



Gender and Local Organisations toward Sustainable Rural Development

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Abstract. *Local organization and gender participation are two elements that have the significant role for the rural development plan. The objectives of the study are to describe the function and role of the local organizations as a media for participation, job allocation of men and women performed in rural development plan. A case study method was used with the key informants from the local organization committees, target group, and development facilitators. The data collected are the type and form women and men contribution, roles and functions of the local organizations in the rural development plan process, and the activity proposed by men and women. The study indicated that the involvement of men and women in the development plan process encourages community participation in rural development and generating a better development plan. Women have the significant role in the identification of problems and planning, primarily related to social and economic aspect affecting household activities, while men profoundly concern to public infrastructure affecting to economic activities. The involvement of men and women should be a necessity for every rural development because the proposed action planned is based on the local community needs.*

Keywords : *Participation; Needs; Rural; Development.*

Abstrak. *Organisasi lokal dan partisipasi gender merupakan dua elemen yang memiliki peran penting bagi rencana pembangunan pedesaan. Tujuan dari penelitian ini adalah untuk mendeskripsikan fungsi dan peran organisasi lokal sebagai media partisipasi, alokasi pekerjaan laki-laki dan perempuan yang dilakukan dalam rencana pembangunan pedesaan. Metode studi kasus digunakan dengan informan kunci dari komite organisasi lokal, kelompok sasaran, dan fasilitator pembangunan. Data yang dikumpulkan adalah jenis dan bentuk kontribusi perempuan dan laki-laki, peran dan fungsi organisasi lokal dalam proses perencanaan pembangunan pedesaan, dan kegiatan yang diusulkan oleh laki-laki dan perempuan. Studi tersebut menunjukkan bahwa keterlibatan laki-laki dan perempuan dalam proses perencanaan pembangunan mendorong partisipasi masyarakat dalam pembangunan pedesaan dan menghasilkan rencana pembangunan yang lebih baik. Perempuan memiliki peran yang signifikan dalam mengidentifikasi masalah dan perencanaan, terutama terkait dengan aspek sosial dan ekonomi yang mempengaruhi kegiatan rumah tangga, sedangkan laki-laki sangat memperhatikan infrastruktur publik yang mempengaruhi kegiatan ekonomi. Keterlibatan laki-laki dan perempuan harus menjadi kebutuhan untuk setiap pembangunan pedesaan karena rencana aksi yang diusulkan didasarkan pada kebutuhan masyarakat setempat.*

Kata Kunci : *Partisipasi; Kebutuhan; Pedesaan; Pembangunan.*

PRELIMINARY

There are two aspects could be considered in the rural development activities such as gender participation of community members and local organization as a media for community interaction in the development process. Promoting equal participation for both women and men in development planning activities especially through local organizations generate a great benefit for rural development (Kutsmus & Kovalchuk, 2020). Local organizations in rural area can provide many services related to rural development initiatives, and act as the potential agents to get development

information and other resources for improving the well being of rural communities (Elakkiya & Asokhan, 2018). The active participation of community members through local organizations in rural planning and development activities will encourage the realization of sustainable development.

The principal point in national development is development in rural area or administrative village which is the lowest level of government institution in the Indonesian government system, so rural village has a vital role in the aggregation of national development. A rural village is an autonomous unit of government, in which its status of development is also implemented, autonomously regulated in Law No. 32/2004 of the regional administration and Law No. 72 (2005) of the Indonesian government's regulations. Increasing the power of local people by enhancing its ability to influence the government, to share in decision making and to understand the rights and obligations of the local people, reducing poverty by encouraging an equitable distribution of available resources; and expanding choice of the people to draw their experience and knowledge (Ofem, Arya, & Borgatti, 2018). The power of local people could be also improved through gender participation in local organization for development activities is as a self-help group and encouraging local people in any local development (Kutsmus & Kovalchuk, 2020).

The levels of success of rural development activities supported by equal gender participation may be assessed by investigating gender relations within local organizations. Gender relations has been conducted on both the differences and inequities between men and women; involving either conflict, separation, and competition (Kim & Lee, 2019). The study focused on gender relations considered in the formulation of rural development plans based on their needs and available resources. This approach encourages the active participation of the community in the implementation of development, including maintaining the results of development that have been achieved.

By considering the local organizations as a platform to strengthen rural development, the study aims to establish the gendered participation in local organizations and rural development activities which is essential to the success of rural development. The research objectives are 1) to describe function and role of the local organizations for rural development plan; 2) to describe gendering of job allocation performed by men and women in the local organizations and rural development planning activities; and 3) to analyze gender potency in the local organizations and rural development activities.

RESEARCH METHODS

The main targets of the development process are people themselves, not only women but also men. Therefore, the involvement of men and women should be a necessity for every rural development planning activity because the proposed activity planned is based on the rural community needs. Gender in development should also consider men's and women's roles and issues in their initiatives, so women or men do not have to carry the burden of all responsibility for change (Wang, Ma, & Guo, 2020). The exclusion of men in gender programs fails to achieve effective equity and empowerment which are important in bringing about positive change in development (Lawson, 2020). It is suggested that a full engendering of the development process can sustain the development and access to development sources (Trauger & Fluri, 2019).

Based on the main objective of this study is to show how men and women have participated in the local organizations and rural development activities for supporting the development of the village. They are related to how power relations are distributed between the sexes, with both men and women having different positions of authority in community (Winter, Darmstadt, & Davis, 2021). Thus, the study offers insights into the interactions between men and women whether an individual's active contribution is appropriately based on their roles in accordance with competency and talents. Local organizations is a media for supporting rural development where participatory approach could be implemented and gender participation is an important which is the division of activities based on the function and role of each party - women and men, so each party can function optimally for development activities.

A local organization emerges and/or works at a local level with the aim of improving and developing communities either through community-wide or specific membership: such as women,

fisherman, farmers, and forest users who are voluntarily bound by a common purpose to achieve shared objectives. The local organization can be defined as informal (such as self-help groups, mediation committees, and multi-stakeholder platform), and formal (such as cooperatives and government body) activities (Kutsmus & Kovalchuk, 2020). The local organizations provide many services related to rural development initiatives, and act as potential agents to get development information and other resources for improving the well being of the rural communities (Kim & Lee, 2019).

Local organizations are the most visible part in a community's structure; and have become a collaborative partnership for community to development activities in which people can cater for their local needs. Therefore, the local organizations are important to the rural development as they are a platform for social change, and have great power to effect and affect greater change in community. The development activities in rural area will deal directly with community, so people as the main target are expected to participate in all aspects of the development process: namely decision making, planning, implementation, monitoring, and benefit sharing. Community participation seems to fit those activities aiming to educate people in analyzing and communicating their issues and assets of their resources for local development (Lawson, 2020). According to Giampiccoli and Saayman participation is about involving people in decision-making, implementation, benefit sharing and program evaluation efforts (2018). Lawson defines participation is an organized effort to increase control over resources (2020) and Paul states that participation is an active process carried out by the public to influence the type of development projects on the basis of a favorable outlook (in Lawson 2020). In particular, this involves the improvement of people's lives, increased incomes, individual development and self-reliance or other community values that are cherished (Guzhavina, 2020). In addition, Maisyaroh et al. suggest that participation is a process in which people define goals, voice their opinions about decisions which affect them, and have commitment to enhance control over their conditions (2021). Thus, participation is a means for community to be involved in processes to achieve development. Local community participation also is a key indicator for successful development as the programs are planned, implemented, and maintained (Foster, 2017).

The research method used was a case study, using a mix of qualitative methods (such as participant observation, in-depth interview, and focus group discussions-FGD). A list of questions was used for formal and informal to guide in-depth interviews and FGD with key informants from the local organization committees, target group, and members of community. Fieldwork of the study was conducted in Desa Ampekale, Maros district, South Sulawesi, Indonesia. The selection of the research sites is purposive because the village has been well-developed due to the emergence of its local organizations. Thus, this study will restrict with the local organizations only which have activities in rural development planning.

The selected key informants gathered with the advice of the village head, local organizations and their members, and community members that have knowledge about aspects related to local organizations and/or rural development activities. The data be gathered by using Focus Group Discussion FGD with community to confirm the data gathered through in-depth interviews. All data collected through the FGD, interviews, recording, transcribing, and coding were utilized to maintain anonymity. The data collected related to mixed gender of the local organizations will be considered.

The primary data taken from all the key informants from the local organization committees and community members of the target group; and secondary data from local organizations concerning their visions, missions, and program activities will be used to identify function and role of the local organizations for rural development. The selection of informants was not proportional based on their sexes, but tended to follow the selected sub-villages. Lalang Tedong was selected in this study because it is considered that the sub-village is relatively developed and the centre of village administration, while Binanga Sangkara is located in the shore line with catch fishery sector as the area of dominant economic activities. There were 12 informants in Lalang Tedong consisting of 9 males and 3 females, and 10 informants from Binanga Sangkara consisting of 3 males and 7 females, so there were 12 Males and 10 Females. Thus, male informants were dominated for rural planning activities, whereas female informants for business activities.

Primary data which had been collected include type and form of contribution of community members to development activities (infrastructure developments), roles and functions of the local organizations in the rural development planning activities, the participation of I between men and women as members of local organizations or/and society in rural development planning process. Secondary data was collected mostly from the village offices such as the history of the village, the characteristics of the village area, population, and the poor. Development Organization considered in this study are BPD (Village Representative-*Badan Perwakilan Desa*), YKL (*Yayasan Konservasi Laut*), and Oxfam. YKL and Oxfam has a partnership through the support of the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA).

RESEARCH RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

1. Research Results

Village Representative Board or *Badan Permusyawaratan Desa* (BPD) is a local organization that is commonly known in rural Indonesia. This RDO is a manifestation of democracy in a village governance system and is a village government's partnership in maintaining governance and carrying out community empowerment (Ramli and Rasdi 2021; Unger 2019; Ofem, Arya, and Borgatti 2018). Thus, BPD is originated from community itself and represent community. BPD is expected to involve community in rural development planning activities, hence, the formulation and nomination of rural development activities are conducted through consensus agreement both at the sub-village and village level (Ramli and Rasdi 2021; Guzhavina 2020)

In the new order regime, BPD's functions were formed by the village consultative council (*Lembaga Musyawarah Desa - LMD*) and the village community resilience council (*Lembaga Ketahanan Masyarakat Desa-LKMD*) in Ampekalle Village. These institutions were local organizations and as partners of local government in carrying out their functions as community services for rural development activities. However, as the initial approach used was the top-down approach, thus, they failed to be functioned as community representatives because the power of a village head was very dominant at that time. A failure to fully integrate or inform community regarding rural development programs and consult with them about key program issues had been resulted in lack of community participation.

BPD was formed based on Government Regulation No. 72 of 2005 on the village, and then reinforced by the enactment of the Village Law No. 6/2014. Under these provisions, the function of BPD was confirmed to become a political and development function, in which previously regarded as an administration element in rural development and rural governance system (Ramli and Rasdi 2021; Unger 2019). The functions of BPD nowadays are to channel community interests, to plan rural development expenditure, and to control village governance (Ofem, Arya, and Borgatti 2018; Unger 2019). Of the first two functions can be addressed through the village development forum (*musyawarah pembangunan desa- musrembangdes*).

Musrembangdes is an annual forum held in a participatory manner involved by local government authorities, women representatives, LOs representing social and business groups, and local leaders to identify problems based on local stakeholders' priorities and define the objectives to be achieved within a specific time-frame, with activities identified for the short, medium, and long term. *Musrembangdes* creates space for dialogue between different groups within the community and enable them to actively participate in the decision-making (Unger, 2019). Therefore, *Musrembangdes* is the forum to key success of rural development programs as community action plan formulates and implements on the basis of local knowledge and exchange ideas among the parties involved.

People's understanding of the function of RDO in Ampekalle Village is still limited only to the LO committee. RDO's function as a means of participation is widely understood by informants, followed by a function of media planning, government partner and community motivator. The first of two functions of RDO's are widely understood because people have actively participated in rural development activities. Meanwhile, the latter two functions are relatively less understood by the community because these functions are not perceived directly by community (Table I).

Table I
Community Understanding to RDO'S Functions

Functions of RDO	Community level	Gender Aspect
Media for community participation	Slightly high	Men slightly dominant
Motivator for community participation	Moderate	Men dominant
Media for government partnership	Slightly high	Men dominant
Media for community development planning	Slightly high	Equal
Overall	Slightly high	Men dominant

Note: Level of understanding (high, slightly high, moderate, slightly low, low)

The level of community understanding the functions of RDO are slightly high know RDO's functions as a media for community participation and development planning respectively because they have taken a part in rural development programs since *PNPM-Mandiri* program introduced in the year 2004. This rural development programs have encouraged community to take a part in decision making, planning, implementation, and evaluation. BPD has adopted the bottom-up approach introduced by *PNPM-Mandiri* in its rural development programs.

Participatory Approach Appraisal (PRA) is the method introduced by *PNPM-Mandiri* and development agencies (Oxfam and YKL) which is adopted by local government and BPD to compile rural community action plan through *musrenbangdes*. BPD and local government have used this method to empower community through self-help and self-decision to participate in any rural development activities. Ranking as a decision-making tool is one of the PRA's methods which have been used widely by stakeholders in Ampekalle Village to identify the most important problems faced by community and select the most feasible opportunities to solve them. Thus, applying this democratic decision-making in rural development programs can help to improve individual and collective wellbeing. Ranking has played an important tool (or voting procedure) to take community decisions democratically about future action strategies and actions as democratic decision-making and participation within a community are essential in the development (Guzhavina, 2020).

RDO's roles are more widely understood by informants than its functions for community due to their active participation in rural development activities. The roles of RDO are to spread information from local government to community, to mobilize community for rural development activities, to manage and persuade community in rural development programs. Level of community understanding to the roles of RDO is high for each feature except RDO's role in managing rural development programs is slightly high. Understanding of men are dominant in managing rural development programs and persuading community to participate in rural development programs (Table II).

Table II
Community understanding to rdo's roles

The role of RDO	Community level	Gender aspect
Spread information from top to down	High	Women slightly dominant
Mobilizing community	Slightly high	Women slightly dominant
Managing rural development programs for community	Slightly high	Men slightly dominant
Persuading community to participate in rural development programs	Slightly high	Men slightly dominant

Overall	Slightly high	Equal
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Note : Level of understanding (high, slightly high, moderate, slightly low, low)

Most informants understood the roles of RDO because community members have been participated actively in *musrenbangdes*, including preparation for rural community action. Community participated in every meeting with hopes that their proposed programs will address their problems. Community was trained by developmental agencies before *musrenmbangdes* was held at that time. Training materials were related to increase skills in identifying problems and potential natural resources of village using sketch of the village, seasonal calendar, and institutional diagrams.

Midterm Village Development Plan (*Rencana Pembangunan Jangka Menengah Desa-RPJMDes*) begins with the preparation of meetings (*musyawarah*) in each sub-village level, and then followed by meetings in village level. The editorial members of *RPJMDes* consists of government segment, BPD, women representatives from LOs, member village representatives, and community leaders. The level of understanding of men informants are better than women on both the functions and roles of RDO for rural development. The low level understanding of women in RDO's functions and roles is because they have just participated actively in rural development activities (decision making, planning, and implementing) since external agencies (YKL and Oxfam) had facilitated them through the development of LEO (Local Economic Organization) (Amandaria 2014). These external agencies have not only empowered them through facilitating in forming business economic activities, but also they had been given trainings to increase their capacity building, such as leadership and public speaking skills, gender roles in household, PRA workshops in order to participate in *musrenbangdes*. These can be traced through several quotations from informants.

It can be concluded that promoting a bottom-up approach where local people is integrally involved in all activities of rural development activities from planning, implementing, and managing programs will lead to a more sustainable rural development. As Korten maintains that when community participate in local development program they have fully local ownership to the programs, and it can be guaranteed through wide participation of community and local government (in Guzhavina, 2020). Therefore, a good local governance should provide democratic and equal opportunities between men and women to participate in all aspects of any rural developmental activities (Kim & Lee, 2019).

Ampekalle Village has relatively small area with dispersed settlement pattern, where most people live on a pond with various limitations of public facilities. About 40% of the population live in the margin side (middle) of the pond or rice field, and 60% are along main roads and alleys. Many houses have their own farm roads and are built by mutual cooperation (*gotong royong*) as people cannot build on their own, especially of labor requirements. Materials needed to develop their farm roads to their houses are covered by volcanic rocks. Source of fresh water is rainwater, which is available approximately eight months and used for bathing and washing, the rest is imported from outside using tanks, while drinking water is brought from outside city and purchased Rp 120,000 per 5000 liters. The price has been subsidized by the local government around Rp 50.000/tank. Farming activities are lasted about eight months when the rainwater is available, and each sub-village has its own rain water harvesting pond. As there is no farming activity for another four months, many people who are not fishermen work as construction workers in urban areas.

As the settlements and the agri-food sectors are not supported by the availability of water with the dominant economic activities are coastal aquaculture (ponds) and less developed agriculture, this conditions have caused the majority of the population live under poverty line, amounting for 504 out of 680 poor households (Midterm Village Development Plan of Desa Ampekalle 2020). Government and NGO supports poor living conditions which have generated high community participation and mutual cooperation to help each other in fulfilling their needs such as building water reservoirs, irrigation channels, wells, houses, mosques, and farm roads.

Community participation for infrastructure activities is influenced by the infrastructure by the scale of infrastructure. The development of infrastructures that requires huge capital investments and

a high degree of technical expertise is dominated by government, and community contribution is in regards to required land for infrastructure needs, labor, and meals. Meanwhile, the development for residential facilities such as footpaths, freshwater ponds, and mosques are sourced from community either in the form of financing or labor (Table III).

Table III
Lists of Infrastructure Development Plan Process and Stakeholders' Contribution

No.	Development activities	Government's contributions	Community's contributions
1.	Main road	Budget, planning, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation	Evaluation, monitoring, land, cheap labor, meals
2.	Irrigation/drainage canal	Budget, planning, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation	Evaluation, monitoring, cheap labor, land, and meals
3.	Farm road	Budget, planning, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation	Planning, implementation, monitoring, evaluation, land, labor, and meals
4.	Play group	Budget, planning, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation	Planning, implementation, monitoring, evaluation, cheap labor, land, meals
5.	Dock	Budget and planning	Budget, planning, monitoring, implementation, evaluation, labor, additional materials, and meals
6.	Fresh water reservoir	Planning, monitoring, implementation, evaluation,	Budget, planning, monitoring, implementation, evaluation, land, materials, labor, and meals
7.	Child health service	Budget, planning, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation	Planning, monitoring, implementation, evaluation, land, materials, cheap labor, meals
8.	Mosque	planning, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation	Budget, planning, monitoring, implementation, evaluation, Land, materials, labor, meals
9.	Foot path	None	Budget, planning, monitoring, implementation, evaluation, Land, materials, labor, meals

Note: Level of participation (high, slightly high, moderate, slightly low, low)

Community contribution to rural infrastructure development plan is strongly influenced by traditional institution of cooperation called *gotong royong*. *Gotong royong* is a shared-contribution in farming activities, building public amenities, and social activities such as wedding parties, funerals, or traditional events. *Gotong royong* is not required if labor can be substituted by machines, available paid labor, required specific skills such as craftsmen. Therefore, *gotong royong* has started to fade in

Indonesia along with advances in technology and increased people's income, especially in big city. However, *gotong royong* is still commonly found in less developed rural areas and categorized as a poor village where *gotong royong* is badly needed to fulfill community's needs so that *gotong royong* is still maintained by community. The development comprises individuals and communities taking responsibility for the quality and sustainability of their own livelihoods with including component of increased ability of community to work together on decision making and program implementation (Guzhavina, 2020). The existence of RDO and LEO in Ampekalle Village has increased community participation especially for women. Coaching from external agencies through trainings has given chances women to voice their needs, where in the past they were excluded decision making for any rural development activities. Inclusive participation and democratic decision-making within community are necessary in the development (Guzhavina, 2020).

Community's participation is slightly high in identifying problems for rural infrastructure development. Community concern more with the availability of clean water, flood, sewer/stream, health, and education. Women tend to have more dominant participation in identification problem than their counterpart (Table IV).

Table IV
Gender Participation on Problem Identification for Rural Infrastructure Development

Identification Problems	Community level	Gender aspect
Lack of fresh water	Slightly high	Women slightly dominant
Dock	Low	Men strictly dominant
Drainage	Moderate	Women slightly dominant
Flood	Slightly high	Women slightly dominant
Sewer/stream	Slightly high	Women slightly dominant
Mosque renovation	Moderate	Women slightly dominant
Lack of public toilets	High	Men slightly dominant
Unpaved roads	Moderate	Women strictly dominant
Childhood education	Slightly high	Women strictly dominant
Health needs	Slightly high	Women strictly dominant
Overall	Slightly high	Women slightly dominant

Note: Level of participation (high, slightly high, moderate, slightly low, low)

Table IV indicates that women participation is on overall slightly dominant on the problem identification for rural infrastructure development. There is a difference between participation of men and women in identifying problems for rural infrastructure development. Women have a dominant participation in the shortage of fresh water, childhood education, and health. In contrast, male is dominant relating to the problem for dock fishing. Women are slightly dominant in problems of flood, and sewer/stream, while men are in the public toilets. This data also similar in decision-making, where women are more dominant than the men (Table V).

Table V
Community Participation on Decision Making For Rural Development Infrastructure

Decision making	Community level	Gender aspect
Building reservoir for rain water or water tank	Slightly high	Women strictly dominant
Well rehabilitation	High	Women strictly dominant
Dock renovation	Low	Men strictly dominant
Re-planting mangroves to overcome flood	Moderate	Women slightly dominant
Renovating mosque	Moderate	Women slightly dominant
Building public toilets	Moderate	Women strictly dominant
Paving roads	Slightly high	Women strictly dominant

Building sewer/stream	Moderate	Equal
Water subsidized	High	Women strictly dominant
Building school for play group	Moderate	Women strictly dominant
Overall	Slightly high	Women strictly dominant

Note: Level of participation (high, slightly high, moderate, slightly low, low)

2. Discussion

Table V shows women are dominant in decision making for rural infrastructure development in terms of fresh water supply, mosque renovation, paved roads, school building, and community health centers building; while men are dominant in the development of the fishing dock.

There is evidence that women have been consulted on the design of rural development programs. Their involvement has facilitated women’s ability in decision making, and thus has increased their participation in LOs (Japar & Fadhillah, 2018). Another study also found that participation will work if community feel that the proposed programs have a direct benefit to community’s livelihoods (Kim & Lee, 2019). In the case of Ampekale Village, the high participation of women in problem identification and decision making for rural infrastructure development is because they feel the immediate benefit of the problems faced as it pertains to the basic needs of their family. The good reasons of community to maintain the participation in community development programs are to meet their daily basic needs (Ofem et al., 2018). This can be linked with factors encouraging women to participate in rural development activities due to lack of rural infrastructure and proposed programs related to fulfilling their basic needs (see table V). The perceived feeling of women also can be seen in their views to impacts of RDO for community lives. Women get more benefits rather than men from the development of RDO than men, even overall benefit is only moderate, particularly in terms of health and educational services (Table V). Thus, the influential participation of women in decision making has turned their status from “users and choosers” to “makers and shapers” (Elakkiya & Asokhan, 2018), and will affect and benefit the capacity of women, and the whole community will be greatly affected as well (Guzhavina, 2020).

Community participation plays a central role in effective rural development programs, and comprehensive community consultation and high level of community participation will achieve people-centered benefits (Kim & Lee, 2019). Thus, promoting a community-centered development process where local people is integrally involved in problem identification, decision making, implementation, management, and evaluation may lead to a more sustainable development over the long term.

CONCLUSIONS

The function of local organization is to facilitate the community in development activities in the village. The involvement of men and women in the development planning activities will increase the role of local organizations. Women have a better role in the identification of problems and planning, especially those related to social and economic needs and affecting household activities of rural communities, while men concern to public infrastructure affecting to economic activities. The involvement of men and women in local organizations encourages the participation of villagers and at the same time improves the quality of village development plans. Village development activities should always be gender-based both in the planning process and in the implementation of development.

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