**International Journal of Scientific Research and Management (IJSRM)**
**||Volume||13||Issue||07||Pages||635-642||2025||**
**Website: https://ijsrm.net ISSN (e): 2321-3418**
**DOI: 10.18535/ijsrm/v13i07.ah01**

# The Role of Stakeholders in Empowering Farmer Groups in Dempo Tengah District, Pagar Alam City, South Sumatra Province (Case Study in Gapoktan Beguyur)

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**Abstract**
Empowerment is an effort to provide power (empowerment) or strengthening to the community. This study aims to analyse the role of stakeholders in empowering coffee farmer groups in Dempo Tengah District, Pagar Alam City, South Sumatra. The main focus of the research is to identify how the government, private sector, and the farmer groups themselves contribute to enhancing the technical and marketing capacities of coffee farmers. This research uses a descriptive qualitative approach with data collection techniques including in-depth interviews, participatory observation, and documentation. Informants consist of key stakeholders, namely representatives from t h e government, private sector (NGOs and coffee business actors), and members of the Gapoktan Beguyur farmer group. Data were analysed using MAXQDA software to identify themes and patterns of actor involvement. The results show that the government plays a dominant role as a facilitator, regulator, and dynamizer through the provision of technical training, production facilities, and access to financing. The private sector serves as a strategic partner in downstream processing, branding enhancement, and market access through packaging design training, digital marketing, and product promotion. Meanwhile, the farmer groups play a crucial role in internal consolidation, joint production management, and strengthening social capital to support the sustainability of empowerment programmes. Collaboration among stakeholders has proven to enhance farmers' abilities to manage their farming businesses independently and expand market networks.

**Keywords**: Empowerment, Stakeholders, Farmer Group Introduction

The smallholder coffee sector in Indonesia has undergone substantial development in recent years. In addition to its status as a leading export commodity, coffee plays a pivotal role in driving the local coffee economy in Indonesia. This is particularly evident in regions such as South Sumatra, Lampung, North Sumatra, Aceh, Bengkulu, East Java, and others that are prominent coffee production centers. The data regarding coffee production in Indonesia from 2019 to 2023 is presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Coffee production per province in Indonesia from 2019 to 2023

| Province | Coffee Production (tonnes) | | | | | Average production (tonnes) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | **2019** | **2020** | **2021** | **2022** | **2023** | |
| **Sumatera Selatan** | **191.080** | **198.945** | **211.681** | **212.452** | **207.320** | **204.296** |
| Lampung | 117.111 | 117.311 | 116.281 | 124.528 | 105.807 | 116.208 |
| Sumatera Utara | 74.922 | 76.597 | 80.871 | 86.956 | 89.593 | 81.787 |
| Aceh | 72.652 | 73.419 | 74.328 | 75.294 | 71.084 | 73.355 |
| Bengkulu | 62.567 | 62.279 | 62.849 | 60.139 | 50.745 | 59.716 |
| Jawa Timur | 49.157 | 45.279 | 45.914 | 45.812 | 44.876 | 46.208 |

| | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Lainnya | 185.022 | 188.550 | 194.267 | 189.581 | 185.995 | 188.683 |
| Jumlah | 752.511 | 762.380 | 786.191 | 794.762 | 755.420 | 770.253 |

**Source: Central Bureau of Statistics 2023**

Based on Table 1, South Sumatra Province is the largest contributor to coffee production in Indonesia with an average production of 204,296 tonnes per year over the last five years. This fact shows that South Sumatra has an important position in the national coffee map. However, despite its large contribution, the smallholder coffee sector in Indonesia and South Sumatra in general still faces structural challenges. Smallholder coffee production, especially the robusta and arabica types, is a source of livelihood for millions of farming households as well as an important part of the social and cultural identity of communities in mountainous and rural areas. However, despite this great contribution, smallholder coffee farmers still face complex and interrelated structural challenges. These challenges include limited access to technical training, lack of post-harvest facilities and infrastructure, weak bargaining position in the value chain, and suboptimal public policy support related to price, financing, and market access.

The success of South Sumatra Province as one of the largest coffee producers cannot be separated from the contribution of each region in producing coffee. Of the 17 districts in South Sumatra, there are 13 coffee-producing districts, one of which is Pagar Alam City with a land area of 8,074 ha with a production of 10,065 tonnes. The land area and robusta coffee production in South Sumatra Province per district from 2021 to 2023 can be seen in Table 2. One of the coffee producing areas in South Sumatra, Pagar Alam City is one of the areas that has great potential. Based on data from the South Sumatra Province Plantation Office (2023), Pagar Alam City has a coffee land area of 8,074 hectares with production reaching 10,065 tonnes in 2023. The contribution of Pagar Alam City is important in the success of South Sumatra as a national coffee centre.

Table 2. Coffee production per province in Indonesia from 2019 to 2023

| No | District/city 17 | Land area (ha) | Coffee production (tonnes) | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | 2021 | 2022 | 2023 |
| 1 | Ogan Komering Ulu | 22.068 | 16.267 | 16.317 | 16.334 |
| 2 | Ogan Komering Ilir | 814 | - | 335 | 340 |
| 3 | Muara Enim | 23.101 | - | 27.652 | 28.650 |
| 4 | Lahat | 54.032 | 17.100 | 22.010 | 22.675 |
| 5 | Musi Rawas | 3.830 | 2.950 | 3.196 | 3.227 |
| 6 | Musi Banyuasin | 3 | - | - | 2.00 |
| 7 | Banyuasin | 524 | - | 724 | 725 |
| 8 | Ogan Komering Ulu Selatan | 89.050 | 50.854 | 62.399 | 60.700 |
| 9 | Ogan Komering Ulu Timur | 483 | - | 2.200 | 438 |
| 10 | Ogan Ilir | | - | - | - |
| 11 | Empat Lawang | 62.126 | 53.769 | 54.000 | 53.756 |
| 12 | Pali | - | - | - | - |
| 13 | Musi Rawas Utara | 36.010 | 325 | 214 | 219 |
| 14 | Palembang | - | - | - | - |
| 15 | Prabumulih | - | - | - | - |
| **16** | **Pagar Alam** | **8.074** | **20.833** | **16.375** | **10.065** |
| 17 | Lubuk Linggau | 1.260 | 877 | 885 | 884 |

**Source: Plantation Office of South Sumatra Province 2023**

Pagar Alam City itself is an agricultural area where most of the population earns a living in the agricultural sector, including coffee plantations. With an area of 633.66 km² and a population of around 150,881 people, the coffee sector has a strategic role in the local economy. The dominant type of coffee cultivated is robusta, which is spread across five sub-districts, one of which is Central Dempo Sub- district, which is the main production centre. Based on the results of a pre-survey in the last three years, the level of coffee production

in Pagar Alam City has decreased due to several factors.

Alam City has decreased due to several factors. Factors affecting the decline in production, quality, and welfare of coffee farmers in Pagar Alam city are, first, increasingly erratic weather conditions due to climate change disrupt coffee planting and harvesting patterns, so coffee production is often unstable. Unseasonal rains or prolonged droughts can damage coffee plants and reduce yields. Secondly, coffee farmers' lack of access to modern agricultural technology and superior seeds makes the quality of the coffee crop unstable.

The coffee produced often does not meet international market standards, leading to low selling prices. In addition, fluctuations in coffee prices in the global market make coffee farmers' income uncertain, making it difficult for many farmers to fulfil their daily needs. I n addition, distribution and supply chain issues are also a challenge. Many coffee farmers are dependent on middlemen at unfavourable prices, as they do not have direct access to the wider market. Limited knowledge in business management and marketing also makes it difficult for farmers to maximise the potential of their coffee products. One of the main problems is the low productivity and quality of the harvest.

These conditions demonstrate the importance of a collaborative stakeholder approach in supporting the sustainability of the smallholder coffee sector. The active involvement of the government, private sector, NGOs, financial institutions, academics, and local communities is needed to build an integrated support system.

This collaboration is not only in technical or logistical matters, but also in formulating a shared vision, sharing roles, and formulating policies that are responsive to farmers' real needs. For example, community-based financing support or easily accessible microcredit schemes, transparent market information systems, and basic price policies that protect farmers from global market fluctuations.

However, the success of empowerment programmes is not only determined by external factors such as policy and technical support, but also by internal dynamics within the farmer groups themselves. Communication between members, the level of participation in decision-making, the existence of collective norms, and the spirit of gotong royong play an important role in ensuring that external assistance or interventions can be utilised effectively and sustainably. Solid and adaptive farmer groups tend to be able to manage programmes independently, establish partnerships with external parties, and improve their bargaining position in the coffee value chain (Ayesha, *et al*., 2024). For example, farmer groups in some areas managed to establish collective sales systems and internal quality control systems that significantly increased the selling price of their coffee. On the other hand, groups without a strong organisational structure often experience dysfunction in aid management and fail to maintain programme sustainability. Analysing the internal dynamics of farmer groups is therefore important to understand how social capacity affects the success of Development interventions.

The role of training and mentoring is not just aimed at improving technical skills, but also as a medium to build farmers' critical awareness of their position in the broader agrarian and economic system. This approach is in line with the rights-based empowerment paradigm, which places farmers not merely as recipients of assistance, but as active subjects who have the capacity to determine the direction of their own agricultural development. In this context, meaningful participation in every stage of programme planning, implementation and evaluation should be the main principle (Aisyah et al., 2023).

Theoretically, research on the role of stakeholders in empowering smallholder coffee farmers has relevance within the framework of agrarian governance and sustainable development. Effective agrarian governance and sustainable development emphasise the importance of coordination across actors, accountability, transparency, and fairness in resource distribution.

In developing countries, this approach provides an alternative to top-down agricultural development models that do not take local diversity into account. Thus, understanding the interactions between actors and local socio-economic conditions is key in designing policy interventions that are more targeted and inclusive. This research is important and relevant because, first, there are limited empirical studies that specifically analyse the role of multi-stakeholders in the context of smallholder coffee farmers in Indonesia. Second, because there is an urgent need to design more contextualised and participatory empowerment strategies, especially in the midst of increasing global challenges such as climate change, commodity price crises, and market access inequality. Thirdly, because the results of this study are expected to make a

practical contribution to the formulation of public policies and programme strategies of institutions assisting coffee farmers in various regions.

**Research Objectives**

The objective of this study is threefold: first, to analyze the role of stakeholders in improving farmers' technical capacity; second, to examine the extent to which stakeholder collaboration can overcome the structural constraints faced by coffee farmers; and third, to explain the internal dynamics of farmer groups in improving the effectiveness and sustainability of coffee farmer empowerment programs.

**Conceptual framework of the study**

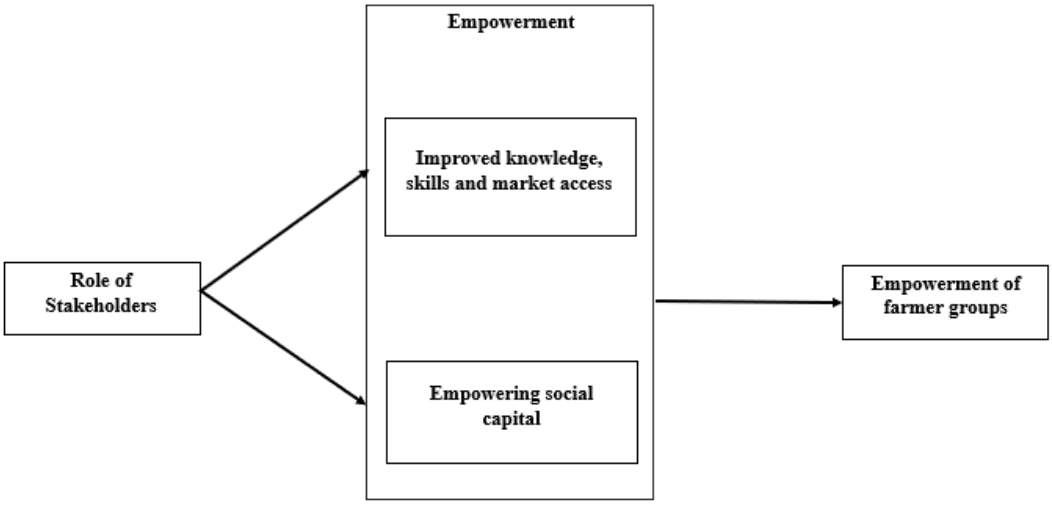



**Figure 1: Conceptual framework**

**Research Method**

This research was conducted using a qualitative approach, where the main focus was to gain an in-depth understanding of the role of various stakeholders in empowering farmer groups. The type of research chosen was a case study, with Gapoktan Beguyur in Dempo Tengah Sub-district, Pagar Alam City, as the main unit of analysis. Case studies allow intensive exploration of the phenomenon of farmer group empowerment in a specific local context, resulting in rich and detailed data on the dynamics that occur. The data collected includes primary and secondary data. Primary data was obtained through a series of in-depth interviews with key informants, including the chairperson and members of Gapoktan Beguyur, field agricultural extension workers (PPLs) responsible for coaching t h e group, representatives from the Pagar Alam City agriculture office, as well as private parties such as banks or input suppliers involved in supporting Gapoktan activities. Direct field observations were also conducted to observe farmer group activities and interactions between stakeholders, complementing information obtained from interviews. Meanwhile, secondary data was collected from relevant documents such as Gapoktan profiles, agricultural agency activity reports, and local agricultural statistics. The technical data analysis of this study used MAXQDA software.

**Results And Discussion**

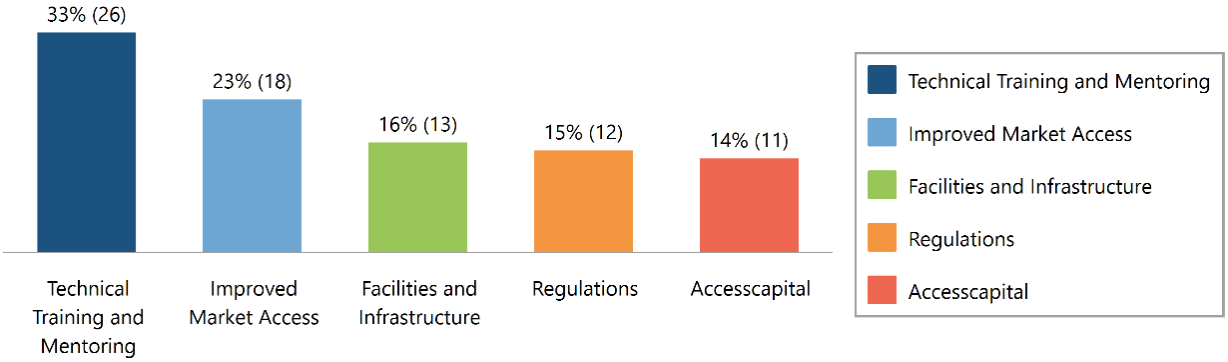
Overview of the Research Location

The Dempo Tengah Sub-district is one of the sub-districts that make up Pagar Alam City, which is located in the South Sumatra Province of Indonesia. The topography of the region is characterized by its hilly landscape, with the Dempo Mountains forming a prominent geographical feature at the sub-district's center. The region's geographical characteristics render it conducive to the cultivation of diverse agricultural commodities, particularly robusta coffee and horticultural crops. The preponderance of the population in Central Dempo Sub-district is reliant on the agricultural sector for their livelihoods, thereby underscoring the pivotal role of farmer groups in the organization of agricultural activities and the enhancement of farmers' welfare. The agricultural infrastructure of the region exhibits significant variation. While certain areas are well-served by adequate road networks, others require enhancement to optimize the distribution of agricultural products. The region generally experiences sufficient water availability for irrigation purposes,

attributable to favorable precipitation patterns and the presence of substantial mountain spring sources. The prevailing socio-economic conditions.

The farming community in Central Dempo exhibits a high degree of homogeneity, accompanied by a range of educational levels. However, it is noteworthy that this community is characterized by a strong spirit of gotong royong, which is a term used to denote a sense of communal cooperation and shared responsibility among members of the farming community. The agricultural institutional environment in this area is marked by the presence of multiple active farmer groups, as well as support from the local government through the relevant agencies and the presence of field agricultural extension workers (PPLs). The case study focuses on Gapoktan Beguyur, a prominent joint farmer group that has members dispersed across multiple villages and engages in a variety of activities, including cultivation and marketing.

**The Role of Stakeholders in Improving Farmers' Technical and Marketing Capacity**




**Source: Results of Primary Data Analysis using MAXQDA, 2025.**

Based on the results of the analysis using MAXQDA software above, it is known that the role of stakeholders involved in empowering coffee farmers can be seen that the Training and Technical Assistance aspect is the most dominant form of stakeholder roles in empowering farmer groups, with a percentage of 33%. This shows that training and technical assistance activities are considered the most frequently conducted and have an important role in increasing the capacity of farmers.

Technical training and infrastructure support from stakeholders are strategic instruments in building the production and marketing capacity of smallholder coffee farmers. Based on the results of in-depth interviews, all informants from the Gapoktan Beguyur farmer group stated that they had attended training from various parties, such as the Agriculture Office, SCOPI, PLN Peduli, and PT Sucden. The materials provided did not only focus on cultivation, but also covered post-harvest aspects and modern marketing. As stated by one informant, **"The training materials cover coffee cultivation from planting to harvesting, pest eradication, and post-harvest processing." (Interview Result)**

This statement illustrates that the training received is comprehensive and seeks to touch the entire production chain. In terms of frequency, training is held periodically, between once every three to six months, and is complemented by regular meetings at the Agricultural Extension Centre. The sustainability of the training is important as it creates a continuous learning process and improves farmers' ability to absorb and apply the knowledge gained. In practice, this training also helps to in practice, this training has helped to form a network of communication and solidarity among farmers, especially in informal discussion groups.

**Figure 2: Coffee Production House Source: Research Documentation, 2025**

The facilities and infrastructure aspect is also a major concern for stakeholders. The local government through the Agriculture Office provides a production house complete with roasting equipment, packaging machines, and solar dryer/dom. As stated by the Head of Plantation, **"We provide assistance in the form of production houses per sub-district and are equipped with roasting machines and solar dryer doms to maintain coffee quality." (Norman, 2025)**

This reflects the government's concrete efforts to improve the quality of farmers' processed products to meet premium market standards. On the other hand, private companies also contribute in the form of providing supporting equipment such as harvesting shears, drying tarpaulins, and safety equipment. This role not only supports production efficiency, but also creates a safer and more professional working environment. The involvement of the private sector also signifies a collaborative pattern that places farmers as development partners, not just objects of intervention.

The tangible impact of this training and infrastructure support is the improvement of farmers' technical capabilities in post-harvest coffee processing. Farmers are now able to process their harvest into final products such as ground coffee and roasted beans, with more consistent quality. This process not only increases added value, but also opens up new marketing opportunities. One informant stated, **"We sell directly, either through social media or to coffee shops. The price of ground coffee is higher than selling to middlemen." (Interview Results)**

In the area of marketing, stakeholders provided digital marketing training that enabled farmers to understand modern marketing techniques, including the use of e-commerce platforms and social media. A farmer said, **"We were given training on packaging design and digital marketing, and even taught how to sell through Shopee and Facebook." (Interview Results)**

The application of digital technology marks a shift in marketing strategy from the conventional pattern of relying on middlemen to an open market-based direct sales system. This transformation gives farmers more space to set prices and build their own brands. In particular, SCOPI and PT Sucden play an important role in product branding training and promotion, including bringing farmers' products to regional and national coffee festivals. Festivals such as the Pagar Alam Coffee Festival are strategic exposure arenas, where local products can be introduced to a network of buyers, entrepreneurs, and suppliers. industry, to the central government. In these forums, farmers were not only passive participants, but began to emerge as the main actors representing local coffee identity.

The active role of stakeholders also encouraged the growth of packaging innovation and brand identity at the farmer group level. In some instances, product packaging was designed collectively by Gapoktan members, taking into account consumer characteristics and market trends. This has increased the professionalism of farmer groups and fostered a sense of ownership of the products they produce.

However, some challenges remain. One of them is limited digital literacy among older farmers, as well as gaps in access to digital devices and internet networks. These obstacles need to be addressed with a phased approach, such as face-to-face training based on hands-on practice, as well as intensive field assistance. The role of agricultural extension officers and NGO mentors is key in bridging this skills gap.

Furthermore, the efficacy of technical training is contingent upon farmers' intrinsic motivation and inclination to adopt innovations. Some farmers, who have traditionally relied on conventional methods, exhibit reluctance to adopt new practices. This underscores the significance of a sociocultural approach in the design of training programs, wherein educational materials are customized to address local requirements and delivered in a participatory manner. Experiential learning and field school visits have been demonstrated to be more effective in fostering farmers' awareness and commitment.

**Figure 3: Farmer Training Source: Research Documentation, 2025**

From a policy analysis perspective, technical training and facilities support from stakeholders reflect the implementation of an agrarian governance approach based on multi-actor collaboration. This is in line with the principle of sustainable development, where farmer empowerment is not only seen as the distribution of aid, but as a participatory process of social and economic transformation. The changes that occurred in farmers' technical capacity and marketing patterns also show that external interventions can function effectively when built on the basis of equality and respect for local knowledge.

Overall, the role of stakeholders in improving technical and marketing capacity proved significant in the context of Gapoktan Beguyur. Not only has there been an increase in farmers' knowledge and skills, but also changes in production patterns and market orientation. Farmers are no longer simply producers of raw materials, but economic actors who are able to create added value, build their own brands, and reach consumers directly. This transformation strengthens their position in the value chain and paves the way to community-based economic independence

## Conclusion

Stakeholders such as the Department of Agriculture, SCOPI, PLN Peduli, and PT Sucden play an important role in strengthening the technical capacity of coffee farmers through training programmes and production facility support. The training provided covers the entire coffee value chain from cultivation, integrated pest control, post-harvest, to digital marketing. This training takes place regularly and is attended by most members of Gapoktan Beguyur.

The availability of facilities such as production houses, roasting machines, solar dome dryers, and work equipment from various parties also support the quality of farmers' processed products. As a result, farmers are able to produce coffee in finished form (powder and roasted beans) and market directly to end consumers through social media, e-commerce, and local networks such as coffee shops and souvenir centres. This transformation shows that technical empowerment not only improves skills, but also strengthens farmers' bargaining position in the supply chain. The empowerment of farmer groups in Central Dempo Sub-district, particularly Gapoktan Beguyur, is strongly influenced by the collaboration of multi-actors from the local government, agricultural extension officers, the private sector, and the group's own internal initiatives. Although the contribution of each stakeholder is visible, optimising empowerment requires improved coordination and more integrated synergy between all parties.

## Suggestions

This study suggests that stakeholders should strengthen their synergies through the establishment of a formal coordination forum to facilitate the planning and evaluation of empowerment programs. Local governments must persist in advocating for policies that facilitate farmers' access to technology, capital, and markets, while concurrently fortifying the capacity of PPLs. For the private sector, the expansion of mutually beneficial partnership programs with farmer groups can serve as an effective strategy. Furthermore, farmer groups are advised to prioritize continuous improvement of their internal capacity and the active participation of their members in every empowerment program. Subsequent research endeavors may explore the most efficacious stakeholder partnership models in diverse agricultural contexts. It is recommended that the following suggestions be given due consideration for the purpose of developing future research.

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