



Participatory Communication Strategy of the Village Head in Increasing Community Involvement in Cikumbueun Village

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Abstrak

Komunikasi merupakan alat dalam menyampaikan maksud dan tindakan yang akan dilakukan. Dalam pemerintahan desa, komunikasi merupakan hal penting untuk menyampaikan sebuah informasi yang dilakukan oleh kepala desa kepada masyarakat desa, seperti yang dilakukan oleh pemerintah Desa Cikumbueun yang terletak di Kabupaten Pandeglang, Banten. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengkaji strategi komunikasi yang dilakukan oleh Kepala Desa Cikumbueun serta menganalisis faktor-faktor yang mendukung dan menghambat efektivitas komunikasi dalam proses Pembangunan di Desa Cikumbueun. Metode yang digunakan yaitu dengan menggunakan penelitian kualitatif dengan jenis penelitian deskriptif serta teknik purposive sampling, yang dilakukan dengan observasi dan wawancara. Strategi komunikasi yang dilakukan oleh Kepala Desa Cikumbueun yaitu dengan Strategi Komunikasi Partisipatif berupa musyawarah desa serta komunikasi berbasis komunitas dan terbukti efektif dalam menyampaikan informasi kepada masyarakat. Namun, dalam pelaksanaannya strategi komunikasi yang dilakukan juga dihadapkan dengan berbagai tantangan yaitu keterbatasan waktu warga, kesenjangan Tingkat partisipasi antara generasi, dan penyampaian makna dalam metode komunikasi secara verbal.

Kata kunci: *Strategi Komunikasi, Partisipatif, Masyarakat*

Abstract

Communication is a vital tool for conveying intentions and coordinating actions. In village governance, effective communication enables the village head to share vital information with the community. This study explores how the head of Cikumbueun Village in Pandeglang Regency, Banten, implements communication strategies during development initiatives. It also examines supportive and inhibiting factors that influence the strategy's effectiveness. Utilizing qualitative descriptive methods and purposive sampling, data were gathered through observation and interviews. The village head adopts a participatory communication strategy, which includes community-wide meetings (musyawarah desa) and grassroots discussions. This approach has proven effective in relaying information and fostering engagement. However, several challenges impede full impact: residents' limited availability, generational disparities in participation, and occasional misunderstandings in verbal communication. These obstacles highlight the need for adaptive methods—such as flexible scheduling, inclusive outreach, and clearer messaging—to enhance the community's involvement in development efforts.

Keywords: *Communication Strategy, Participatory, Community*



Introduction

In the 2020 edition of *Ilmu Komunikasi*, the process of conveying information, news, and messages is achieved through various media, selected according to the communication model in use. Drawing on media characteristics, Cangara categorizes four primary types:

1. Interpersonal Media, ideal for one-on-one communication, this type includes traditional channels such as courier services, telephone, and letters
2. Group Media, when engaging audiences of more than fifteen, communication occurs through meetings, seminars, or conferences. These formats are preferred for important organizational discussions .
3. Public Media, with audiences of approximately 200 or more, venues such as large public meetings or assemblies become the medium of choice .
4. Mass Media, when the audience is anonymous and geographically dispersed, mechanical channels like newspapers, magazines, radio, television, and the Internet are employed to broadcast messages to a wide public .

Every development initiative depends on communication to link individuals, playing a pivotal role in planning, coordination, and information dissemination. This framework forms the communication strategy employed by the village head to execute work programs and policies. Consequently, effective communication not only conveys information but also promotes active involvement and participation from the community in all facets of village development. (Tenerman, 2022).

According to (Ilpiyanto et al., 2023), two-way communication has various advantages, namely the clarity of the message so as to create satisfaction, misunderstandings can be avoided, and allow a more comfortable situation for communication participants. The disadvantage is that the communication process becomes longer because it allows classification, or objections. Two-way communication is a communication process that allows the sender and receiver to be equally positioned in communication, in processing existing message material, and in the path of communication.

An effective communication strategy presents a significant challenge for any leader striving to build an inclusive society without creating communication gaps among village officials, residents, and local organizations. In the context of rural development, effective communication and collaboration form the foundational pillars of success. By fostering clearer lines of communication, community participation naturally increases, leading to stronger cooperation from residents (Ali Akbar Siregar, 2024).

As more villagers engage in the planning, implementation, and evaluation of programs, policies become better aligned with community needs. However, in practice—such as in Cikumbueun Village—overall participation remains low. Contributing factors include limited understanding of village policies, restricted access to information, and suboptimal communication strategies that fail to reach all demographics (Tenerman, 2022).

The communication efforts of the Cikumbueun Village Head require refinement and strategic focus to effectively engage stakeholders in development efforts. The primary target for effective communication is the community at large. Achieving meaningful participation requires collaboration between the Village Head, local residents, and community organizations—including youth, religious, and civic groups. These organizations must remain actively involved in development planning through bottom-up participatory approaches, such as village deliberations (Musdes).

Contemporary village development increasingly emphasizes participatory development—where community involvement is integral at every stage. Yet

communication challenges persist in connecting the village government and residents. Despite expanded authority held by the Village Head, cooperation between government and community has not been fully realized. Insufficiently effective communication may result in residents lacking awareness or interest in village programs, leading to passive or reluctant participation.

This situation in Cikumbueun reflects challenges faced by many underdeveloped villages across Indonesia. Initial observations reveal that, despite possessing various resource potentials, the village's overall well-being remains low. Core issues include inadequate infrastructure, limited access to basic services, and a scarcity of productive economic activities. Compounding these issues is insufficient community engagement in village programs.

Low community involvement can significantly hinder collective efforts to improve welfare. Therefore, the Village Head's communication strategy is a critical area for deeper study. The manner in which the Village Head interacts with residents can shape the degree to which community members are motivated to participate in development initiatives. Ineffective communication tends to foster passivity, demotivation, and disengagement from village policymaking.

Based on these conditions, this study aims to examine the communication strategy employed by the Head of Cikumbueun Village in enhancing community participation. It will also analyze the supporting and inhibiting factors that affect communication effectiveness in the village development process. By doing so, the research is expected to provide new insights into development communication and offer strategic recommendations for Village Heads seeking more effective community engagement.

Implementation Method

The present study was conducted in Cikumbueun Village, Mandalawangi District, Pandeglang Regency, Banten. The author employed a qualitative methodology with a descriptive design. Informants were selected using purposive sampling, including: the village head as a key informant, village residents as primary informants, and several village officials as supplementary informants. Data consisted of primary sources obtained through observation and interview techniques. Observation was defined as a deliberate and systematic examination of social phenomena, recorded with precision, while interviews were structured dialogues between an interviewer posing questions and an interviewee providing responses. The data were analyzed using the interactive model of qualitative analysis as proposed by Miles and Huberman, involving three iterative phases: data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing and verification.

Result and Discussion

The participatory communication strategy implemented by the Cikumbueun Village Head plays an important role in increasing community involvement in various aspects of village development. The Cikumbueun Village Head, Mr. Eli Suheli, understands that effective communication in the context of village development must be inclusive, flexible, and adapt to the social conditions of the community. One of the main strategies employed is through village consultative meetings, which serve as the primary means for residents to participate in development-related planning and decision-making. As stated by Mr. Eli Suheli as the Village Head, "We discuss the development in Pamatang Raja and Pamatang Purut together first in deliberations, so that the community can know and get involved." In participatory communication theory,

this deliberation is a real form of deliberative dialogue, where the community does not only accept policies from the village government, but also has the opportunity to offer opinions, criticize policies, and provide constructive input.

In addition to deliberation, community-based communication is the main strategy in disseminating information. The Village Head relies more on WhatsApp Group for communication with Kadus, RT and RW because it is considered faster and more efficient than traditional methods such as letters. However, this communication strategy still takes into account the condition of the community, not all of whom have access to digital technology. Therefore, information is still delivered directly through intermediaries such as Kadus, RT, RW, or community leaders, as well as announced in strategic locations in the village such as posyandu, village offices and assemblies. Of course, this approach reflects the principle of participatory communication, which is the use of various communication channels in accordance with the characteristics and preferences of the audience so that information can be received optimally.

However, in its implementation, participatory communication also faces various challenges. One of the main obstacles is the limited time for residents to participate, especially for farmers who work until late afternoon. As revealed by the Kadus of Hamlet 1, Pak Nasrudin, "Many residents work in the garden until sunset, so if there is a meeting or important information, it must be delivered at night or directly through their neighbors so that it reaches them." The strategy used to overcome this challenge is informal social network-based communication, which is in accordance with the principle in participatory communication theory that communication must adapt to the social dynamics of the community. In this case, interactions are not always carried out in official forums, but also in casual conversations in social environments such as coffee shops or small community meetings.

The communication approach in delivering information is also adapted to the habits and characters of the community to make it more effective. The Kadus of Dusun 3 explained that older residents tend to feel more comfortable discussing in a relaxed atmosphere, such as while enjoying coffee or eating together. Meanwhile, for younger people, a more effective approach is to first engage in activities that interest them, such as fishing or playing games, before delivering more serious information. This strategy demonstrates the application of participatory communication theory in understanding that effective communication should be based on cultural and social approaches inherent in the community.

.In addition, there is still a gap in participation levels between the older and younger generations. Residents aged 30 and above tend to be more active in various village activities, while many young people have migrated out of town. To overcome this, village officials utilize community-based activities, such as pengajian and qosidah, as a means to convey information. In accordance with participatory communication theory, the use of this community-based communication platform allows information to be more easily accepted because it is associated with values that are already rooted in the community's culture.

The impact of this communication strategy was significant in increasing community participation. Village programs such as the construction of a tourist road to Curug Tomo and the provision of clean water in Pamatang Purut can run well because the community is involved in the process from an early stage. In addition, religious activities such as recitation are also an effective means of communication because of the higher level of community participation in these activities. "The recitation is considered compulsory, so the residents participate more often," said the Kadus of Hamlet 1. This shows that communication associated with cultural and religious values is more easily accepted and followed by the community.

However, while community-based communication is considered effective in reaching many citizens, there are still challenges in ensuring the accuracy and clarity of the information received by the community. One of the main obstacles faced is the potential for information distortion in word-of-mouth communication methods. Information that is conveyed verbally from one individual to another has the possibility of changing meaning, either due to miscommunication, different understanding, or simplification of the message that does not match the original context.

As stated by Mrs. Sa'diah from Hamlet 2, "I prefer it when there is a letter, because if it is by word of mouth sometimes something is not clear." This statement reflects that although participatory communication emphasizes the importance of direct interaction, additional mechanisms are needed to maintain information accuracy. The existence of written documents such as letters or official announcements can be a solution to minimize errors in message delivery. In addition, the use of digital communication media such as WhatsApp groups can also help reduce the risk of distorted information, although limited access to technology is still an obstacle for some residents, especially the elderly who are less familiar with digital devices.

Overall, the participatory communication strategy implemented by the Cikumbueun Village Head shows that the success of village development depends not only on the policies made, but also on the extent to which the community is involved at every stage. With dialogic, community-based communication that adapts to the local culture, Cikumbueun Village has succeeded in creating a more inclusive and collaborative environment. Active community participation in village meetings, involvement in socio-religious activities, and the use of various communication media show that effective communication can increase community awareness and involvement in village development.

However, even though the implemented communication strategy has demonstrated effectiveness, ongoing evaluation and refinement are essential to ensure equitable access to information and optimal participation in village development for all community groups. One key measure is to strengthen the integration of both oral and written communication, while expanding the use of digital technologies—mindful of their accessibility and user familiarity. Additionally, enhancing the role of intermediaries such as neighborhood leaders (RT/RW) in systematically disseminating information can ensure that every resident receives accurate and relevant updates. By continuously improving communication mechanisms, strengthening village government–community engagement, and adapting approaches to meet local needs, participatory communication in Cikumbueun Village can evolve further. This will not only foster deeper community involvement in development initiatives but also cultivate a more autonomous society—one that is informed of its rights and responsibilities and takes ownership of policies implemented. These principles align with the broader goals of participatory development, which emphasize inclusive dialogue through a combination of media forms and active stakeholder facilitation .

Conclusion

Communication is part of life in social society, all aspects of the role in life require communication to understand each other in action and make an influence on mindset. Communication becomes a tool that bridges the relationship between one individual and another, effective communication can create a good relationship. Community life that is created forms an order of life led by a leader, one of which is in the small scope of village government. Establishing communication carried out by the village government both between the village head and the community is very important

to convey important things such as information in order to achieve effective communication goals for village development.

Communication strategies by village leaders can increase and influence community participation. One of the communication strategies carried out by the Head of Dsa Cikumbueun, the author analyzes the factors that support and hinder the effectiveness of communication to the community. Communication strategy is a process of delivering messages from the source to the recipient. The communication carried out is a participatory communication strategy with an approach through village meetings and community-based communication delivered through online communication media such as WhatsApp Group which is considered effective in the process of delivering communication. The communication approach taken by Cikumbueun villagers is also adjusted to the habits and characters of each resident. In its implementation, these types of communication strategies have challenges such as time constraints caused by the work of Cikumbueun villagers who mostly work as farmers and gardeners who work until the afternoon or evening, so that villagers miss information or activities held. In addition, the delivery of community-based communication has challenges such as inaccuracy and clarity of delivery received by the community caused by changes in the meaning conveyed.

Acknowledgments and Advise

Improving the effectiveness of communication between the village government and the community requires various strategic efforts that can overcome the existing challenges. Village governments can optimize the use of more flexible communication media, such as disseminating information through recorded deliberations, printed leaflets, or other digital platforms that are more accessible to the community. In addition, the schedule of village meetings should be better adapted to the community's free time to increase participation. To overcome the obstacle of inaccurate information in community-based communication, a more structured delivery mechanism is needed, for example by appointing community representatives as liaisons who have been given a clear understanding of the messages to be conveyed. Periodic evaluation of the communication strategy also needs to be done to ensure its effectiveness and adjust it to the evolving needs of the community. It is hoped that the communication can be more effective in supporting participatory and inclusive village development.

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