



COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION IN DEVELOPMENT: CASE STUDY IN TEBA VILLAGE

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ABSTRACT

The focus of this research is on community participation. This focus is operated on the work program currently being carried out by Teba village: whether the work program implemented is the result of a decision of the village council forum or the village head's own initiative. Using Arnstein's participation ladder, we will analyze the level of community participation in development in Teba village, Biboki Tanpah District, North Central Timor Regency. Using the interview method and supported by documents in the form of village meeting minutes (musdes), village meeting attendance lists (musdes), and document work plan (RKPdes) from 2019- 2024, data collected and analyzed to determine the level of community participation. The study conducted found that community participation in Teba village was at the second level. At the information provision rung, the public is given information but the decision has been taken. Likewise, on the consultation ladder. The village head conducts discussions but, there is no guarantee the suggestions will be accepted. In taking heart, the government only makes promises that can easily be ignored.

Keywords: Community participation, Arnstein's ladder of participation

INTRODUCTION

Village Law No. 6 of 2014 is a law that provides big space for villages to take care of themselves. It means villages have the authority to regulate themselves at the village level. This authority provides space for villages to develop according to the needs and conditions of the village. Because of that authority, the spirit of development is participatory development.

To create participatory development, the Law has stipulated village deliberations/ Musdes (article 54 of Law No. 6 of 2014). Village meetings under to this Law, are a very

strategic village forum because they will discuss Village structuring, Village planning, Village cooperation, investment plans entering the Village, the formation of Village-Owned Enterprises (BUMDes), additions and disposals of Village assets, and extraordinary events. It means, that all activities in the village must be decided at the village deliberation forum to achieve what has been planned and can bring prosperity to the village residents themselves.

Kumar in Phologane (2014) states that participation can be a means and an end. Participation as a means is used to achieve predetermined goals. Meanwhile, participation as a goal means that participation is an effort to empower people to participate in their development. With Kumar's statement in Phologane (2014), Village in the law affirms that village meeting is a strategic forum because it is to achieve predetermined village goals and also as an effort to empower people to participate in village development.

However, villages today still tend to inherit the top-down approach and practice patron-client social relations, which is the old paradigm of village development (Hartono, 2023). Corruption of village funds by village heads is an indicator of less participatory development practices. Furthermore, Imelda Nahak (2019) study in Naran Village, Raimanuk District, Belu Regency, stated that culture is a factor that causes people to be reluctant to participate. The reluctance is shown by the culture *manfatin ukunrai*. The *manfatin ukunrai* culture is the culture of the royal government system, which dominates the community's mindset so that the community views community participation as only limited to implementing government programs and not planners. This inheritance of the old culture of development certainly contradicts the spirit of Village Law No. 6 of 2014, which demands community participation from planning to evaluation.

Participatory development will have a positive impact on village progress. Rudi Hartono stated there are four impacts of participatory development: first, participatory development is base on residents' needs. Second, participatory development will give birth to inclusive development. Third, participatory development encourages transparency in the use of village funds. Fourth, participatory development will empower village residents, advance political awareness, and strengthen social cohesion (Hartono, 2023, [kompas.com](https://www.kompas.com)).

The same thing was also emphasized by Ank Michelsa and Laurens De Graaf (2017) that community participation in policymaking has a positive impact on democracy, namely contributing to an inclusive policy process, encouraging civic skills and virtues, leading to rational decision-making based on public reason (deliberation), and increasing the legitimacy of the process and results (legitimacy) (Michelsa and Laurens De Graaf, 2017. 875-876).

Arnstein's perspective on the ladder of participation, we will describe the practice of community participation in village development. Arnstein introduced the ladder of participation in describing community participation. Community participation starts from the first level, namely the manipulation ladder and the therapy ladder. The steps of manipulation and therapy have the aim of "educating" and "treating" society so that at the first level, there is no participation or non-participation. At the second level, there is rung information, consultation, and placation. At the rung information, the public is given information, but the decision has been taken beforehand, and the public does not have the opportunity to ask questions. At the rung consultation, there is a public discussion forum and proposals/suggestions are heard and accommodated, but there is no guarantee that the proposals/suggestions are accepted by decision-makers. At the placation rung, there have been discussions, and suggestions have been accepted, but they are just promises that can easily be ignored. Arnstein named this second-level tokenism. At the third level, there are the steps of partnership, the steps of delegation of power, and the steps of control by society. At the partnership ladder, the community has influence and the ability to bargain with decision-makers. At the level of delegation of power, the community has full authority to manage a policy object. And at the rung of control by society, government power is in the hands of the public. At this third level, Arnstein calls citizen power (Arnstein, 1969).

In describing the level of community participation using Arnstein's participation ladder, we chose Teba Village as the research location and object of the case study in this research. The selection of Teba village was due to the following subjective assessment; First, this village is led by a millennial village head. Second, this village is a village that did not take part in the simultaneous village head election on 17 May 2023 in North Central Timor Regency. This subjective thinking is the basis for us to provide limitations that the practice of community participation in Teba village was researched before Law

No. 6 of 2014 was revised, bearing in mind that currently the issue of revising village laws is strengthening with the thing being discussed is the term of office of the village head from the previous 6 years for three periods will be revised to 9 years for two periods. Apart from that, another thing that was discussed was increasing village funds from previously only 1 billion to 2 billion.

The focus of the research is community participation. This focus is operated on the work program carried out or carried out by the Teba village at this time; whether the work program implemented is the result of a decision of the village council forum or the village head's initiative. The work program will provide a complete picture of the level of community participation. From the focus of the research above, this research aims to find out the practice of community participation in development in Teba Village and to find out what is the level of community participation in Teba Village.

METHOD

This research method is qualitative research with a focus is community participation. With the focus of research carried out on the Teba village head's work program, we will conduct in-depth interviews with the village head, four hamlet people, one community leader, one traditional leader, and five residents. So, the total number of respondents interviewed was twelve people. Interviews are also semi-structured interviews. It means that there are questions that have been prepared and asked according to the answers given by the respondent. Apart from that, we will also collect meeting minutes, meeting attendance lists, village government work plans (RKPdes), and village medium- term development plans (RPJMDes). After the data is collected, the data will be analyzed and presented again using Arnstein's participation ladder.

RESULTS

Frequency of Village Deliberations (Musdes) in Teba Village

Village meetings can be held at least once a year. That's what Article 54, paragraph 3 of Village Law No. 6 of 2014 says. It means that every year, there needs to be a village meeting. In Teba Village, from 2019 to 2023, there have been four village meetings. Data collected through interviews with village heads stated that the village deliberation (musdes) had been held four times with several variations. The first village deliberation was held in 2020. The second village deliberations were held in 2021, and the third village

deliberation was held in 2022. Whereas, the fourth village deliberation was held in 2023. In the first and second village deliberations were held after there was a village deliberation. Meanwhile, in the third village deliberation, there is a variation, namely that the village deliberation is carried out without prior village deliberation but carried out based on data from the village deliberation in the previous year. It means that data from the previous m village deliberation is used as a data source for conducting village deliberation. In 2023, village deliberation will no longer be carried out based on village deliberation data but based on information available on the SDG's application (<https://dashboard-sdgs.kemendesa.go.id/>). Apart from that, in planning development in the village, the village must also adapt to the village ministry's instructions regarding the priority use of village funds which are issued annually by the village ministry. In determining work programs, villages must also synchronize financing nomenclature in siskeudes (village financial system). Here, the head of Teba village stated that it would be difficult to accommodate all village deliberation decisions if no financing nomenclature were available in the village financial system (siskeudes).

Representation of participants at the Village Deliberation

The village law is a law that adheres to the idea of representation in village meetings. It is explicitly stated in Article 54, paragraph 1 of Village Law No. 6 of 2014, namely that the village meeting is attended by the village consultative, village government, and elements of the village community. Understanding this representation in practice tends to prioritize feelings of likes or dislikes. In general, the practice is that the village head will only invite people he likes. When this feeling of liking is dominant, the substance of the planning is sometimes unclear and the interests of many people are not taken into consideration. According to Walter Lippmann (1999), the practice of prioritizing feelings of like or dislike was said to be a disease in the democratic system.

This disease of democracy is confirmed by the data obtained. The attendance list for the village meeting in Teba village shows that those invited to take part in the village meeting were the same people. From 2019 to 2023, it will still be the same people who are invited to village meetings.

The work program currently being implemented

The Teba village work program is as follows:

First, clean water. The clean water program is one of the activities to realize the mission of the elected village head. Clean water is a common need of the Teba village community so it is welcomed by all village residents so that it can be implemented immediately. During the village deliberation implementation, the community proposed providing clean water. The proposal was accepted at the village consultation, and in 2020 program was implemented.

The second program is the stimulant house. Stimulant housing is a housing assistance program provided to eighteen heads of families (KK) with the amount of assistance being ten million rupiah per head of family in the form of building materials. The stimulant house is an assistance program with a financing scheme that is partly borne by the beneficiary and partly borne by the village government. The stimulant house is a program that does not originate from the village head's mission contained in the RPJMD but is a program that must be implemented due to instructions from the village ministry and the regent. This program is a village adjustment program.

The conditions for recipients of stimulant housing assistance are vulnerable poor families and have not been touched by assistance from village funds such as direct cash assistance (BLT). In determining the requirements for recipients of assisted housing, villages take data based on data about poor families available in the SDG's application.

Based on this data, the village head determines who can receive stimulant housing assistance. Determining who deserves to receive this sometimes tends to be closed. The village head, through the village deliberation forum, only conveys to the village deliberation participants about the program of activities that will be carried out in a year, but who can accept it, only the village head knows.

Third, the street light program. This program is a work program from the ministry so it is a village adjustment program. The program was implemented by the village by installing street lights in the village. Each hamlet has 3 street lights installed. Because there are four hamlets, there are 12 street lights installed.

Fourth, citizen economic empowerment program. This program is a program implemented based on instructions from the village ministry. The Ministry has determined that twenty percent (20%) of village funds will used for community economic empowerment.

The program is a program that is in sync with the RPJMDes so that the village implements it by procuring 34 cows which are distributed to 34 heads of families. The conditions for receiving cattle assistance are that families are vulnerable to poverty, have not been touched by village financial assistance, and are willing to receive this assistance. Determining the requirements is conveyed at the village meeting, but who is eligible to receive it is only decided by the village head himself.

DISCUSSION

Participation is an essential element in democracy. The practice of participation in Teba village can be described as follows; Village deliberations are only limited to forums for confirming activity plans in the RPJMDes, RKPdes, SDG's applications, and not as strategic forums for preparing development plans in villages. In the description above regarding village meetings, villages no longer need to hold village meetings, because the activity program is already in the SDG's application. It was confirmed also from the results of interviews with the community. The community says, that at village meetings they are present only to hear the activity plans that had been prepared by the village head. The village head also admitted that the village meeting was a place to re-read the work plan that was stated in the RKPdes, ministry instructions, and also what was stated in the SDG's application. The presence of citizens is a way to gain legitimacy. Apart from that, village deliberations are only a place to get confirmation because villages also face challenges from the Ministry of Finance which has determined the nomenclature of financing within a year. Sometimes, proposed programs from the citizen cannot be accommodated because they are not included in the financing nomenclature.

From the description above, the analysis of participation practices in Teba village using Arnstein's participation ladder is at the second level. At the level of providing information, the Teba village head uses village meetings to convey information to the community about activity programs in one working year but the decision has been taken by the village head himself. The village head, with his authority, determines for himself who should receive stimulant housing assistance and cow assistance. The community is only told the conditions, but who can accept it is determined by the village head himself. It encourages village heads to determine aid recipients based on a scale of likes and dislikes. The disease in democracy, namely determining who one likes or dislikes as

stated by Walter Lippmann, is being practiced again. On the consultation rung, village deliberations are consultation forums. The community is only limited to proposing activity plans, village government will determine whether the suggestions are accepted and implemented or not. The village government always argues that suggestions are only accepted because the village government must adhere to the RPJMdes, RKPdes, and instructions from the village ministry regarding priority use of village funds. If the proposed suggestions are to the documents mentioned above, then the proposed suggestions can be implemented. At the placation rung, the village government will of course promise that the suggestions made in the village deliberation will be implemented but it is only a promise because the village government will easily ignore it.

CONCLUSION

Using Arnstein's participation ladder to analyze community participation in development in Teba village, community participation is at the second level. Information, suggestions, and promises have been made to the community, but the decision was taken by the village government itself.

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