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# Coastal Community Economic Empowerment Strategy in Merauke Regency

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ABSTRACT

Community economic empowerment is an important approach to realize a balanced, developing and just economic structure, to realize a successful economic empowerment, community business capacity must become strong and independent, and in sync with community's best potential and product, in this paper is coastal community. The purpose of this study is how the main strategies and work programs that need to be taken to improve the economy of the community in Merauke Regency by optimally utilizing coastal community resources and knowing the inhibiting and supporting factors of empowerment. Qualitative research method with a SWOT analysis tool with a focus on data sources based on the results of interviews and discussions with the fisheries service and fisheries business actors. The results of the study explain that the increase in fisherman productivity has the highest weight value which is carried out by increasing the role of capital assistance and market intervention, verified by the efforts of coastal communities.

## 1. Introduction

The strategic target of empowerment expects a change in condition, well-being, or behavior because of the start of several programs or activities and related to the impact of a program<sup>[1]</sup>. Long-term impact strategic management covers the long term, by predicting long-term events and analyzing the potential impact of implementing a program. The empowerment requires a long-term strategy with a clear vision and mission to increase the independence and welfare of the community as part of development.

Empowerment manifests as a redistribution of power, between regions, classes, races, genders, or individuals<sup>[2]</sup>.

Community economic empowerment is seen as very important to realize a balanced, developing and just economic structure; grow and develop the community's business capacity to become a strong and independent business; increasing the role of the community in regional development, job creation, income distribution, economic growth, and alleviating people from poverty. Economic empowerment efforts that have been taken are to further empower community businesses to be more efficient,

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productive, and competitive, namely by creating a conducive business climate and business opportunities as wide as possible. In the context of fostering community business, it is necessary to develop partnership relationships in the form of mutually supportive and beneficial business linkages between large, medium, and small businesses and cooperatives to strengthen the economic structure. Community economic development is a people-oriented development activity with the condition that it touches aspects of justice, balance of natural resources, which are carried out specifically in ways that are in accordance with the capacities, norms, values, perceptions, and beliefs of local community members, where the principles resident participation is upheld<sup>[3]</sup>. The paradigm shift in governance from government to governance places the need for community participation in regulating and managing public affairs and interests in a better, legitimate, accountable, and effective way than without community participation. in the development process<sup>[4]</sup>. One strategy to generate active participation of individual community members is through a group approach<sup>[5]</sup>. Development aimed at community development will be easy to understand if it involves local agents through a forum called a group, because in carrying out various livelihood activities, everyone tends to group<sup>[6]</sup>. Community empowerment is a concept of economic development that encapsulates social values. This concept reflects the new paradigm of development, which is people centered, participatory, empowering, and sustainable<sup>[7]</sup>.

Economic growth is an increase in production capacity to achieve additional output, which is measured using the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and Gross Regional Domestic Product (GRDP) in a region. In general, economic growth is the process of increasing output per capita in the long-term referring to an increase in national or per capita income and output<sup>[8]</sup>. Balanced regional development is indicated by the existence of a level of balanced growth between regions in accordance with their capacity and development needs. Economic development does not mean that every region must have the same level of development or a uniform economic pattern. In simple terms, this means achieving the full capacity of regional development in accordance with the potential of the region. The development of the coastal potential of Merauke Regency has enormous potential in the fisheries sector having a beach length of more than 846.36 km, can produce a sustainable potential of 232,500 tons/year supported by Fish Landing Places (TPI) and Ocean Fishery Ports (PPS)<sup>[9]</sup>. The economic growth rate of Merauke Regency in 2018 was recorded at 8.11

percent and in 2019 it was 7.57 percent<sup>[10]</sup> which means a decrease of 0.54 percent, but higher than the Papua Province's economic growth rate of 6.3 percent<sup>[11]</sup>.

The results of the research strategy of coastal area management in Merauke Regency<sup>[12]</sup> found that local government management policies are still sectoral and less integrated, with the priority of management strategies on strengthening programs on community-based conservation. First, the creation of an atmosphere or climate that allows the community to develop. Second, improving the community's ability to build through various financial assistance, training, infrastructure, and facilities development, both physical and social, as well as institutional development in the regions. Third, the protection of the social structure of the community in the social system is the most important factor in implementing community empowerment, including the economic and political system<sup>[13]</sup>. The novelty of research on coastal community empowerment strategies is a SWOT analysis of community empowerment programs in accordance with existing potential, as well as supporting factors and inhibiting factors for empowerment programs. The purpose of this research is to formulate the main strategies and work programs that need to be taken to improve the economy of the people in Merauke Regency. It can also provide direction in the optimal and sustainable use of coastal community resources to increase and distribute community welfare in accordance with the vision of Merauke Regency to become the mainstay of intelligent and healthy humans, the gate of national food, the gate of prosperity and peace of mind of the archipelago.

## 2. Research Methods

This study uses a qualitative method through interviews with decision makers from the Merauke Regency Fishery Office, businessmen and fisherman community leaders. The research location is in Merauke Regency, Papua Province, which was chosen with the consideration that Merauke Regency is an area where most of the people work as fishermen. Region determination of the entire sub-district as the research area is carried out by considering the geographical characteristics of the area. Other considerations that are also used are the number of community business units, economic growth in form, contributions to the formation of GRDP and employment opportunities, as well as local government policies.

The focus of research is on community empowerment strategies by displaying the variables used, namely (1) internal factors in the form of strengths and weaknesses and (2) external factors in the form of opportunities and threats. Data analysis in this study uses a SWOT

(Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats) analysis model as a tool to determine whether aggressive, conservative, defensive, or competitive strategies are the most appropriate for a particular organization. Dimensional matrix applied several parallels that can be drawn for public and nonprofit organizations that represent two internal dimensions (financial strength and competitive advantage) and two external dimensions (environmental stability and industrial strength).

### 3. Results and Discussions

#### 3.1 State of Natural Resources

##### 3.1.1 Fishery Products Processing

The results of fishing in Merauke Regency have been marketed to the international market since 1994 by PT. Djarma Aru with the management of fish fillets and shrimp <sup>[14]</sup>, as well as for the domestic market sent to Surabaya, marketing of marine product processing is good because it already has regular customers, and the demand continues to increase every year.

##### 3.1.2 Cultivation and Capture Fisheries

Currently, cultivation and capture activities are filled with fish fillet, shrimp paste, salted fish and fresh shrimp which are sent via airplane cargo. The results of processing salted fish and shrimp paste from Merauke Regency are very popular and demand is increasing in each marketing period.

##### 3.1.3 Coastal Management

Activities carried out include planting mangrove seedlings and making slope. This mangrove forest conservation activity is filled with training on planting and

seedling as well as sorting mangrove seedlings.

#### 3.2 Obstacle Factors

Barriers faced in empowering the community: (a) lack of community enthusiasm, (b) lack of collaboration between agencies, (c) limited budget provided, (d) continuity of the implemented program.

#### 3.3 Supporting Factors

- a. Government commitment in accordance with the vision and mission of Merauke Regency;
- b. There are trainings for HR development;
- c. Government assistance in the form of nets, cool strategy etc.;
- d. There are groups that care about the environment;
- e. Local regulations that are not burdensome;
- f. Stable political environment;
- g. Geographical conditions and the potential of the coast are very large;

#### 3.4 Identification of Strategic Issues

In determining a step that must be taken, formulating strategic issues is a very important thing that must be done by an organization. Strategic issues can be obtained through a strategic management approach by analyzing various supporting factors (strengths and opportunities) and inhibiting factors (weaknesses and threats). The concept of community empowerment and poverty alleviation of fishing communities in general will be influenced by the internal and external environment, which can determine the level of success in improving community welfare. The internal environment will synergistically determine strengths and weaknesses, then the external environment will synergistically determine

**Table 1.** Matrix of Evaluation of Internal and External Factors for Empowerment of the Fishery Sector in Merauke Regency

	STRENGTH	WEAKNESS
INTERNAL	Huge potential of fishery resources. Easy to absorb new technology. Can maintain environmental conservation.	Skills and mastery of technology still not enough. High work spirit but ability Low entrepreneurship. The average level of education is low. Low capital capability.
	OPPORTUNITY	THREAT
EXTERNAL	The demand for fish production is high. Availability of credit facilities for fishermen. fishing ground is close and wide. Cheap labor. Water quality is quite good.	Damage to marine ecosystems due to overfishing. The market price is still low. at the fisherman level. High operating costs.

Source: SWOT Analysis, 2021

the opportunities and threats that will be faced by fishing communities.

The analysis of various aspects that have an important influence on the empowerment of fishing communities in Merauke Regency, can be identified internal environmental factors (strengths and weaknesses) and strategic externals (opportunities and threats), based on the survey results, known strengths and weaknesses, as well as opportunities and threats from the fishing community as set out in Table 1. The formulation of strategies for empowering fishing communities in Merauke Regency is carried out using a SWOT analysis based on strategic environmental factors. The alternative strategies which are the formulation of a strategic plan for community empowerment for poverty reduction in Merauke Regency, the results of generating the SWOT matrix are presented in Table 2.

**Table 2.** Fisherman Community Empowerment Strategy in Merauke Regency

	STRENGTH	WEAKNESS
INTERNAL	Providing easy credit facilities for fishermen.	Introduction of appropriate technology to fishermen.
	Market intervention by government and related agencies.	Development of fish processing business diversification and selling price intervention.
	OPPORTUNITY	THREAT
EXTERNAL	Complicated fishing vessel licensing management.	Fuel price subsidies for fishermen.
	Special fuel distribution regulations for fishermen.	Regulations to prevent overfishing through clear rules.

Source: SWOT Analysis, 2021

The results of the analysis of the strategy for empowering fishing communities can formulate strategies for empowering fishing communities. Then formulated several strategic programs for poverty alleviation, namely 1) increasing the role of financial institutions; 2) increasing the productivity of fishermen; 3) improving the welfare of fishermen 4) conservation of fish resources.

The design of this strategy program is then made a multiple matrix which refers to a table of numerical scales and is then responded to by the respondents. The results of the assessment of each stakeholder turned out to have different program priority options, such as different program priorities from the government and the empowerment program priorities from academia and the government having different program priorities. After conducting a SWOT analysis, the results show that the component of increasing fishermen's productivity has

the highest weight value in the selection of alternative strategy programs for empowering fishing communities in Merauke Regency, then followed by programs to increase the role of local institutions and conservation of fish resources around the waters.

**Table 3.** Activity Plan Based on Weight and Priority of Community Economic Empowerment Program

Program	Activity
Increase in Fishermen	Productivity
	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Facilitating ship ownership credit for potential captains</li> <li>2. Social Security Social Security</li> <li>3. Encouraging the role of Local Governments for capital assistance and market price intervention</li> </ol>
Institutional Improvement	Local Role
	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Forming a joint business group and mentoring</li> <li>2. Provide training on fish processing business diversification</li> </ol>

Source: SWOT Analysis, 2021

The main argument in formulating this strategic plan is since Merauke Regency has large coastal and marine resources. One of the keys to success in the economic empowerment of coastal communities in Merauke Regency who depend on their source of income directly depends on marine products. The production of fishing communities in Merauke Regency is highly dependent on the weather. In certain seasons, the amount of production can be so abundant that it cannot be absorbed by the market. This causes prices to be very low due to abundant harvests. However, during the dry season or bad weather, the production yield is so small that the results from fishing are not able to cover operational costs, so it is necessary to verify with a fishpond business for people who have land and a form of capital to be able to enlarge fishing boats so that they are more reliable for use during the wave season.

### 3.5 Priority Strategy and Program Elaboration

In general, of all the components in the SWOT factors that have been identified, the strategic program based on the results of generating the SWOT matrix is as follows:

The SO (strength-opportunity) strategy includes a more intensive socialization program of credit facilities for fishermen and a market intervention program by the government,

The WO strategy (weaknesses-opportunities) includes an introduction to appropriate technology programs for fishermen, and a diversification program for developing fish processing businesses and fishponds.

The ST strategy (threat-strengths include the program



to facilitate the processing of ship permits, and the deregulation program for the distribution of fuel oil specifically for fishermen.

The WT (weakness-threats) strategies include a fuel price subsidy program for fishermen and a regulation-making program to prevent overfishing.

The results of the SWOT analysis show that the component of strength (S) has the highest weight value in determining the strategy of empowering fishing communities, followed by the components of opportunities (O), weaknesses (W), and threats (T). The internal factor of the fishing community empowerment strategy is dominated by the strength component, while the dominant external factor is the threat component. The magnitude of the strength and threat factors compared to the weaknesses and opportunities in the strategy of empowering fishing communities is an indicator of success in empowering fishing communities in Merauke Regency. Furthermore, from the strength's component, the determining factors in the strategy for empowering the fishing community of Merauke Regency are: (a) long coastline; (b) high morale; (c) open to change. Based on the results of the analysis of these strength factors, it turns out that the factor of high morale is the main strength factor in the strategy of empowering the fishing community of Merauke Regency. High work spirit in managing the potential of aquatic resources is the main capital that has the potential to be developed. Thus, this factor is expected to be maximized, considering the vast potential available for improving the welfare of the fishing community of Merauke Regency in the future. Until now, it has been proven that the Merauke Regency area is an archipelagic area, most of which consists of sea waters.

The results of the analysis of the components of the weakness of the factors that determine the community empowerment strategy of Merauke Regency are 1) skills and mastery of technology are still lacking; 2) low entrepreneurial spirit; 3) the average level of education is low; 4) still dependent on investors (fish buyers) who provide loans. Based on the results of the analysis of the ranking of the factors of weakness above, it turns out that 1) skills and mastery of technology are still lacking; 2) low entrepreneurial spirit; 3) the average level of education is low; 4) low bargaining position against collectors is a fundamental weakness factor in the context of empowering fishing communities in the district Merauke. For this reason, the formulation of strategies that will be implemented in empowering fishing communities needs to consider these factors so that they can run according to what is desired.

The results of the analysis of the components of opportunities, the determining factors in the strategy of empow-

ering the fishing community of Merauke Regency are 1) high demand for fish production; 2) availability of credit facilities for fishermen; 3) the fishing ground is close and wide; 4) cheap labor and 5) water quality is quite good. Based on the results of the analysis of the ranking of the opportunity factors above, it is known that the cheap labor factor is the most important factor to be optimized, as an opportunity to empower the fishing community in Merauke Regency. This is also supported by the close and wide fishing ground, which is an important opportunity to be considered. Based on the results of data processing above, it shows that the SWOT component with the lowest weight is the opportunity component.

Threats component of the factors that determine the strategy of developing community food barns are 1) damage to marine ecosystems due to overfishing; 2) the market price is determined by the financier; 3) high fuel prices; 4) fishing depends on the season and 5) production yields fluctuate. Based on the analysis of the ranking of these threat factors, damage to marine ecosystems due to destructive fishing is a serious threat factor in empowering fishing communities in Merauke Regency. The weight of this factor is very high. It shows that this factor is expected to be overcome soon and it is hoped that a strategy will be implemented to be able to immediately overcome the problem.

#### 4. Conclusions

The results of the SWOT analysis, the factor with the highest priority in the strategy of empowering coastal communities in Merauke Regency to improve the welfare of coastal communities shows that the component of increasing fisherman productivity has the highest weight value in the selection of alternative fishing community empowerment programs in Merauke Regency, then followed by the component of increasing the role of capital assistance and market intervention, all of which lead to the development of the skills of fishermen to increase productivity and increase selling points.

Barrier factors experienced by coastal communities are low human resources and the ability of the community to obtain business credit assistance, lack of government funds to finance and difficulties in managing shipping permits, as well as the absence of other business diversification that supports when the water conditions are bumpy and still rely on only on marine fishery products. Supporting factors are commitment, a stable political environment, regulations that do not burdensome, people who want to change, there is environmental concern, integration with the vision and mission of the service and the vision and mission of the Merauke Regency Government.

An advancement in productivity usually comes with a price to pay, economic empowerment through marine products will cause the possibility of natural damage, unbalance ecosystem, coupled with the lack of community awareness and action in preserving natural resources and ecosystem. It can be seen from the amount of consumption waste from the fishermen themselves and household waste from community around the coastal area. With the vastness of the sea area, there are indeed limitations for the Government to oversee destructive fishing activities. Starting from the limitations of supervisory personnel, supervisory ships, and a very wide area coverage. For this reason, community participation is needed to jointly fight the perpetrators of destructive fishing<sup>[15]</sup>, the lack of knowledge and education can be caused by low education of the local community, therefore relevant agencies must take serious actions in educating and preventing the possibility of damages. In the event that damages occur, this will take a long time to reverse the condition, this will eliminate sources of income for the coastal community, and also destroying the environment (landslide, flood, natural ecosystem death). Economic empowerment should and must be renewable to be able to provide many generations to come. The use of fishing methods and means should be under Government surveillance. Government should also protect its territory from illegal and destructive fishing to protect the sustainability of aquatic ecosystems. Destructive fishing activities carried out by members of the public generally use explosives (fish bombs), and the use of toxic materials to catch fish. The use of these materials causes damage to coral reefs and the surrounding ecosystem and causes the death of various types and sizes that exist in these waters<sup>[15]</sup>.

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