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UTILIZING NARROW YARDS AS A FAMILY FOOD SOURCE: A CASE STUDY IN SUNGGAL DISTRICT

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Abstract

Utilizing small yards is one way to support family food security, particularly in areas with limited land. This study aims to analyze the level of utilization of small yards as a source of family food and the factors influencing it in Sunggal District. The research method used is a quantitative descriptive approach with data collection techniques through observation, interviews, and questionnaires with respondents who have small yards. The data obtained were analyzed using descriptive analysis with the help of percentages. The results show that the utilization of small yards in Sunggal District is still classified as moderate and not optimal. Most respondents have used their yards to grow food crops such as vegetables and medicinal plants, but their utilization is still simple and limited. The utilization of yards contributes to reducing household expenses and improving the quality of family food consumption. Factors influencing yard utilization include land area, level of knowledge and skills, availability of production facilities, community motivation, and government support. Based on the research results, efforts are needed to increase community capacity through counseling, training, and support for production facilities so that the utilization of small yards can be more optimal in supporting family food security.

Keywords : narrow yard, food security, family, land use, Sunggal

INTRODUCTION

Food is a basic need that is crucial for supporting the quality of life and well-being of society. The availability of sufficient, safe, and nutritious food is one of the main indicators of achieving household food security. However, continued population growth and the conversion of agricultural land to residential and industrial areas have led to a reduction in productive land, particularly in urban areas and buffer zones (Suryana, 2014). This situation demands alternative efforts to independently meet food needs at the household level. One solution that can be developed is utilizing home yards, including those with limited space. Small yards have the potential to be used as food production areas through the cultivation of horticultural crops, family medicinal plants, and small-scale livestock farming (Ashari et al., 2012). Optimal use of home yards not only increases food availability but can also help reduce household expenses and improve family nutritional intake (Rahayu & Prawiroatmodjo, 2005).

On the other hand, government programs such as the Sustainable Food Home Area (KRPL) or Sustainable Food Yard (P2L) have encouraged communities to be more active in utilizing their yards as a sustainable food source (Ministry of Agriculture, 2020). These programs aim to improve family food security while supporting diversified food consumption based on local resources. However, the implementation of these programs in various regions still faces several obstacles, such as limited community knowledge, lack of technical skills, and low awareness of the importance of yard utilization (Hidayati, 2016). Sunggal District, as a semi-urban area, has significant potential for developing the use of small yards. However, many yards remain underutilized and tend to be left empty or used for non-productive purposes. However, with the application of simple cultivation techniques such as vertical gardening, hydroponics, or the use of planting containers, limited land is no longer a major obstacle (Suhardjo, 2009). In addition to its role in meeting food needs, yard utilization also has positive social and environmental impacts, such as increasing family independence, improving environmental quality, and strengthening local food security (Purwantini et al., 2016). Therefore, a more in-depth study is needed on how communities in Sunggal District utilize small yards, including the potential and influencing factors.

This research is expected to provide a comprehensive picture of the level of utilization of narrow yards as a source of family food in Sunggal District, so that it can be a basis for formulating policies and community empowerment strategies to increase household food security.

RESEARCH METHODS

This research was conducted in Sunggal District, Deli Serdang Regency, North Sumatra. The location was selected purposively, considering the area's semi-urban characteristics with significant potential for utilizing small yards. The research period was January–February 2024. The research used was descriptive with a quantitative approach. This study aimed to describe the level of utilization of small yards as a family food source and the factors influencing it. The quantitative approach was used to obtain measurable data that could be analyzed statistically.
The population in this study was all households with yards in Sunggal District. The sample was determined using a purposive sampling method, selecting respondents with small yards and utilizing (or potentially utilizing) them as a food source. The sample size for this study was 30 respondents. The data types used in this study consist of primary and secondary data. Primary data was obtained through direct interviews with respondents using a structured questionnaire. Meanwhile, secondary data was obtained from relevant agencies, such as the Central Statistics Agency (BPS), the agricultural service, and relevant literature.

Data collection techniques included observation, interviews, and documentation. Observations were conducted to directly observe the condition of the yards and the types of plants cultivated. Interviews were conducted to obtain information on the level of yard utilization, the types of plants grown, and the challenges encountered. Documentation was used to support the data in the form of photographs and field notes. The data analysis technique used was quantitative descriptive analysis. The data obtained were analyzed using simple statistics, such as percentages and averages, to describe the level of utilization of small yards. Furthermore, the analysis was conducted to identify factors influencing yard utilization, such as land area, education level, knowledge, and availability of supporting facilities.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

1. Respondent Characteristics

Based on the research results, the majority of respondents in Sunggal District were of productive age, between 30 and 55 years old. The respondents' educational level was dominated by high school graduates, with a small proportion having higher education. The majority of respondents worked as housewives and informal sector workers. This condition indicates that respondents have sufficient potential time to engage in yard utilization activities. This characteristic aligns with research stating that the productive age group is more active in household resource utilization activities, including yards (Hidayati, 2016).

2. Level of Utilization of Narrow Yards

The research results show that the utilization of small yards in Sunggal District is still moderate. Some respondents have used their yards to grow food crops such as vegetables (chili, kale, spinach), family medicinal plants (ginger, turmeric), and potted fruit plants. However, there are still respondents who have not utilized their yards optimally.
The utilization of gardens is generally still simple, using polybags and pots. The application of technologies such as vertical farming and hydroponics is still limited. This aligns with research by Ashari et al. (2012), which states that yard use in the community is generally traditional and has not yet fully utilized technology.

3. Contribution of the Yard to Family Food Needs

Utilizing small yards has made a positive contribution to meeting family food needs, although it's not entirely sufficient. The harvest from the yard can reduce household expenses for daily vegetable purchases. Furthermore, the availability of fresh food in the yard also improves the quality of family consumption and nutrition. This aligns with Rahayu and Prawiroatmodjo's (2005) findings, which state that yards play a crucial role in providing food sources and increasing the diversity of household food consumption. Furthermore, yard utilization also contributes to supporting sustainable family food security (Purwantini et al., 2016).

4. Factors that Influence Yard Utilization

Several factors that influence the use of narrow yards in Sunggal District include:

1. **Land area** : Although limited, land area still influences the variety of crops cultivated.
2. **Knowledge and skills** : Low levels of knowledge are the main obstacle in optimizing yards.
3. **Availability of production facilities** : Access to seeds, fertilizers and planting media is crucial for successful cultivation.

4. **Public motivation and awareness** : Awareness of the importance of independent food is the main driving factor.
5. **Government support** : Programs such as P2L play a role in increasing community participation (Ministry of Agriculture, 2020).

This finding is supported by Suryana (2014) who stated that the success of household food security is influenced by internal and external factors, including access to resources and policy support.

5. Discussion

Research shows that small yards have significant potential as a source of family food, but their utilization is not optimal. This is due to limited knowledge and skills, as well as limited use of simple technologies. However, with the application of techniques such as vertical farming and hydroponics, small plots of land can be utilized more intensively (Suhardjo, 2009). Furthermore, yard utilization also has positive environmental and social impacts, such as increasing family independence and strengthening local food security. This aligns with the FAO (2013) report, which emphasizes the importance of a household-based approach to improving food security sustainably.

Thus, efforts are needed to increase community capacity through outreach, training, and support for production facilities so that the utilization of narrow yards in Sunggal District can be more optimal and sustainable.

1. Ashari, S., Saptana, & Purwantini, TB (2012). Potential and prospects for utilizing yard land to support food security. *Agro-Economic Research Forum* , 30(1), 13–30.

Conclusion

Based on research on the use of small yards as a source of family food in Sunggal District, it can be concluded that the community's yard utilization is still moderate and suboptimal. Most respondents have used their yards to cultivate food crops such as vegetables, medicinal plants, and fruit on a small scale, but some yards remain unused productively. Utilizing yards has been shown to positively contribute to meeting family food needs, particularly by reducing household expenses and improving food quality. However, this contribution remains limited due to limited land area and suboptimal management. Factors influencing yard utilization include land area, knowledge and skill levels, availability of production facilities, community motivation, and government support. With improvements in these factors, the use of small yards has the potential to be optimized as a source of family food.

Suggestion

Based on the research results, several suggestions that can be given are as follows:

1. **For the Community**
   Communities are expected to make optimal use of small yards by planting a variety of nutritious food crops. Furthermore, they need to improve their knowledge and skills through training or self-study on cultivation techniques for small plots.
2. **For the Government**
   The government is expected to increase support through extension programs, training, and the provision of production inputs such as seeds, fertilizer, and planting media. Strengthening programs such as the Sustainable Food Yard (P2L) also needs to be continued.
3. **For Further Researchers**
   Further research is expected to examine this in more depth using different methods, such as qualitative or experimental approaches, as well as adding other variables such as economic and social aspects in more detail.

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