



The Meaning and Role of BUMDes Muji Berkah in the Dynamics of the Socio-Economic Welfare of the Margorejo Village Community, Kendal

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Abstract: This study examines the operational management and socio-economic impacts of Badan Usaha Milik Desa (BUMDes) Muji Berkah in Margorejo Village, Kendal Regency. The research aims to identify key success factors of BUMDes innovation and analyze its social-economic contributions to community welfare. Using qualitative case study approach through in-depth interviews with BUMDes administrators, village officials, and community members, complemented by participatory observation and document analysis conducted during July-August 2025. The study reveals that BUMDes Muji Berkah successfully operates seven active business units including waste management, livestock, internet services, water supply, fish farming, and rice milling. Success factors include transformational leadership, adaptive capacity, and structural support from village government through formal legality and initial capital. The socio-economic impacts encompass job creation for 61 workers (permanent and seasonal), women's empowerment through PKK groups involvement, and strengthening community social cohesion. Despite operational success, challenges remain in financial documentation and seasonal business vulnerability. The study concludes that BUMDes success depends more on institutional governance and leadership rather than natural resource availability, providing a replicable model for community-based rural development.

Keywords: BUMDes, Village Economy, Community Empowerment, Rural Development, Transformational Leadership, Social Innovation.

Introduction

Rural economic development occupies a strategic position in Indonesia's national development. Following the enactment of Law Number 6 of 2014 on Villages, villages gained extensive autonomy to manage their economic resources, one of which was through the establishment of *Badan Usaha Milik Desa* (BUMDes/Village-Owned Enterprises). The government's commitment was demonstrated through a significant increase in village fund allocation from IDR 20.76 trillion in 2015 to IDR 71.19 trillion in 2020 (Badan Keahlian Sekretariat Jenderal DPR RI, 2021). This support resulted in a surge in the number of BUMDes

from 11,945 units in 2015 to 65,941 units in mid-2024 (Mendes PDTT, 2024), affirming systematic efforts toward community-based village independence.

Macroscopically, the presence of BUMDes is considered a positive policy achievement. Data from the Ministry of Villages PDTT in 2023 recorded more than 60 thousand active BUMDes absorbing more than 255 thousand workers (Wisanggeni et al., 2025). Villages with BUMDes also tend to have higher Village Development Index (*Indeks Desa Membangun/IDM*), supported by research findings showing that village fund allocation and *PADes* (Village Original Income) have positive effects on the Village Development Index in Gowa Regency (Iftitah & Wibowo, 2022). This

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improvement demonstrates BUMDes' potential as an *engine of growth* in rural economics.

However, behind this success narrative lies an operational paradox. BPKP data reveals that only 75.8% of BUMDes are active, while the rest are stagnant or non-operational (Khaerunnisa, 2024). Classic problems include unclear legal entity status, weak business planning, limited financial literacy, and governance vulnerabilities that lead to risks of fund misuse (Polidu, Nento, & Batu, 2025). Analysis shows that BUMDes management alone is insufficient without support for human resource capacity, innovation, and strong governance (Parjaman & Enas Enas, 2021).

This constellation of national problems finds its relevance in the real conditions of Margorejo Village, Kendal Regency. Based on BPS data (2024), this village faces severe challenges with unemployment rates reaching 29.45% and poverty rates of 9.35%. This condition reflects the limited access of the community to employment and productive economic activities. In such context, the presence of BUMDes is expected to become a key instrument for opening economic valves and strengthening the socio-economic resilience of the community.

Amid the bleak portrait of BUMDes at the operational level, BUMDes *Muji Berkah* in Margorejo Village emerges as an anomaly. This BUMDes is able to operate innovatively despite the village's lack of major natural resources. The business units managed include public services, waste management, to creative economy programs involving the community. Several of its initiatives have even received appreciation from the regional government, indicating good practices in BUMDes governance amid the village's structural limitations. The uniqueness of BUMDes *Muji Berkah* lies not only in economic achievements but also in the social impact it generates, such as increased citizen participation, women's involvement, and the emergence of collective awareness.

Previous research has extensively highlighted the role of BUMDes in strengthening local economies. However, most still focus on quantitative aspects that are easily measurable, such as the growth in the number of business units, the amount of contribution to Village Original Income (PAD), or labor absorption in numbers (Sinarwati & Prayudi, 2021; Yaqin et al., 2023). Consequently, the qualitative dynamics behind the success of a BUMDes such as leadership processes, social capital, adaptation strategies, and unmeasurable social impacts are often overlooked. This research is present to answer that gap. Through a deep qualitative case study approach on BUMDes *Muji Berkah*, this research deliberately takes a position to raise the narrative behind those numbers.

Based on this background, the objectives of this research are to identify key factors of operational success and innovation of BUMDes *Muji Berkah*, analyze the socio-economic impacts it generates for the Margorejo Village community, particularly in terms of participation and community resilience, and interpret its governance practices as a model of community-based village empowerment that can be adopted contextually. Academically, the findings of this research are expected to enrich rural development literature with a qualitative perspective. Practically, this research aims to provide a picture of good practices that can serve as a reference for other villages with similar characteristics and resource limitations.

Method

This study employed a qualitative approach using a case study strategy to explore the management practices of *Badan Usaha Milik Desa* (BUMDes) *Muji Berkah* in Margorejo Village, Cepiring District, Kendal Regency. The location was purposively selected because this BUMDes was recognized as successful in developing business units despite the village's limited natural resources.

The research was conducted between July and August 2025, in conjunction with the Community Service Program (*Kuliah Kerja Nyata*), allowing students to focus on direct observation and qualitative analysis of the BUMDes' socio-economic impacts. Research informants included three BUMDes administrators (Director, Secretary, Treasurer), two village officials (Village Head and Finance Officer), and five community members (three farmers and two representatives from women's groups). They were selected using a purposive sampling technique based on their direct involvement with BUMDes activities.

Data were collected through in-depth interviews, participatory observations, and document analysis of BUMDes archives and village reports. Semi-structured interview guides were designed to enable deeper exploration of participants' experiences and perceptions. Data analysis was conducted using thematic analysis involving coding, theme identification, and meaning interpretation to uncover success factors and the socio-economic roles of BUMDes. Data validity was ensured through source and method triangulation, as well as member checking with BUMDes administrators and village officials. This approach aimed to provide a comprehensive understanding of the meaning and role of BUMDes *Muji Berkah* in the dynamics of Margorejo Village community welfare.

Result and Discussion

General Overview and BUMDes Governance

Badan Usaha Milik Desa (BUMDes) *Muji Berkah* was established in 2018 as a manifestation of economic empowerment for the Margorejo Village community, Cepiring District, Kendal Regency. The leadership of this BUMDes was entrusted to Mr. Sunarto as Director, with a management structure involving village officials and community members, as outlined in the Village Head's Decree. This structure demonstrates commitment to orderly and legally-based governance.

Throughout its journey to the 2023-2025 period, BUMDes *Muji Berkah* consistently developed seven business units focusing on productive economic and public services. This aligns with findings stating that clear governance is a main factor in BUMDes sustainability (Albaab & Darmawan, 2024).

The existence of BUMDes cannot be separated from local economic conditions. Central Statistics Agency (BPS) data for Kendal Regency in 2024 recorded

a poverty rate of 9.35%. In-depth interviews with administrators and community members show that BUMDes *Muji Berkah* is viewed as a strategic instrument for the village to face these challenges. This finding aligns with Rismanita & Pradana (2022) who state that BUMDes can create new economic spaces while increasing community participation in village development. Participant observation in the field reinforces that the presence of BUMDes *Muji Berkah* not only touches the needs of residents but also reflects BUMDes' function as the driving motor of local economy as shown by Yulian's (2022) study on village labor absorption.

Operational Performance of BUMDes *Maju Berkah*

Based on field observations and interviews with managers, all business units of BUMDes *Muji Berkah* operate actively with varying management models. Details of activities, workforce, and contributions of each unit are shown in Table 1.

Tabel 1. Business Units of BUMDes *Muji Berkah*

Business Unit	Activities	Permanent Staff	Seasonal Workers
Bank Sampah Rejomulyo	Manage waste & collaborate with MBG Kitchen	4	30
Ternak Soneta	Livestock farming & animal pens	6	10
WiFi Margo Net	Village internet services	3	3
Pemesanan Hewan Kurban	Seasonal sacrificial animal distribution service	0	5
PamDesa (air)	Clean water services for residents	2	2
Embung Mulyo (budidaya ikan)	Freshwater fish farming & product sales	2	5
Margo Makmur (rice milling)	Rice milling services for farmers	3	6

The existence of BUMDes cannot be separated from local economic Routine service units such as PamDesa and Margo Net are managed with simple procedures and provide recurring services, while productive units such as Ternak Soneta and Embung Mulyo require more complex management cycles. Meanwhile, socially-based units such as Bank Sampah and Dapur MBG function as community empowerment facilities, especially for PKK groups and informal workers. However, the limitation of financial documentation per unit remains a challenge, so in the future, strengthening the administrative system is needed so that the monetary contribution of each unit can be measured more accurately.

Although operations run actively, the limitation of financial documentation per unit remains a challenge. This condition makes quantitative analysis of each unit's monetary contribution to village income difficult. Therefore, strengthening administrative systems and transparency of financial reports becomes a strategic

step to strengthen accountability and sustainability of BUMDes in the future.

This finding simultaneously answers the problem raised in the introduction, that amid many BUMDes that are stagnant due to weak governance, *Muji Berkah* is actually able to maintain operational sustainability through diversification of business units and involvement of village institutions.

Achievements and Recognition of BUMDes *Muji Berkah*

Recording the operational track record of BUMDes *Muji Berkah*, documentation from the official Margorejo Village channel and Dokar dashboard shows that this entity has achieved several important accomplishments. One of its main achievements is the "Best and Most Transaction Services" award from collaboration with Bapenda and Bank Jateng on September 24, 2024. Previously, on July 14, 2024, BUMDes also received a certificate as "Best BUMDes in Samsat Budiman services". This recognition confirms

the capacity of BUMDes *Muji Berkah* as a public service agent that is not only efficient but also able to contribute directly to regional income and increased community satisfaction.

Recognition of BUMDes *Muji Berkah* was also manifested through public service innovation and strategic partnerships. The launch of WiFi business unit "Margo Net" on October 10, 2024, became a new experience in the form of technology services at the village level. Followed by sacrificial animal ordering services that began in 2025, BUMDes demonstrated its ability to integrate residents' needs at important moments in the village social calendar. Additionally, in May 2025, BUMDes received a visit from the Deputy Minister of Home Affairs (*Wamendagri*), Bima Arya Sugiarto, accompanied by the Kendal Regent, Dyah Kartika Permanansari. This visit is a real recognition from the central and regional governments of the potential and business model of BUMDes *Muji Berkah*.

Strong institutional tracks also became one of the key factors in the sustainability of this BUMDes. Coordination established between BUMDes directors and regency-level government institutions, such as DPRD and Dispermasdes, proves solid institutional relationships. The online meeting on April 25, 2025, is a strong indication that BUMDes is able to expand its network, opening opportunities for funding access, technical support, and strategic collaboration in the future. Overall, formal achievements, service innovation, and institutional networks become a solid foundation for the sustainability and replication potential of the BUMDes *Muji Berkah* model in a broader context.

Social and Economic Implications

The presence of BUMDes *Muji Berkah* has proven to provide significant social and economic impacts for the Margorejo Village community. Through the operation of its seven business units, BUMDes successfully created jobs for both permanent staff and seasonal workers. Interviews with managers show increased income for about 30 seasonal workers in the Bank Sampah Rejomulyo unit. This finding aligns with Milloen et al., (2025) study showing BUMDes' role in improving household economics through informal labor absorption in villages. Thus, BUMDes not only adds individual income but also contributes to village household economic stability.

Beyond economic aspects, *Muji Berkah* also promotes social inclusion, particularly women's and youth involvement. Field observations show the dominance of PKK groups in Bank Sampah management, reinforcing Suryanto & Maq et al., (2024) argument that BUMDes can become a space for women's

empowerment through community-based economics. Similarly, WiFi *Margo Net* and Ternak Soneta units provide space for village youth to develop technical and managerial skills. This aligns with findings stating that youth participation in village business units contributes to unemployment reduction and increased entrepreneurial capacity in rural areas (Harjanti, 2021; Hayati, 2021).

Overall, the contribution of BUMDes *Muji Berkah* confirms its position as a strategic instrument in building village economic independence. Although there is no public financial data detailing contributions to Village Original Income (*PADes*), the operational impact felt by the community is consistent with research results by Sinarwati and Prayudi (2021) that BUMDes are capable of budgeting and 64.3% are able to manage village potential. Business units such as *PamDesa*, *Embung Mulyo*, to social programs *Dapur Makan Bergizi Gratis* (MBG/Free Nutritious Meal Kitchen) form an independent and sustainable local economic cycle, reducing community dependence on external sectors. Thus, this research strengthens literature about BUMDes not only as economic institutions but also as vehicles for social empowerment and cultural transformation at the village level.

Business units such as *PamDesa*, *Embung Mulyo*, to social programs *Dapur Makan Bergizi Gratis* (MBG) form an independent and sustainable local economic cycle, reducing community dependence on external sectors. Thus, the socio-economic impact generated by BUMDes *Muji Berkah* becomes concrete evidence of the initial research hypothesis, that inclusive governance and business innovation can overcome classic BUMDes barriers while improving village community welfare.

Success Factors of BUMDes *Muji Berkah*

Based on participatory observation results and in-depth interviews, the success of BUMDes *Muji Berkah* in managing various business units is supported by three key factors. First, transformational leadership from the BUMDes Director who not only mobilizes the management team but also builds community trust. This is reflected in efforts to involve community leaders and farmer groups in decision-making, so that every policy aligns with residents' aspirations. Second, adaptive capacity that makes BUMDes responsive to local market dynamics. The rice milling unit (*Margo Makmur*), for example, not only offers milling services but also develops harvest distribution systems that provide added value for farmers. Third, structural support from village government in the form of formal legality through Village Head Decree and provision of initial capital, which strengthens operational legitimacy and increases public trust in BUMDes.

This finding fills the research gap outlined in the introduction, namely the need for qualitative analysis of why some BUMDes remain effective despite facing structural limitations. By mapping these success factors, this research not only provides conceptual contribution to BUMDes literature but also provides practical reference for other villages attempting to replicate similar models.

This research result aligns with previous literature emphasizing that participatory leadership model is a key factor in increasing BUMDes social legitimacy (Puspitasari, Ardiyansyah, and Hapsari, 2022; Samosir et al., 2025). Kambaru et al., (2025) highlight the importance of local value chain-based innovation to maintain village business sustainability. Meanwhile, the role of village government intervention in strengthening BUMDes institutions through legality and capital support is greatly needed (Firmansyah, 2024; Sudiyono et al., 2025). Thus, practices at BUMDes *Muji Berkah* not only affirm existing theories but also show how combinations of leadership, adaptation, and structural support can operate simultaneously in real contexts.

However, this success is not entirely without constraints. One fundamental issue is the minimal quantitative documentation regarding workforce, wage structure, and beneficiary lists, making precise economic impact measurement difficult. This condition differs from Harjanti's (2021) findings which successfully demonstrated BUMDes contribution to labor absorption through systematic village statistical data. Additionally, several business units still depend on seasons, such as sacrificial animal orders and rice milling, making them vulnerable to income fluctuations. This phenomenon strengthens research results according to Imron, Surur, and Puspitasari (2025) that dependence on seasonal markets and weather factors is one of the main causes of BUMDes financial instability, resulting in income fluctuations and hindering operational sustainability.

These limitations simultaneously open learning opportunities. BUMDes *Muji Berkah* has room to strengthen recording and reporting systems, as well as develop business diversification strategies to not depend on seasonal sectors. These steps are important to maintain financial stability while increasing accountability as an institution trusted to manage village assets. Thus, this case study shows that BUMDes success is determined by synergy between internal factors (leadership and innovation) and external factors (village government support), although it still leaves homework in documentation and risk management aspects.

Scientific Value and Policy Implications

This research scientifically confirms that BUMDes success is more determined by institutional factors and

transformational leadership rather than merely natural resource availability. This finding strengthens arguments by Putri et al., (2025) and Tampubolon and Riyanti (2025) showing that institutional governance and managerial innovation play greater roles in improving village community welfare. Thus, the BUMDes *Muji Berkah* case provides new contribution in the form of empirical evidence from a non-potential village capable of creating success through a combination of institutional factors, village government support, and business diversification strategies.

Policy implications arising from this research include three main points: first, the need to strengthen administrative capacity and financial literacy for administrators; second, provision of tiered technical assistance from regency and provincial governments; third, market access facilitation so that BUMDes business units can compete sustainably. This aligns with Gani's (2025) view emphasizing the importance of structural intervention in ensuring BUMDes institutional sustainability.

For replication, the BUMDes *Muji Berkah* model is insufficient to copy only from its business unit forms, but must also be equipped with formal legality, initial capital, and simultaneous managerial assistance. Without these three aspects, sustainability is difficult to achieve. Therefore, policies focusing on governance and institutional development are far more relevant than merely adding new business units.

Conclusion

The main conclusions of the study may be the community service study on BUMDes *Muji Berkah* shows that successful business unit management in Margorejo Village depends not only on economic potential, but more on participatory institutional governance, transformational leadership, and structural support from village government. The operation of seven active business units has provided real impact in the form of job creation, women's and youth empowerment, and strengthening community social cohesion. This confirms BUMDes' position as a strategic instrument for economic development as well as a vehicle for social empowerment at the village level.

However, this success still faces limitations in financial documentation and vulnerability of seasonal business units that can affect financial stability. Therefore, recommendations that need to be taken include strengthening administrative capacity and financial literacy, continuous technical assistance from regional government, and market access facilitation so that BUMDes can operate more accountably and sustainably. With these steps, the BUMDes *Muji Berkah*

model can be replicated contextually as a good practice for community-based rural development.

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