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Research Article

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Agriculture-Based Empowerment of Local Farmers: A Study of the Pineapple Commodity in Matialemba Village, East Pamona District, Poso Regency

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Abstract: *This study analyzes agriculture-based empowerment of local farmers through the development of the pineapple commodity in Matialemba Village, East Pamona District, Poso Regency. It applies Edi Suharto's five-dimensional empowerment framework: enabling, strengthening, protecting, supporting, and maintaining. A descriptive qualitative approach was employed. Data were collected through observation, interviews, and documentation involving eight informants: the Village Head, a member of the Village Consultative Body, the Head of Planning Affairs, a Field Agricultural Extension Officer, a representative of the Village-Owned Enterprise (BUMDes), the head of a farmer group, a farmer, and a local collector. The findings indicate that farmer empowerment initiatives have been implemented but remain suboptimal. Enabling has been pursued through farmer groups and the village development planning forum, but no dedicated pineapple-development program or budget has been established. Strengthening activities remain largely limited to agricultural extension and have not provided sustained training in processing and value addition. Protection is inadequate in addressing price fluctuations and marketing risks. Support is concentrated on production inputs, while post-harvest facilities, marketing access, and the direct role of BUMDes remain underdeveloped. Maintenance has been reflected in future planning, but the proposed initiatives have not yet been fully implemented. Consequently, the village's pineapple potential has not been translated into sustainable farmer economic independence or stronger local economic development. The study highlights the need for integrated institutional, technical, post-harvest, and marketing support.*

Keywords: *farmer empowerment; local farmers; pineapple commodity; local economic development; enabling; strengthening; protecting; supporting; maintaining.*

Introduction

Agriculture is an important pillar of Indonesia's economy, including the horticultural subsector and commodities such as pineapple. Indonesia has been reported as one of the world's largest pineapple producers, with annual production exceeding 3.2 million tonnes (CNBC Indonesia, 2024). Nevertheless, high production does not automatically translate into improved farmer welfare. This gap highlights the importance of empowerment initiatives that enable farming communities not only to produce raw commodities but also to create added value and strengthen the local economy.

The empowerment of farmers and the development of village economies are supported by several national regulations, including Law Number 19 of 2013 concerning the Protection and Empowerment of Farmers, Law Number 3 of 2024 amending Law Number 6 of 2014 concerning Villages, and Government Regulation Number 11 of 2021 concerning Village-Owned Enterprises. These regulations provide a framework for village governments to develop local economic potential, strengthen farmer institutions, and promote more productive management of village commodities. At the regional level, Poso Regency Regional Regulation Number 2 of 2013 concerning the Protection of Sustainable Food Agricultural Land

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includes provisions on the responsibility of local government to protect and empower farmers and their institutions.

Central Sulawesi is an important pineapple-producing province. Statistics cited in the source manuscript report pineapple production of 31,381 tonnes in 2023, placing the province among Indonesia's ten largest producers (BPS-Statistics of Central Sulawesi Province, 2024). Poso Regency is identified as one of the province's principal production areas, alongside Sigi and Parigi Moutong Regencies. One village with substantial pineapple potential is Matialemba, located in East Pamona District, Poso Regency. The source manuscript, citing Poso Regency in Figures, identifies Matialemba as the regency's second-largest pineapple production centre after Doda Village in South Lore District (BPS-Statistics of Poso Regency, 2023).

Preliminary information from Jefri K. Toumbo, the Field Agricultural Extension Officer (PPL) in Matialemba, indicated that the village had more than 15 hectares of productive pineapple land and that peak-season harvests could reach approximately 8,000–10,000 fruits. Elsewhere in the research findings, the extension officer estimated the cultivated area at approximately 20 hectares. These figures are retained as reported in the research materials; the difference should be clarified against village or agricultural extension records before publication.

Despite this production potential, post-harvest business development and value addition remain limited. Farmers predominantly sell fresh pineapples at prices that fluctuate according to supply and market demand. During periods of abundant harvest and limited market absorption, fruit may accumulate, spoil, or be used as animal feed. Processing into products such as chips and jam, as well as the development of more reliable marketing channels, has not progressed optimally. The situation reveals a gap between production capacity and the community's ability to convert agricultural output into a more stable source of income.

The problem is also associated with the limited role of village institutions, particularly the village government and BUMDes, in supporting processing and marketing. The village government reportedly established more than ten farmer groups from 2021 onward. However, the existence of these groups has not yet fully strengthened farmers' bargaining position or their access to technology, assistance, and markets. Farmer empowerment therefore requires more than the formation of groups; it also needs practical support for capacity development, business protection, market access, and product innovation.

This study draws on Edi Suharto's empowerment framework, which consists of five dimensions: enabling, strengthening, protecting, supporting, and maintaining. These dimensions provide a basis for examining whether village-level initiatives create opportunities for farmers, improve their capacities, protect them from economic vulnerability, provide practical support, and sustain empowerment outcomes. Previous studies have examined farmer empowerment, the role of village government, and community economic development through BUMDes (Purnama Sari et al., 2025; Putra & Wardana, 2026; Putri et al., 2025). However, the research reviewed in the source manuscript does not specifically examine pineapple-farmer empowerment in Matialemba through all five dimensions of Suharto's framework. This study addresses that gap by analyzing farmer capacity, village institutional support, post-harvest processing, and market access.

The study aims to analyze how local farmers are empowered through the development of the pineapple commodity in Matialemba Village. It focuses on the five dimensions of Suharto's framework and considers the role of village governance and local institutions in translating agricultural potential into added value and improved farmer welfare.

Method

This study employed a descriptive qualitative approach to analyze pineapple-farmer empowerment in Matialemba Village, East Pamona District, Poso Regency. The approach was selected to understand the role of the village government, farmers' circumstances, and the constraints affecting pineapple production, post-harvest activities, and marketing. The analysis was guided by Edi Suharto's five dimensions of empowerment: enabling, strengthening, protecting, supporting, and maintaining. The qualitative orientation follows the view that social phenomena should be examined in their natural context and understood through the experiences and perspectives of the people involved (Moleong, 2017; Sugiyono, 2020).

The study used primary and secondary data. Primary data were obtained from informants selected purposively because of their roles and knowledge relevant to farmer empowerment. The eight informants comprised the Village Head, a representative of the Village Consultative Body (BPD), the Head of Planning Affairs, a Field Agricultural Extension Officer (PPL), a representative of BUMDes, the head of a farmer group, a farmer, and a local collector. Secondary data were obtained from books, journal articles, previous studies, village documents, and regulations related to farmer empowerment and local economic development.

Data were collected through observation, interviews, and documentation. Observation was used to examine pineapple farming conditions, farmers' activities, and the handling of harvested produce. Interviews explored empowerment programs, village-government support, and constraints in post-harvest processing and marketing. Documentation involved reviewing regulations, activity reports, and other relevant records to complement and cross-check the interview and observation data.

Data analysis followed the interactive model of Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña (2014), which consists of data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing and verification. Information was selected and organized according to the research focus, then presented descriptively to identify patterns and issues in farmer empowerment. Conclusions were developed by comparing interview, observation, and documentary evidence and interpreting the findings through Suharto's five empowerment dimensions. The research was conducted in Matialemba Village because, despite its pineapple production potential, the village continues to face constraints in post-harvest processing, marketing, and increasing the added value of agricultural products.

Results and Discussion

The findings indicate that pineapple-farmer empowerment in Matialemba Village has been initiated through the establishment of farmer groups, farmer participation in the Village Development Planning Meeting (Musrenbangdes), agricultural extension, and the provision of production inputs. However, these initiatives have not yet developed into an integrated and sustainable empowerment program. Support for skills development, price protection, post-harvest processing, and marketing remains limited. The following discussion examines the findings through the five dimensions of Edi Suharto's empowerment framework.

Enabling

Enabling refers to efforts by the village government to create opportunities and conditions that allow farmers to develop their potential. The findings show that the Matialemba Village Government has established more than ten farmer groups since 2021 and has involved farmer representatives in the Musrenbangdes. These initiatives provide an institutional channel for farmers to participate in village

development planning. However, the opportunities created have not been supported by a dedicated program or budget for pineapple development.

The Village Head, Anuar Allo, stated that the village had not allocated a specific budget or provided dedicated capital facilitation for the pineapple commodity because of limitations in the village budget (interview, 18 July 2026). Farmers also reported that information and socialization concerning pineapple processing were infrequent and that marketing remained heavily dependent on local collectors. The Field Agricultural Extension Officer, Jefri K. Toumbo, reported that pineapple cultivation covered approximately 20 hectares, while the Nanas Berjaya Farmer Group had around 15 members.

These findings indicate that enabling has been implemented through farmer-group formation and opportunities for participation in village planning, but it remains suboptimal because it has not generated concrete business opportunities. In Suharto's framework, creating opportunities should enable farmers to develop their potential and participate in economic activities. Institutional formation alone is insufficient if it is not followed by programs, resources, and practical access to markets.

Strengthening

Strengthening concerns the development of farmers' knowledge, skills, and capacities so that they can manage their businesses more independently. The study found that capacity-building activities for pineapple farmers have not been sufficiently structured. Although the Field Agricultural Extension Officer reportedly conducts agricultural outreach approximately twice a month, farmer participation remains low, and specialized training in pineapple processing has not been sustained.

Village Head Anuar Allo acknowledged that the village had not conducted specific technical training or intensive extension activities focused on pineapple cultivation and processing (interview, 18 July 2026). Yuniati Pabuntang, head of the Nanas Berjaya Farmer Group, explained that farmers had opportunities to develop derivative products such as pineapple chips and jam but had not received adequate technical training or packaging assistance.

The findings suggest that farmers' practical experience in cultivation has not been matched by skills development that could support product innovation and business diversification. From the perspective of Suharto's strengthening dimension, empowerment remains inadequate because the existence of farmer groups has not been accompanied by sustained capacity-building activities that can increase farmers' independence and competitiveness.

Protecting

Protecting refers to measures intended to reduce risks and prevent farmers from being placed in vulnerable or exploitative conditions. The study found that the village government has provided fertilizer, pesticides, and other production inputs. However, there are no specific measures to address falling prices, ensure the absorption of harvested products, or reduce losses when production exceeds market demand.

A pineapple farmer, Sri Yanti Palino, explained that a large fruit could sell for as much as IDR 30,000 under normal market conditions, but the price could fall to approximately IDR 10,000 when market prices declined (interview, 1 August 2026). She also explained that unsold pineapples sometimes had to be discarded or used as animal feed. This account demonstrates that high production does not necessarily result in higher farmer income, because prices and market absorption strongly influence the returns farmers receive.

Protection efforts therefore remain concentrated on the production stage and do not adequately address marketing risks. Under Suharto's framework, protection should help prevent farmers from

remaining vulnerable to price instability and limited buyer availability. Measures such as stronger collective marketing, improved market information, and arrangements for absorbing harvest surpluses would address risks that are not covered by production-input assistance alone.

Supporting

Supporting concerns the practical assistance provided by the village government and relevant institutions to help farmers develop their businesses. The findings show that existing assistance is dominated by production inputs, while processing facilities, harvest collection facilities, and market access remain inadequate. BUMDes Matialemba has also not been directly involved in managing or marketing the village's pineapple commodity.

Village Head Anuar Allo stated that BUMDes had not yet been directly involved in collecting, processing, or marketing residents' pineapple production (interview, 18 July 2026). As a result, farmers continue to sell their produce individually or through collectors, mainly in the form of fresh fruit. Farmers and farmer groups nevertheless need processing equipment and access to markets if the harvest is to generate greater added value.

The findings reveal a gap between the assistance currently available and farmers' actual business-development needs. In terms of Suharto's supporting dimension, empowerment remains suboptimal because support has not yet enabled farmers to move beyond the sale of raw products toward higher-value processed goods. Strengthening the role of BUMDes could provide an institutional channel for aggregation, processing, and marketing, although the specific business model would need to be developed with farmers and assessed for feasibility.

Maintaining

Maintaining concerns the continuity of programs and support so that empowerment produces benefits over the long term. The study found that sustaining pineapple-farmer empowerment remains a challenge. The village government has, however, begun planning to develop the pineapple commodity through the 2027 planning and budgeting process. The proposed initiatives include procuring equipment for pineapple-chip production and exploring marketing cooperation with third parties.

Village Head Anuar Allo stated that the village intended to prioritize the pineapple empowerment program and allocate a specific budget in the 2027 planning process (interview, 18 July 2026). This statement indicates growing recognition of the need for a more focused approach to developing the commodity. Nevertheless, the proposed program remains a plan, and its implementation and outcomes cannot yet be assessed. Farmer groups also continue to need mentoring, renewed group activities, and support for processing and marketing.

Maintaining is therefore reflected in the village government's planning commitment but has not yet been demonstrated through implementation. In Suharto's framework, sustainability requires more than a stated commitment: it must be supported by realized programs, consistent mentoring, and stronger institutions that enable farmers to continue developing their businesses independently.

Overall Assessment

Overall, pineapple-farmer empowerment in Matialemba Village has begun through farmer-group formation, participation in village planning, agricultural extension, and production-input assistance. However, all five dimensions remain less than optimal because support is still concentrated on the initial stages of production and institutional organization. The principal problems are the lack of sustained capacity

development, limited protection against price and marketing risks, the underdeveloped role of BUMDes, and insufficient post-harvest processing facilities and market access.

The findings are consistent with the broader understanding that community empowerment requires coordinated development of human capacity, enterprise activities, the enabling environment, and institutional capacity (Mardikanto & Soebianto, 2015). They also underline the importance of collaborative relationships between government and non-government actors in local development (Ansell & Gash, 2008). In Matialemba, the village government has created initial participatory and institutional arrangements, but these arrangements have not yet been translated into a complete value chain connecting production, processing, aggregation, and marketing.

The practical implication is that empowerment should be organized as an integrated local economic development strategy rather than as separate assistance activities. This requires farmer participation in program design, regular technical training, feasible post-harvest facilities, stronger farmer-group management, and a clearly defined role for BUMDes. Marketing arrangements should also address seasonal surpluses and price volatility. The proposed 2027 initiatives may provide an opportunity to address these gaps, but their contribution will depend on implementation, institutional coordination, and ongoing evaluation.

Conclusion

This study concludes that the Matialemba Village Government has undertaken efforts to empower local pineapple farmers through the formation of farmer groups, farmer participation in the Musrenbangdes, agricultural extension, and the provision of agricultural production inputs. Nevertheless, these efforts have not yet formed an integrated and sustainable program capable of transforming the pineapple commodity into a stronger driver of the village economy.

The limitations are evident across the five dimensions of Edi Suharto's empowerment framework. Enabling has created channels for participation but has not been accompanied by a dedicated pineapple-development program and budget. Strengthening remains limited in terms of sustained technical training, processing skills, and packaging. Protecting does not yet adequately address price fluctuations and marketing risks. Supporting is still concentrated on production inputs, while post-harvest facilities, market access, and BUMDes involvement remain limited. Maintaining has appeared in the village government's 2027 planning commitment, but the proposed activities have not yet been implemented.

The study therefore recommends that the village government, farmer groups, agricultural extension services, and BUMDes develop a coordinated empowerment program that links production, capacity-building, post-harvest processing, and marketing. The implementation of the planned 2027 initiatives should be monitored through clear responsibilities, realistic budgeting, farmer participation, and periodic evaluation. Such an integrated approach is necessary if the village's pineapple potential is to generate added value, strengthen farmer economic independence, and contribute more substantially to the local economy.

This study is limited to a qualitative examination of one village and the perspectives of eight purposively selected informants. The reported land-area estimates also differ within the source materials, and the production statistics and policy details should be verified against original administrative records. Future studies could compare several pineapple-producing villages or examine the economic feasibility and institutional arrangements of BUMDes-led processing and marketing.

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