

Participatory Communication in Community Empowerment: An Analysis of the Ladder of Participation in the Panembangan Minapadi Tourism Village, Banyumas

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ABSTRACT: The success of community empowerment largely depends on communication practices that foster meaningful community engagement throughout the development process. However, scholarly attention to the relationship between participatory communication and the level of community participation in tourism village development remains limited. This study examines the practice of participatory communication in community empowerment within the Panembangan Minapadi Tourism Village and identifies the level of community participation using Arnstein's Ladder of Citizen Participation as the analytical framework. A qualitative case study approach was employed. Data were collected through participant observation, in-depth interviews, and document analysis, and were analyzed using an interactive process involving data reduction, data display, and interpretation. The findings reveal that participatory communication was manifested through open dialogue, relatively egalitarian communication, active community involvement in decision-making, and collective action that strengthened the community empowerment process. Based on Arnstein's Ladder of Citizen Participation, community participation was situated at the Partnership level, characterized by collaborative engagement among local community members, village authorities, extension officers, and academics in planning, implementing, and evaluating tourism development programs. Nevertheless, strategic decision-making authority remained largely under the control of the village government. These findings demonstrate that participatory communication serves as a crucial mechanism for strengthening community empowerment while simultaneously enhancing the quality of community participation in tourism village development.

KEYWORDS: participatory communication; community empowerment; tourism village; Ladder of Participation.

I. INTRODUCTION

Over the past decade, rural development has undergone a fundamental paradigm shift. Whereas development was previously driven by a top-down approach emphasizing economic growth, contemporary rural development increasingly embraces a people-centered development paradigm that recognizes local communities as the primary actors in planning, implementing, and evaluating development initiatives. This shift is closely aligned with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly those related to poverty reduction, food security, reducing inequalities, and developing inclusive and resilient communities. Within this framework, development success is no longer assessed solely in terms of economic growth but also by the extent to which communities are empowered to participate in decision-making, exercise agency, and manage local resources independently and sustainably.

Consistent with this paradigm shift, community empowerment has emerged as a central approach to rural development across many countries. Rather than being viewed merely as the provision of assistance or the transfer of resources, community empowerment is increasingly understood as a process of enhancing local capacities, enabling communities to identify problems, articulate their needs, determine appropriate development priorities, and exercise greater control over decisions that shape their livelihoods. Consequently, the effectiveness of community empowerment initiatives depends not only on financial investment, the availability of natural resources, or government institutional support, but also on the capacity of communities to participate actively in shaping their own development.

From this perspective, the success of community empowerment is closely linked to the quality of social relationships and communication established among development stakeholders. Communication extends beyond its conventional role as a means of information dissemination; it functions as a social mechanism that facilitates dialogue, builds trust, promotes collective learning, and shapes the distribution of power within participatory decision-making processes. As such, effective communication

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constitutes a critical foundation for fostering collaborative governance and ensuring the long-term sustainability of community-based development initiatives.

Development communication scholarship has consistently recognized participatory communication as a strategic driver of successful community empowerment. Unlike conventional communication approaches, which are predominantly linear and information-oriented, participatory communication positions local communities as active agents of development who possess the knowledge, experience, and capacity to contribute meaningfully throughout every stage of the development process. Through egalitarian dialogue, knowledge sharing, and collaborative learning, participatory communication facilitates decision-making that is more responsive to community needs while simultaneously fostering a stronger sense of ownership over development initiatives. Consequently, the quality of communication throughout the empowerment process constitutes a critical determinant of the sustainability and effectiveness of community-based development.

In Indonesia, the community empowerment approach has gained increasing prominence through rural development policies that promote the utilization of local resources and endogenous potential as the foundation for sustainable economic growth. One prominent manifestation of this policy is the development of tourism villages, which integrate economic, social, cultural, and environmental assets into a comprehensive framework for sustainable rural development. Within this framework, tourism villages are conceived not merely as tourist destinations but also as vehicles for community empowerment through strengthening local institutions, generating employment opportunities, supporting micro-enterprises, and conserving natural and cultural resources. Accordingly, the success of tourism village development ultimately depends on the capacity of multiple stakeholders to foster sustained collaboration and meaningful community participation.

One notable example of tourism village development in Indonesia is the Panembangan Minapadi Tourism Village in Banyumas Regency. The village has adopted the minapadi system, an integrated rice–fish farming model that combines paddy cultivation with freshwater aquaculture and is further developed into an agriculture-based educational tourism destination. This integrated approach aims not only to enhance land productivity and improve local livelihoods but also to diversify the rural economy through educational tourism, fish-processing enterprises, and environmentally sustainable tourism activities. The distinctiveness of this model lies in its ability to integrate agriculture, aquaculture, and tourism within a community empowerment framework that capitalizes on local resources—an approach that remains relatively uncommon among tourism villages in Indonesia. Nevertheless, the development of the Panembangan Minapadi Tourism Village continues to face a number of challenges.

Preliminary observations indicate that the development process is constrained by limited coordination among community groups, weak institutional integration, challenges in sustaining community participation, and communication mechanisms that have yet to effectively support participatory decision-making. At the same time, the emergence of diverse community-based enterprises has increased the need for a communication system capable of accommodating and connecting the interests of village authorities, farmer groups, fish farmer associations, local entrepreneurs, academics, and the broader community. These conditions suggest that the success of community empowerment depends not only on the availability of local economic potential but also on the extent to which participatory communication can create inclusive spaces for dialogue, coordination, and collaboration among all stakeholders.

Conceptually, participatory communication constitutes a fundamental pillar of community empowerment by positioning local communities as active agents of development through dialogue, equality, and meaningful engagement in decision-making processes. In the context of tourism village development based on local resources, this approach is expected to strengthen community capacity while fostering collaborative and sustainable governance. Empirical evidence, however, suggests that rural development practices continue to be predominantly program-driven, with communication functioning primarily as a mechanism for information dissemination rather than as a participatory process that facilitates dialogue, negotiation, and the shared distribution of decision-making authority. This discrepancy between the normative ideals of participatory communication and its implementation in practice underscores the need for more in-depth investigation, particularly within the context of tourism village development grounded in local potential.

Although a growing body of research has examined the minapadi system, tourism village development, and participatory communication, these topics have largely been investigated in isolation. Studies on the minapadi system have primarily focused on agricultural productivity and economic benefits, while research on tourism villages has emphasized institutional arrangements and destination development. Meanwhile, studies of participatory communication have predominantly been conducted in development contexts beyond tourism villages. Consequently, limited scholarly attention has been devoted to explaining how participatory communication shapes community empowerment processes while simultaneously influencing the level of community participation in the governance of tourism villages based on local resources.

Against this backdrop, the present study aims to analyse participatory communication practices in the community empowerment process of the Panembangan Minapadi Tourism Village, identify the level of community participation using Arnstein's Ladder of Participation as the analytical framework, and examine the relationship between participatory

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communication practices and the level of community participation. By addressing these objectives, the study seeks to contribute to the theoretical advancement of participatory communication scholarship while providing practical insights for village governments and other stakeholders in designing more participatory and sustainable community empowerment strategies.

II. METHODS

This study employed a qualitative case study approach to gain an in-depth understanding of participatory communication practices in community empowerment within the development of the Panembangan Minapadi Tourism Village, located in Cilongok District, Banyumas Regency, Indonesia. Participants were selected using purposive sampling and included village government officials, agricultural extension officers, academics, farmer groups, freshwater fish farmer associations, fish-processing and marketing groups, tourism village managers, and community members actively involved in the development of the Panembangan Minapadi Tourism Village.

Data were collected through participant observation, in-depth interviews, and document analysis. The credibility of the findings was enhanced through source and methodological triangulation. Data were analysed using the interactive model proposed by Miles and Huberman, which consists of data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing and verification. The findings were subsequently interpreted through the perspectives of participatory communication and Arnstein's Ladder of Participation to examine the relationship between participatory communication practices and the level of community participation in tourism village empowerment.

III. RESULT AND DISCUSSIONS

A. Participatory Communication Practices in Community Empowerment within the Panembangan Minapadi Tourism Village

Panembangan Village, located in Cilongok District, Banyumas Regency, possesses considerable local potential in the agricultural and fisheries sectors, which has been integrated through the minapadi farming system. This integrated system enables the simultaneous cultivation of rice and freshwater fish while serving as the foundation for a community-based tourism village that combines agriculture, aquaculture, educational activities, and tourism. The distinctive characteristics of this model make the Panembangan Minapadi Tourism Village an appropriate case for examining participatory communication in community empowerment. Its development depends not only on the availability of natural resources but also on the capacity of local communities to actively participate and collaborate in managing these resources in a sustainable manner.

Community empowerment is fundamentally a process that positions local communities as the principal actors throughout every stage of development. From the perspective of participatory communication, the success of an empowerment programme depends not only on the availability of resources, supportive public policies, or institutional capacity, but also on the extent to which communication facilitates dialogue, knowledge exchange, and meaningful community engagement in decision-making processes. Participatory communication therefore serves as a strategic mechanism for fostering collaborative relationships among village authorities, extension facilitators, academics, and community members, ensuring that all stakeholders have equal opportunities to express their aspirations, share experiences, and contribute to the implementation of community empowerment initiatives.

Participatory communication practices within the Panembangan Minapadi Tourism Village were enacted through continuous interactions among a diverse range of stakeholders, including village government officials, agricultural extension officers, fisheries extension officers, academics from Jenderal Soedirman University and Diponegoro University, farmer groups, freshwater fish farmer associations, fish-processing groups, and community members who served as the principal actors in the minapadi system. These interactions extended beyond programme implementation and began during the planning stage, encompassing programme design, extension activities, implementation, and subsequent evaluation. The involvement of these diverse stakeholders demonstrates that the development of the Panembangan Minapadi Tourism Village is inherently a collaborative process that relies on sustained communication among all parties.

Findings from observations and in-depth interviews indicate that participatory communication was facilitated through a variety of regular communication forums, including farmer group deliberations, agricultural extension meetings, discussions with village authorities, and mentoring activities conducted by academics. These forums provided opportunities for community members not only to obtain information regarding the development of the minapadi system but also to raise concerns and discuss the challenges encountered throughout programme implementation. Consequently, communication functioned as a reciprocal and interactive process rather than a one-way transmission of information, enabling community members to share their experiences, articulate their needs, and contribute ideas related to the management and development of the Panembangan Minapadi Tourism Village.

Participatory communication within the Panembangan Minapadi Tourism Village extends beyond the dissemination of technical information on agricultural and aquaculture practices. It has evolved into a coordination mechanism that connects diverse community groups with complementary roles in the management and development of the tourism village. Farmer groups (Poktan), freshwater fish farmer associations (Pokdakan), fish-processing and marketing groups (Poklahsar), the Village-Owned Enterprise (BUMDes), the village government, and partner universities interact continuously to support the development of the

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minapadi-based tourism area. This pattern of communication demonstrates that community empowerment is not implemented by a single institution in isolation but is instead sustained through a communication network that brings together multiple stakeholders with complementary roles and responsibilities.

Despite these strengths, the findings also reveal several challenges in the implementation of participatory communication. Although the number of community groups involved in the development of the Panembangan Minapadi Tourism Village has increased, coordination mechanisms have yet to be fully integrated. Each group continues to manage its administrative functions and operational activities independently, resulting in suboptimal information exchange across stakeholder groups. This fragmentation has affected institutional coordination as well as the development of tourism village business units. Consequently, these issues have become recurring topics of discussion in communication forums involving the village government, community representatives, and facilitating partners as part of ongoing efforts to strengthen the governance of the Panembangan Minapadi Tourism Village.

Participatory communication in community empowerment within the Panembangan Minapadi Tourism Village is characterized by a dynamic and evolving process. On the one hand, communication has created interactive spaces that bring together diverse development stakeholders in a shared forum for dialogue. On the other hand, challenges remain in integrating communication across stakeholder groups, resulting in institutional coordination that has yet to function optimally. These findings suggest that participatory communication should not be understood merely as a mechanism for information exchange but rather as a social process that fosters collaboration, coordination, and collective learning in the management of a tourism village based on local resources.

The communication practices observed in the community empowerment process of the Panembangan Minapadi Tourism Village are consistent with the principles of participatory communication, which emphasize dialogue, interaction, and collective learning as the foundations of community empowerment. Open communication enables community members to move beyond the role of passive recipients of information and become active participants in the development process. Nevertheless, the findings also demonstrate that the mere existence of communication forums is insufficient to ensure effective community empowerment. The effectiveness of participatory communication depends largely on the quality of interactions within these forums, particularly the extent to which community members are able to express their views, receive meaningful responses, and influence decision-making processes.

B. Dialogue as a Medium for Knowledge Exchange in Community Empowerment

Dialogue constitutes a fundamental element of participatory communication, as it provides a platform through which stakeholders exchange knowledge, experiences, and ideas in formulating solutions to development-related challenges. From the perspective of participatory communication, dialogue is not understood as a one-way transmission of information but rather as a reciprocal process that facilitates mutual learning between community members and development facilitators. Accordingly, the quality of dialogue serves as an important indicator for assessing the extent to which community empowerment genuinely creates opportunities for local communities to express their aspirations and influence the implementation of development programmes.

In the Panembangan Minapadi Tourism Village, dialogue is institutionalised through a series of regular communication forums, most notably the weekly meetings of farmer groups facilitated by agricultural extension officers. These meetings function not only as channels for disseminating technical information on rice cultivation, improved seed varieties, and the use of organic fertilizers, but also as participatory forums where farmers openly discuss the challenges they encounter throughout the cultivation process. Issues related to pest management, the availability of agricultural inputs, irrigation management, and the further development of the minapadi system are deliberated collectively, allowing participants to contribute their views and practical experiences in identifying appropriate solutions.

The significance of these dialogue forums is further supported by interviews with agricultural extension officers, who explained that the weekly meetings serve as a two-way communication mechanism between extension personnel and farmers. Through these interactions, farmers not only receive technical guidance on cultivation practices but also communicate their needs for production inputs, technical constraints, and other challenges encountered in the field. The information provided by farmers subsequently informs the formulation of extension recommendations and the selection of topics for subsequent training sessions. Consequently, dialogue extends beyond the mere dissemination of information and evolves into a feedback mechanism that strengthens collective learning and supports continuous improvement in community empowerment practices.

These findings indicate that dialogue within the community empowerment process of the Panembangan Minapadi Tourism Village is inherently interactive. Agricultural extension officers do not position themselves as the sole source of knowledge; rather, they create opportunities for community members to share the experiential knowledge they have acquired through their farming practices. Likewise, community members are not passive recipients of information but active contributors whose insights and experiences inform the refinement of community empowerment programmes. This communication pattern reflects a process of knowledge exchange, which constitutes one of the defining characteristics of participatory communication.

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Dialogue extends beyond interactions between agricultural extension officers and farmers to include village authorities, academics, freshwater fish farmer associations, and other community groups involved in the development of the Panembangan Minapadi Tourism Village. These communication forums provide a platform for discussing issues related to tourism village development, institutional strengthening, and the management of community-based enterprises. Consequently, dialogue functions as a coordination mechanism through which diverse stakeholders collectively shape the direction of minapadi-based tourism village development. This finding demonstrates that participatory communication has evolved beyond technical agricultural communication into a broader form of development communication that integrates the interests of multiple stakeholders in pursuit of shared development goals.

The dialogic communication observed among agricultural and fisheries extension officers, academics, village authorities, and farmer and fish farmer groups in Panembangan Village is consistent with Paulo Freire's conception of dialogue as the foundation of community empowerment. Freire argues that dialogue is grounded in relationships of equality, enabling individuals to learn from one another while fostering critical consciousness. Within the context of the Panembangan Minapadi Tourism Village, deliberative forums function not merely as channels for transferring knowledge from extension officers to farmers but also as spaces for collective reflection, where community members critically examine the challenges they encounter and collaboratively formulate alternative solutions. In this sense, dialogue serves as a process of collective knowledge construction that strengthens the effectiveness of community empowerment.

The findings of this study further reinforce previous research demonstrating that two-way communication is a critical factor in enhancing the effectiveness of community empowerment programmes. More importantly, however, this study offers a more specific contribution by showing that dialogue serves not only as a mechanism for information exchange but also as a means of coordinating diverse stakeholders involved in the governance of the Panembangan Minapadi Tourism Village. This finding highlights the strategic role of dialogue in integrating the interests of village authorities, extension officers, academics, farmer groups, freshwater fish farmer associations, and community-based enterprises into a collaborative development process.

The dialogic communication practices observed in the community empowerment process of the Panembangan Minapadi Tourism Village fulfil one of the fundamental principles of participatory communication by providing community members with opportunities to openly express their experiences, needs, and ideas. Nevertheless, the effectiveness of dialogue is determined not merely by the frequency of communication forums but, more importantly, by the quality of the relationships established among development stakeholders. Within the framework of participatory communication, one of the key dimensions shaping the quality of these relationships is communicative equality.

C. Communicative Equality as the Foundation of Community Empowerment

One of the fundamental principles of participatory communication is the establishment of communicative equality among all actors involved in the development process. Communicative equality extends beyond providing equal opportunities to participate in communication forums; it also entails creating an environment in which every individual is able to express opinions, share experiences, and influence decision-making processes without coercion or domination by more powerful actors. Within the context of community empowerment, communicative equality constitutes a fundamental prerequisite for ensuring that local communities are not positioned merely as objects of development but rather as active subjects with the right to determine development priorities based on their own needs, knowledge, and lived experiences.

The community empowerment process within the Panembangan Minapadi Tourism Village involves a wide range of stakeholders, including village government officials, agricultural extension officers, fisheries extension officers, academics from Jenderal Soedirman University and Diponegoro University, farmer groups, freshwater fish farmer associations, fish-processing groups, and community members as the principal actors in the minapadi programme. These stakeholders regularly participate in deliberative meetings and facilitation activities that serve as platforms for coordination, reflection, and programme evaluation. Within these forums, community members are encouraged to share their experiences, express their needs, and discuss the challenges they encounter in managing both farming activities and tourism village initiatives.

Interview findings indicate that community members function not only as recipients of information provided by village authorities and extension officers but also as valuable sources of knowledge that contribute to programme development. Farmers who had adopted the minapadi system prior to the implementation of government programmes offered practical insights that were actively considered during discussions and decision-making processes. These findings demonstrate that local knowledge was accorded a position that was relatively equal to the scientific knowledge contributed by extension officers and academics. Consequently, communication was not characterized by rigid hierarchical relationships but rather by a process of mutual learning among all participants engaged in dialogue.

Communicative equality was further reflected in the openness demonstrated by the village government in addressing the challenges encountered in managing the Panembangan Minapadi Tourism Village. One of the key issues concerned the lack of integration among the various community-based business groups, which hindered effective coordination and administrative

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management. Rather than resolving this issue unilaterally, the village government brought it into a communication forum involving academics and community representatives to collectively explore alternative solutions. Through this deliberative process, an integrated Management Information System (MIS) was developed by the Information Technology (IT) team from the partner universities to facilitate the coordination and management of the various community business groups operating within the Panembangan Minapadi Tourism Village.

The communication practices underpinning community empowerment in the Panembangan Minapadi Tourism Village therefore function not merely as channels for disseminating government policies but also as deliberative spaces for addressing development-related challenges. These communication forums enable stakeholders to present arguments grounded in their knowledge and practical experience, allowing decisions to emerge through collective deliberation rather than unilateral authority. Such communication practices demonstrate that community members are afforded meaningful opportunities to participate actively in communicative processes, although facilitative roles continue to be performed primarily by the village government and agricultural and fisheries extension officers.

These findings are consistent with Jürgen Habermas's Theory of Communicative Action. Habermas argues that ideal communication occurs under conditions in which all participants enjoy equal opportunities to express their views, advance arguments, offer criticism, and receive responses without being constrained by unequal power relations or domination. Under such conditions, communication is not directed toward advancing the interests of particular actors but rather toward achieving mutual understanding through communicative action.

Communication practices in the development of the Panembangan Minapadi Tourism Village exhibit characteristics that approximate the concept of communicative action proposed by Jürgen Habermas. This is reflected in the existence of communicative spaces that enable village authorities, extension officers, academics, and community members to engage in open dialogue and deliberate on various development-related issues. The knowledge informing these deliberations is derived not only from formal institutional actors but also from the lived experiences of community members in implementing the minapadi system. These findings suggest that communication is grounded in knowledge exchange and the pursuit of mutual understanding, thereby providing community members with relatively equal opportunities to participate in communicative processes.

Nevertheless, the findings also indicate that these communication practices do not fully reflect the ideal speech situation envisioned by Habermas. Village authorities and extension officers continue to perform the primary facilitative roles in setting meeting agendas, guiding discussions, and coordinating programme implementation. This suggests that the communication structure still exhibits a degree of asymmetry, with formal actors exercising greater influence over communicative processes. However, this influence does not preclude community members from expressing their views and contributing to discussions. In other words, while communication has evolved toward a more participatory model, it has not yet reached a communicative condition that is entirely free from power relations.

These findings reinforce previous studies suggesting that open and dialogic communication enhances community engagement in empowerment processes. More importantly, however, this study demonstrates that communicative equality is not determined solely by the existence of deliberative forums but by the extent to which these forums provide genuine opportunities for community members to influence the direction of programme development. Accordingly, communicative equality should be understood as an evolving process in which local communities are progressively gaining greater opportunities to express their experiences and ideas, even though programme coordination continues to be facilitated by the village government and agricultural and fisheries extension officers.

Communication practices in the community empowerment process of the Panembangan Minapadi Tourism Village exhibit dialogic and relatively egalitarian characteristics that are broadly consistent with Habermas's Theory of Communicative Action. Nevertheless, this communicative equality has not entirely eliminated the facilitative role of formal institutional actors, who continue to play a central role in coordinating communicative processes. These findings suggest that participatory communication in the Panembangan Minapadi Tourism Village is evolving toward a more deliberative form of communication, in which community members are afforded increasingly greater opportunities to influence development processes. To further examine the extent to which these communicative spaces shape programme decisions, the following section analyses community participation in decision-making processes.

D. Participation in Decision-Making as an Implementation of Participatory Communication

One of the key indicators of participatory communication is the extent to which community members are involved in decision-making processes. Participation should not be understood merely as attendance at programme activities but as the opportunity for community members to express their aspirations, influence decisions, and contribute to determining the direction of programme implementation. From the perspective of participatory communication, decision-making that actively involves community members reflects a dialogic form of communication in which decisions emerge through the exchange of ideas and collective deliberation rather than being determined solely by actors holding formal authority.

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Decision-making in the development of the Panembangan Minapadi Tourism Village is undertaken through a series of deliberative forums involving village authorities, agricultural extension officers, academics, farmer groups, freshwater fish farmer associations, and community members. These forums serve as the primary platform for discussing issues related to the development of the minapadi system and the management of the tourism village. Proposals and recommendations put forward by community members are not merely recorded as inputs during discussions but are taken into consideration in programme planning and in addressing challenges encountered throughout programme implementation.

Community members are provided with opportunities to articulate their needs based on their practical experiences in the field. Issues concerning production inputs, cultivation techniques, tourism area management, and institutional development are openly discussed during deliberative meetings. Village authorities and extension officers subsequently consider these inputs through collective deliberation before determining appropriate courses of action. Consequently, the decisions reached are not simply the outcome of unilateral decisions by the village government but rather the product of communicative processes grounded in deliberation and shared understanding.

A clear example of participatory decision-making emerged when the village government encountered challenges in coordinating the various community-based enterprises operating within the Panembangan Minapadi Tourism Village. Rather than resolving these issues unilaterally, the village government engaged community members, academics, and development facilitators in a collaborative deliberative process. Through this communicative process, stakeholders collectively agreed to develop an integrated Management Information System (MIS) capable of coordinating the administration and management of the different community business groups, thereby improving institutional coordination. This finding demonstrates that the decisions reached were the outcome of collective deliberation grounded in the actual needs and priorities of the local community.

Participatory communication within the Panembangan Minapadi Tourism Village has provided community members with meaningful opportunities to influence decision-making processes. Deliberative forums function not merely as channels for communicating government policies but have evolved into spaces for deliberation in which diverse stakeholders present arguments informed by their experiences, knowledge, and interests. As a result, the decisions reached enjoy a higher level of legitimacy and community acceptance because they are founded upon shared understanding and collective agreement.

The findings of this study further support the participatory communication perspective, which emphasizes that the success of community empowerment is strongly influenced by the quality of communication throughout decision-making processes. Decisions reached through open dialogue are more likely to respond to community needs than those formulated unilaterally. In the context of the Panembangan Minapadi Tourism Village, the active involvement of community members in deliberative processes demonstrates that communication has functioned as a mechanism for fostering a strong sense of ownership toward community empowerment programmes.

Nevertheless, the findings also indicate that formal authority over strategic policy decisions remains vested in the village government as the principal programme administrator. While community members are provided with opportunities to present proposals and contribute to deliberations, the implementation of strategic decisions continues to require coordination with and approval from the village government in collaboration with facilitating institutions. These findings suggest that, although decision-making has become increasingly participatory, decision-making authority has not been fully devolved to the community. Accordingly, participatory communication practices in the Panembangan Minapadi Tourism Village have established a collaborative decision-making mechanism that enables community members to move beyond the role of policy recipients and become active participants in shaping decisions related to tourism village development. This involvement constitutes an essential foundation for fostering collective action in the implementation of community empowerment programmes.

E. Collective Action and Community Empowerment as Outcomes of Participatory Communication

Participatory communication extends beyond dialogue and decision-making processes; its ultimate objective is to foster collective action as a tangible expression of community participation. Collective action indicates that communicative processes have generated shared understanding, which is subsequently translated into collaborative efforts to implement development programmes. Consequently, collective action constitutes a key indicator for assessing the effectiveness of participatory communication in advancing community empowerment.

The community empowerment process within the Panembangan Minapadi Tourism Village has facilitated the establishment of various community groups, each performing distinct yet complementary roles in tourism village development. In addition to farmer groups responsible for minapadi cultivation, the village has developed freshwater fish farmer associations (Pokdakan), fish-processing and marketing groups (Poklahsar), tourism management groups, the Village-Owned Enterprise (BUMDes), and a range of other community-based productive enterprises. The emergence of these organizations demonstrates that participatory communication has encouraged community members not only to engage in deliberative forums but also to collaborate actively in the implementation of development initiatives.

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The establishment of these community organizations represents a concrete manifestation of community empowerment, as it provides local residents with opportunities to develop their capacities in accordance with their respective resources and expertise. Farmer groups focus on advancing the minapadi farming system, freshwater fish farmer associations strengthen aquaculture enterprises, while fish-processing groups create added value through downstream processing activities. At the same time, tourism management groups are responsible for developing agriculture-based educational tourism. This functional division of roles demonstrates that participatory communication has fostered collaborative action, thereby strengthening integrated community economic development.

The collective action that has emerged within the Panembangan Minapadi Tourism Village did not arise spontaneously; rather, it is the outcome of sustained communicative processes conducted through deliberative meetings, extension activities, facilitation, and continuous coordination among diverse stakeholders. These communication forums have served as platforms for building trust, fostering shared understandings, and establishing common goals, thereby strengthening the community's commitment to collaborative efforts in developing the Panembangan Minapadi Tourism Village.

From the perspective of participatory communication, these findings demonstrate that communication functions not merely as a means of information dissemination but as an empowering process in itself. Community members not only gain access to information about development programmes but also enhance their capacities, expand collaborative networks, and strengthen local community institutions. Accordingly, community empowerment is reflected not only in improved economic capacities but also in the increasing ability of local communities to organize collectively and collaborate in managing local resources and development initiatives.

The findings further demonstrate that participatory communication makes a significant contribution to fostering collective action, which constitutes a fundamental basis for the sustainability of the Panembangan Minapadi Tourism Village. The more intensive the communication among community members, village authorities, extension officers, and academics, the stronger the community's capacity to collaborate in developing a tourism village based on local resources. Consequently, the collective action identified in this study represents a tangible manifestation of participatory communication that has successfully cultivated a shared awareness of the importance of community empowerment.

F. Community Participation Through the Perspective of Arnstein's Ladder of Participation

An analysis of participatory communication practices in community empowerment alone is insufficient to provide a comprehensive understanding of the community's position within the development process. It must therefore be complemented by an assessment of the level of community participation itself. Accordingly, this study adopts Sherry R. Arnstein's Ladder of Participation as an analytical framework to examine the extent to which community members exercise influence over decision-making processes in the development of the Panembangan Minapadi Tourism Village.

Arnstein conceptualizes citizen participation as an eight-rung ladder organized into three broad categories: Non-Participation, Tokenism, and Citizen Power. The Non-Participation category describes situations in which citizens function merely as objects of public policy, with little or no opportunity to influence decisions. Tokenism refers to circumstances in which community members are given opportunities to be heard, yet their influence over decision-making remains limited. In contrast, Citizen Power represents conditions in which citizens exercise genuine authority in decision-making through mechanisms such as partnership, delegated power, or citizen control. Drawing on this framework, the level of community participation in the development of the Panembangan Minapadi Tourism Village is assessed based on the empirical findings concerning participatory communication practices.

The findings indicate that community empowerment in the Panembangan Minapadi Tourism Village cannot be classified within the Non-Participation category. Community members are not positioned as passive recipients of government policies or merely as implementers of programmes designed by the village government. Instead, they actively participate in deliberative meetings, extension activities, and facilitation programmes that provide opportunities to express their experiences, articulate their needs, and discuss the challenges encountered in developing the minapadi system and managing the tourism village. These findings demonstrate that communication practices have created participatory spaces that extend well beyond the one-way dissemination of information.

When examined through the Tokenism category, community participation in the Panembangan Minapadi Tourism Village demonstrates a level of engagement that extends beyond the lower rungs of Informing and Consultation. Community members are not merely informed about development programmes or invited to express their opinions; rather, the proposals and recommendations articulated during deliberative forums are taken into consideration in programme planning and in addressing challenges that arise during implementation. The communication forums involving village authorities, extension officers, academics, and community members demonstrate that decision-making is shaped through dialogue, enabling local residents to contribute arguments grounded in their practical knowledge and lived experiences.

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Furthermore, decisions concerning the development of the Panembangan Minapadi Tourism Village are reached through collaborative communicative processes. A notable example is the deliberation over the need for an integrated Management Information System (MIS) to coordinate the various community-based enterprises operating within the tourism village. Rather than being determined unilaterally by the village government, this issue was discussed collectively with community members and academics, resulting in a solution based on shared understanding and mutual agreement. In addition, community members play active roles in implementing development programmes through farmer groups, freshwater fish farmer associations, fish-processing groups, and tourism management groups. These findings indicate that community participation extends beyond consultation, with local residents assuming the role of partners in the implementation of development initiatives.

Based on the overall findings, the level of community participation identified in this study is most appropriately situated at the Partnership level, one of the rungs within Arnstein's Citizen Power category. At this level, community members and government institutions establish collaborative partnerships throughout the planning, implementation, and evaluation of development programmes through mechanisms of dialogue, deliberation, and multi-stakeholder collaboration. This partnership is reflected in the complementary distribution of roles, whereby the village government acts as facilitator, academics serve as development partners, and community members function as the principal actors in implementing community empowerment initiatives. These collaborative relationships demonstrate that community members exercise meaningful influence over programme implementation, although formal decision-making authority remains vested in the village government.

Nevertheless, the findings also indicate that the level of community participation has not yet reached the Delegated Power or Citizen Control levels. This is evidenced by the continued central role of the village government in determining strategic policies, coordinating programme implementation, and making decisions concerning institutional governance and tourism village management. Although community members are provided with broad opportunities to express their aspirations, contribute recommendations, and participate actively in programme implementation, ultimate authority over strategic policy decisions remains with the village government in collaboration with facilitating institutions. Consequently, the distribution of decision-making authority within the development of the Panembangan Minapadi Tourism Village remains collaborative rather than fully devolved to the community.

The participatory communication practices that have evolved in the Panembangan Minapadi Tourism Village have successfully advanced community participation toward a Partnership model. This finding reinforces the preceding analysis by demonstrating that open dialogue, communicative equality, community involvement in decision-making, and the emergence of collective action are key factors that strengthen the community's position within the development process. In other words, participatory communication functions not merely as a mechanism for exchanging information but as a transformative process that enables community members to exercise greater influence over the direction of tourism village development.

Overall, the findings demonstrate that community participation in the development of the Panembangan Minapadi Tourism Village is best characterized as Partnership within Arnstein's Ladder of Participation. This level of participation indicates that community members have assumed the role of government partners in the community empowerment process through communication that is dialogic, collaborative, and oriented toward the collective resolution of shared challenges. Nevertheless, this partnership requires further strengthening, particularly through greater devolution of authority and enhanced institutional capacity within the community, so that participation may progressively evolve toward more autonomous forms of citizen power in the future.

CONCLUSIONS

Participatory communication in the community empowerment process of the Panembangan Minapadi Tourism Village is manifested through open dialogue, communicative equality, community involvement in decision-making, and collective action in the management of a tourism village based on local resources. These four dimensions are mutually reinforcing, strengthening community capacity while fostering a more inclusive and collaborative approach to local development governance. Viewed through Arnstein's Ladder of Participation, the level of community participation is best characterized as Partnership, indicating that community members have become active partners of the village government throughout the planning, implementation, and evaluation of development programmes. However, strategic decision-making authority remains concentrated within the village government, indicating that participation has not yet progressed to the Delegated Power or Citizen Control levels.

Theoretically, this study demonstrates that the effectiveness of community empowerment depends not only on community participation itself but also on the quality of dialogue, communicative equality, and meaningful involvement in decision-making processes. By integrating participatory communication with Arnstein's Ladder of Participation, this study provides a more comprehensive understanding of the relationship between communicative processes and levels of citizen participation in local resource-based rural development. Practically, the findings highlight the importance of strengthening inclusive communication, enhancing the institutional capacity of community organizations, and expanding opportunities for shared decision-making in order to support the long-term sustainability of the Panembangan Minapadi Tourism Village.

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