production processes and product diversification. This is done by establishing partnerships with regional markets and going online to expand the reach of herbal products. Community empowerment is an important aspect by applying an integrated approach. Each individual in the village is encouraged to be not only a participant, but also an active stakeholder in all aspects of the programme. This has proven to be one of the most impactful innovations, as it fosters a sense of ownership and responsibility for the success of the programme. Education and training are key pillars in the HERBAMAN Programme's efforts. Villagers are equipped with the knowledge and skills needed to manage the herb garden independently and effectively. The programme's innovation is not only limited to product development, but also to an inclusive and sustainable learning process for the entire community. Thus, the HERBAMAN Programme is not just about producing products, but also about creating sustainable social and economic change for Tambak Kalisogo Village.

The journey of the HERBAMAN Programme shows how the synergy between innovation and community spirit can have a positive impact on the progress of the village and the welfare of its people. The success of this programme is also supported by the support of various stakeholders in Tambak Kalisogo Village, including the support of the Tambak Kalisogo Village Government, the Asman toga group, the Sidoarjo Regency Environment and Forestry Service, and PT PGN Tbk - SOR III as a supporter of programme implementation. With stronger stakeholder support and continuous innovation, the HERBAMAN Programme aims to continue creating sustainable positive change for Tambak Kalisogo Village, turning environmental challenges into meaningful economic and health opportunities.

In terms of health, the HERBAMAN programme supports the use of herbal plants into processed herbal drinks intended for the elderly in Tambak Kalisogo village by providing herbal drinks during elderly posyandu activities. Then this herbal plant is also processed into PMT food for children under five and those affected by stunting by processing it into nuggets made from TOGA plants or herbs so that the nutrition of these children under five has improved so that from 27 children in Kalisogo affected by stunting now decreased to 22 children. Until now, the ASMAN Group continues to strive to reduce the stunting rate.

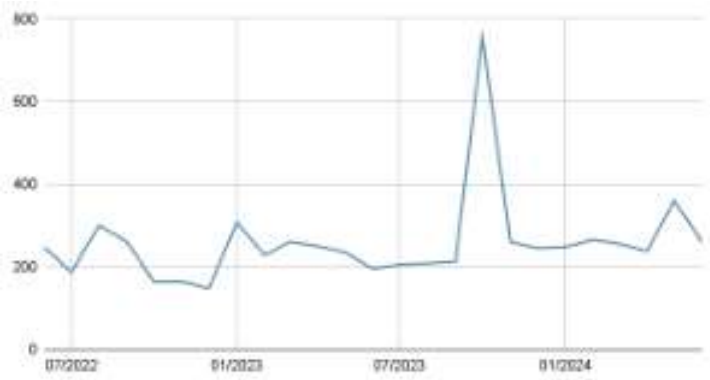
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Source: ASMAN 2023 group report

Tambak Kalisogo Village had various social and economic problems, such as high poverty rates and income inequality, before the presence of PT PGN Tbk - SOR III - Kalisogo Station's Environmental Social Responsibility Programme (CSR). Many housewives do not have their own income and depend on their husband's limited income. The presence of untended wild plants also increases the risk of fire and worsens the aesthetics of the village. However, with the implementation of the CSR programme, the village underwent a significant transformation. The HERBAMAN programme with the development of the ASMAN Group successfully transformed wild plants into economically valuable products, such as herbs and processed foods, which increased the income of the local community. Now, members of the ASMAN Group, especially housewives, have managed to receive additional income with an average of IDR 258,000 per month, from initially having no income. This in turn has improved the family economy. Below is a graph of the income of the group from its inception (June, 2022) to the present (June, 2024):



Source: ASMAN 2023 group report

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This CSR programme is an inclusive programme that involves the active participation of various groups, especially women. They all play a role in the cultivation, processing and marketing of herbal products, ensuring equitable distribution of economic benefits. This involvement of various groups as stakeholders not only provides easier economic access, but also strengthens the community with a sense of shared responsibility for the success of the programme. The benefits of this programme go beyond income generation.

The programme has created significant multiplier effects, such as increased environmental awareness, new skills training, and reduced fire risk through wild plant management. The impact of the CSR programme extends throughout Tambak Kalisogo Village, with direct and indirect beneficiaries increasing from 10 fostered members to 15 fostered members within 2 years of programme implementation. The programme contributes significantly to the achievement of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) targets, specifically SDG 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth) and SDG 12 (Responsible Consumption and Production).

By providing new economic opportunities and promoting sustainable organic farming practices, the programme supports inclusive and sustainable local economic growth. In addition, the use of former landfill land as a TOGA garden also helps mitigate climate change by reducing carbon emissions and improving soil conditions. Support from the Sidoarjo Regency Environmental Agency in the form of a permit to use the former landfill land for TOGA development demonstrates the synergy between the CSR programme and climate change mitigation efforts. The CSR programme of PT PGN Tbk - SOR III - Kalisogo Station has shown how synergy between the company, government, and community can bring positive changes to the village and its people. This programme is a witness and an opportunity for the community to be able to turn problems and disadvantages into a glimmer of hope to achieve a better life.





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Sumber: Laporan kelompok ASMAN 2023

DISCUSSION

Poverty reduction

Efforts to alleviate poverty and reduce social inequality in Indonesia, especially in Tambak Kalisogo Village, demonstrate the importance of planned and sustainable interventions. Data from the Central Statistics Agency (BPS) and the Ministry of National Development Planning/National Development Planning Agency (Bappenas) show that poverty remains a serious problem in many regions, including in East Java province, particularly in Sidoarjo District. The high poverty rate in this area indicates an urgent need for programmes that can help improve community welfare. Through PT Perusahaan Gas Negara SOR III HERBAMAN's empowerment programme, it is able to provide opportunities for housewives to earn additional income from processing herbs into food and drinks.

Women's empowerment

Based on interviews conducted by researchers, the HERBAMAN programme initiated by PT Perusahaan Gas Negara (PGN) through corporate social responsibility (CSR) is a clear example of how collaboration between companies, government, and communities can produce significant changes. The programme combines the use of

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family medicinal plants (TOGA) with women's empowerment. Women's empowerment is identified as one of the keys to alleviating poverty and improving community health.

This research shows that women's empowerment has a significant positive impact. In the HERBAMAN programme, housewives in Tambak Kalisogo Village are actively involved, which not only increases their income but also has a direct impact on family welfare. An integrative approach involving skills training and community empowerment has shown positive results.

Public Health

Minister of Health Regulation No. 9/2016 on the Development of Traditional Health through Independent Care Utilisation of TOGA and Skills states that the implementation of independent care in the community needs to be guided in a tiered and sustainable manner. The HERBAMAN programme focuses not only on economic aspects but also on health and the environment. The use of herbal plants as a preventive and promotive health solution shows that public health can be improved through a community-based traditional approach. The HERBAMAN programme supports the use of herbal plants into processed herbal drinks intended for the elderly in Tambak Kalisogo village by providing herbal drinks during elderly posyandu activities. Then this herbal plant is also processed into PMT food for children under five and those affected by stunting by processing it into nuggets made from TOGA plants or herbs so that the nutrition of these children under five has improved so that from 27 children in Kalisogo affected by stunting now decreased to 22 children.

CONCLUSION

This research highlights efforts to alleviate poverty and reduce social inequality in Indonesia, particularly in Tambak Kalisogo Village, East Java. Data shows that poverty is still a serious problem in many areas, including Sidoarjo. The high poverty rate in this area indicates the need for planned and sustainable interventions. The HERBAMAN programme, initiated by PT Perusahaan Gas Negara (PGN) through its corporate social responsibility (CSR) programme, is an example of collaboration between the company, government and community that has resulted in significant change. The programme utilises family medicinal plants (TOGA) and empowers women as the key to alleviating poverty and improving community health.

Empowering women through the HERBAMAN programme has had a significant positive impact. Housewives in Tambak Kalisogo Village earn additional income from

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processing herbs into food and drinks. In addition, the programme also helps to improve the quality of the village environment and reduce the risk of fire. With support from various parties, including the government and other stakeholders, the HERBAMAN programme has successfully transformed environmental and social challenges into meaningful economic opportunities. This programme demonstrates how the synergy between innovation and community spirit can have a positive impact on the progress of the village and the welfare of its people.

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