

ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT THROUGH OYSTER MUSHROOM CULTIVATION IN BUNUTIN VILLAGE, BANGLI REGENCY

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ABSTRACT

The agricultural sector in Bali is not only dominated by commodities such as rice, horticulture, and plantation crops but has also begun to develop toward modern agribusiness, one of which is the cultivation of oyster mushrooms (*Pleurotus ostreatus*). This study aims to analyze the role of oyster mushroom cultivation in enhancing the economic empowerment of the community in Bunutin Village, Bangli Regency. The background of this research stems from the condition of rural communities that largely depend on conventional agricultural sectors with relatively low income levels. Through the development of oyster mushroom cultivation, the community is encouraged to innovate in managing local resources productively and sustainably. The research method used is a qualitative descriptive approach, with data collection techniques including interviews, observations, and documentation involving oyster mushroom farmers, farmer group leaders, and village government officials. The data obtained were analyzed using data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion-drawing techniques. The results show that the oyster mushroom cultivation program in Bunutin Village has had a significant impact on increasing community income, expanding employment opportunities, and strengthening the entrepreneurial capacity of local farmers. This activity has also raised community awareness of the importance of agricultural diversification and the utilization of agricultural waste as an environmentally friendly growing medium. Furthermore, the support from the village government and assistance from academic institutions have contributed to strengthening the sustainability of this program. Thus, oyster mushroom cultivation has proven to be an effective strategy for **economic** empowerment in rural communities, particularly in Bali, which possesses favorable agroclimatic potential. Further development is expected to include business management training, innovation in processed mushroom products, and broader market access to create an independent and competitive village economy.

Keywords: *economic empowerment, oyster mushroom cultivation, Bunutin Village, sustainable agriculture, Bangli.*

1. INTRODUCTION

Agriculture is a sector that plays a vital role in supporting Indonesia's economy, especially in rural areas. The agricultural sector serves as the main pillar of economic development in Indonesia. However, in recent years, the interest of young generations in agriculture has tended to decline due to the perception that this sector is less promising and often associated with traditional forms of labor. This phenomenon raises concerns about the regeneration of farmers in the future. Innovation and diversification in agricultural enterprises are therefore essential to attract the interest of the millennial generation to actively engage in productive and sustainable agribusiness activities. Amid these challenges, various forms of modern agricultural innovation have emerged that are capable of drawing the attention and participation of young people in agribusiness — one of which is oyster mushroom cultivation. Oyster mushrooms (*Pleurotus ostreatus*) have a high economic value, a relatively short harvesting period, and a continuously increasing market demand at both local and national levels. Moreover, oyster mushroom cultivation does not require extensive land and can be carried out using simple technology, making it highly suitable for young farmers who are generally more adaptive to innovation and new technologies. Bunutin Village, located in Bangli Regency, Bali, is one of the rural areas where most residents rely on the agricultural sector as their primary source of livelihood. The community predominantly cultivates rice, vegetables, and plantation crops, yet the income generated from these conventional agricultural activities remains relatively low and unstable due to seasonal dependence and fluctuating market prices. This condition has encouraged local farmers, particularly the younger generation, to explore alternative agricultural enterprises that are more innovative and profitable.

In response to this, oyster mushroom cultivation has emerged as a promising alternative agribusiness in Bunutin Village. The local community has begun developing small-scale oyster mushroom production by utilizing easily available raw materials such as sawdust and agricultural waste. This initiative not only creates new economic opportunities but also promotes the use of environmentally friendly practices through the recycling of organic waste.

The agricultural sector is one of the main pillars of national economic development, particularly in rural areas. However, along with social and economic changes, many rural communities face limitations in developing competitive agricultural enterprises. One alternative that has recently gained attention is the cultivation of oyster mushrooms (*Pleurotus ostreatus*), which offers promising economic prospects and can be managed on a small to medium business scale. Rural economic development is an essential part of efforts to improve community welfare. One effective strategy is economic empowerment based on local potential, in which communities utilize their natural and environmental resources to increase income and economic independence. Economic empowerment is a process of enhancing the ability of individuals or groups to manage their economic potential in a way that promotes self-reliance and competitiveness. In the agricultural context, empowerment is carried out through improving skills, access to capital, technology, and market opportunities. Bangli Regency, as one of the agrarian areas in Bali Province, has significant potential for developing horticultural commodities, including mushrooms. Its cool geographical conditions and the availability of local raw materials such as straw and sawdust make this region suitable for mushroom cultivation. Through the development of oyster mushroom agribusiness, it is expected that the empowerment of millennial farmers can be achieved — not only by increasing income levels but also by strengthening regional food security and creating new employment opportunities in the agricultural sector.

2. RESEARCH METODOLGY

This study aims to examine the process of oyster mushroom cultivation and its impact on the economic empowerment of the local community in Bunutin Village, Bangli Regency. The research was conducted in Bunutin Village, located in Kintamani District, Bangli Regency. This area lies in a highland region characterized by cool temperatures and high humidity, making it an ideal environment for oyster mushroom (*Pleurotus ostreatus*) cultivation. The people of Bunutin Village take advantage of these natural conditions to develop oyster mushroom farming as a promising local agribusiness initiative. The research employed an empirical qualitative method. This approach focuses on examining real-life phenomena or situations in detail by collecting factual data and developing existing concepts. Data were obtained through field observation, interviews with local farmers, and documentation related to mushroom cultivation activities in the village. Bunutin Village has long been recognized as one of the oyster mushroom cultivation centers in Bali. The development of this agribusiness is supported by favorable climatic conditions and the initiatives of local farmers who have built mushroom houses (*kumbung*) and produce their own growth media (*baglog*). The expansion of oyster mushroom cultivation has the potential to serve as an economic empowerment strategy for farmer groups, particularly among millennial farmers seeking alternative sources of income beyond conventional agriculture.

3. RELATED RESEARCH

The agricultural sector in Bali is not only dominated by commodities such as rice, horticulture, and plantation crops, but it has also begun to develop toward modern agribusiness, one of which is oyster mushroom cultivation (*Pleurotus ostreatus*). Oyster mushroom farming has become a form of community economic empowerment, as it can be carried out with relatively small capital, limited land, and simple technology. Oyster mushrooms are a high-value horticultural commodity that thrive in cool, highland climates. This sector has increasingly attracted the interest of millennial farmers, as it can be integrated with digital innovation and value-added processing to create diversified agricultural products. Over the past decade, oyster mushroom cultivation has emerged as one of the fastest-growing agribusiness sectors in Bali Province. According to Suharto (2014), community empowerment encompasses three key dimensions: enabling (creating a supportive environment), empowering (strengthening individual and group capacities), and protecting (providing safeguards for vulnerable groups). These dimensions form the theoretical foundation for understanding how oyster mushroom

cultivation contributes to community economic empowerment in rural areas such as Bunutin Village, Bangli Regency.



Figure 1. *Capsicumannum* L
Source: Desa Bunutin, Bangli

In addition to the continuously increasing market demand, oyster mushroom cultivation is also considered environmentally friendly, as it does not require large areas of land and is well-suited to the highland climates of regions such as Bangli, Tabanan, and Buleleng. One of the main centers of oyster mushroom production in Bali is Bunutin Village, located in Bangli Regency. The growth medium (*baglog*) is made from sawdust, bran, and lime, which are easily available in Bali due to the abundance of the local wood industry (Suardana, 2021). Processed oyster mushroom products have received positive responses from local markets, creating opportunities for business diversification among rural communities. Program evaluations have demonstrated the success of the participatory approach in empowering local residents and provided recommendations for expanding this program to other regions, as well as establishing cooperatives to strengthen coordination and sustainability (Epi, 2024).

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Bunutin Village, located in Bangli District, is one of the areas with rich natural resources that support agricultural activities. Before the implementation of the oyster mushroom cultivation program, most of the villagers depended on traditional farming sectors such as rice, vegetables, and secondary crops. The community's income was generally low and unstable, as it relied heavily on planting seasons and fluctuating market prices. In addition, agricultural waste such as sawdust and straw had not been optimally utilized, resulting in underused local resources. The limited employment opportunities in the village also caused many productive-age residents to migrate to other areas for work. This situation contributed to low economic self-sufficiency and a lack of innovation in the local agricultural sector. However, since 2018, the community has started to develop oyster mushroom cultivation as an alternative to conventional farming. Based on interviews with the "Tirta Tani" farmer group, approximately 25 households are actively involved in mushroom cultivation activities. The average production reaches 40–50 kilograms per week, with a selling price ranging from Rp15,000 to Rp20,000 per kilogram. The oyster mushroom cultivation program in Bunutin Village is the result of a collaborative effort between the farmer group, the village government, and academic facilitators from universities in Bali. The program began with basic training on oyster mushroom cultivation techniques, baglog preparation, production management, and marketing strategies. Local raw materials such as sawdust, rice bran, and lime are used as the mushroom growing medium. The production process is carried out in simple mushroom houses (*kumbung*), which were built through a community-based self-help system. Furthermore, the farmer group established a cooperative marketing system to distribute harvested mushrooms to traditional markets, restaurants, and grocery stores in Bangli and surrounding areas. This activity has created new economic opportunities, particularly for housewives and village youth who previously did not have permanent employment. As a result, oyster mushroom cultivation has not only strengthened community income but also fostered social participation, entrepreneurship, and sustainable local development in Bunutin Village.

Community members in Bunutin Village play an active role in the maintenance of baglogs, harvesting, and marketing of oyster mushrooms to both traditional markets and restaurants in Bangli and Gianyar. In addition to increasing income, these activities have created new employment opportunities for housewives and village youth, particularly in baglog production, harvesting, packaging, and sales. Consequently, the program has directly contributed to reducing unemployment and enhancing household economic self-reliance in Bunutin Village. The role of oyster mushroom cultivation in economic empowerment lies in its ability to increase household income by providing additional earnings from the sale of fresh mushrooms and processed mushroom products. This business also generates new job opportunities for young villagers. Through training provided by the Department of Agriculture and local universities—such as Dwijendra University, Udayana University (UNUD), and the Agricultural Development Polytechnic (Polbangtan)—farmers have gained new skills and knowledge in baglog sterilization techniques, mushroom house management, and digital marketing. The strengthening of farmer groups and micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs) through mushroom cultivation has encouraged the formation of farmer cooperatives, which help improve the bargaining position of farmers within the agribusiness value chain. Oyster mushroom cultivation has also become an innovation platform for millennial farmers, as it can easily be integrated with social media marketing and online pre-order systems. From a social and economic perspective, this activity has opened new income sources for local farmers, with additional monthly earnings from mushroom harvests. It has also created new job opportunities for youth, especially because oyster mushroom cultivation requires limited land area and can be carried out at home. Farmer groups in Bunutin have now achieved greater economic independence, as they can produce their own baglogs and distribute their products to markets in Bangli, Gianyar, and Denpasar. The development of processed mushroom products has also led to innovative creations such as mushroom chips, mushroom floss, and mushroom satay, which are popular in tourist markets. Challenges in Oyster Mushroom Cultivation Despite these positive developments, several challenges remain in the oyster mushroom cultivation program in Bunutin. These include limited initial capital for expanding baglog production and mushroom houses (kumbung), fluctuating prices of raw materials such as sawdust and bran, variable seed quality, and contamination risks during the cultivation process. Moreover, marketing channels remain simple, as most sales are still conducted through local collectors, and there is a lack of modern sterilization equipment, which hinders large-scale production.

5. CONCLUSION

Oyster mushroom cultivation in Bunutin Village has proven to be an effective and sustainable form of rural economic empowerment. This initiative has successfully increased community income, created new employment opportunities, and optimized the utilization of local resources. The program serves as a tangible example of community-based agricultural innovation, supported by favorable environmental conditions, strong community participation, and continuous guidance from the local government and academic institutions. The success of oyster mushroom cultivation demonstrates that sustainable agricultural innovation can serve as a new agribusiness icon for Bali, one that is environmentally friendly and capable of empowering the younger generation. Through this activity, local residents have been able to create new sources of income, expand job opportunities, and develop entrepreneurial skills leading to greater economic self-reliance. Moreover, oyster mushroom cultivation has contributed to the optimal and sustainable use of local resources, particularly through the use of agricultural waste such as sawdust and straw as eco-friendly growing media. Support from the village government, farmer groups, and universities has strengthened the program's sustainability and enhanced community capacity in professional agribusiness management. Therefore, oyster mushroom cultivation in Bunutin Village can be considered an effective model of rural economic empowerment, capable of promoting economic independence and improving the quality of life in Bali's agroclimatically rich regions. To further enhance the impact and sustainability of oyster mushroom cultivation as an economic empowerment initiative, several recommendations can be made:

1. Facilitate access to microfinance and modern equipment – The government should provide easier access to micro-capital and assist farmer groups in acquiring modern sterilization tools to increase production efficiency and product quality.
2. Establish a Mushroom Farmers' Cooperative – The formation of a "Bunutin Oyster Mushroom Cooperative" is recommended to strengthen farmers' bargaining positions and streamline distribution channels.

3. Continue collaboration with universities – Strengthen partnerships with higher education institutions such as Dwijendra University, Udayana University (UNUD), and Polbangtan for ongoing research, training, and technology transfer in cultivation and business management.
4. Enhance digital marketing strategies – Encourage farmers, especially the younger generation, to use social media platforms and e-commerce systems for product promotion and online sales.
5. Promote value-added product development – Support innovation in processed mushroom products (e.g., mushroom chips, satay, and floss) to increase profitability and expand into tourism markets.

By implementing these recommendations, oyster mushroom cultivation in Bunutin Village has the potential to become a **sustainable, community-driven agribusiness model** that contributes significantly to Bali's rural economic resilience and food security.

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