



## Empowerment Policy Implementation Model Muyu Women in Socio-Economic Life in Boven Digoel District, South Papua Province

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### ABSTRACT

This study analyzes the implementation of the empowerment policy for Muyu women in Boven Digoel Regency. The method used is descriptive qualitative with a case study approach in Mandobo and Ninati Districts. The analysis was conducted using the SWOT model with data obtained through interviews, observations, FGDs, and documentation studies. The results show that the empowerment policy is not optimal due to limited human resources, lack of gender understanding, weak coordination between institutions, and a strong patriarchal culture. Effective strategies include capacity building through education, access to capital and markets, institutional strengthening, and a local culture-based approach. The impact is an increase in economic independence and participation of Muyu women in development. The recommended model is a hybrid model based on local wisdom and multi-stakeholder collaboration (Pentahelix) with the principles of Gender Equality and Social Inclusion (GESI).

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## **INTRODUCTION**

The policy of empowering women has actually become an important instrument for achieving gender equality and mainstreaming as initiated by UNESCO and the UN in sustainable development or known as the term Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in the 17 sustainable development goals, the fifth and eighth (SDGs 5 & 8) contain information about Gender equality and Decent Work and Economic Growth.

Women's empowerment is a crucial aspect in achieving equitable and sustainable social and economic development in Indonesia. This applies nationally, from the central to the regional levels, and must be supported by a number of policies and regulations. Boven Digoel Regency has an official policy through Regent Regulation (Perbup) No. 35 of 2019 concerning guidelines for implementing gender mainstreaming (PUG) in regional development in Boven Digoel Regency. This policy serves as the basis for implementation and demonstrates the regional government's commitment to equal roles between men and women in socio-economic development in the regency. In the context of this paper, gender mainstreaming and women's empowerment are intended for indigenous Papuan women from the five major tribes in Boven Digoel.

Papuan women, particularly those of the Muyu tribe in Boven Digoel Regency, play a vital role in the social, economic, and cultural life of indigenous communities. This dual role does not guarantee their well-being and adequate socio-economic access. Various obstacles and limitations, ranging from difficult transportation access and geographical location, particularly for those in the Ninati District, are difficult to access in terms of education, economic opportunities, capital, and markets. This is exacerbated by the influence of a strong patriarchal culture, which remains a barrier that needs to be addressed effectively with an approach that is appropriate to the local cultural context.

Various empowerment programs have been carried out by technical OPDs, but findings in the field indicate that policy implementation has not been effective. The empowerment programs implemented are still general for all Indigenous Papuans (OAP), without special attention to women's groups from certain tribes, including the Muyu Tribe. Meanwhile, it is known that the Muyu Tribe has its own socio-cultural character and women in particular have an important role not only in the domestic sphere as a wife and mother for the continuation of the lineage and preservation of cultural traditions to children and grandchildren, but also in household economic activities and local markets both at the village level and brought to the city to be sold at the Mumanjakowa market and zero point or shop verandas. In line with the presence of Regent Regulation 35 of 2019 as a basis for formulating policies and programs in efforts to mainstream gender and empower women specifically for the Muyu Tribe.

The main obstacles to policy implementation include limited human resources (HR) implementing it, namely ASN at the Women's Empowerment and Child Protection Service (DP3A) who understand gender analysis, the absence of gender-disaggregated data, weak coordination and communication between partner OPDs, and minimal socialization of Regent Regulation 35 of 2019 internally within OPDs and to the wider community and implementing officials.

In addition, a strong patriarchal culture has weakened women's position in economic and social decision-making. In this context, this study seeks to explore, analyze and answer several research problem formulations related to how the implementation of women's empowerment policies specifically for the Muyu tribe is carried out, supporting and inhibiting factors, effective empowerment strategies and their impacts, and appropriate approach models as solutions for improvement to strengthen the role of Muyu women in their socio-economic life.

This research focuses on the implementation of the Muyu women's empowerment policy. The main issues examined are how the policy is implemented in community life and the extent to which its implementation can improve the role and welfare of Muyu women. Furthermore, this research highlights the factors that support and hinder the policy's implementation, including resource, socio-cultural, and institutional factors. Furthermore, this research seeks to identify the most effective empowerment strategies and their impact on increasing the capacity and participation of Muyu women.

## **THEORETICAL REVIEW**

There are several supporting theories that are considered relevant in the context of implementing the Muyu Women's Empowerment Policy in Socio-Economic Life in Boven Digoel Regency, some of these theories include:

### ***Policy Implementation Theory***

The implementation of the Muyu women's empowerment policy in Boven Digoel Regency relies on Grindle's theory, which highlights two main aspects: policy content and implementation context. Success depends on clarity of objectives, resources, and socio-political support (Grindle, 1980). Korten's congruence theory complements this by emphasizing the harmony between policies, implementing institutions, and local social conditions, suggesting that failure often occurs if these inconsistencies are ignored (Korten, 1980). This approach ensures that empowerment programs are effective within the Muyu cultural context.

### ***Empowerment and Gender Strategy***

Jack Rothman's empowerment theory offers three community-based models—locality development, social planning, and social action—that are successful if the Muyu community actively participates in resource management (Rothman, 1968). The theory of women's roles and gender mainstreaming (PUG) emphasizes the dual role of Muyu women in the domestic sphere and the formal and informal economy, in line with SDGs 5 and Boven Digoel Regency Regulation No. 35/2019 for equality (Molyneux, 1985). This integration encourages the inclusion of gender needs in local development.

### ***Adaptive Feminism Approach***

Liberal feminism demands equal rights through legal reform and access to education and economics, while radical feminism targets the roots of patriarchy. However, in the Muyu context, it is implemented non-

confrontationally through dialogue, deliberation, and adaptation to traditional customs (Friedan, 1963; Firestone, 1970). Strategies include respecting local wisdom, strengthening women's roles without disrupting cultural identity, and gradual collaboration with traditional leaders and men as partners (hooks, 1984). This approach minimizes resistance and builds harmonious equality within the indigenous community.

Liberal feminism emphasizes equality of rights and opportunities between women and men through reforms within existing systems, including legal, regulatory, and policy changes that enhance women's access to education, economics, politics, and other domains. In contrast, radical feminism posits that patriarchal systems form the root of women's oppression and inequality, necessitating fundamental transformations in social, cultural, and political structures to eradicate discrimination. Within the context of empowering Muyu women, radical feminism adopts a non-confrontational approach that prioritizes dialogue, inclusivity, and adaptation to the tribe's customary values and cultural traditions.

This adapted radical feminism manifests through several key strategies. Open dialogue and *musyawarah* (consensus-building discussions) occur between women, men, customary leaders, and the broader community to collectively address gender inequality, fostering safe communication spaces that respect all perspectives. Changes to patriarchal structures integrate feminist values gradually and contextually, honoring local *adat* (customs) and wisdom rather than outright rejection. Women's roles in decision-making, economic, and social spheres are strengthened without undermining cultural identity or community harmony.

Further principles include a gradual, participatory implementation involving all customary stakeholders to ensure inclusivity and avoid abrupt impositions. Collaboration positions men and *adat* leaders as partners in change, building solidarity to minimize socio-cultural resistance. This non-confrontational, dialogic, inclusive, and adaptive strategy harmonizes radical feminism with Muyu local culture, ultimately aiming for gender equality within the indigenous community.

## **METHODOLOGY**

Qualitative descriptive method with case study approach. Data were collected through in-depth interviews, participatory observation, FGD, and literature/documentation studies with informants determined by purposive sampling including from the local government (Women's Empowerment Office, Cooperatives, SMEs Office, and Food Security Office), traditional leaders, women's leaders, NGOs, and Muyu women as traders in the Mandobo District area (Mumanjakowa Market and Titik Nol Market) and in Ninati District.

Data collection techniques were conducted through in-depth interviews (with Muyu women, traditional leaders, Muyu women's organizations, and relevant OPD officials), participant observation (of the social and economic activities of Muyu women in the market and their communities), FGDs (with Muyu women's groups and the Regional Government); and

literature/documentation studies (documents of Regent Regulation 35 of 2019, relevant OPD reports and several relevant data sources from the internet).

Data analysis techniques, using a combination of SWOT analysis to determine the strategies used based on mapping strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and challenges in the research findings, then continued with the data condensation model according to Saldana (2016), through several steps, namely: re-reading data, coding data, identifying patterns and themes, and interpreting results.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

### ***Policy Implementation***

Based on the findings in the field, it is known that the implementation of Regent Regulation 35 of 2019 has been carried out by technical OPDs, but has not shown optimal results. Empowerment programs in efforts to improve the economy of the community specifically for women carried out by the Cooperatives, SMEs, Industry Service in the form of entrepreneurship training activities, cooperatives, MSMEs and financial literacy have been carried out generally for Indigenous Papuans not specifically for certain tribes. In the context of gender mainstreaming, several PUG activities and socialization by the Women's Empowerment and Child Protection Service (DP3A) as well as the appointment of Mawan Village as the location of the "Women-Friendly and Child-Caring Village Pilot Project" have been carried out but have not run optimally, and coordination and communication between technical OPDs and partner OPDs have not been carried out effectively and have not been based on gender analysis and have not been in accordance with the local needs of Muyu women.

Furthermore, limitations in gender-disaggregated data and a lack of field facilitators with a strong understanding of gender analysis also hamper the effectiveness of program implementation. Monitoring and evaluation efforts for program implementation are still carried out in general, without in-depth mapping of participation and impacts on women's groups in the Muyu community. This makes it difficult to measure program results quantitatively or qualitatively, especially in terms of the extent to which the policy contributes to improving women's economic welfare and independence at the local level.

The women's economic empowerment program run by the Department of Cooperatives, SMEs, and Industry, in the form of entrepreneurship training, cooperatives, MSMEs, and financial literacy, is still general for the Indigenous Papuan community without specifics for the Muyu tribe. In the area of gender mainstreaming, although the Department of Women's Empowerment and Child Protection (DP3A) has conducted outreach and appointed Kampung Mawan as a pilot project for a women- and child-friendly village, its implementation has not been optimal. Coordination and communication between technical OPDs and with partners are ineffective and lack a basis in gender analysis or the local needs of Muyu women, so that strengthened collaboration is needed to optimize policies (Uniplaita, 2023; Van Meter & Van Horn, 1975).

This condition shows that the success of implementing women's empowerment policies does not only depend on the availability of programs, but also on the relevance of the approach used to the socio-cultural context of the local community. In this case, the local wisdom of Muyu women who play an important role in household and community economic activities needs to be the basis for program planning and implementation. A participatory approach that directly involves Muyu women in the planning, implementation, and evaluation processes will encourage more gender-responsive and sustainable policies. Supporting institutional capacity and improving the competence of civil servants in gender analysis are also strategic steps to ensure the sustainability of women's economic empowerment programs in the region.

Supporting factors for the implementation of this policy include the existence of Regent Regulation 35 of 2019 as a legal basis, support from civil servants in the DP3A and partner OPDs, abundant natural resource potential, the existence of a dryland rice farming community in Ninati District with good harvests, and the hardworking and independent nature of Muyu women. On the other hand, inhibiting factors are limited human resources who understand gender analysis, the absence of gender-disaggregated data, lack of internal and external coordination and socialization, a still strong patriarchal culture, and policy content that is not fully contextualized to the local Muyu culture (Uniplaita, 2023; Van Meter & Van Horn, 1975).

Based on these conditions, policy implementation strategies need to be directed at strengthening institutional capacity and improving gender understanding, both at the implementing and community levels. Collaboration between local government agencies (OPD), traditional institutions, and Muyu community leaders is key to ensuring policies are culturally acceptable and effectively implemented. Furthermore, compiling accurate, gender-disaggregated data will assist policymakers in designing more targeted programs. The empowerment of Muyu women can also be strengthened through ongoing mentoring and training based on local potential, so that they become not only beneficiaries but also key actors in their community's economic development.

### ***SWOT Analysis***

A SWOT analysis applied to the empowerment of Muyu women in Boven Digoel Regency shows that the primary strength lies in regulatory support through Regent Regulation 35 of 2019, which provides a strong legal basis for implementing empowerment policies. Furthermore, the region's abundant natural resource potential provides a valuable asset that can be utilized for women's economic development, particularly in the agricultural and handicraft sectors. The hard work and independence of Muyu women are also crucial assets supporting the sustainability of empowerment programs. These factors form a solid foundation for building initiatives that can improve the well-being of women in the community (Susanti, 2023). The SWOT analysis confirms that policy alignment through regional regulations is a strategic entry point to ensure that the Muyu women's empowerment program runs in a targeted and sustainable manner. However, exploiting this opportunity requires

strengthening local institutional capacity and synergy between actors, including the government, Muyu women's organizations, and supporting partners, so that natural resource potential can truly be converted into productive economic activities managed by women. In this context, strengthening technical skills, market access, and ongoing mentoring support are key to ensuring that the work ethic and independence of Muyu women become not only a latent strength, but also a lever for improving the welfare and economic independence of their families.

On the downside, several significant challenges hamper effective policy implementation. The policy's lack of specificity, which has not been fully adapted to the cultural and social needs of Muyu women, has resulted in suboptimal implementation. Limited human resources with a strong understanding of gender analysis and a lack of gender-disaggregated data hinder planning and evaluation based on women's real needs. Suboptimal coordination and communication between technical OPDs and partners, as well as a strong patriarchal culture, are internal barriers that need to be addressed. Considerable opportunities exist in the form of budget support for technical OPDs, the potential for cultural tourism development, synergy with SDGs programs, and the involvement of civil society organizations. However, threats such as cultural resistance to change, dependence on grants, local political dynamics, and external pressures such as the loss of traditional traditions and the exploitation of customary forests by companies, necessitate an adaptive and collaborative approach to empowerment strategies to maintain sustainability and socio-cultural balance (Susanti, 2023; Korten, 1980).

### *Empowerment Strategy*

Muyu's women's empowerment strategy prioritizes the GESI (Gender Equality and Social Inclusion) approach and local wisdom with a focus on capacity building through local culture-based training, institutional and social network strengthening, facilitating access to capital and markets, legal protection advocacy, participatory monitoring, and integration of traditional values. The local wisdom strategy includes preserving the culture of mutual cooperation, developing local economic potential such as organic farming, fisheries, and handicrafts, and pentahelix collaboration (government, community, academics, business, media) as the key to successful implementation (Rothman, 1968; Korten, 1980).

This approach not only aims to increase the economic capacity of Muyu women, but also to strengthen their social position within the traditional community structure. Through culture-based training and cross-sector collaboration, Muyu women are expected to be able to develop sustainable and market-oriented businesses without losing the traditional values that define their identity. The use of GESI principles ensures that every woman, including those from vulnerable groups, has equal access to resources, opportunities, and decision-making. Thus, this strategy serves a dual purpose; driving economic independence while preserving the socio-cultural harmony of the Muyu community.

### ***Recommended Approach Model***

The recommended hybrid model with a participatory approach and Pentahelix collaboration also draws on empirical examples of stakeholder synergy in various development contexts. The Pentahelix framework enables effective multi-actor interaction across government, academia, community, private sector, and media to address complex societal issues through coordinated roles and shared responsibilities. Studies indicate that utilizing this framework facilitates sustainable innovation and resilience by leveraging interdisciplinary strengths and enhancing each stakeholder's contribution, especially in culturally sensitive or development projects. This collaborative approach ensures that local values and knowledge are integrated while introducing modern tools like digitalization for promotion and marketing, making it contextually appropriate and mutually reinforcing among partners. This Pentahelix-based hybrid approach also emphasizes the importance of ongoing coordination and evaluation mechanisms to ensure the effectiveness of collaboration. Each element in the helix is expected to have a regular communication forum, a performance monitoring system, and mutually agreed performance indicators so that the synergy formed is not merely symbolic. Thus, the decision-making process becomes more transparent, accountable, and adaptive to changing societal needs and global challenges. This approach not only strengthens cross-sector collaboration, but also fosters a sense of collective ownership of the development outcomes being pursued.

Furthermore, the model's emphasis on gender mainstreaming and women's empowerment is strengthened through active engagement and equal participation of women across all levels, from policy formulation to implementation and evaluation. This inclusive participation increases awareness of gender equality and empowers women economically and socially within their cultural settings. The model also supports preservation of local traditions by incorporating indigenous knowledge into development plans, thus promoting culturally respectful progress. Together, these elements foster a holistic development process that is participatory, culturally aligned, gender-sensitive, and digitally enabled, aiming to create sustainable socio-economic upliftment in local communities. This detailed integration of the Pentahelix framework and gender-responsive participatory mechanisms into local development initiatives underscores the innovative character of the hybrid model as a strategic, inclusive, and culturally adaptive approach for socio-economic empowerment and sustainable cultural preservation.

The recommended approach is a "Hybrid Model" based on participatory approaches and the utilization of local wisdom potential through multi-actor pentahelix collaboration and digitalization. This model emphasizes the alignment of policy content with Muyu culture, the active participation of women, collaboration between the government, indigenous communities, academics, the business world, and the media, and contextual gender mainstreaming. The impacts include increased gender awareness, women's economic independence, cultural preservation, and women's active role in decision-making within customary institutions and village government. This

approach represents a significant innovation for the development of community-based women's empowerment policies within the framework of Papua's special autonomy (Uniplaita, 2023; Rothman, 1968).

## CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

The implementation of women's empowerment policies in Boven Digoel Regency through Regent Regulation No. 35 of 2019 has been carried out by various technical OPDs such as the DP3A, the Cooperatives and SMEs Office, and the Food Security Office, but is still general in nature for Indigenous Papuans without a specific focus on Muyu women. Despite a strong regulatory commitment, the results have not been optimal due to limited coordination between OPDs and a lack of adaptation to the local cultural context, so that a significant impact on women's socio-economic improvement has not been achieved widely (Uniplaita, 2023; Korten, 1980).

Supporting factors such as Regent Regulation No. 35/2019, abundant natural resource potential, and the independence of Muyu women are key strengths, while obstacles include limited human resources for gender analysis, the absence of gender-disaggregated data, and a dominant patriarchal culture. Effective strategies based on GESI and local wisdom, supported by a participatory hybrid model with pentahelix collaboration, can increase economic independence, social participation, and the achievement of SDGs 5 and 8 by utilizing local potentials such as agriculture and ecotourism (Rothman, 1968; Grindle, 1980).

### *Research Limitations*

This research focuses specifically on the Muyu tribe in Ninati District, Boven Digoel Regency. Therefore, generalizing the findings to the five major indigenous Papuan tribes or other regions in South Papua requires further adjustment. Data collection relied on interviews, participant observation, and focus group discussions (FGDs), which are susceptible to subjective respondent bias due to patriarchal cultural norms, although triangulation was conducted to increase validity. Furthermore, access to official gender-disaggregated data from regional government agencies (OPD) was limited due to an incompletely integrated documentation system, and the study did not include a long-term evaluation of the program's post-intervention impact. External factors such as social conflict in Papua also affected researchers' mobility, limiting the scope of observations in traditional markets and other indigenous communities.

## FURTHER STUDY

Future research is recommended to expand the scope to the five indigenous tribes of Boven Digoel to compare the dynamics of women's empowerment across ethnicities, integrating quantitative data, such as large-scale surveys, to empirically measure SDGs 5 and 8. A longitudinal approach could evaluate the sustainability of the hybrid model post-implementation, including the impact of digitalization on market access for indigenous women's MSMEs.

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