

Women's Participation in Planning and Development in Puncak Village

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Abstract

Participation in development is the participation of the community in a development process. Women's involvement in planning and development is crucial. This study aims to determine women's participation in planning and development in Puncak Village, South Sinjai District, Sinjai Regency. The method used in this study is a qualitative descriptive research method. Data analysis techniques used are data reduction, data presentation, and conclusions. The results of the study indicate that women's participation in development planning in Puncak Village, South Sinjai District, Sinjai Regency is still low with the form of participation being ideas and energy. Women's participation is relatively high in the health sector, especially in integrated health service post (Posyandu) activities. Determinant factors that influence the low participation of women in development planning in Puncak Village, Sinjai Regency are the level of busyness, willingness and education level.

Keywords: Women's Participation, Development Planning, Village Development, Community Empowerment, Determinants of Participation

Introduction

Women's participation in social life, including planning and development, is a persistent issue in global development. Women's active involvement in village planning and development is a pillar of national development. Community development will be successful if it involves the potential within the community. Potential can be defined as a community's wealth, which can be physical in the form of nature or non-physical in the form of human investment. Women's responsibility as human resources in community development is an essential element. Women's empowerment is directed at developing and empowering various potentials that align with their individual characteristics, enabling them to be active, not merely passive.

State support for women's involvement in planning and decision-making within the context of village development has been officially communicated through Law No. 22 of 1999 concerning regional autonomy regarding the role of rural women. First, village decentralization allows women to actively participate in the decision-making process. Second, the existence of village institutions, namely the Village Representative Body (BPD), which allows women to sit on it and play a role in the decision-making process (Hidayat, 2023).

Women's participation in development is an effort to recognize the quality of women's abilities and raise the status of women who have often been underestimated (Purnomo et al., 2024). But

in many villages, as stated Amalia (2023) that the contributions between women and men still occur. Social and cultural norms such as gender stereotypes are one of the main challenges that currently still hinder women's access to public life.

In many communities, women still face traditional expectations that limit their role in life. In existing development decision-making structures, women are often not actively involved. In many cases, they simply act as recipients of the impacts of decisions made by village leaders without providing opinions or aspirations. This fact highlights a gap in the planning and decision-making process, where women's voices are often unheard in community development planning and decision-making.

Women's role in planning and decision-making processes is not only crucial in expressing their own aspirations and needs, but also in ensuring that women's interests are broadly reflected in public policy. Increasing women's participation is tantamount to increasing their effectiveness in influencing decisions that can guarantee the economic rights of women's groups and the wider community (Das, 2025). Women's involvement in development policymaking can bring about significant changes, both in terms of the quality of social and economic life.

For example, women are more likely to allocate household income to the health and education of their children, which in turn contributes to long-term human development (Hariyono, 2020; Juslaeni et al., 2024) So that women's involvement in the development planning and decision-making process can support the achievement of more inclusive and sustainable development results (Faizien, 2025). Women's participation is not only seen as a social and political right, but also as an important element in creating more effective development policies that support all levels of society (Hanasi, 2025)

Furthermore, the importance of gender equality in sustainable village development will not be achieved if only a portion of society is involved in the decision-making process. Involving women in development planning allows for more diverse, equitable decisions that address the needs of all stakeholders, including women. This aligns with international and national commitments to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly Goal 5 on gender equality, which encourages women's empowerment in all aspects of life (Neno et al., 2025).

Against this backdrop, research on women's participation in planning and development in Puncak Village is crucial. This research aims not only to describe existing conditions but also to provide insights into how more inclusive policies can be implemented and how women can be empowered in strategic roles to achieve more equitable and equitable development. This research aims to examine in more depth why women's participation in development in Puncak Village remains low, as well as the inhibiting factors and potential opportunities that can be leveraged to increase women's roles in village development planning.

Literature Review

Research on women's participation in planning and decision-making has been widely conducted in various regions, but those specifically discussing this matter in Puncak Village, South Sinjai District are still limited. The involvement of women in participating in village development is considered very important because this will support national development efforts at the regional

level, especially at the village level, to achieve the goal of gender equality (Budoyo & Hardiyanti, 2021). Research conducted by Malahayati & Rasyid (2020) Regarding women's participation in village development planning deliberations (a case study in Krueng Batu Village, North Kluet District, South Aceh Regency, Aceh Province), it was stated that women's participation in the pre-village development planning meeting (Musrenbangdes) stage was not yet available. Women's participation was only seen in the implementation stage of the Krueng Batu Village Musrenbangdes and the post-Musrenbang stage as a Village Representative Team. This form of women's participation was driven by the PKK mothers who took the initiative to carry out a special activity, the Women's Deliberation on Village Development Planning. Apart from that, other facts in the research conducted by Miranti & Haryanto (2021) This indicates that women's lack of active participation in non-physical forms such as attending meetings and conveying ideas regarding the continuity of development programs in Giri Purno Village is still low. This is caused by low ability, education level, and lack of awareness regarding the importance of women's participation in village development.

Other research from Ayuna (2022) The study found that the level of women's participation in Naga Alih Village is relatively low, with women rarely participating in development. In general, community groups and men are more actively involved than women. Factors influencing women's participation in development planning in Naga Alih Village are socio-cultural factors. These socio-cultural factors include indicators such as the majority of the community still considering women more suitable for kitchen work, and the perception that development planning is still an elite matter, from the neighborhood unit (RT), hamlet, village, sub-district, provincial, and central government levels. In the customary context, women are not directly involved in customary decision-making, but are more involved in decision-implementation, resulting in minimal benefits for women from customary decisions. In the evaluation of decisions, women have been given space to provide criticism and suggestions, but this has not been utilized effectively due to women's tendency to avoid disputes (Kadek, 2023).

In contrast to the research above, other facts were put forward from the research Openg et al., (2022) that village development planning activities in Swarga Bara Village, Sangatta Utara District, East Kutai Regency have involved women's participation, such as participation in ideas, labor, funding, and facilities and infrastructure. Besides that Jacka & Sargeson (2015) stated that in the formal sphere, only representatives from the Village Consultative Body have female participation. However LeGris et al., (2014) The study revealed that female BPD members' participation in decision-making was not visible. Although they participated in aspiration gathering activities, they were unable to grasp the deeper meaning of community members' desires, and their legitimacy in decisions was very low. The low capacity of female BPD members also resulted in low levels of participation. Purnomo et al. (2024) In her research, she revealed that women's participation in Sumber Jaya Village is limited to the implementation of integrated health posts (Posyandu) and the Family Empowerment and Welfare (PKK) activities. Women's participation in development planning in Sumber Jaya Village is still very low and needs to be increased to achieve equitable development. Meanwhile, women's involvement in infrastructure development is still far below the ideal level, which is 30% of men's participation.

Methods

This research design uses a qualitative approach with a case study method. This approach was chosen to understand in depth the phenomenon of women's participation in the planning and decision-making process in Puncak Village, Sinjai Regency, South Sulawesi Province. This study aims to explore the perspectives, experiences, and challenges faced by women in the planning and decision-making participation process. Data collection techniques were carried out through in-depth interviews, participant observation, and documentation studies. The research location was chosen purposively in Puncak Village, South Sinjai District, South Sulawesi Province because of its unique socio-cultural context, which influences women's participation in planning and decision-making. The data used in this study consists of primary data obtained through interviews and observations, and secondary data obtained through document research. The informants in this study were the Village Head, BPD, Chairperson of the TP-PKK of Puncak Village, KPM Members, Community Leaders, and women in the community.

Results and Discussion

Women's participation in village planning and development processes

Participation is the involvement of an individual or group in an activity. According to Sumaryadi, participation involves the participation of an individual or group in the development process, either through statements or activities, such as providing input, energy, time, expertise, capital, or materials, as well as utilizing and enjoying the results of development. According to the author, women's participation can be classified into two aspects: participation in the form of ideas/thoughts (non-physical) and direct participation (energy/physical).

Participation of Ideas/Thoughts

Research shows that women's participation in planning and development in Puncak Village remains very low. Although women outnumber men, this has not significantly impacted village participation.

Table 1. Population of Puncak Village

| No | Gender | Total |
|----|--------|--------------|
| 1 | Male | 1.495 People |
| 2 | Female | 1.586 People |
| | Total | 3.081 People |

Source: Population of Puncak Village

The table above shows that the number of female residents of Puncak Village is higher, at around 1,586 compared to the number of male residents, which is only around 1,495. This allows women to participate in the planning and development of Puncak Village, not only as beneficiaries, but also as active subjects in the planning and development process. However, research results in Puncak Village indicate that women's participation is still very low, especially in formal forums in village deliberations (musdes) such as the village medium-term development planning meeting (RPJMDes), APDS planning, and others that require the contribution of ideas or thoughts from a female perspective.

Various village deliberation activities have been held, starting from planning, decision-making

and development in Puncak Village, in fact, women's participation is still low. The Village Medium-Term Development Plan (RPJMDes) is one of them, which focuses on infrastructure development such as repairing and constructing roads, and public facilities. This was proven when the author conducted observations by directly attending the 2026 RPJMDes meeting held at the Puncak Village Office Hall on September 18, 2025, of the 5 women's organizations invited such as Community Empowerment Cadres, Posyandu Cadres, BPD Members, PKK Cadres and Majelis Taklim with a total of 52 members, only 5 people were seen attending the Deliberation.

Table 2. Percentage of women's presence in Village Deliberations

| No. | Women's Group | Number of Members | Number of Attendees | Attendance Percentage |
|-----|-------------------------------|-------------------|---------------------|-------------------------|
| 1 | PKM cadres | 1 | 1 | 100% |
| 2 | Integrated Health Post Cadres | 20 | 5 | 25% |
| 3 | Female BPD members | 1 | 1 | 100% |
| 4 | PKK cadres | 28 | 1 | 3.57% |
| 5 | Taklim Assembly | 15 | 1 | 6.67% |
| | Total | 52 | 9 | 17.31% (average) |

Based on Table 2, the percentage of women present in village deliberations clearly shows that women's participation is still very low. This is supported by the results of an interview with the Head of Puncak Village, who stated that:

"The percentage of women's presence in planning and development in Puncak Village remains very low, particularly during meetings, where men predominate".

This opinion was supported by the Chairman of the Puncak Village Consultative Body (BPD) who said that

"When there is a deliberation meeting at the Village Office, we always invite women representatives, but only a few attend."

Based on the attendance and interview data above, it is clear that women's participation in development planning activities is still low.

Participation in the form of labor

Another form of participation that women can undertake, besides ideas, is through labor. This labor participation refers to how women are directly involved, even though not all women in a group participate fully. According to observations and interviews, women participate in development in Puncak Village, particularly in the health sector. This is reflected in the integrated health service post (Posyandu) activities in four hamlets in Puncak Village, which are attended by all Posyandu cadres. This is consistent with an interview with Nursia, one of the Posyandu cadres in Puncak Village.

"I am active in activities such as integrated health posts (Posyandu) and health education, but I have never attended a meeting at the village office."

This interview demonstrates that women, particularly health cadres like Nursia, play an active

role in implementing community health programs. Activities such as weighing, data recording, and outreach are tangible contributions to village development. However, Nursia indicated a disconnect between practical and formal participation. Women are still rarely involved in decision-making spaces such as village meetings or planning forums, indicating unequal access to village political space. This is supported by another integrated health post (Posyandu) cadre, Nadia, who stated that

"As a Posyandu (Integrated Health Post) cadre, I actively attend monthly checkups to weigh and measure toddlers' development. However, I never attend meetings at the village office when invited. This is because I still feel awkward and embarrassed to speak in formal forums."

These interviews revealed that women's participation in development in Puncak Village is active but limited, primarily due to psychological and cultural barriers in formal forums. Although women have been structurally invited, their absence reflects the need for a more transformative approach, namely creating welcoming, supportive, and empowering spaces for women to participate in decision-making processes. The Village Secretary emphasized that women's participation in supporting health development, especially integrated health posts (Posyandu),

"Women play a significant role in the field, especially in health. However, formal forums like planning meetings are still predominantly attended by men. We still need encouragement to get women more involved formally, too."

An interview with the Puncak Village Secretary confirmed the village officials' recognition of women's contributions in the field. However, he also frankly acknowledged that women's participation at the formal level is still suboptimal, as it is still dominated by men. This statement opens up the opportunity for officials to commit to change, for example by promoting affirmative action policies or more systematically involving women in the village development planning meeting (musrenbang). In addition to actively participating in health activities, women are also involved in religious activities, such as the Islamic study group (Majelis Taklim), which is held twice a month. As Mrs. Nilwa explained:

"I participate in the religious study group (Majelis Taklim) in our hamlet. It's held twice a month and usually includes religious studies, religious sermons, and women's social gatherings. Many housewives are active in it, as it not only allows us to learn about religion but also allows us to socialize."

Mrs. Nurlindah also said the same thing:

"I always come to the religious study groups. The activities are calming, and I can also expand my religious knowledge. Sometimes I feel more comfortable speaking here than in formal meetings."

These interviews demonstrate that the majelis taklim (Islamic study groups) serve not only as a forum for strengthening religious values, but also as an informal social space where women share information and experiences. This can be called an alternative space for women's participation because, although not as formal as the musrenbang (development planning meeting), these meetings serve as a medium for communication, social consolidation, and sometimes even a

starting point for the emergence of critical awareness regarding development issues. The psychological and cultural functions of the majelis taklim are as a safe space for women to express themselves. Informants felt more comfortable and confident in a religious and social atmosphere, compared to formal village forums, which may be perceived as more rigid or hierarchical. This suggests that women's active participation in majelis taklim could be an indicator of social capacity that has not been formally accommodated in the village planning system.

Factors Influencing Women's Participation

Women's participation in planning and development is a crucial element in realizing gender equity and creating a participatory and sustainable development process. Although various policies have encouraged women's involvement at various levels of decision-making, the reality on the ground shows that their participation remains suboptimal. This is influenced by various interrelated factors, both structural and cultural. Therefore, it is important to examine in depth the factors influencing women's participation in planning and development in order to formulate more effective strategies to increase their involvement in the future.

Inhibiting Factors

Various obstacles limit women's active involvement in optimal village planning and development. In Puncak Village, some women have demonstrated willingness, ability, and active contributions in village planning forums. However, this is not evenly distributed among all women. Based on interviews and field observations, several inhibiting factors were found to be quite dominant, particularly busy domestic and productive roles, as well as a lack of communication or access to information from the village. These obstacles cause some women to feel unable, lack the time, or even uninvited to participate in the decision-making process. To understand more deeply, the following is a presentation of the results of an interview with Mrs. Mia.

"I actually want to attend the village meeting, but the timing often clashes with household chores. My children are still young and can't be left alone for long periods. If I stay at the meeting, I'll neglect my housework."

These interviews revealed that high domestic workloads remain a major barrier for women, particularly housewives, to actively participate in village planning forums. This makes it difficult to consistently participate. Another challenge faced by women is due to the busyness factor, as conveyed by Mrs. Kartini,

"During planting or harvest season, I barely have time. I'm in the rice fields from morning till evening. Sometimes village meetings are held during work hours, so I can't attend."

Busyness stemming from economic activities such as farming also poses a significant barrier. This reflects the fact that planning activities do not fully consider the schedules of working women, particularly those in the informal sector or agriculture. The final factor that causes low participation of women is because only certain figures are involved in village deliberation meetings, as stated by Mrs. Nurlia.:

" Village meetings sometimes only involve certain figures. Those of us who are not

administrators or community leaders are rarely invited."

The lack of inclusive communication from the village government also contributes to low female participation. Women who are not considered "leaders" or "managers" feel marginalized and excluded, both informationally and socially.

Supporting Factors

Women's participation in planning and development in Puncak Village did not emerge spontaneously, but was driven by various internal and external factors that influenced women's motivation and ability to actively participate. Based on research and interviews conducted in Puncak Village, several key factors were identified that drove women's involvement in village planning and development: willingness/awareness and education level

Will or Awareness

Participation will not occur without the willingness or awareness of the individual concerned. In the context of women in Puncak Village, the willingness to participate in village planning and development is one of the initial foundations for meaningful participation. This willingness often grows from an awareness of the important role of women in voicing needs, overseeing equitable development, and ensuring that the interests of women's households and communities are not neglected. This awareness can emerge naturally from daily life experiences or be formed through social interactions, training, and involvement in community organizations. With increased awareness, women begin to realize that they have the right and responsibility to participate in the village development process. As Mrs. Senni explained,

"At first, I didn't really understand the importance of village meetings. But after participating in several training sessions and discussions, I realized that women's voices are also important. Now, I always attend every village meeting."

Based on the interview results above, it is clear that the personal awareness factor is a driving force for women to participate in development because of a concern or awareness to be involved, either directly or indirectly, in the development.

Educational Level

Education plays a crucial role in enhancing women's capacity and empowerment, including their participation in village planning and development. Women with higher levels of education tend to have greater knowledge, skills, and confidence to participate in decision-making processes. Education not only equips women with information but also fosters critical thinking and awareness of their rights and roles in society. In Puncak Village, both formal and informal education has proven to be a factor encouraging women to actively contribute to village development forums. This is evident in the involvement of women with higher education backgrounds in deliberation activities, village working groups, and other community organizations. As stated by Mrs. Rismawati,

"Because of my background as a kindergarten educator, I feel a responsibility to voice the aspirations of the community, especially regarding the education of children and women. Many people don't understand the importance of education, so I felt compelled to

participate in the village development planning meeting (Musrenbang), particularly regarding kindergarten facilities."

The interviews clearly demonstrate that women's education provides a moral and intellectual impetus for participation in development forums. This also demonstrates how education fosters a sense of social responsibility.

Conclusion

The results of the study indicate that the role of women in development planning in Puncak Village, South Sinjai District, Sinjai Regency, is still very low. This is due to women's busyness such as taking care of the household and busy in the agricultural land. Women actively participate in health activities such as integrated health service posts (Posyandu). In the development planning of Puncak Village, women are only involved in Posyandu activities or programs and are not involved in infrastructure development. Some people who have higher education, such as teachers, acknowledge the importance of women's involvement in the village development planning process. In the future, women's participation in Puncak Village needs to be increased again in accordance with applicable policies.

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