The Role of the Sawangan Organic Rice Farmers Association in Increasing the Economic Value of Organic Rice: Case Study in Sawangan, Magelang

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Abstract. The role of the Sawangan Organic Rice Farmers Association in increasing the economic value of organic rice is an effort to make farmers more empowered. This study aimed to analyze the Sawangan Organic Rice Farmers Association's role in empowering organic rice farmers in the Sawangan sub-district, Magelang District. The research method is qualitative with a case study approach. Data collection was done by using observation, in-depth interviews, and documentation. Informants as data sources were determined by purposive sampling. The results of this study indicated that the Sawangan Organic Rice Farmers Association, as a facilitator, had carried out various essential roles in empowering organic rice farmers. Empowerment was carried out through education by delivering marketing information and technical guidance on post-harvest processing, the role of facilitation in helping provide convenience, the role of advocacy, and the role of monitoring and evaluation. The role played by the Sawangan Organic Rice Farmers Association encourages changes in increasing the economic value of organic rice.

Keywords: role, association, organic rice

1. Introduction

Agriculture has a strategic role in the national economy and meets the food availability for the Indonesian people [1]. Organic agriculture is a sustainable agricultural program to meet food availability without using synthetic chemicals. One of the potentials of organic agriculture in Indonesia is in Sawangan District, Magelang Regency, Central Java Province. The location of Sawangan Subdistrict, which is at the foot of Mount Merapi, provides natural resource benefits to farmers in Sawangan District to carry out organic rice farming. Organic rice farming in Sawangan Subdistrict has been initiated in the 1970s by pioneer farmers and began to develop during the "Go Organic" program in 2010.

Organic farming's potential and opportunities are quite enormous and still have obstacles in various aspects, including post-harvest and product marketing [2]. Organic rice farmers in Sawangan District also experience marketing constraints and the selling price of organic rice products. Organic rice farmers do not have a particular market, so organic rice products are made to intermediaries at low prices. Organic attributes with health considerations as added value have not been able to increase farmers’ income. One of the efforts to overcome this problem requires the role of farmer institutions as facilitators in supporting farmers’ interests. The role of the Sawangan Organic Rice Farmers Association in
empowering organic rice farmers is expected to encourage the growth and development of productive businesses. It can increase the competitiveness and bargaining position of organic rice products, thereby increasing farmers' income. This study aimed to analyze the Sawangan Organic Rice Farmers Association's role in empowering organic rice farmers in the Sawangan sub-district, Magelang District.

2. Methods
The method used in this research was qualitative through a case study approach to find out the problem of the object of research in depth [3]. Informants were determined by purposive sampling, namely the determination of informants with specific objectives. The informants were the Chairman of the Sawangan Organic Rice Farmers Association and the Chairman of the Association of Farmer Groups. Data collection was carried out by observation, in-depth interviews, and documentation [4]. Data analysis techniques consisted of data reduction, data presentation, concluding, and verification [5]. The first stage in data analysis is to reduce. Data reduction is summarizing, focusing, and selecting important data. In this research, the data obtained from informants was summarized and focused on important things based on the research's problems and objectives. The second stage is the presentation of the data. Research data on the Sawangan Organic Rice Farmers Association's role that has been reduced, are presented in narrative form or written form. The third stage is drawing conclusions and verification. Initial conclusions are made based on the research's problems and objectives and then verified with strong evidence so that they become the findings of the research.

3. Results and Discussion
The results showed that the Sawangan Organic Paddy Farmers Association is a farmer institution whose members are organic rice farmers in Sawangan District. The Sawangan Organic Rice Farmers Association plays a role as a facilitator in empowering organic rice farmers. The functions of the Sawangan Organic Rice Farmers Association are:

3.1 The role of education.
The Sawangan Organic Rice Farmers Association carried out an educational role for organic rice farmers by providing information about post-harvest and marketing activities. The marketing information provided to farmers consists of price, rice varieties with high sales prospects, organic rice market, and selling grain from farmers. Information on the time of grain sale from farmers to the Organic Rice Farmers Association is essential information. It can affect the post-harvest handling process so that grain harvesting can be done on time. Besides, the characteristics of rice varieties are also necessary to know. Each feature of different rice varieties requires additional post-harvest handling. Mentik Wangi Susu was a typical rice variety of Sawangan District that requires special post-harvest handling, especially in the drying process. Drying should be done immediately after the Mentik Wangi Susu grain was harvested. The grain is dried in a certain thickness so that the rice is evenly milky and avoids the amount of broken rice. This information was conveyed so that farmers' organic rice products had high competitiveness and bargaining power.

"The information we conveyed varies, especially about the market and post-harvest grain. We shared market information about the types of rice sought after by buyers, the price of unhulled rice, the organic rice market everywhere, and the selling time of grain from farmers. Information on the timing of grain sales is essential to collect the grain on time because it had something to do with post-harvest handling. For example, the Mentik Wangi variety, after harvesting, it might be dried in the sun immediately, and the sun had to be thick, often turned around; otherwise, it won't be satiating, and many are crushed. " (Interview with the Chair of the Sawangan Organic Rice Farmers Association, 3 March 2020).

Apart from marketing information, the Sawangan Organic Rice Farmers Association also provided guidance on post-harvest handling for farmers who will become organic rice business actors. The direction provided covers the entire post-harvest handling process starting from storing grain, drying, rice production, sorting, grading, and packaging. The Organic Rice Farmers Association also facilitates
the marketing of organic rice for business farmers. Post-harvest handling guidance aimed to maintain quality to comply with the standards of the Organic Rice Farmers Association.

Mr. Ahmad Saleh conveyed the statement as Chairman of the Sawangan Organic Rice Farmers Association:

"We also conveyed to farmers, whoever farmers who want to become entrepreneurs are welcome. We guide it from storing it, unless it is automatic when using the oven, no need to train, grind, sieve, sort, we guide it until the packaging. Anyway, until the quality is the same as our standards. We would help with marketing; we can come with us. " (Interview with Mr. Ahmad Saleh, Chairman of the Sawangan Organic Rice Farmers Association, 3 March 2020)

3.2 The role of innovation / information dissemination
The Sawangan Organic Rice Farmers Association carried out the process of disseminating innovation and information through group meetings. The meeting was usually attended by representatives of the Association of Farmer Groups (Gapoktan) and members of the Farmers Group (Poktan). Besides, information was also conveyed through the use of the WhatsApp (WA) group social media. Information obtained by the management of the Association of Farmer Groups (Gapoktan) and the Farmers Group (Poktan) was then conveyed back to the farmers in their respective areas. This activity play a role played in disseminating innovation or information.

"The Sawangan Organic Rice Farmers Association (Gatos) had the WhatsApp (WA) group. Apart from meetings, usually if there is market information, prices were shared with the Gatos management; we would discuss it. Through the WhatsApp (WA) group, it's faster. Later, when the farmer group meeting or meetings with farmers living in the fields, we would convey the information." (Interview with the Chairman of the Association of Farmer Groups 'Tani Mulyo' on 12 June 2020)

3.3 Facilitation role
The Sawangan Organic Rice Farmers Association carried out its role in providing convenience to organic rice farmers. The facilitation role consists of:

3.3.1 Facilitating organic rice land certification
The Sawangan Organic Rice Farmers Association facilitated the process and the full financing of the independent certification activities for farmers' organic rice fields. Organic land certification costs a lot of money, but the Sawangan Organic Rice Farmers Association never involves farmers in providing a budget. Independent certification through the Seloliman Organic Certification Institute (LeSOS) has been carried out twice in 2016 and 2019. Organic certification is essential as proof of the legality of organic agricultural products. Besides, organic certification can also increase the competitiveness and bargaining position of organic rice products, so that farmers' income is relatively higher.

Mr. Ahmad Saleh conveyed the statement as Chairman of the Sawangan Organic Rice Farmers Association:

"We have to protect the new farmers, we have to help the farmers, but our role is not optimal either. So far, what we have done is land certification. It is essential for marketing because if there were no land certification, people would not believe whether our rice was organic or not. For the accreditation, we used Gatos' cash, even though the cost was high, up to tens of millions. Alhamdulillah, we can. We never ask the farmers for money for certification; we all bear it. " (Interview with Mr. Ahmad Saleh, Chairman of the Sawangan Organic Rice Farmers Association, 3 March 2020)

3.3.2 Facilitating marketing
Farmers who will sell organic paddy rice will be assisted in marketing. The Sawangan Organic Rice Farmers Association bought unhulled rice from organic rice farmers in Sawangan District. After establishing the Sawangan Organic Rice Farmers Association, the farmers had no problem selling organic rice paddy because each region had business actors who would buy organic rice grain. In the past, farmers had to find intermediaries to sell unhulled organic rice to other areas. After establishing
the Sawangan Organic Rice Farmers Association, farmers sold organic paddy grain directly to the Association (Gatos). The Sawangan Organic Rice Farmers Association provides market guarantees for organic rice farmers.

"If farmers want to deposit their grain, we help the market. We buy rice from farmers in Sawangan District. At least after the Gatos Association existed, farmers were not confused about selling unhulled rice because there were business actors in each region. For example, in Ngentak Hamlet, you were confused when you wanted to sell unhulled rice, looking for intermediaries to go to other areas. Now, no, farmers sell their unhulled rice directly to Gatos. That has helped the market too." (Interview with Mr. Ahmad Saleh, Chairman of the Sawangan Organic Rice Farmers Association, 3 March 2020)

3.3.3 Facilitating grain packaging and transportation
The Sawangan Organic Rice Farmers Association facilitated sacks as a means of packing grain for free. Farmers could pick up the bags before harvesting is done. If farmers used their sacks, they could ask for replacement sacks. Besides, the Sawangan Organic Rice Farmers Association facilitated the transportation of unhulled rice to the location by four-wheeled vehicles. The Sawangan Organic Rice Farmers Association fully bore transportation costs. If the farmers' transportation costs are borne, the farmers have to pay a fee of Rp. 50,000 to Rp. 100,000 depending on the distance from the location where the grain is collected. The Sawangan Organic Rice Farmers Association has helped reduce farmers' costs by facilitating grain packaging and grain transportation.

Mr. Ahmad Saleh conveyed the statement as Chairman of the Sawangan Organic Rice Farmers Association:

"Farmers who sell rice, we provide free sacks. No need to buy it at the shop. So if you want to harvest, farmers can take sacks here, or if farmers have bags, they can use bags from farmers first and then replace them. We also provide transportation for picking up the grain. We take the grain to the location, in the fields, or to the farmer's house. The fare is free, even though it is a farmer who brings it to Gatos, it costs around Rp. 50,000 to Rp. 100,000 depending on the distance from the location where the grain is collected." (Interview with Mr. Ahmad Saleh, Chairman of the Sawangan Organic Rice Farmers Association, 3 March 2020).

3.3.4 Facilitates relatively high prices
The price given by the Sawangan Organic Rice Farmers Association for the purchase of organic rice products was relatively higher than the market price. The price difference given to farmers was an added value of organic products. The somewhat higher price makes farmers' income increasing. In addition, the marketing process was more open than the slash system because it uses a weighing system.

The results of the interview with Mr. Ahmad Saleh, Chairman of the Sawangan Organic Rice Farmers Association:

"We buy unhulled rice from these farmers at a competitive price. That's the advantage of being organic. Although a little, there is definitely a difference between the price in the market. If you multiply the yield by a few quintals, it's not bad. Farmers' income has increased. " (Interview with Mr. Ahmad Saleh, Chairman of the Sawangan Organic Rice Farmers Association, 3 March 2020)

3.3.5 Facilitating organic rice seeds
Another facilitation role played by the Sawangan Organic Rice Farmers Association was to provide organic rice seeds. Farmers could get rice seeds quickly without having to pay. The Sawangan Organic Rice Farmers Association provided organic rice seeds for free to farmers who need them. This activity aimed to increase productivity and maintain grain quality. The excellent quality grain would get a high price. In addition, providing rice seeds for free aimed to maintain a strong relationship between farmers and the Sawangan Organic Rice Farmers Association.
The results of the interview with Mr. Ahmad Saleh, Chairman of the Sawangan Organic Rice Farmers Association:

"We give the seeds for free; farmers do not have to pay. We provide the seeds; there is a purpose. Apart from making the rice good's production and quality, the main goal is to make the relationship between Gatos and the farmers closer and more robust. " (Interview with Mr. Ahmad Saleh, Chairman of the Sawangan Organic Rice Farmers Association, 3 March 2020)

3.4 The role of advocacy
The advocacy role given by the Sawangan Organic Rice Farmers Association to organic rice farmers was pricing policies. The Sawangan Organic Rice Farmers Association was committed to protecting organic rice farmers, one of which is by providing a higher price. This commitment was based on organic rice farmers' contribution to supporting organic rice marketing activities by the Sawangan Organic Rice Farmers Association. The organic rice farmer's grain with IR 64 variety was purchased at a minimum price of Rp. 4,500, while the Mentik Wangi Susu is Rp. 5,000. This price is higher if the market price in general, the IR 64 variety is Rp 4,300, and the Mentik Wangi Susu is less than Rp. 5,000. The price difference provides added value to the income of organic rice farmers.

Based on the results of an interview with Mr. Ahmad Saleh, Chairman of the Sawangan Organic Rice Farmers Association:

"Farmers complement us; without them, our business activities will not be able to run; that's why we commit to protecting them by providing competitive prices. The price is higher than the price on the market. For example, the cost of IR 64 unhulled rice in the market is Rp. 4,300; we buy a minimum of Rp. 4,500 depending on the quality. We buy Mentik Wangi Susu for Rp. 5,000, while on the market, it's less than Rp. 5,000. " (Interview with Mr. Ahmad Saleh, Chairman of the Sawangan Organic Rice Farmers Association, 3 March 2020)

3.5 The role of monitoring and evaluation
The Sawangan Organic Rice Farmers Association monitored and evaluates prospective farmers in the organic rice business. Monitoring was carried out to assess the entire post-harvest rice handling process and assessing the quality of the rice produced. Monitoring and evaluation were carried out until the rice quality is by the Sawangan Organic Rice Farmers Association's quality standards.

This is based on an interview with Mr. Ahmad Saleh as the Chairman of the Sawangan Organic Rice Farmers Association:

"Yes, I guide farmers who want to join the business, because why? Later, if not instructed, we won't enter the spec even though we already have a market. So I continue to monitor everything; if it matches the quality, then I can walk alone. " (Interview on 3 March 2020)

The role of the Sawangan Organic Rice Farmers Association in empowerment activities refers to the opinion of [6]. This opinion states that facilitators as agents of change can play an educational role (education, dissemination of innovation, facilitation, consultation, advocacy, supervision, monitoring, and evaluation). The results showed that the Organic Rice Farmers Association's role was not optimal because it had not carried out its full educational role. However, this association's part can encourage changes in increasing the economic value of organic rice. The information conveyed by the Sawangan Organic Rice Farmers Association on marketing empowerment activities is supported by Lee's opinion in [7]. This opinion states that farmers need marketing materials about production planning advice and sales time, market information, marketing development practices, and group marketing.

4. Conclusion
The Sawangan Organic Rice Farmers Association played various vital roles as a facilitator in empowering organic rice farmers. Empowerment was carried out through the role of education as educators by delivering marketing information and post-harvest handling guidance. In addition, the Sawangan Organic Rice Farmers Association also played a role in disseminating information, a facilitating role in providing various facilities, an advocacy role, monitoring, and evaluation role. The
Sawangan Organic Rice Farmers Association as a forum for organic rice farmer associations in Sawangan District to increase the economic value of organic rice. Thus, organic rice products have high competitiveness and bargaining power to increase farmers’ income.

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