

Regional Economic Development Planning Based On Agriculture, Forestry And Fisheries In The Framework Of Reducing Poverty Levels In The Districts/Cities Of West Nusa Tenggara Province In 2019-2023

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ABSTRACT

This research is motivated by the substantial contribution of the agriculture, forestry, and fisheries sectors to the Gross Regional Domestic Product (GRDP) of West Nusa Tenggara (NTB) Province, at 22–23%, which has not been accompanied by optimal poverty reduction. This study aims to analyze the potential of these three sectors and formulate an effective regional economic development strategy for poverty reduction. The research used a descriptive qualitative approach through in-depth interviews, observations, and documentation studies of regional planning documents. The results indicate that the potential of the primary sector has not been optimally utilized due to low added value and minimal downstreaming. Furthermore, policy implementation remains hampered by limited infrastructure, data, and human resource and technological capacity. The strategies required include modernizing the primary sector, strengthening cross-sector coordination, and accelerating downstreaming to increase added value and community income.

INTRODUCTION

In essence, every individual is born with the same right to welfare, but the reality shows a significant gap in welfare due to differences in family economic backgrounds. This gap triggers a vicious circle of poverty, where the incompetence of the previous generation limits the vertical mobility of the next generation. To break this chain of accumulative imbalance, planned and effective regional economic development planning is absolutely necessary (Mahi, 2018; Sjafrizal, 2014). Regional economic development should ideally be directed at optimizing the unique potential of the region, increasing job availability, and alleviating poverty, especially in underdeveloped regions.

Ideally (*das sollen*), West Nusa Tenggara Province (NTB), through its 2019-2023 Regional Medium-Term Development Plan (RPJMD), has established the vision of "NTB Gemilang." One of its main pillars rests on strengthening the primary sector (agriculture, forestry, and fisheries), which geographically and sociologically forms the foundation of the livelihoods of the majority of local communities. The agricultural sector (rice, corn, soybeans,

and horticulture) absorbs more than a third of the workforce. Meanwhile, the marine sector, with its superior commodities such as grouper and snapper, not only has high economic value for export but also maintains the ecological balance of coral reefs. The combined contribution of these primary sectors consistently contributes 22-23% to the Gross Regional Domestic Product (GRDP) of NTB Province.

However, the facts on the ground (*das sein*) demonstrate a development paradox. Although the primary sector (agriculture, forestry, and fisheries) dominates the macroeconomic structure, its contribution to the real welfare of the community remains very low. The poverty rate in West Nusa Tenggara Province remains above the national average (ranging from 13.97% to 14.56% in the 2019-2023 period). Regional disparities are also striking, with North Lombok Regency recording a poverty rate approaching 29%, followed by Bima, Dompu, and East Lombok at 12-16%. These new pockets of poverty are located in the agricultural and fisheries base. The root of the problem lies in low economic added value due to minimal downstream product processing. Most leading commodities (such as corn, seaweed, and fish) are sold as raw materials, resulting in potential *multiplier effects* and Regional Original Income (PAD) flowing outside the region. This is compounded by the dominant labor absorption in the low-productivity informal sector, and the trend of forest area destruction exceeding the rate of rehabilitation.

Faced with the gap between abundant natural resources and the reality of structural poverty, the West Nusa Tenggara (NTB) Provincial Government is being challenged to reformulate its economic development planning. Regional economic transformation can no longer be driven by annual bureaucratic activities that are *business as usual* . Instead, it requires a strategy of modernization, institutional strengthening, and the creation of inclusive, local commodity-based added value.

The novelty of this research lies in its approach which simultaneously unites three dimensions: (1) Integration of the agriculture, forestry, and fisheries sectors as a unified framework for local resource-based development; (2) Functional emphasis of development planning on strategic outcomes of poverty reduction; and (3) Use of a qualitative-participatory approach to explore narratives, stakeholder perceptions, and the dynamics of policy implementation at the grassroots level (such as the phenomenon of the "sakap" profit-sharing system for farmers and the welfare of fishermen).

Based on this urgency, this study aims to examine in depth two main problem formulations:

1. What is the potential of the agriculture, forestry and fisheries sectors in the regional economy that can contribute to reducing poverty levels in NTB Province?
2. What development strategies should be integrated into regional economic development planning to accelerate poverty reduction in NTB Province?

Theoretically, this study is expected to enrich the literature on primary sector-based regional economic planning in the context of poverty alleviation. Practically, the results are intended as academic references and transformative policy recommendations for local governments in formulating more equitable and sustainable development policies.

METHODOLOGY

Research Approaches and Types

This research applies a qualitative approach with an interpretative (postpositivistic) paradigm to deeply understand the phenomena of development planning and poverty alleviation based on the natural context and subjective meanings constructed by participants. Its exploratory and flexible nature is considered relevant to explore unstructured regional economic policy issues without involving statistical measurements, where the researcher acts directly as the main instrument (human instrument) in the field. In line with Saldana's (2011) view, this qualitative approach includes various naturalistic methods in social studies that produce non-numerical data such as interviews, field notes, document analysis, and visualizations that are then analyzed narratively and interpretively.

Furthermore, Creswell (2012) emphasized that qualitative methods are an exploratory process to understand the meaning of actions or problems experienced by individuals or groups through the formulation of open-ended questions, field data collection, inductive analysis, and the formulation of narrative results from five main traditions, namely phenomenological research, grounded theory, ethnography, case study, and narrative research. In order to capture this social reality, the study refers to the thoughts of Moleong (2016) and Sugiyono (2024) who state that qualitative studies aim to describe objective reality as perceived by subjects based on their behavior, motivation, and views on phenomena through integrated data collection techniques in order to find authentic meaning or patterns.

Location, Time, and Data Source

This research was conducted in West Nusa Tenggara (NTB) Province. The location was chosen based on strategic considerations that NTB Province has significant primary sector natural resource potential, but still faces real challenges in the form of poverty, social welfare issues, and regional economic inequality. The research locus was specifically directed at the Regional Development Planning Agency (Bappeda) of NTB Province as the agency that carries out the macro planning coordination function, as well as technical sectoral agencies including the Agriculture and Plantation Service, the Environment and Forestry Service, the Maritime Affairs and Fisheries Service, and the NTB Provincial Food Security Service. The research implementation time was designed adaptively until all scientific stages were declared complete, including administrative preparation, field data collection, critical analysis, and the preparation of the final report.

The data sources in this study were determined using purposive sampling, a method of deliberately selecting informants based on specific expertise considerations and criteria (Sugiyono, 2024). Informants were selected because they possessed sufficient authority, insight, and experience as structural officials and functional planners in relevant agencies. The research data were categorized into two types: primary data and secondary data. Primary data were obtained directly through active interaction in the form of in-depth interviews and field observations to capture the actual situation and build a relationship of trust (*rapport*) with informants. Meanwhile, secondary data were collected indirectly through documentary studies of official agency documents, development achievement reports, policy archives, regional regulations, scientific journals, and relevant official statistical data to enrich the analytical perspective.

Data Collection Instruments and Techniques

Referring to Sugiyono's (2024) thinking, in qualitative research, the researcher (human instrument) acts as the primary instrument. Before entering the field, researchers conduct

independent validation, which includes mastery of qualitative methods, broad insight into the substance of economic planning, and academic and logistical readiness. Researchers function independently in determining focus, selecting informants, collecting, assessing quality, analyzing, and interpreting data. Data collection techniques are carried out in natural settings using a multi-technique method that focuses on three main pillars: direct observation, in-depth interviews, and documentation (Marshall & Rossman, 2016).

In detail, observation is applied to capture empirical reality and understand the meaning behind the behavior of subjects in the field. According to Nasution (1988), observation allows scientists to capture reality objectively, while Marshall (1995) adds that this technique helps understand the behavior and hidden meanings behind the actions of participants. Sanafiah Faisal (1990) classifies observation into participatory, overt-covert, and unstructured forms, where the participatory variety is distinguished into passive, moderate, active, and full forms (Spradley in Stainback, 1988). As a complement, in-depth interview techniques are used to obtain substantive information related to the perceptions, experiences, and beliefs of informants that cannot be observed visibly (Esterberg, 2002; Stainback, 1988). Finally, documentation studies are applied by collecting records of past events, both in the form of written documents (policies and regulations) and visual documents (photos and videos of activities) to strengthen the authenticity of the data (Bogdan; Sugiyono, 2024).

Data Analysis Techniques

Qualitative data analysis is defined as the process of systematically searching for and compiling data from interviews, field notes, and documentation through organizing into categories, describing units, synthesizing, and drawing conclusions (Sugiyono, 2024). This analysis is conducted interactively and continuously from the beginning of data collection until the data reaches saturation. Methodologically, this process refers to the interactive and flow models of Miles and Huberman (1984, 2014), which divide it into four cyclical stages:

1. **Data Collection:** Exploring the research object extensively to record all field information comprehensively.
2. **Data Condensation:** The process of sorting, focusing, simplifying, and abstracting raw data from interview transcripts. At this stage, researchers also conduct anticipatory data reduction after establishing the conceptual framework and research questions.
3. **Data Display:** Arranging condensed data into narrative form, tables, or matrix charts to make it easier to understand the situation and plan the next action.
4. **Conclusion Drawing and Verification:** Formulating initial conclusions flexibly which are continuously verified with valid evidence in the field until they produce solid final findings in the form of new descriptions or relationships between variables.

Data Validity Testing

Data validity is a crucial foundation for ensuring that research results truly reflect objective reality on the ground, with no discrepancies between what researchers report and empirical reality (Sugiyono, 2024). Given the plural and subjective nature of qualitative reality as a result of social construction, validity testing is conducted through a comprehensive approach encompassing four main criteria:

1. **Credibility Test:** Conducted to ensure the reliability of the data through extended field observation techniques to build rapport, increase persistence through consistent observation, and conduct triangulation (triangulation of sources, methods, and time) to

cross-check the consistency of information. Researchers also conducted negative case analysis of conflicting data, included reference materials (recordings and photos), and conducted member checks in the form of discussions of interview transcripts with informants to align perceptions.

2. **Transferability Test:** This is conducted by presenting a rich and detailed contextual description (thick description) in the report. Researchers prepare a structured transcript so that readers or other researchers can assess the feasibility and relevance of the findings' application to different social or environmental conditions.
3. **Dependability Testing:** Focuses on the consistency of research when repeated by others. Researchers audit the entire research process, from problem formulation to conclusion drawing, and use a solid theoretical foundation as a guide for data collection to ensure the research steps remain organized and traceable (audit trail).
4. **Confirmability Test:** Measures the level of objectivity of the research to ensure that the final results are derived purely from field data and free from subjective researcher bias. This test is conducted by returning the processed data and conclusions to the informant for transparent and accountable review of their feasibility.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Overview of Regional Conditions

1. Geographical Conditions

West Nusa Tenggara Province is an archipelago located in the south-central part of Indonesia, geographically located between 115°46'–119°05' East Longitude and 8°10'–9°05' South Latitude. It borders the Java Sea and the Flores Sea to the north, the Indian Ocean to the south, Bali Province to the west, and East Nusa Tenggara Province to the east. Its strategic location gives it a crucial position both nationally and regionally.

The province of West Nusa Tenggara covers an area of approximately 49,312 km², consisting of 40% land and 60% water. The province encompasses two main islands, Lombok and Sumbawa, as well as hundreds of smaller islands. With a coastline of 2,333 km, NTB has significant coastal potential for development. The topography of West Nusa Tenggara Province is quite varied, ranging from lowlands to mountainous areas. Mount Rinjani and Mount Tambora are two key geographic landmarks that influence climate and land use. Land in the highlands is generally used for agriculture, while coastal areas thrive in the fisheries and tourism sectors. However, the vast distribution of islands and diverse geographic conditions pose challenges in the equitable distribution of infrastructure and public services, especially in remote areas. Therefore, geographical aspects and regional shape are crucial for equitable development processes and improving community welfare.

2. Demographic Conditions

Residents play a dual role in regional development, serving as both actors and beneficiaries. The population of West Nusa Tenggara Province increased from 5,070,385 in 2019 to 5,560,287 in 2023, with an annual growth rate of approximately 1.62% per year. This growth is influenced by birth rates and migration. Population distribution is uneven, with more than 70% concentrated on Lombok Island, which covers only a quarter of West Nusa Tenggara Province's land area. In contrast, the larger Sumbawa Island is inhabited by less than a third of the population. This imbalance creates significant pressures in Lombok, such

as water shortages, land degradation, and the conversion of forests to residential or agricultural land.

Mataram City has the highest population density, at 7,301 people/km², followed by Central Lombok and East Lombok. Conversely, Sumbawa and Dompu have much lower population densities. Central Lombok is experiencing the fastest population growth, while Mataram City is experiencing slower growth. The sex ratio in West Nusa Tenggara Province is relatively balanced, indicating stable demographic potential. Despite its strong demographic capital, pressures on densely populated areas need to be addressed immediately. Equitable development, the opening of new areas, and environmental protection are key to making population dynamics a driver of sustainable prosperity throughout West Nusa Tenggara Province.

3. Condition of Regional Development Indicators

Regional development cannot be assessed solely from economic growth, but also from the social welfare aspect of the community. In West Nusa Tenggara Province, development progress can be analyzed through two main groups of indicators: economic indicators and social indicators. Economic indicators include economic structure, economic growth, prosperity, and investment efficiency (Incremental Capital-Output Ratio/ICOR). Meanwhile, social indicators include the Human Development Index (HDI), income inequality (Gini Ratio), poverty rate, and unemployment. All of these indicators are interrelated and serve as a crucial basis for evaluating development effectiveness and formulating regional policy directions. The following is a description of each indicator based on data presented by the Central Statistics Agency of West Nusa Tenggara Province.

1) Regional Economic Structure

Over the past five years, the economic structure of West Nusa Tenggara Province has been dominated by the agriculture, forestry, and fisheries sectors. Although its contribution to GRDP declined from 22.96% in 2019 to 21.79% in 2023, this sector remains the backbone of the regional economy due to its vast coverage and high labor absorption capacity, particularly in rural areas.

Furthermore, the mining and quarrying sector contributes significantly, but its contribution is volatile, depending on global commodity price dynamics and production volumes. This sector recorded its highest contribution of 19.92% in 2022, but declined to 17.53% in 2023. Despite its high value in GRDP, this sector plays a smaller role in employment.

The trade and construction sectors also contributed significantly, at 14.18% and 10.18%, respectively, in 2023, reflecting growth in consumer spending and infrastructure development. However, the manufacturing sector still showed a low contribution, at only 4.47% in the same year. This indicates that the potential for processing agricultural, fishery, and forestry products has not been optimally utilized. To increase added value and expand employment opportunities, developing a downstream sector based on agro-industry, modernizing production equipment, and strengthening market access are priorities. This strategy will make the primary sector the main driver of sustainable and inclusive economic growth.

2) Regional Economic Growth

The economic growth of West Nusa Tenggara Province during the 2019-2023 period exhibited fluctuating dynamics. In 2019, the economy grew by 3.90%, but contracted to -0.62% in 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Recovery began in 2021 with growth of 2.30%, which then jumped to 6.95% in 2022. However, in 2023, growth slowed again to 1.80%, indicating external pressures and internal structural challenges.

The agriculture, forestry, and fisheries sector showed relatively stable, albeit low, growth. After contracting by -0.41% in 2020, the sector grew by 2.19% in 2022 and then slightly declined to 2.05% in 2023. This stability demonstrates the primary sector's resilience to short-term shocks, although structural challenges such as low productivity and access to technology still need to be addressed. Conversely, the mining sector experienced highly volatile growth, reaching 27.66% in 2020 but dropping drastically to -10.39% in 2023. Dependence on this sector presents a challenge due to its uneven impact on public welfare.

To promote inclusive economic growth, the West Nusa Tenggara Provincial Government can direct policies toward agricultural revitalization, irrigation and agricultural infrastructure development, and facilitating access to capital for smallholder farmers. Furthermore, supply chain digitization and agricultural product downstreaming programs are crucial strategies for creating equitable economic growth.

3) Regional Economic Prosperity Level

Per capita income in the West Nusa Tenggara Provincial Government showed an upward trend in most districts/cities during the 2019-2023 period. Mataram City recorded the highest per capita GRDP in 2023 at IDR 51.64 million/year, while West Sumbawa Regency recorded the highest absolute figure at IDR 193.80 million/year. However, the figures in West Sumbawa reflect inequality as most of this value comes from the capital-intensive mining industry with minimal local labor. Conversely, regions such as East Lombok and Central Lombok still record per capita incomes below IDR 20 million/year, indicating low economic productivity per individual. To increase prosperity equitably, it is necessary to encourage industrialization of the agricultural and fisheries sectors through product processing, development of agro-industry MSMEs, and empowerment of the local economy. This strategy will increase added value and create broader and more sustainable employment opportunities.

4) Incremental Capital-Output Ratio (ICOR)

The ICOR value of West Nusa Tenggara Province during the 2019–2023 period showed sharp volatility. In 2020, the ICOR reached -52.07 due to the impact of the pandemic, which suppressed economic productivity. This condition improved in 2021 and 2022, with ICORs of 14.70 and 4.67, respectively, but then jumped again to 18.42 in 2023 due to large investments in smelter projects that had not yet produced direct output. Investment efficiency is a crucial aspect of inclusive growth. Therefore, the government needs to ensure that investment is directed towards sectors with a broad impact, such as basic infrastructure, job training centers, and local economic development. Furthermore, bureaucratic reform, regulatory simplification, and digitalization of permits are needed to improve the investment climate. Local community participation in development planning is also crucial for direct investment benefits.

5) Human Development Index

The Human Development Index (HDI) of West Nusa Tenggara Province increased from 68.14 in 2019 to 72.37 in 2023, reflecting progress in education, health, and living standards. Mataram City recorded the highest HDI in 2023 at 81.15, while North Lombok Regency had

the lowest at 68.02. The inter-regional HDI gap remains a major challenge. The government needs to strengthen basic education programs, health services, skills training, and MSME-based economic empowerment, especially in underdeveloped areas. Collaboration between the government, the private sector, and the community is needed to promote equitable human development.

6) Gini Ratio

The Gini ratio for West Nusa Tenggara Province decreased from 0.379 in 2019 to 0.375 in 2023, indicating a gradual improvement in inequality. However, variation between districts/cities is quite high. Mataram City and Bima City recorded relatively high inequality ratios in 2022, while North Lombok showed the lowest and most stable level of inequality. Strengthening sectors that directly impact low-income communities, such as agriculture, forestry, and fisheries, is a key strategy for reducing inequality. Equitable distribution of development outcomes will be more effective if based on local potential and implemented through an inclusive approach.

7) Poverty Level

The percentage of the poor in West Nusa Tenggara Province decreased from 14.56% in 2019 to 13.85% in 2023. However, regional disparities remain significant. Mataram City and Bima City recorded poverty rates below 9%, while North Lombok's rate remains very high, reaching 25.80%. Poverty reduction can be achieved through strengthening local sectors, particularly agriculture, fisheries, and forestry. Support in the form of training, access to technology, financing, and product processing will increase the added value and income of the poor.

8) Unemployment Rate

The Open Unemployment Rate (TPT) in West Nusa Tenggara (NTB) decreased from 4.22% in 2020 to 2.80% in August 2023. The TPT in rural areas (2.32%) was lower than in urban areas (3.27%), indicating that the agriculture and fisheries sectors remain the primary absorbers of labor in rural areas. However, many jobs in these sectors remain informal and less productive. Therefore, modernization of the primary sector through access to technology, vocational training, and the development of agro-maritime-based education needs to be intensified to create a skilled and innovative workforce.

Based on this description, overall, the economic development of West Nusa Tenggara Province has shown positive progress over the past five years, with stable macroeconomic growth and improved public welfare. However, major challenges remain: regional inequality, low value-added in the primary sector, and high poverty rates in some areas. Strengthening the agriculture, forestry, and fisheries sectors is a key strategy because they reach vulnerable groups and absorb a large workforce. With an integrated, region-based approach, development in these sectors will not only drive economic growth but also build a more resilient and equitable social structure.

Informant Characteristics

Informants play a crucial role in research because they are the primary source of information directly related to the object and subject of study. In this study, the researcher selected informants using a purposive sampling technique. Purposive sampling is a method of selecting data sources based on specific considerations (Sugiyono, 2018), such as individuals deemed to possess in-depth knowledge of the required information or strategic positions,

enabling them to provide comprehensive and relevant information to the research topic. Initially, the researcher identified the Head of the Regional Development Planning Agency (Bappeda) of West Nusa Tenggara Province as the key informant. This selection was based on the consideration that the agency's leadership possesses strategic authority in the policy formulation process, as well as a comprehensive understanding of the direction and implementation of regional development planning.

However, during the fieldwork, a direct interview with the Head of Bappeda could not be conducted. This was due to time constraints and the high intensity of activities of the agency's leadership. Based on applicable administrative procedures, the interview request letter submitted by the researcher to the Head of Bappeda was then assigned to a functional planning official deemed competent and relevant to the research substance. Following up on this disposition, the researcher conducted an interview with the designated functional planning official. In the context of this research, the informant was considered representative, given his role directly involved in the technical planning process, from program formulation and planning data analysis to the implementation of regional development policies. This change in key informants did not necessarily reduce the quality or depth of the data obtained. Instead, interviews with functional planning officials provided more technical and operational information, thereby enriching the research analysis. To ensure the validity and reliability of the data, the researcher also conducted triangulation through documentation studies and other relevant supporting sources.

Key informants are defined as individuals directly involved in development planning activities that are the focus of this research, namely development planning based on the agriculture, forestry, and fisheries sectors, which are the responsibility of the West Nusa Tenggara Provincial Technical Service. Therefore, key informants in this context are those who have a technical and in-depth understanding of the issues being studied. A similar approach was applied in determining key informants. Initially, the researcher identified three key informants: the Head of the West Nusa Tenggara Provincial Agriculture and Plantation Service, the Head of the West Nusa Tenggara Provincial Environment and Forestry Service, and the Head of the West Nusa Tenggara Provincial Maritime Affairs and Fisheries Service. The selection of these informants was based on the consideration that regional apparatus leaders have strategic authority in the policy formulation process, as well as a comprehensive understanding of the direction of planning and implementation of development programs in their respective sectors.

However, during the fieldwork, direct interviews with the three agency heads could not be conducted. This was due to time constraints and the high level of activity of each agency head. Based on the applicable administrative mechanism, the interview request letters submitted by the researcher to each agency head were then assigned to officials/staff members with the competence and relevance to the research substance to follow up on the request. Following up on these dispositions, the researcher then conducted interviews with the appointed officials/staff members at each regional government agency. In the context of this research, these informants were still considered representative and highly relevant, given their direct involvement in the technical planning process, from program development and sectoral data analysis to the implementation of development policies. This change in key informants did not necessarily reduce the quality or depth of the data obtained. Instead, interviews with

these officials/staff members provided more technical and operational information, thereby enriching the empirical analysis in this study.

From the data above, there is one key informant, namely IK01 as a Functional Planner at the Bappeda of West Nusa Tenggara Province. The main informants consist of 5 (five) people: IU01 is the Secretary of the Service at the Agriculture and Plantation Service of NTB Province, IU02 is the Program Staff of the Secretariat of the Service at the Agriculture and Plantation Service of NTB Province, IU03 is the Functional Planner at the Environment and Forestry Service of NTB Province, IU04 is the Manager of Marine and Fisheries Services at the Marine and Fisheries Service of NTB Province and IU05 is the Manager of Marine and Fisheries Production at the Marine and Fisheries Service of NTB Province.

Qualitative Analysis Results

1. Data Validity

The data in this study were obtained through triangulation techniques, namely in-depth interviews, observation, and documentation. Interviews were conducted with local government officials, particularly from the Regional Development Planning Agency (Bappeda) and the technical department responsible for the agriculture, forestry, and fisheries sectors. Informants were selected based on their direct involvement in the planning process, program implementation, and evaluation of regional development policies. The approaches used in this study were descriptive qualitative, which aimed to describe in depth the potential of the agriculture, forestry, and fisheries sectors in the regional economy and the development strategies implemented to reduce poverty in West Nusa Tenggara Province. The data obtained were analyzed by describing, interpreting, and linking them to the context of regional development policies.

2. Research Findings

Based on the results of interviews and data collection in the field, several main findings were obtained as follows:

1) Dynamics of Planning and Development Strategy in the Agriculture, Forestry, and Fisheries Sector

The regional development planning process for the agriculture, forestry, and fisheries sectors is carried out through the preparation of planning documents such as the Regional Medium-Term Development Plan (RPJMD) and the Regional Apparatus Strategic Plan (Renstra). This stage involves various stakeholders through participatory mechanisms, such as development planning meetings (musrenbang). In this process, local governments consider a number of indicators, including natural resource potential, the sector's contribution to GRDP (Gross Domestic Product), and the socioeconomic conditions of the community, including poverty levels.

Interview results indicate that the agriculture, forestry, and fisheries sector is a development priority because it is directly related to community welfare, particularly for low-income groups. Informant (A) stated that:

"Planning begins with the Musrenbang (Development Planning Meeting) and is then formulated into the RPJMD (Regional Medium-Term Development Plan). However, there are still challenges in the availability of accurate data as a basis for planning" (interview A, July 16, 2025).

In line with this, informants from the technical service (B) revealed that:

"The issue of poverty has been a primary consideration in program development. However, in practice, planning must still be adjusted to budget constraints and central government policies" (interview B, November 25, 2025).

These findings indicate that although development planning has involved various stakeholders and prioritized poverty, its implementation still faces several obstacles. Limited accurate data, suboptimal community involvement, and a mismatch between planning and actual needs on the ground are factors that impact planning effectiveness. Furthermore, planning flexibility is limited due to the influence of budget allocations and policy direction from the central government.

2) Program Implementation and Challenges in Poor Areas

In implementing development programs in the agriculture, forestry, and fisheries sectors, local governments have initiated various flagship programs, such as assistance with production facilities and equipment, training for farmers and fishermen, and the development of local resource-based businesses and farmer groups. These programs are primarily aimed at increasing production capacity and community incomes.

However, interview results indicated that program implementation still faces various obstacles, particularly in areas with high poverty rates. Some of the main obstacles identified include limited infrastructure, low human resource capacity, and limited access to technology and markets. These conditions have resulted in program implementation not being optimal across all regions. Informant (D) revealed that:

"Although there are quite a lot of available programs, their implementation in the field is often hampered by accessibility, particularly in remote areas. As a result, aid distribution is uneven" (interview D, November 24, 2025).

This indicates that geographic factors are a major obstacle to program implementation. Furthermore, problems in targeting also impact program effectiveness. Informant (C) stated that:

"Not all poor people are properly recorded, so there are still groups that have not been touched by the program" (interview C, 11-25-2025).

This situation is exacerbated by budget constraints, a lack of coordination between institutions, and suboptimal targeting mechanisms. Therefore, it can be concluded that although various programs have been implemented, their implementation remains incompletely effective and on-target, particularly in reaching poor communities in remote areas.

3) Institutions and Coordination in Program Management

From an institutional perspective, coordination between regional agencies in implementing development programs in the agriculture, forestry, and fisheries sectors has essentially been implemented. However, this coordination has not been optimal. Interviews indicate that there is still a tendency for sectoral differences between agencies, which has resulted in unsynchronized program implementation. Informant (A) stated that:

"Coordination has indeed been implemented, but it is still partial so that programs between regional devices have not been fully integrated" (interview A, 07-16-2025).

This indicates the persistence of sectoral egos, which are a barrier to achieving cross-sector synergy. On the other hand, the role of village governments is considered quite

strategic in supporting program implementation, particularly in directly reaching the community. Informant (D) emphasized that:

"The village government is the party closest to the community, so it has an important role in ensuring that the program is accepted and its benefits are felt by the community" (interview D, 11-24-2025).

Furthermore, collaboration with external parties such as the private sector, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and universities has begun to develop, although it is not yet evenly distributed and remains poorly structured. This situation indicates that institutional strengthening, increased cross-sectoral coordination, and the development of strategic partnerships are still needed for more effective and efficient program implementation.

4) Sector Potential and Downstream Development

The agriculture, forestry, and fisheries sector has significant potential to support the regional economy, particularly in creating jobs and increasing community incomes. Several subsectors considered to have superior potential include food agriculture, capture fisheries and aquaculture, and the use of non-timber forest products.

However, interview results indicate that this potential has not been optimally utilized, particularly in the downstream sector. Most products are still marketed as raw materials, resulting in relatively low added value. Informant (E) revealed that:

"The potential of the agricultural and fisheries sectors is quite large, but it has not been balanced by adequate processing of the results" (interview E, 11-21-2025).

This indicates that the low level of product processing is a major obstacle to increasing the sector's economic value. Efforts to promote downstreaming policies have actually begun by local governments. However, implementation still faces various obstacles, such as limited technology, access to capital, and the capacity of local businesses. Informant (F) stated that:

"Business actors have the desire to develop, but are constrained by limited capital and technology" (interview F, 11-21-2025).

Thus, it can be concluded that the development of downstreaming in the agriculture, forestry, and fisheries sectors still requires stronger support, both through increasing access to technology and capital, as well as through strengthening the capacity of business actors, so that existing economic potential can be optimally utilized.

5) Socio-Economic Impact on Society

Development programs implemented in the agriculture, forestry, and fisheries sectors have generally had a positive impact on increasing community incomes. However, this impact has not been felt evenly. Some communities, particularly those directly involved in production and processing activities, have benefited from the programs. In line with this, informant (A) stated that:

"There has been an increase, but it is not yet significant and has not been felt by the whole community" (interview A, 07-16-2025).

This statement indicates that while the program has contributed to increased income, its benefits remain limited. This situation indicates that there are still groups in society, particularly those classified as poor and vulnerable, who have not fully experienced the program's optimal impact.

In measuring program success, local governments generally use indicators such as increased revenue, reduced poverty rates, and increased sector productivity. However, in

practice, program evaluations still tend to focus on output aspects, such as the number of programs implemented, and do not fully focus on outcomes, particularly the tangible impact on poverty reduction. This was conveyed by informant (B), who stated:

"Assessment of success is still seen from the number of programs, not yet from their impact on poverty reduction" (interview B, 11-25-2025).

Furthermore, the sustainability aspect of the program is also a challenge that requires attention. The dependence of some communities on government assistance indicates that self-sufficiency has not yet been fully achieved. Therefore, efforts are needed to improve the program's effectiveness, both by expanding its reach to poor communities and by strengthening the outcome-based evaluation system. This way, development goals, particularly poverty alleviation, can be achieved more optimally and sustainably.

6) Evaluation and Development Recommendations

The monitoring and evaluation (monev) system for development programs in the agriculture, forestry, and fisheries sectors has essentially been implemented periodically by regional authorities. However, its implementation still faces various limitations, particularly related to data availability, the indicators used, and human resource capacity. Informant (A) stated that:

"Monitoring activities have been carried out, but have not been carried out optimally due to these limitations" (interview A, 07-16-2025).

In practice, program evaluations still tend to focus on administrative aspects, such as activity implementation and budget absorption, rather than measuring substantive impacts on community welfare. This situation results in a program's effectiveness in achieving development goals, particularly in improving welfare and reducing poverty, not being able to be measured comprehensively.

Nevertheless, several best practices have been identified, particularly in community empowerment programs based on farmer and fisherman groups. This approach has proven effective in increasing community capacity, participation, and independence in managing productive activities, thus potentially becoming a model that can be replicated in other regions.

Based on research findings, strengthening accurate data-driven planning and increasing community participation are key areas of focus. Furthermore, coordination and synergy between regional agencies need to be continuously improved to ensure more integrated program implementation. Developing downstream processing of superior regional products is also crucial for increasing economic added value, which needs to be supported by increased public access to technology and capital. Furthermore, monitoring and evaluation systems need to be geared toward an impact-based approach so that program success is measured not only by output but also by its contribution to sustainable community well-being.

Overall, these findings confirm that strengthening downstreaming, increasing human resource capacity, and developing data-based planning are strategic steps that need to be taken to increase the effectiveness of development in the agriculture, forestry, and fisheries sectors.

Discussion

This discussion integrates the research findings with theories of economic and regional development, as well as relevant previous research. Furthermore, the discussion is explicitly directed at answering the research problem formulation and achieving the research objectives,

specifically analyzing the role of the agriculture, forestry, and fisheries sectors in reducing poverty in West Nusa Tenggara (NTB) Province.

In general, research results indicate that the agriculture, forestry, and fisheries sector holds a highly strategic position within the regional economic structure. This sector is a major contributor to Gross Regional Domestic Product (GRDP) and absorbs a significant workforce. However, this significant role has not been fully equated with a reduction in poverty levels. This situation indicates a gap between existing economic potential and the effectiveness of implemented development strategies. Conceptually, this situation reflects the difference between actual conditions (*das sein*) and the desired ideal conditions (*das sollen*).

1. Sector Potential and Its Contribution to Poverty Reduction

The research results show that the agriculture, forestry, and fisheries sectors are the base sectors in the NTB economy. This is in line with the economic base theory proposed by North (1955), which states that the base sector plays a major role in driving regional economic growth through the multiplier effect. This finding is also consistent with research by Alwi et al. (2023) which emphasized the importance of leading sectors in regional development, and Riyadi and Andri (2015) who found that the agricultural sector has a high Location Quotient (LQ) value as a base sector.

However, the dominance of this sector has not yet significantly reduced poverty. This finding aligns with the findings of Hermawan (2012) and Sihombing and Bangun (2019), which show that the agricultural sector does influence poverty but cannot automatically reduce it without appropriate policy support. From the perspective of Todaro and Smith (2015), this indicates that economic growth is not yet inclusive, as the increase in sector output has not fully benefited the poor.

Furthermore, these limitations are closely related to low added value due to minimal downstreaming, limited public access to development programs, inter-regional disparities, and low human resource quality. Thus, despite this sector's significant economic potential, its contribution to poverty reduction remains structurally suboptimal.

2. Development Planning: Participatory but Not Yet Fully Data-Driven

From a planning perspective, research results indicate that the development planning process has been implemented through formal mechanisms such as development planning meetings (*musrenbang*), the development of the Regional Medium-Term Development Plan (RPJMD), and strategic plans for regional apparatus. This aligns with Sjafrizal's (2020) perspective, which emphasizes the importance of community participation in the regional development planning process.

However, upon closer analysis, the quality of this participation remains limited and tends toward formality. This finding aligns with research by Ashari (2015), which shows that public participation generally occurs only in the initial stages, while strategic decision-making is still dominated by the government. This indicates that participation is not yet fully substantive.

Furthermore, the limited availability of accurate and integrated data is a major obstacle to planning. From Sjafrizal's perspective (2020), effective development planning must be based on accurate data (evidence-based planning) to allocate resources efficiently and effectively. Therefore, the current situation indicates that development planning in NTB still tends to be administrative in nature and has not fully functioned as a strategic instrument to address the real needs of the community.

3. Development Strategy and Implementation Gaps

Development strategies for the agriculture, forestry, and fisheries sectors have been formulated in various regional planning documents and implemented through programs such as production facility assistance, training, and community empowerment. However, the effective implementation of these programs still faces various challenges.

One of the main problems is the gap between planning and implementation on the ground. Development programs have not fully reached poor communities, especially in remote areas. Geographical barriers, limited infrastructure, and low human resource capacity are key factors contributing to this situation.

This phenomenon can be explained through Myrdal's (1957) theory of cumulative causation, which states that developed regions tend to develop more rapidly, while underdeveloped regions lag further behind. Furthermore, Hirschman (1958), using the concept of the backwash effect, also explained that uneven economic growth can negatively impact less developed regions. In this context, development in West Nusa Tenggara (NTB) still faces challenges in achieving equity and inclusivity.

4. Institutions and Development Coordination

The success of regional development is greatly influenced by institutional strength and effective intersectoral coordination. From Sjafrizal's perspective (2020), regional development must be carried out in an integrated manner through cross-sectoral coordination. However, research shows that coordination between regional agencies in NTB remains weak and tends to be sector-specific.

This situation prevents development programs from producing optimal synergistic effects. This finding aligns with Chang's (2016) perspective, which emphasizes the importance of institutional capacity in development, and Pritchett's (2020) perspective, which highlights the importance of bureaucratic quality in policy implementation. Furthermore, the participatory approach proposed by Chambers (1983) demonstrates that community involvement, particularly through village governments, has significant potential to support more effective and sustainable development.

5. Downstreaming and Economic Transformation

One of the main weaknesses in the development of the agriculture, forestry, and fisheries sector in West Nusa Tenggara (NTB) is the low level of downstream processing. Most products are still sold in their raw form, resulting in relatively low added value. This situation has limited the increase in community incomes.

From the perspective of economic transformation theory, this condition indicates that the structural transformation process has not been optimal. Lewis (1955) emphasized the importance of shifting from the traditional to the modern sector, while Rodrik (2017) emphasized the importance of creating productive jobs as the key to economic development. Furthermore, Harsono (2024) emphasized the importance of inclusive regional economic transformation in improving public welfare.

Furthermore, the concept of leading sectors proposed by Tarigan (2005) and Sjafrizal (2020) emphasizes the importance of forward and backward linkages between sectors. However, this study found that these linkages were still weak, resulting in the expected multiplier effect not being optimally achieved.

6. Impact of Multidimensional Poverty Programs and Approaches

In terms of impact, implemented development programs have shown uneven results and tend to be unsustainable. Program evaluations still focus on outputs, such as the amount of aid distributed, and do not fully measure outcomes or long-term impact.

From the perspective of modern poverty theory, poverty is not simply understood as a lack of income. Amartya Sen (1999) views poverty as a lack of capabilities, while the UNDP (2021), using its Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI) approach, emphasizes the importance of education, health, and living standards. Furthermore, Bappenas (2020) also emphasizes the importance of a cross-sectoral approach to poverty alleviation.

The research results show that communities remain dependent on government assistance, while access to programs is unequal. Furthermore, the long-term impact of development programs has not been significantly seen. This indicates that the development approach still tends to be assistance-based and does not fully promote empowerment.

7. Synthesis: The Gap between Das Sein and Das Sollen

Overall, the research results indicate a gap between actual and ideal development conditions. On the one hand, the agriculture, forestry, and fisheries sectors play a dominant role in the regional economy, but on the other hand, their added value remains low and has not significantly reduced poverty.

Development planning is still not fully data-driven, program implementation is uneven, and institutional coordination remains weak. Meanwhile, the ideal situation is development that is based on regional potential, inclusive, capable of driving economic transformation, and improving community welfare in a sustainable manner. This gap indicates that development in NTB is still in the transitional stage toward this ideal situation and has not yet fully functioned as an instrument of socio-economic transformation.

8. Strategic Implications of Development

Based on the overall discussion, it is clear that increasing development effectiveness requires strengthening data-based planning and regional potential, as emphasized by Sjafrizal (2020). Furthermore, the quality of public participation needs to be improved so that it is not only formal but also substantive in the decision-making process.

Cross-sector coordination needs to be strengthened to achieve integrated planning, while downstream development is a crucial step to increase the sector's added value. Furthermore, development approaches should be geared toward community empowerment, as emphasized by Amartya Sen (1999), and productive economic transformation, as proposed by Rodrik (2017). Furthermore, monitoring and evaluation systems need to be geared toward measuring outcomes and impacts, so that development is not solely oriented toward budget absorption but also toward significantly improving community welfare.

Overall, this discussion confirms that the agriculture, forestry, and fisheries sector has significant potential as a driver of regional development in West Nusa Tenggara Province. However, its contribution to poverty reduction remains suboptimal due to various structural, institutional, and policy constraints. Based on economic and regional development theory, a transformation in development planning and implementation is needed, moving toward a more data-driven, integrated, inclusive approach oriented toward improving community well-being in a sustainable manner.

Policy Implications

Based on the research findings, there are several policy implications that can be used as a basis for strengthening regional development strategies in West Nusa Tenggara Province, particularly in poverty alleviation efforts through the agriculture, forestry, and fisheries sectors.

1. **Structural Transformation Through Downstreaming:** Regional governments need to direct development policies toward structural transformation of the primary sector by strengthening downstreaming. This policy is crucial for increasing product added value, expanding the manufacturing industry base, and creating more productive and sustainable jobs.
2. **Strengthening Evidence-Based Policy:** Strengthening data-driven development planning by building an integrated and accurate sectoral data system is essential for improving program targeting accuracy and reducing the gap between planning and implementation on the ground.
3. **Cross-Sector Institutional Integration:** Development policies need to be directed at strengthening cross-sector coordination and institutional integration, given the persistent fragmentation of policies among regional agencies. An integrated development planning approach is crucial for increasing the effectiveness and efficiency of development interventions.
4. **Optimizing Targeting Mechanisms:** Regional governments need to strengthen the targeting mechanisms for poverty alleviation programs, especially in underdeveloped and remote areas, by ensuring that poor community groups are truly the main priority in the distribution of development programs.
5. **Increasing the Capacity of Local Human Resources:** It is necessary to increase the capacity of local human resources and institutions, through strengthening vocational education, training based on superior sectors, and empowering community business groups to be able to increase productivity and economic independence.
6. **Reformulation of the Monitoring and Evaluation System:** The policy monitoring and evaluation system needs to be reformulated from merely administrative evaluation to outcome and impact-based evaluation, so that development performance can be measured based on its impact on reducing poverty and improving community welfare.
7. **Implementation of the Empowerment-Based Development Approach:** Development policies need to place more emphasis on the empowerment approach than the short-term aid approach, in order to create sustainable development and reduce community dependence on government intervention.

CONCLUSIONS

Based on the results of the analysis and discussion, several conclusions can be formulated as follows:

1. The agriculture, forestry, and fisheries sector in West Nusa Tenggara Province holds a strategic position within the regional economic structure, as reflected in its contribution to Gross Regional Domestic Product (GRDP) and its role in absorbing labor, particularly among low-income groups in rural areas. However, the sector's economic potential has not yet significantly impacted poverty reduction. This is due to low added value due to limited downstream processing, limited access to technology and markets, and persistent

disparities in development between regions. Consequently, the sector's contribution to poverty alleviation remains structurally suboptimal.

2. The development strategy for the agriculture, forestry, and fisheries sectors has been formulated through regional development planning documents, such as the Regional Medium-Term Development Plan (RPJMD) and regional government strategic plans, using a participatory approach through development planning deliberation mechanisms. However, in its implementation, this strategy has not been optimal in supporting poverty reduction. This is characterized by the limited availability of accurate data as a basis for planning, suboptimal coordination between regional government agencies, limited fiscal capacity, and ineffective program targeting mechanisms. Furthermore, the monitoring and evaluation system is still dominated by an output-based approach, thus failing to reflect the substantive impact on community welfare.
3. Overall, there is a significant gap between the economic potential of the agriculture, forestry, and fisheries sectors and the effectiveness of the implemented development strategies. This gap reflects the fact that the development process in West Nusa Tenggara Province is still in a transitional stage, where structural transformation toward inclusive, value-added, and poverty-reduction-oriented development has not yet been fully achieved.

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