

Potential and Challenges in Community Empowerment in the West Kalimantan Border Area



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ABSTRACT: The COVID-19 pandemic has harmed the economy of border area communities in the West Kalimantan Border Area, Kapuas Hulu Regency, Indonesia. This article aims to analyze the Potential and Challenges in Community Empowerment in the Badau Region, especially using analytical descriptive research with a qualitative approach, where the author tries to provide an overview or describe the condition of the objects and existing problems. The governance issue in the State Cross Border Post Badau is analyzed. Situations that have never happened before have disrupted governance at the cross-border post, including the closure of the Indonesian and Malaysian cross-country routes. This is the first time the State of Malaysia has implemented a lockdown since the COVID-19 pandemic. The results of this study show that the potential and challenges in community empowerment in Badau District are discussed.

KEYWORDS: Potential, Challenges, Community Empowerment, Border Areas,

INTRODUCTION

Problems on the West Kalimantan border include problems with areas that are still isolated and located inland with natural conditions that are difficult to reach. Meanwhile, facilities and infrastructure are related to the lack of infrastructure support, such as electricity, public roads, clean water, and telecommunications, which can be used as driving factors for community economic activities. Let us look at it from a social and economic perspective. The gap between people in border areas and Malaysian residents has triggered the lives of people in border areas who are more inclined towards neighboring countries. Development in border areas still needs to catch up compared to other regions' development. Apart from that, the low level of Welfare felt by the community is the cause of many activities such as illegal logging, trading, and trafficking (Rangkuti, 2010).

In addition, society's tendency towards neighboring countries triggers the erosion of nationalist values due to low access to information, therefore, it is necessary to reformulate citizenship education at the border to obtain an appropriate educational framework for defending the country and love for the country (Sutiyono, 2018). If viewed from its position directly adjacent to the sovereign territorial area of neighboring countries, the border area of Indonesia and Malaysia is a strategic area for increasing the economic growth of society. Such conditions must, of course, also be supported by empowerment carried out by the central government, regional government, and stakeholders to improve the Welfare of the people in the area.

This is in line with Law Number 23 of 2014 concerning Regional Government, which states the rights, authority, and obligations of autonomous regions to regulate and manage government affairs and local communities' interests in the system of the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia. Education development in border areas still needs to be improved due to inadequate access and infrastructure (Bunau et al., 2011; Itasari, 2018; Normina, 2016; Suciati & Ariningsih, 2016). So far, border communities rarely receive attention from the government.

Their lives are limited by access to transportation, communication, education, health, and so on. This dependency problem can be seen in many aspects, such as health and education. These two aspects still need to catch up compared to neighboring countries, so border communities consider it better to send their children to school and to get health access to neighboring countries rather than in their own country. Apart from better facilities, schools in Malaysia are free and children even get school equipment, dormitories, uniforms, and pocket money.

Then, Itasari (2018) studied how the government plays a full role in fulfilling the educational rights of citizens at the border. However, the right to education has not been fulfilled due to hampered accessibility and inadequate educational infrastructure in the country's border areas. The problems faced by people in the border areas of West Kalimantan are always related to the economic development of neighboring countries and the backwardness they face, namely the progress of the Malaysian economy on the one hand and the decline of the Indonesian economy on the other (Dedi, 2009). Likewise with the economic aspects of border communities. The Indonesian people on the border are far less deprived than the Malaysian people on

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the border.

The Malaysian government provides sufficient Welfare for its people by providing free education up to high school level, accessible health facilities, and providing living allowances for those who are elderly. Their income is also more significant than the income of Indonesians at the border. This economic disparity causes many people living on Indonesia's borders to choose to work in neighboring countries. For example, being a palm oil worker in Malaysia can earn around eight million rupiah per month, whereas being a palm oil worker in Indonesia only earns no more than ¼ of that. This is because our country's currency (rupiah) is quite different when converted to the currency of the neighboring country, Malaysia (ringgit). If converted, the value of 1 ringgit will change to approximately IDR 3,800.00.

This is also what happened to the people in Badau, West Kalimantan. Badau is one of the border sub-districts which borders directly on the Sarawak region, Malaysia. Badau has its capital in Nanga Badau, approximately 15 minutes from Lubok Antu Market, Malaysia. To reach Badau, you need a road trip, which takes around 23 hours from Pontianak. This trip can be accelerated by taking a plane from Pontianak-Kapuas Hulu, an approximately 1-hour journey, and continuing by car/bus to Badau which takes approximately 5 hours. The close distance causes Badau's economic center to depend on the Lubok Antu Market in Sarawak, Malaysia. This is because the distance to the district and provincial centers makes it impossible for traders in Badau to take goods from Pontianak. After all, transportation costs are so expensive and also prevent damage to goods on the road. Therefore, traders prefer to shop at Lubok Antu Market, Malaysia, and establish good trade relations so that they get capital assistance from large traders in Malaysia.

Apart from these problems, another problem is also improving the community's economy, which needs to be addressed after the Covid-19 pandemic. It is also known that the economy of border area communities is very dependent on relations with neighboring countries; however, on the other hand, the COVID-19 pandemic has harmed the economy in border areas. So, given the existing problems, strategic efforts need to be made to provide a good impact after the COVID-19 pandemic by providing empowerment and promising programs to restore the economic problems of border communities in Badau District, Kapuas Hulu Regency. From the explanation above, this article aims to analyze the Potential and Challenges in Community Empowerment in the West Kalimantan Border Area, especially.

RESEARCH METHOD

The research on the Potential and Challenges in Community Empowerment in the West Kalimantan Border Area employs analytical descriptive research with a qualitative technique, in which the author attempts to present an overview or describe the condition of the objects and existing problems. As a result, the descriptive approach is intended to meet the research purpose, which is to precisely explain the facts and characteristics of the examined object.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Potential for Empowerment of Border Communities

Community Empowerment Through Economic Empowerment

Badau District is a rapidly rising economic core area. This region possesses exceptional resources that could be developed. Even if it has yet to be fully utilized, the range of resources now available can stimulate local economic activity as well as the activities of regional economic units. Another potential is the area's strategic location, which provides direct access to Sarawak (Malaysia). Its advantageous location as a border territory with direct access to adjacent nations is a driving force behind the Badau Region's economic development. These economic prospects come as a result of the two bordering regions' resource consumption and spatial proximity (Van, 2005; Niebuhr & Stiller, 2001).

Badau's economy has grown as a border region since the establishment of the State Cross Border Post. Direct land access to Sarawak (Malaysia) has an impact on commercial and social activity. This neighboring country provides a prospective market not only for local producers in the Badau area, but also for producers in Kapuas Hulu Regency and West Kalimantan, as well as national producers. Thus, the existence of State Cross Border Post, apart from providing significant changes to the economic development of the Badau Region, will also increase regional and regional economic productivity as a whole. As explained in the previous chapter, the agricultural potential in Badau District is quite varied. Various agricultural potentials are divided into food crops, plantations, and livestock. Other economic potential in Badau District can be divided into industry and trade. The economic dynamics of Badau District must be distinct from the role of its economic sectors.

The existing sector composition (data for 2021) shows that the agricultural sector is a sector that makes quite a significant contribution, namely around 32.92%. Next, which has quite an important role, is the transportation and communications sector. The growth of market potential in integrated border regions positively impacts regional income and employment, which leads to economic growth in border regions (Niebuhr & Stiller, 2001). Conditions in the last five years show that the economic structure of Kapuas Hulu Regency has mostly stayed the same, and the agricultural sector is still the leading sector, contributing 38.18% (in 2021). The agricultural sector, especially the oil palm plantation subsector, influences the processing industry. Some of the food industry's output is CPO and palm kernel. The processing industry sector contributed 28.75%, followed by the trade sector. The

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development of a border area on the basis of this potential can be carried out in the context of economic growth in the development of the border area which is beneficial for both parties (Wu, 2001).

The border area of Badau District has significant natural resources, namely potential coal mining resources, gold, forests, freshwater fisheries, which are pretty promising, and smallholder plantations such as cocoa, pepper, and rubber. Unfortunately, this potential has not been developed optimally, so it has not been able to raise the level of Welfare of people in border areas. Most of the economic activities of the people in the Badau District area are still traditional, both in the agricultural sector and the trade sector (still using the barter system). This region tends to be Sarawak's economic hinterland, so until now the added value of opening border activities has not been seen. This condition shows Malaysia's economic condition is more advanced than West Kalimantan. Border area development needs to be managed better, and there needs to be a clear, comprehensive, and integrative development concept. Development activities are still in the form of partial development plans with a sectoral approach. An example is the exploitation of forest areas (legal and illegal), with the main target only being economic growth or meeting the needs of local communities without considering sustainability aspects.

Land use in the study area is generally divided into built-up and undeveloped areas. A built-up area is land use dominated by intensive or productive urban buildings. In contrast, an undeveloped area is where the natural form is still dominant. Protected areas and production forests still dominate the pattern of space use in the Badau District. These protected areas are divided into two groups, namely conservation and river borders. The conservation area reaches $\pm 80\%$ of the total area of the sub-district; not all parts of the area are planned to support cultivation activities because of the conservation function. Existing, relatively rapid urban development and growth occur on primary/national arterial road corridors. From the Badau City bridge to the inter-state border, the development direction tends to be linear (ribbon development). This is a logical consequence of the growth of formal and informal economic activities in areas around the border. Quite rapid growth and development occurred in the primary arterial road corridor. Various economic activities are starting to impact various building and environmental violations, along with the lack of direction in the arrangement of buildings along the corridor.

Challenge Empowerment of Border Communities

Social Welfare is the focus of this research, especially in the border area of Badau District. Regarding economic problems, attention and facilitation from local governments, such as business capital assistance, guidance, and training for farmers, is highly expected. If you look at the potential, government assistance in the form of empowerment can certainly develop border residents. However, if this effort is not accompanied by a prior assessment regarding the applicable culture and customs, the assistance provided will not be practical. The government needs to understand and utilize the existing capital in the region and whether the human capabilities in the border areas are ready to accept the assistance and assistance provided. Next, the Problem of Badau State Cross Border Post Management Regarding Community Economic Empowerment Efforts One thing that can be used as a reference is increasing power related to governance and increasing infrastructure development.

In this case, the increase is directly proportional to the development that has been carried out. In this case, the goal in the capacity-building field is realizing success in governance. In order to realize good capacity development, various parties must be able to synergize with one another so that the main points related to capacity building can be realized. The word capacity building is often interpreted as development. In this case, focus, goals, and results are the development referred to. In agencies or institutions, capacity building is related to the ability of the institution or agency to make decisions about the programs that will be implemented. On the one hand, capacity building also means efforts to manage borders to develop border areas, especially communities. State Cross Border Post Badau is currently operating normally.

The construction phase was completed and inaugurated by the President of the Republic of Indonesia, Joko Widodo. This is one of the advantages of State Cross Border Post Badau. In this case, the advantage in question is that when COVID-19 occurred, the Badau State Cross Border Post did not experience a significant impact in the form of disruption to infrastructure management or even the worst possibility, namely, stopping construction. State Cross Border Post Badau had quite a good capacity before the COVID-19 pandemic occurred. However, it cannot be avoided that the COVID-19 pandemic is currently shutting down the mobilization of economic flows in the Border Areas. After the COVID-19 pandemic, State Cross Border Post Badau experienced various problems. To be able to overcome these problems, of course, various kinds of efforts are needed, one of which is through good governance at State Cross Border Post Badau with the aim of not only stabilizing conditions but also overcoming future problems. State Cross Border Post Badau has a particular strategy during the COVID-19 pandemic: implementing increased management of activities in and out of Indonesia-Malaysia.

This is based on the conditions that occurred during the Covid-19 pandemic. Even though the decision-making has been thought through carefully with various considerations, various dimensions still feel disadvantaged. The surge in cases of the COVID-19 pandemic has undoubtedly affected the activities taking place at State Cross Border Post Badau, including in terms of governance at the cross-border post. Various cases and problems that have never happened before have disrupted governance in the State Cross Border Post. This is a challenge in itself for the apparatus involved in handling the State Cross Border Post. The impact most felt by State Cross Border Post Badau is the governance related to the closure of the Indonesian and Malaysian cross-

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country routes. This closure (lockdown). The Malaysian government carried it out during the COVID-19 pandemic until after the Covid-19 pandemic. This is the first time Malaysia has implemented a lockdown since the Covid-19 pandemic occurred.

By implementing a lockdown for Malaysia, the Indonesian government experienced its impact, whereas Indonesia did not implement a lockdown for its country. So, Indonesia automatically cannot access and enter Malaysian territory. Only now, the departure gate at State Cross Border Post Badau is still closed, or in other words, no activities can be carried out. So currently the activities at State Cross Border Post Badau have shifted to handling the return of Indonesian Migrant Workers from Malaysian territory. Even though the development of COVID-19 cases in Indonesia is starting to decrease, the activities taking place at State Cross Border Post Badau have yet to be able to operate normally again because the State of Malaysia has yet to open access to and from the territory of the State of Malaysia. This has resulted in a decrease in the number of Indonesian Migrant Workers placements in various neighboring countries. This decrease occurred drastically because in order to be able to send to neighboring countries, entry and exit access was required via the Badau State Cross Border Post. On the other hand, there has also been an increase in Indonesian Migrant Workers returns, disrupting the existing management system at State Cross Border Post Badau. However, this incident has a positive side, especially for the state cross border post in Badau.

Currently, Indonesian Migrant Worker Protection Agency at the Badau State Cross Border Post as the agency that handles the issue of repatriating Indonesian Migrant Workers in Malaysia is working extra hard compared to other agencies at the Badau State Cross Border Post, such as Customs and Excise, which is minimal or can be said to be non-existent. Activities in the form of inspection of goods. Apart from that, institutions such as Immigration in the Badau State Cross Border Post also experienced a decrease in activity due to minimal or even no activity of people going in and out through the State Cross Border Post, which was caused by the lockdown policy of neighboring countries. Currently, the Indonesian Migrant Worker Protection Agency is assisted by the Health and Security Agency to handle the return of Indonesian Migrant Workers, who was reported from Malaysia.

Figure 6.2.

Data on the number of Indonesian Migrant Workers arrivals for the period January – December 2020



source: Interview results processed by researchers

Figure 6.3.

Data on the number of Indonesian Migrant Workers arrivals for the period January – July 2021



source: Interview results processed by researchers

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Based on the paragraph above, it can be seen that there has been a two-fold increase in Indonesian Migrant Workers returns since before the pandemic occurred until the Covid-19 pandemic struck. In the first graph, it can be seen that in the 2020 period, the number of Indonesian Migrant Workers returning from Malaysia reached up to 2845 people, while in the 2021 period, as shown in the second graph, it can be seen that only 2333 Indonesian Migrant Workers people returned to Indonesia. Based on this comparison, it can be seen that in the 2020 period, when COVID-19 was still in a dangerous status, many Indonesian Migrant Workers stopped working and were deported back to Indonesia. Since the first year of the COVID-19 pandemic, the number of Indonesian Migrant Workers deported through State Cross Border Post Badau has been relatively high. This is in direct contrast to the data held by immigration agencies regarding the arrival period of Indonesian Migrant Workers from Malaysia.

CONCLUSION

If viewed from its position directly adjacent to the sovereign territorial area of neighboring countries, the border area of Indonesia and Malaysia is a strategic area for increasing the economic growth of society. These two aspects still need to catch up compared to neighboring countries, so border communities consider it better to send their children to school and to get health access to neighboring countries rather than in their own country. Badau is one of the border sub-districts which borders directly on the Sarawak region, Malaysia. It is also known that the economy of border area communities is very dependent on relations with neighboring countries; however, on the other hand, the COVID-19 pandemic has harmed the economy in border areas. So, given the existing problems, strategic efforts need to be made to provide a good impact after the COVID-19 pandemic by providing empowerment and promising programs to restore the economic problems of border communities in Badau District, Kapuas Hulu Regency. The border area of Badau District has significant natural resources, namely potential coal mining resources, gold, forests, freshwater fisheries, which are pretty promising, and smallholder plantations such as cocoa, pepper, and rubber. Unfortunately, this potential has not been developed optimally, so it has not been able to raise the level of Welfare of people in border areas. Most of the economic activities of the people in the Badau District area are still traditional, both in the agricultural sector and the trade sector (still using the barter system). Border area development needs to be managed better, and there needs to be a clear, comprehensive, and integrative development concept. From the Badau City bridge to the inter-state border, the development direction tends to be linear (ribbon development). Challenge Empowerment of Border Communities Social Welfare is the focus of this research, especially in the border area of Badau District. Next, the Problem of Badau State Cross Border Post Management Regarding Community Economic Empowerment Efforts. One thing that can be used as a reference is increasing power related to governance and increasing infrastructure development. On the one hand, capacity building also means efforts to manage borders to develop border areas, especially communities. Even though the development of COVID-19 cases in Indonesia is starting to decrease, the activities taking place at State Cross Border Post Badau have yet to be able to operate normally again because the State of Malaysia has yet to open access to and from the territory of the State of Malaysia. Currently, Indonesian Migrant Worker Protection Agency at the Badau State Cross Border Post as the agency that handles the issue of repatriating Indonesian Migrant Workers in Malaysia is working extra hard compared to other agencies at the Badau State Cross Border Post, such as Customs and Excise, which is minimal or can be said to be non-existent. Apart from that, institutions such as Immigration in the Badau State Cross Border Post also experienced a decrease in activity due to minimal or even no activity of people going in and out through the b, which was caused by the lockdown policy of neighboring countries.

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