



Pentingnya Memperjuangkan Kedaulatan Pangan Bagi Petani Dan Rakyat Indonesia
The importance of fighting for food sovereignty for farmers and Indonesian people

**“Communicating Development”: an international audio series of AMARC
by JRKDem**

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The concept of food sovereignty first emerged during a meeting of farmers who formed in 1992 at the Congress of the National Union of Farmers and Livestock Owners (UNAG). These activities are coordinated by the farmers who spread from Africa, North America, Central and South America; Asia, the Caribbean and Europe.

Furthermore, in April 1996, the second meeting took place held in Tlaxcala (Mexico). From this meeting successfully formulated the vision, namely: "Food sovereignty is the right of every nation to maintain and develop their ability to produce the basic food with respect for cultural diversity and the production system itself. The community have a right to produce their own food in their region. Therefore, the food sovereignty is prerequisite to achieve genuine food security)." (Via Campesina, 1996).

In Indonesia, the concept of food sovereignty has officially become a destination and also an approach in the development of national food, as stated in Law number 18 of 2012 about Food, together with food self-sufficiency and food security. However, until this time the formulation and understanding of food sovereignty is still varied and less clear.

So today, we will discuss more about the meaning and importance of food sovereignty for our life with Dian Pratiwi Pribadi, the chairman of the institution KIBAR ([Kediri Bersama Rakyat](#)). Here are the results of our interview, happy listening.

Please introduce your full name and what is your organisation?

Insert 1 :

"My name is Dian Pratiwi Pribadi, commonly called Dian from KIBAR (Kediri Bersama Rakyat) institution."

Could you give a brief overview of KIBAR, the institution has concentrated on what issues?

Insert 2:

"In the beginning of KIBAR established in 2005, we had more activity in rural areas by learning together with the community of farmers, rural communities about sustainable agriculture, about rural government, how the involvement of women in rural and public discussion to increase their participation. We also often invited by our friends from women's movement network, so intentionally or unintentionally, we eventually got into the issue of violence against women and in Kediri, we also cooperated with the government to build the integrated services

center, although it also stumbling because the political will from the government is very minimum but at least we have two issues that (have been dealt with) by KIBAR."

Talking specifically about food sovereignty, could you share with the listeners and public why food sovereignty is important to be known and understood by the general public, especially farmers?

Insert 3:

"Food sovereignty is of course important, because food is a basic human need. What happened in Indonesia in the last decade is that food was trifled with and ignored from the beginning in production. The term goes from upstream to downstream.

The government itself also has the concept of food that I think is wrong. They use the term of food security..., it is not just the term that is wrong but the implementation is also wrong. In the next process, if I'm not wrong, it was started by the United Nations... they introduced the term of food sovereignty that make the context of the country territory more sovereign and independently to food.

So food in addition to more than just a basic human need, it also brings culture, bring livelihood, even the political system... it is also affected by food. So that lately, several multinational companies engage in food issues... Just about 10 companies dominate the world's food. In several studies, in fact that much poverty is caused, not because of the lack of food, not because of the lack of food production, but because access to food was not accepted by the people in need, because it's only controlled by companies that only focus on profit orientation, they do not care about what food would be appropriate for the people in need but more about what is most important for them, that they sell food and get the profit.

The food producer that is the most major is the farmer. We can see in Indonesia the condition of the farmers. The farmers have a large contribution and their services to produce food and to give to Indonesian people's lives, but their own lives are well below the poverty threshold. They produce the food but they do not get more advantage in the process of marketing. The other persons who get the biggest advantage are precisely the traders so, food sovereignty is important.

Data shows that starving in Indonesia was at 60% in the rural areas. With assumption that most (people in these areas) are farmers or farm laborers it was very ironic. So the solution to address these problems is food sovereignty. The food is produced from the region itself according to the needs of the area itself, does not need to look for outside intervention. (The cultures are produced) in accordance with the culture there and according to the environment and the ecosystem there.

Let's say we are talking about a village which is a small area of a State. So, that affects the future, no food shortages in the country itself. Within the scope of the village, their communities can meet their own food and do not need help from the outside, because the food of every society was certainly different from other societies, so it is not necessary the village forced with the same food. So, food sovereignty is not only that there is no hunger but also when food comes from domestic location or from the region itself. With local foods, there are more nutrients. Food is not just gorged but also nutritious.

Going back to the beginning of KIBAR, doing the community assistance or agricultural activities in the community and comparing with the current situation, what is the difference... has there been change or the situation is still stagnant?

Insert 4:

"To make a social change certainly not be easy moreover in this year we are still eleven years doing activity in the community, but at least talk about sustainable agriculture or organic farming which has broader aspects, not only for production but also for improving the welfare of farmers. I never calculate the quantity but at least, for example, there are 10 farmer groups of the 10's there were 1 or 2 farmer groups, and from 1 or 2 farmer groups that have 1 to 3

farmers who have applied the term of food sovereignty itself, thus they manage their land, either the paddy fields or gardens or those who's life is around the forest for the fulfillment of their food... that is healthy but they also sell for the other needs. The point is, already they reached their own food sovereignty. "

What efforts KIBAR has done to apply the food sovereignty concept in the community? For example, there is this idea to develop the local seeds, could you share something about this?

Insert 5:

"Talking about seeds, actually from the start as well but at first we spoke more broadly about sustainable agriculture... So, in a farming family, that they apply the organic farming system that all inputs of the production also come from their own environment... After KIBAR (started) doing advocate (work) to the seed farmer who are criminalized by a multinational company, we began to focus more our talks about seed sovereignty. In the process, finally we learned more about the seeds, we think it is also important. We want more focus because many other organizations are talking about sustainable agriculture; moreover KIBAR is also very well known to talk about the seed."

This condition is also an irony. East Java is the biggest corn producer in Indonesia but the corn which are used, ie the hybrids corn, that every farmers are planting, these corns they have to buy and also only a few kinds of varieties, so this is not good for the sustainability of the ecosystem. We want to turn on or preserve back the local seeds and also bring the culture of community which can survive more to any climate problems, social problems and so on. Actually, not just the seed is the origin of the plants but to bring all aspects of life ranging from politic, social-economic and culture."

How is the response of the community about the process of preserving and developing their own seeds?

Insert 6:

"Can't be blamed and can not be labeled negative as well to the farmers that it is not easy for them to use the local seeds in their farming because it is a betting if they lose then they can not eat and can not fulfill for their needs everyday so everything need a process. Actually we also have a strategy, at this time that could be expected to preserve the local seeds precisely the farmers in the upper middle class, they have a huge production capital so that for their lives has been suffice and still have funds that can be set aside."

For the development of this local seed, actually more for a social activity that can not be expected its profits to this day because it is difficult, condition of our environment was damaged so the local seed cannot survive in a damaged environment. Actually, the farmers themselves already know how to do natural farming, how the local seed but they could not avoid from the environmental conditions of community that force them to have practices of farming that are unsustainable and unhealthy.

Actually talking about the seed, if we go to the old peasant farmers, the farmer who is very experienced, their experiences, they really know. Actually the knowledge is not from us, from friends of KIBAR and the people we meet at the university, but actually from the farmers who are struggling daily in their paddy fields. Their knowledge is plenty, they just need to be woken up, driven, self motivated and maybe supported as to how they can do the farming practices, that exactly they know it's good but it's hard to release it. "

Perhaps (you can discuss) also the process, because of the soil conditions... such as soil that has been damaged by pesticides and then returns to an healthy condition... this process takes a long time, right?

Insert 7:

"In fact the important point of all it is the government policy, but to advocate the policies, (it is) needed extra energy and friends of KIBAR. For this time, we decided not to do it. So, (we are

involved) directly to farmers only, we start from the small things, that is like a small puzzle. We have confidence that if only the grassroots level while the government's policy not touched, then the tip ends of farmers remain miserable. Our strategy is like that. We measure the ability of our friends have not been able to advocate to government and while we are motivating the farmers to apply the environmentally friendly agriculture."

During this time, has KIBAR ever cooperated with the government or other agencies for example in developing sustainable agriculture or for efforts to come back to the food sovereignty?

Insert 8 :

"Cooperating in the sense that sharing something physically with them, there is nothing, maybe our cooperation such as discussions, held a workshop with the government. Many methods that we done are different so that is not connect in the real community , so we do with each our ways , this is in the local government level, in the central government we do through advocacy, KIBAR have networking with several organisations at the national level. In the central level we could pressure the principles that we want but if in the area do not do anything with reason according to the center policy. Personally the leaders of department at the local level are difficult to cooperate with outside parties."

Is there any success story from the community that can be shared with other farmers? (Anything to inspire) other farmers to move and follow what has been done?

Insert 9 :

"Actually, it is precisely our most major method. I said before that when friends of KIBAR haven't the skills or the knowledge, when there is success with farmers then we introduce them to other farmers (to reciprocate). So physically we only mediate and facilitate the process. It is also done through various media, leaflets, workshops and others. It's what we do, it's the main thing."

In three years, what is expected by KIBAR for food sovereignty issues and agricultural issue in general?

Insert 10 :

"Food sovereignty for Jokowi reign already sign in the vision and mission RPJMN in the nawacita (9 priority agendas) already mention of food sovereignty is quite correct but in practice up to the bottom is still much less understand, start of the definition, the concept until the practice. For example, to the local government, so it's also the one thing we can do, actually it is not difficult. Also, if we could have a discussion with the head of the villages and their staff to talk about food security, they can do by themselves in their areas, if we speak about food sovereignty from government aspect."

In reality, we want more focus on the seeds, make a seed bank and then network. There are many organizations that are involved together and campaign on preservation of the local seeds, we plant, we develop and then distributed to the public, either seed or crops. Provoking people to plant their own food, it's a small thing but I am sure if it's done continuesly, it would be great."

So far, what are the barriers or obstacles that have been considered very disruptive by KIBAR to the process of assistance or socialization of the rural community to get the food sovereignty?

Insert 11 :

"Speaking broadly, so talking about the capitalist economic system... our food is controlled by large corporate companies and they introduce food which is really unhealthy but wrapped in packaging that says healthy food and durable, produced hygienically but actually that is not healthy food. The healthiest food is food that is home-made, self-produced, so the community know from the beginning to the end."

If you cannot alone, make the scope of group or the village scope. The government was defeated by the financiers, so if judging from the experience of KIBAR, the barrier was very large because we are dealing directly with the companies when we are doing the advocates and the government cannot do anything. Because the companies were also a part of the government, as long as it does not violate the law it finish even though not only that with various schemes that make it easy and tantalize for farmers."

What messages KIBAR wants to convey to the listener, not only in the Kediri region but to farmers all over Indonesia who might be listening?

Insert 12:
"I want to focus on two groups, first to farmers in general: our expectations during this time that KIBAR (has worked), farmers can do as much as possible with their farming: that is environmentally friendly and also friendly to their own health begin from all the means of production, seeds, fertilizers and how they cultivate the paddy fields and gardens. Do not damage the environment; do the agro ecological ways and most importantly, the best outcome for the farmers themselves so the residents' farmer will be healthy.

For the general public, in order to purchase and consume the products of our farmers, do not buy food at the supermarket, do not buy packaged foods that look beautiful which is mass produced but (is full of preservatives) or, be in solidarity with the labor of workers who produce it because perhaps the company (does not respect the basic rights of its workers). Shopping in traditional markets, or your neighbor who is a farmer, we are better to buy their products because we know the goods which are produced, if it's healthy or not, so that as consumers of foods we also have to be smart."

Listeners, that is the sharing information and knowledge from Dian Pratiwi, a woman activist who concentrated on sustainable agriculture issues and the development of local seeds. Hopefully it will be



Thank you very much for your attention. I'm Noor Chasanah who guides this interview. I will withdraw from your listening room, greetings democracy.

This event is presented by the Community Radio Network for Democracy (JRKDem), in cooperation with AMARC and FAO.

"This segment is part of an audio series highlighting the importance of Communication as a major tool for Development. It has been produced with the support of the World Association of Community Broadcasters and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations."