

Masyarakat, Kebudayaan dan Politik

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Management of Local Forestry Resources in Overcoming Poverty and Environmental Issues¹

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ABSTRACT

State forestry resource management in Java still confronts a serious conflict since the deforestation rate in Java has taken place until now. In the past, the State Forestry Corporation (SFC) was unaware of the socioeconomic problems around the state forestry. Security approach in combination with legal-bureaucracy tools was strongly applied to overcome social conflicts related to the forestry uses particularly by local people. In response to this crisis in the state forestry sector, the SFC in 2001 issued the policy of community-based forest management or well-known as PHBM (pengelolaan hutan bersama masyarakat). According to this policy, forest villagers are entitled to plan PHBM activities together with SFC and other stakeholders and receive a share of benefits. This policy has changed the centralistic role of SFC towards the decentralist one. The main objective of this research was to examine the co-production process of local forestry management involving multi stakeholders to improve sustainable forest resource utilization. Banyumas forest communities in three forest villages under Banyumas Timur SFC was purposively selected to be an in-depth multi case study. Data was collected by various methods such as in-depth interview, focus group discussion, and observation. Results of this study showed that local forestry management will develop well by strategic efforts through involving multi stakeholders in managing state forests. In long term, development of cooperation with various stakeholders in forest management could play an important role to overcoming poverty alleviation and deforestation problem.

Key words: forestry resource management, poverty alleviation, forest sustainability, multi stakeholders

Since the implementation of forest co-management in 2001 by state forest corporation (SFC, *perhutani*) in Java, forest communities and organizations have struggled to increase their access and rights in extracting state forest as crucial part to overcome poverty and environmental problems. Compared to the past, current forest management policy or well-known as *pengelolaan hutan bersama masyarakat* (PHBM) offers larger opportunities to the participation of forest communities in managing forest state area under partnership regime. This policy, however, still triggers a serious conflict since the deforestation rate in Java has taken place until now. It was recorded that there are 2,500 hectares annually, or 0.2 percent of the whole Indonesia's forest, which is 1.17 million hectares annually from 2003 to 2006. Currently, the annual rate of deforestation in Java from 2007 to 2010 has reached 10,000 hectares and has become a serious threat to people and protected wildlife on the island (forestry ministry quoted in the Jakarta Post, June 12, 2010). This situation has arisen a critical question on how effective the

implementation of PHBM can encourage local forestry management to stop deforestation rate.

Actual performance of management of local forestry resource, as described above, confronts an incredible challenge mainly goes to the proponents of community-based management (Awang 2008; Venema and van Den Bremmer 2006). Their claim that local people are able to manage natural resource based on local values and indigenous knowledge actually can not be applied in all situations. A study of Awang (2008) found that some forest communities in Java are successful in managing their private forest by taking economic and environmental balance into account for their livelihood improvement. But the situation in private forest area is different from that in state forest area. Management of state forest area tends to be an arena of politically competing interests (Borrini-Feyerabend 2000; Rosyadi 2005).

A current study of Pambudiarto (2008) reported that although PHBM policy provides benefits to forest communities, it has not been followed by the improvement of forest village community

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organization (LMDH or *lembaga masyarakat desa hutan*) performance. Low capacity of LMDH, low achievement of LMDH's main goal, lack of public service provided by LMDH to its members, elitist board of LMDH, and low managerial skill are some indicators of actual LMDH performance description. Other study of Rosyadi (2009) found that most of forest-dependent people did not have informal rule to prevent illegal cutting as well as systematic social sanction for those who illegally cut the forest trees. Meanwhile, the SFC used to frighten people by illegal forest cutters when they had a strong power. But the situation has changed with opposite. Illegal cutters still freely go to the forest without worrying supervisory activities of the forest rangers.

Although there have been some studies concerning local forestry management in Java, they still ignore the role of multiple stakeholders involved in the implementation of PHBM policy. In line with the new governance model, PHBM policy actually opens more access to broader public participation. The policy idealizes collaboration, interaction and partnership among government, private, civil society

organization and forest community in the process of forest resource management. The previous studies did not aware of the dynamic collaboration which has been built between forest communities and multi stakeholders. Information of this study will be essential for policy makers in increasing collaboration of forest management at the local level. Therefore, this study aims to examine the co-production process of local forestry management involving multi stakeholders to improve sustainable forest resource utilization.

Methods

Banyumas forest communities under Banyumas Timur SFC was purposively selected to be an in-depth multi case study since it managed 161 forest villages. The research sites were selected in three forest villages, namely: Kalisalak, Sokawera, dan Serang. These three forest villages represent highest to lowest level of forest management respectively based on interview with the SFC. In addition, the research site shows the dynamic process of local

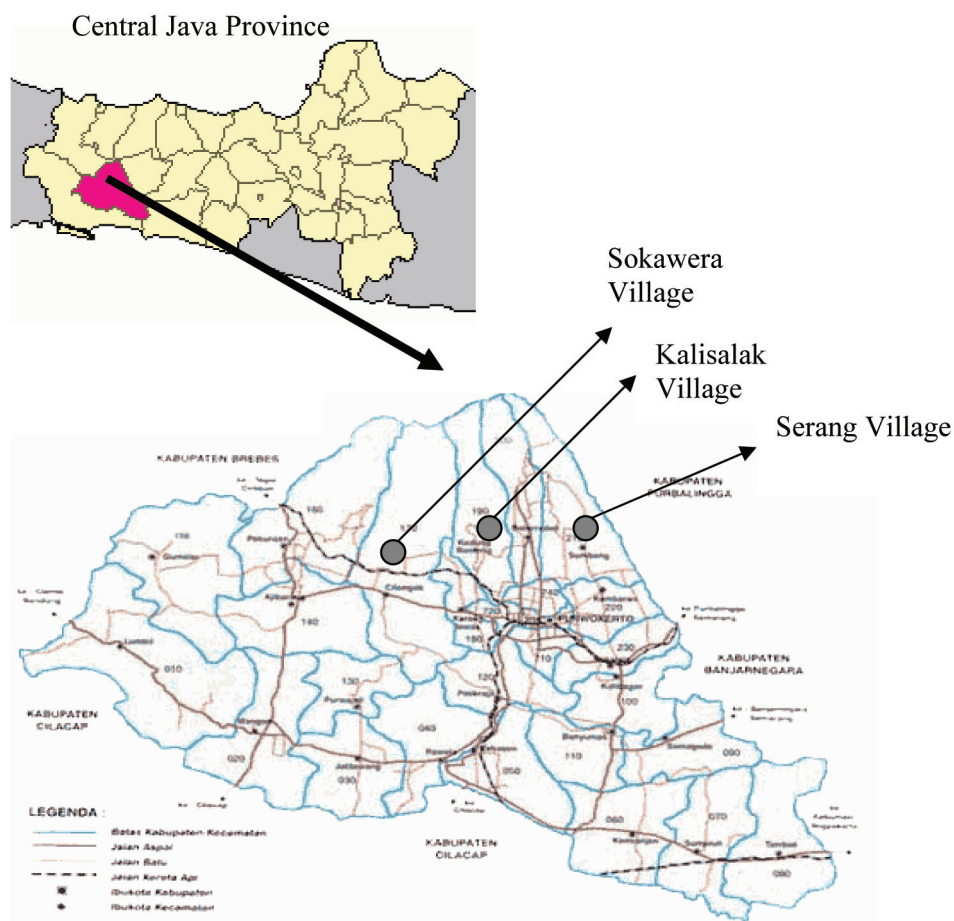


Figure 1.
The Map of Research Location in Banyumas District
Source: www.banyumaskab.go.id

forestry management with the dual objective of improving forest communities' welfare and forest sustainability after the implementation of PHBM policy.

Various methods of data gathering are applied to obtain convincing answers to the question on the co-production process of local forestry management in overcoming poverty and environmental issues. They were in-depth interview, focus group discussion, and observation. The intention was that some facets that are insufficiently taken into account by one method will be included in the examination by applying another method. In-depth-interview with informants intended to give a detailed description of forest-co management implementation processes going on at local level concerning the role of multi stakeholders and their contribution to forest and community welfare improvement. Informants purposively selected in this study include leaders of forest villagers, forestry organization, and SFC officers. Focus group discussions were held to confirm and deeply explore findings obtained from the field both observation and in-depth interview in front of informants. Data collection was undertaken from April to June 2010. The data has been analyzed in thematic and comparative technique to build explanation on collaborative forest management at local level.

Results

The SFC is the single manager of all production forests and most protection forests on Java. As a parastatal organization within the Ministry of Forestry, the SFC's mandate is to manage forest cover and watershed, to generate state revenue through forest production and to stimulate the improvement of rural welfare through forest-related earning opportunities. In response to the forestry crisis indicated by the increasing deforestation rate and forestry conflicts, particularly in Java, the head of the surveillance board of the SFC issued a policy on forest co-management or PHBM in April 2001. The objectives of the policy were as follows (SFC 2001) (1) to increase the responsibility of the SFC, local forest communities and related-parties towards the sustainability of forest resource benefits and function; (2) to improve the role of SFC, forest community and related-parties in forest resource management; (3) to integrate forest resource management activities into regional development fitting the social and dynamic conditions of the forest communities; (4) to improve the quality of forest resources based on

regional characteristics; (5) to increase the income of the SFC, forest community and related-parties simultaneously.

Basically, PHBM policy is oriented towards improving the economic development of forest villagers on the basis of the principles of mutual benefit, reinforcing and support. In achieving this aim, forest villagers are entitled to plan PHBM activities together with the SFC and other stakeholders. Investors may also be invited to invest their capital together with the villagers' and the SFC's capital in PHBM activities (SFC 2001).

In 2007 PHBM "plus" policy has been issued by SFC to improve the previous PHBM policy. The purpose of PHBM plus policy is not only to improve forest sustainability and forest villager welfare, but also to realize developed and prosperous forest village based on cooperation among stakeholders (local government, SFC, forest community, and other organizations). Thus, PHBM activities are expected to generate more benefits particularly to improve the economy of rural forest.

In conclusion, collaborative forest management has become a central and promising forestry program in Indonesia's reform era. However, since the increasing deforestation rates around 10,000 hectares per year, this trend has challenged the current policy. As part of relevant comparison, we use the case of Banyumas forest community to analyze the collaborative process of forest management at the local level.

PHBM policy has facilitated the formation of community-based forestry organization or so-called '*Lembaga Masyarakat Desa Hutan*' (LMDH). Farmer group-based forest management in the past policy is no longer effective; therefore it has been shifted from group to village level through PHBM policy. It is also expected that public participation in forest management will be broader and attract more resources than before. At initial stage, LMDHs were forced by SFC to fulfill pre-requirement of PHBM program. Under this program, all cooperation between SFC and forest villagers must be under legal contract so that SFC requires LMDH at law recognition. Due to using top-down approach, management of LMDH was not supported by insufficient personnel and other resources. As a consequence, many LMDHs are inactive and relying on SFC intervention. However, some LMDHs as Kalisalak and Sokawera villages are experiencing leadership changes from the first to second generation. Such a leadership change seems to encourage new leadership of LMDHs to develop network with other stakeholders beyond SFC or

forestry-related institution. They even are successful to attract external resources to run their activities such as illiteracy alleviation, life skill program, and livestock development. Some LMDHs also seems to build co-activities program in development of ecotourism potency in their village area. Some forestry forum and LMDH association at the level of Central Java Province have been developing since 2007 to strengthen efforts of empowering forest people.

The Interaction of Multi Stakeholders in Supporting Local Forestry Management and Their Strategies

Under forest co-management approach, the SFC puts LMDHs as partners in managing forest resources. This situation differs from the past practices. The SFC also encourages LMDH to invite other stakeholders to participate in PHBM activities. In many occasions, some SFC officers remind LMDH organizers not to rely on SFC assistance. Instead, LMDH should open external agencies to contribute their resource for the successful of PHBM policy. This situation also represents that SFC has recognized the importance of extending partnership with other stakeholders. This concern is described by an informant of SFC:

“The formation of LMDH aims to improve the cooperation between forest people and SFC. Although it is facilitated by SFC, it is expected to extend cooperation not only with SFC but also with other stakeholders. Thus, all potential stakeholders would participate in state forest management. The SFC is now no longer able to act alone to manage the state forest. LMDH should be autonomous. But, it is also strategic partner of SFC.”

Tabel 1 shows the interaction of multi-stakeholders in supporting local forestry management and strategies that have been applied to develop environmental awareness towards forest. In Kalisalak village, forest people seem to be successful to attract more participation of external agencies than other selected forest villages. Various natural and economic potencies in Kalisalak have been utilized as productive capital. Water resource supply provided by rivers flowing from the state forests is converted into electric energy to fulfill thirty eight rural household needs with roughly 100 watt per household. The management of electricity in the village Kalisalak applies micro hydro energy. Thus,

many people realize the importance of protecting forests for forest products and elements in the forest community through regular monitoring. Members of LMDH who also work for SFC as latex tapping labor are utilized to monitor the damar (*Sorea Javanica*) trees as they go inside the state forest area. Since 2008 there are no longer forest tree thief activities. In addition, the role of traditional leaders in the management is very influential in the customary law. Elders from the Kalisalak village ordered that water resources from water springs should be maintained. They also keep the myths that the existence of large trees which has a fountain is the heritage of ancestors and therefore it should be kept maintained. In the rural context, this way is delivered in a simple language that it will be understood by rural traditional people.

Efforts to extend networking are not only conducted at the regional level, but also at central level. In 2007 LMDH Madyolaras was successful to get livestock assistance from Directorate of Animal Husbandry due to intensive communication with agricultural extensionist and local animal husbandry agency. The amount of livestock assistance is around 83 tails of cows and 123 tails of goats. To keep the livestock, people plant the grass in the forest for feeding material. This program, thus, are successful in integrating forest inside and outside forest activities. An informant of LMDH leader describes as follows:

“We forbid our members to cut the forest trees. Why? Because the forest trees can play the ecological role as water catcher. We need water for activating our generator turbine, irrigating our *sawah* (wetland), and fulfilling our daily household need. We’ve just allowed our members to plant grass and fruit crops for our livestock and generating additional income. The formation of livestock keeper group is aimed to reduce our dependency on the forests especially timber product and at the same time it can provide alternative job for increasing our income.”

In connection with the implementation of PHBM policy, the SFC provides technical and program assistance. Forest people, who still have extra energy, can work for the SFC as latex tapping labor. Under this policy, SFC gives regular profit sharing from latex selling outcomes to LMDH in order to support financial capacity of the local organization. Therefore, SFC and LMCH can develop mutual trust since they need each other in managing the state forest. Interestingly, relationship between forest

Table 1.
Involvement of multi stakeholder under PHBM Policy

Village	Stakeholders	Kind of Cooperation	Observed Output Indicators
Kalisalak	Provincial and Regency Water Resource Management Agency, village government, LMDH Madyolaras	Installation of electric generator (micro-hydro) relying on power of river flow from the forest.	Building people's awareness of the important role of forest as water suppliers. Designing regular monitoring activities by forest labors to keep the forest trees from illegal loggers. Maintaining myth of forest as the ancestor's heritage by rural elders.
	Directorate of Animal Husbandry, LMDH Madyo Laras	Livestock (cow) assistance for LMDH	Building people's awareness of the important role of forest as grass suppliers for feeding livestock (non-timber production provider). Providing livestock keeping activities for reducing people's forest dependency.
	SFC, LMDH Madyo Laras, local government, forestry extensionis	Technical and program assistance	Increasing mutual trust and help between SFC and forest people in collaborative forest management.
Sokawera	Directorate of Non Formal Education, LMDH Argowilis	Program assistance for increasing literacy and life skill.	Building awareness of the importance of education for poverty alleviation.
	SFC, LMDH Argowilis	Technical and program assistance	Increasing mutual trust and help between SFC and forest people in collaborative forest management. Designing informal rules (" <i>Kesepakatan Larangan</i> ") to stop forest tree theft activities.
Serang	SFC, LMDH Gunung Slamet	Technical and program assistance	Increasing mutual trust and help between SFC and forest people in collaborative forest management.

Source: results of interview and observation

villagers and SFC supervisor is getting better now. In the past, their relationship was worst and distrustful.

There is slightly different from Kalisalak's experience, forest people in Sokawera village are more interested in integrating non formal education into PHBM program implementation. According to the leader of LMDH Argowilis, the state forest resource adjacent with Sokawera village provides only less benefit for rural people in terms of labor provision and agro-forestry practices. In addition, it is also difficult to access the state forest location. It can take one and half hour to achieve the forest location with hilly character. Therefore, most of people are reluctant to go inside the forest unless some who have bad intention to steal the forest trees. Based on this situation, empowerment strategy that LMDH Argowilis has chosen is developing non-formal education program in cooperation with directorate of non-formal education. The main aim of this program is to increase education level and provide training for improving new skill of rural people. Through this program, people are expected to get employment beyond forestry sectors. So far, this program seems to work.

In relation with implementation of PHBM policy, the process of cooperation with SFC in forest management has been developed in a dynamic context. As reported in the study of Rosyadi (2005),

at the initial phase of PHBM implementation relationship between Sokawera villager and SFC was worst. It was because of people distrust on SFC as happened in the past time where there were a bad treatment of SFC to the forest farmers as low wage labor and accusation of stealing the forest trees by SFC to forest villagers. Currently, the SFC has changed their officers orientation. Partnership and equality principles are developed by the SFC as a foundation of cooperation with forest communities. One of the results from this cooperation is the issuance of agreement of *larangan* generated by Sokawera community to keep their forest from human destruction).

Compared to other two villages, Serang has not cooperated yet with some other stakeholders except the SFC. Through PHBM program, Serang's LMDH has tried to control the development of vegetable plantations which expand to state forest area. Not only for the well-developed technique of vegetable plantation, its commodity's value is also promising in the limited owning of land. This situation led to development of vegetable plantation to the forest area which has turned it into agriculture land.

One of significant efforts conducted by LMDH's figures is using persuasive approach to community. By means of such strategy, problem solving over the conversion of the land has not put community

as guilt agent, but made them as active subject in problem solving. The leader of Serang's LMDH described his strategy to address the land conversion problem as follows:

"It is difficult to stop community to expand their plantation area to state forest with a sudden policy. What people have done with development of vegetable plantation is only for the shake of their welfare. They are different with wood's thief. The wise approach to overcome the problem is controlling their location to anticipate the wider expansion to another forest. Not by expelling them out of the forest. As part of the LMDH's committee, we are trying to design productive activities out of forest area, like cattle farm. The climate here is suitable for cattle breeding. However, we have not found a good partner who can cooperate in such a program. For the time being, we control community not to destroy forest with SFC.

The cases above show that interaction between local institutions and interest groups has run well in managing forest resources. Community has tried to cooperate with other groups as part of their strategy. In Kalisalak, strategy to manage water resources, poultry breeding, utilization of forest resources (non-wood commodities, such as latex tapping and grass planting) has become a favorite choice which is suitable with the potency and people's need. In Sokawera, the development of non-formal education has been strategic way to alleviate poverty and decrease exploitation of forest resources. In this context, strategy of forest utilization has been focused on maintaining forest existence as part of water catchment area rather than for the need of exploitation. Contrary to other two villages, Serang

still endeavors to cooperate with other groups. Cooperation with the SFC has been conducted to control the development of vegetables in certain points which are located at state forest area. This strategy has been chosen until the new strategy found to decrease the people's dependence on the forest. This study also found that forest management which involved community has run well. It encouraged a good cooperation among local institutions, SFC, community and stakeholders. Thus, collaborative approach has replaced a single player strategy implemented by the SFC in the past.

Contribution of Cooperation to Poverty Alleviation and Forest Sustainability

Some cases in the field show that cooperation with stakeholders has contributed significant aspect to the poverty alleviation and the existence of forest resources. Table 2 demonstrates that Kalisalak has intensive and various cooperation with stakeholders compare to other villages. Ability to cooperate with other groups can not be separated with the leadership pattern of LMDH's committee in promoting inclusive and active strategy to communicate with other groups. The realization of cooperation is intended to optimize all potency in the village. Therefore, the existing resources can be converted into productive capital like water resources converted into electric energy.

Due to the poverty alleviation, what happened to Kalisalak shows that cooperation with *Perhutani* (SFC) and stakeholders are intended to provide income both directly and indirectly. Good cooperation has directly provided labor market as latex-tapping labor and livestock keeper. Meanwhile, electricity which has been indirectly provided from cooperation

Table 2.
The contribution of collaborative forest management to poverty alleviation and forest sustainability

Village	Stakeholders	Contribution
Kalisalak	National Applied Technology and Research Agency, village government, LMDH Madyolaras	Household electricity need can be fulfilled, reduction in firewood consumption, state forest in good condition.
	Directorate of Animal Husbandry, LMDH Madyo Laras	Employment provision, more income for people, reduction in forest dependency.
	SFC, LMDH Madyo Laras, forestry extensions, local government	Employment provision as latex (resin) tapping labor, more alternative income, more intensive forest monitoring, ecotourism plan.
Sokawera	Directorate of Non Formal Education, LMDH Argowilis	Intensifying youth activities, More options to look for job, reduction in forestry employment.
	SFC, LMDH Argowilis	Employment provision as forest farmer, more additional income, controlling illegal logging and firewood collection.
Serang	SFC, LMDH Gunung Slamet	Employment provision as forest farmer, more additional income, controlling illegal farming for vegetable crops.

Source: results of interview and observation

with Provincial and Regional Water Management Agency has decreased people's dependence over the oil energy for daily lighting. The importance of water supply to generate turbine has encouraged people to protect forest resources from destruction. This attitude has contributed significant role in the forest preservation both rational action (intensive regular monitoring) and non-rational action such as myth about forest as the place of their ancestors.

In Sokawera, non-formal education programs like eradication of illiteracy and skill training have resulted various activities of youth. It can change the work orientation of youth beyond the forest sector. Besides, the achievement in making conducive environment of Sokawera is their success to design agreement to maintain forest from illegal logging and other destructive efforts. This practice is so interesting that could not be found in other forest-based villages. This study found that intensity of cooperation in education has encouraged people of Sokawera to design a rational approach and legally binding to prevent and overcome forest problems.

Contrary to other two villages, economic contribution which is gained directly by people of Serang from management of forest resources through utilization of forest area for agriculture. Good climate to plant vegetables is insufficient. It make dependence of community is still high. Together with Perhitani, Serang's LMDH has tried to control the plantation of vegetables in forest area with persuasive approach. This is a wiser way than expelling people from forest area. As a result, condition of state forest which borders with Serang is categorized as not good status due to the ongoing expansion of agriculture in the forest area.

Discussion

The case study shows that local forestry management will develop properly by strategic efforts through involving multi stakeholders in managing state forests. The SFC is currently not able to work alone. In new governance perspective, this situation represents that collective power has shifted central authority in addressing public administration issues (Bourgon 2009). Monopoly by government in state forest management has been proved to be ineffective to improve people welfare as well as forest sustainability (Mukerji 2003; Prasad 2010). A current study in Indonesia has shown that participatory approach in forest management through activities such as determining the plant

location, defining a plan for the plant, seedbed, and teaks planting has generated double impacts: people income improvement and forest sustainability (Nasikh 2009). In long run, as this case studies found, application of co-production in forest management will provide better access to gain more productive resources for rural people through development of various forms of cooperation without depending on the SFC assistances.

As the analysis shows, those who are successful to gain more cooperation with stakeholders will get more opportunities to overcome economic and environmental problems. By attracting more stakeholders in local forestry management will increase more external resource flowing to rural areas (Debnarayan & Nimai 2006). Such a strategic effort can be used optimally by various natural resources existed in the rural areas to provide alternative energy, increasing knowledge, and providing more job opportunities. In long term development of cooperation with various stakeholders in forest management can play an important role in overcoming poverty alleviation and deforestation problem.

Important determinants of successful local forestry management consisted of local leadership, changes in the SFC officers orientation and role, cooperative attitudes and behavior of forest villagers. The changing forest management policy from centralized to decentralized has created a conducive climate at the local level in developing leadership of community-based organization. Some studies show that a favorable policy atmosphere can encourage local initiatives and empowerment in improving natural resource condition (Helling et al 2005:7; Ali, 2010:6). Local leaders who have capacity to serve their member interests played a strategic role in increasing collective power of rural people. This can generate a positive effect on attitude and behavior of forest villagers towards the importance of cooperation in maintaining and managing the state forest.

An interesting aspect of the case is differences in the performance of local forestry management to overcome poverty and environmental problems which are depended on intensive networking and cooperation rather than the existing local organization. The more stakeholders they have, the more cooperation they gain. This shows that it is crucial to enhance forestry governance at the local level.

Conclusion

The study shows that local cases can provide useful insight into the dynamics of forest management in the context of the new forest governance policy. Although rapid deforestation in Java still occurs, forest communities in some villages have been building their capacity to manage the state forest. The case study gives reason to hope that collaborative forest management is a promising approach, but it should be followed by application of partnership, equality, and guidance by the government. Finally, my case study indicates that collective power used by local organization in managing natural resource is an effective strategy to replace the dominant role of the government in past time.

Rural development programs especially in the context of forest management should be oriented to empower local potency and labor absorption. They can reduce people dependency on timber forest product. These programs, in long term, can enhance local economy and encourage rural autonomy that relies on local resource used in sustainable manners.

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