

Communication Dynamics in Rural Women's Empowerment

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Abstract: Rural women's empowerment is one of the important strategies in supporting sustainable development because women have a strategic role in improving family welfare, developing local economies, and strengthening community social resilience. However, various obstacles such as low access to education, information, economic resources, and strong socio-cultural norms still limit women's participation in the development process. This study aims to analyze the dynamics of communication in rural women's empowerment, identify factors that affect the effectiveness of communication, and explain the role of communication in increasing women's participation and independence. The research uses a **literature study method (library research)** with a qualitative approach through **content analysis** techniques. The data used are secondary data derived from national and international journal articles, scientific books, and supporting documents published in the **2016–2026 period**. The analysis was carried out through the stages of literature collection, data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawn. The results of the synthesis show that participatory communication is a key factor in the success of rural women's empowerment. The shift in communication patterns from a *top-down* approach to dialogical and community-based communication has been proven to increase women's participation, capacity, and independence. The effectiveness of communication is influenced by the level of education, access to information, socio-cultural conditions, social capital, and institutional support. In addition, group communication plays an important role in strengthening social networks, expanding access to resources, and improving women's decision-making capabilities. Thus, participatory, inclusive, and contextual communication strategies are important prerequisites in realizing sustainable rural women's empowerment.

Keywords: development communication, participatory communication, women's empowerment, rural women, sustainable development.

I. INTRODUCTION

The empowerment of women in rural areas is an important agenda in supporting sustainable development, especially in the government's efforts to improve family welfare and to strengthen the social structure of the community. The empowerment of rural women plays a crucial role in accelerating local economic development and increasing the social resilience of the community through women's active participation in decision-making. Women living in rural areas have a strategic role, not only in the family environment, but also in productive economic activities, children's education, and in the preservation of cultural values. However, limitations such as low access to education, information and economic resources are still major challenges that can hinder the optimization of these roles. However, these efforts are often constrained by limited access to information and conservative social norms that limit women's mobility in rural areas ([Wahyudi et al., 2024](#)).

In this case, communication is very important in supporting the success of women's empowerment programs. Communication is no longer defined as a process of delivering information, but as an interactive process

that allows for the exchange of information, increasing critical awareness, and strengthening the capacity of individuals and groups. The process of women's empowerment in rural areas is highly dependent on a participatory and dialogical communication approach to ensure the active involvement of all parties. This communication is the key to success in designing and running empowerment programs (Toto Sugito et al., 2022). With the creation of effective communication, women are not only beneficiaries of the program, but also play a role as actors who are actively involved in the process of planning, implementing, and evaluating empowerment activities. Communication is essential in working groups such as farmer groups, business groups, and community-based organizations, as it helps to convey information, bring ideas together, build cooperation, and encourage participation among members. The success of a group in achieving a common goal depends largely on how effective its communication is (Bulkis, 2026).

The dynamics of communication in rural women's empowerment programs show complexity that is not simple. The communication pattern that occurs is still dominated by a top-down approach that makes various programs less responsive to women's needs. In addition, the way messages are conveyed, received, and interpreted can be influenced by socio-cultural elements such as local norms. In this context, communication dynamics play a central role as a catalyst that influences the effectiveness of empowerment, especially through how development messages are disseminated and internalized by local communities (Setiawati et al., 2025).

Women's empowerment in rural areas is a crucial agenda in accelerating sustainable development, especially in supporting the government's efforts to improve family welfare and strengthen the social structure of the community. In the context of village development, women are not only seen as a beneficiary group, but also as the main subjects who have the capacity to actively contribute in various sectors of life. Women's empowerment is often carried out through feminist actions and collective organizations, where they discuss and make decisions that affect their lives. Effective communication strategies involve using culturally and linguistically appropriate channels to overcome information barriers. Michael, J.P., et. al., (2000). Women's involvement has been proven to be able to encourage more inclusive, equitable, and social, economic, and environmental sustainability-oriented development. One of the important factors that supports the success of women's empowerment is the availability of effective communication systems in community groups. Through good communication, information, knowledge, and experience can be disseminated evenly so as to increase the participation and capacity of group members. In practice, the evolving communication patterns include two-way communication and multi-way communication. (Bulkis, 2025)

Rural women play a strategic role that is multidimensional. In addition to carrying out domestic functions as household managers, women also have significant contributions in productive economic sectors, such as agriculture, home industry, and micro businesses. On the other hand, women also play an important role in children's education and the formation of the character of the next generation, as well as being the guardians of local wisdom values and community culture. This complex role makes women key actors in realizing sustainable development at the grassroots level. (S.P.L., 2024)

However, the great potential that rural women have is often not optimally optimized. Historically entrenched cultural orientations have excluded women from key development processes, denying them their voice in initiatives that directly impact their lives and communities (Akuja & Kandagor, 2024). Entrenched social structures and cultural resistance often limit women's autonomy as well as their access to resources (Makabe, 2025). This is due to various structural barriers that are still entrenched, such as limited access to formal education, low information literacy, and lack of opportunities to improve skills and capacity. In addition, gender-biased social and cultural norms also narrow the space for women's participation in the decision-making process at the family and community levels. (Chadrapal, 2025).

Inequality in access to economic resources is also a major challenge that hinders women's empowerment in rural areas. Many women still have difficulty accessing capital, entrepreneurship training, and adequate market networks. This condition has an impact on women's low economic independence and their limited contribution to overall village development. Therefore, efforts to empower women need to be carried out comprehensively and

sustainably, through increasing access, participation, and control of resources, so that women's role in development can be optimally optimized.

However, the implementation of communication in rural women's empowerment is often faced with various structural and cultural challenges. Limited access to information, low levels of education, and strong cultural norms that still limit women's movement space are the main obstacles in the empowerment process. This condition causes communication not always to run optimally, so that messages of empowerment are often not conveyed effectively or are not able to encourage changes in behavior and mindset. Therefore, a deep understanding of the dynamics of communication that occurs is very important so that the communication strategies applied can be more adaptive, contextual, and sustainable. The effectiveness of empowerment is highly dependent on group communication skills that are able to increase community participation and the efficiency of program implementation at the grassroots level (Kuswanti et al., 2020).

Based on the background, this study focuses on several main problems related to rural women's empowerment. The first problem is how the dynamics of communication occur in the process of empowering rural women. The second problem is related to the factors that affect the effectiveness of communication in supporting the success of empowerment programs. In addition, this study also seeks to understand how the role of communication in increasing women's participation and independence in rural areas. In line with the formulation of the problem, the purpose of this paper is to analyze in depth the dynamics of communication in the process of rural women's empowerment, identify the factors that affect the success of communication in empowerment, and explain the role of communication in increasing women's participation and capacity.

II. Method

2.1 Types of Research

This research uses the library research method, which is a series of activities related to collecting library data, reading and recording and processing research materials. This study uses a qualitative approach using content analysis techniques to explore, interpret, and synthesize literature data on communication dynamics in rural women's empowerment.

2.2 Data Sources

The source of data for this research is secondary data from national and international journal articles, scientific books, proceedings, and policy documents relevant to the themes of development communication, group communication, group empowerment, women's empowerment, and rural development. The literature was selected based on several criteria, namely directly related to the research topic, based on credible scientific sources, and published in a time bracket relevant to the 2020 – 2026 time frame.

2.3 Data Analysis Techniques.

Data analysis is carried out in an interactive and continuous manner by adopting a flow model of analysis which includes four stages.

Literature Data Collection Data Reduction Data Presentation Conclusion Drawing Data

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III. Results and Results

3.1 Communication Dynamics in Rural Women's Empowerment

Based on the results of the literature synthesis in the period of 2020 – 2026, communication is a strategic factor that can determine the success of a women's empowerment program in rural areas. The communication created not only serves as a means of conveying information, but also becomes a medium of social learning, critical awareness development, capacity building, and participatory decision-making. Based on the results of the literature synthesis for the 2020 – 2026 period, communication is a strategic factor that can determine the success of women's empowerment programs in rural areas. Communication not only functions as a means of conveying information, but also as a medium for social learning, critical awareness building, capacity building, and participatory decision-making. In various empowerment programs, effective communication is able to increase women's involvement in economic, educational, social, and village development activities.

Research studies show that the communication patterns that develop in women's empowerment programs have shifted from a top-down approach to a participatory approach. In the top-down approach, women are often placed in positions as recipients of information, so they have limited participation. However, with a participatory approach, women have a wider space for dialogue, so that they can be able to convey their aspirations, needs and experiences in the development process. Successful participatory communication is supported by the existence of group forums, community assistance, and the involvement of local actors who have an understanding of the socio-cultural context of the community.

In their daily lives, rural women have a multidimensional war as household managers, business actors, family educators, and as guardians of local cultural values. Therefore, empowerment communication strategies need to consider the complexity of these roles so that development messages can be received and implemented optimally.

3.2 Factors Affecting Communication Effectiveness

The results of the study show that the effectiveness of communication in women's empowerment is influenced by various factors, both from within the individual (internal factors) and from the surrounding environment (external factors).

1. Access to Information and Education

Most studies confirm that low levels of education and information literacy are the main obstacles for rural women in accessing various information about development. These limitations hinder their ability to understand development programs, develop skills, and take advantage of the various economic opportunities available.

2. Socio-Cultural Factors

Patriarchal cultural norms and traditional gender constructions still limit women's communication spaces in the family and society. In some communities, women do not have the same opportunities to express their opinions or participate in decision-making. Conditions like this cause the communication created to be unbalanced and less effective in supporting women's empowerment. This causes women to not be able to maximize their potential in contributing to socio-economic development, thus slowing down progress towards gender equality.

3. Social Capital and Group Communication

Women's groups have high effectiveness as a forum for communication in supporting economic and social development. Through intense interaction within the group, members can exchange information, learn together, and strengthen solidarity. In addition, women's groups help build social networks that are essential for the success of diverse, empowerment programs. When communication in groups goes well, the participation of members will increase, so that the capacity of women's organizations to face various challenges and achieve common goals will increase.

4. Institutional Support and Mentoring

The literature also shows that support from higher education institutions, village governments, community organizations, and other companion institutions in creating a comfortable and open communication atmosphere is very important. By providing community-based assistance, women will have an easier time accessing various information, training, and economic resources that they need in order to strengthen their independence. Such support will help women to develop and play a more active role in the social and economic life of their environment.

3.3 The Role of Communication in Increasing Women's Participation and Independence

Effective communication plays an important role in encouraging women to participate more actively in various developments carried out in the village. The communication process takes place in a dialogical and open manner, women will not only be recipients of information, but will also convey ideas, criticisms and inputs. This gives them the space to engage in every stage, from planning to implementation and evaluation of empowerment programs. With deeper involvement like this, women feel that the programs they run are truly theirs, so the spirit to maintain and continue these activities becomes stronger and more sustainable.

In the economic field, communication between women's groups and their social networks is important to get much-needed information. Through groups and social networks, women's groups can find out how to get business capital, information about new technologies embraced in developing businesses, skills in improving business skills, and various opportunities in marketing their products so that they can be marketed more widely. In addition, the intensity of communication between kelpom[ok members opens up space for the emergence of new ideas and mutually reinforcing collaborations. Innovation and cooperation should help women's groups in an effort to increase economic independence in a real way, and it is not just a theory.

From the perspective of sustainable development, communication is not just a tool in exchanging information, but one of the important instruments in the process of social transformation. Through effective communication, collective awareness about the importance of gender equality will be built and developed among rural communities. This will contribute to increasing women's capacity, both in terms of knowledge, skills, and confidence to have an active role. In addition, good communication will strengthen the social resilience of the community by building solidarity and support provided by community members. Therefore, the success of women's empowerment programs is highly dependent on how the communication system is developed to be participatory, inclusive, and adapts to the needs and characteristics of local communities.

3.4 Literature Synthesis Table

Author	Year	Method	Key Findings	Implications
Kuswanti, Saleh, Hubeis & Puspitawati	2020	Quantitative survey in the PEKKA group	Group communication has a significant effect on women's economic empowerment.	Strengthening group communication increases the success of women's economic empowerment programs.
Toto Sugito et al.	2022	Empowerment communication (CSR) study	Participatory communication increases community involvement in rural empowerment programs.	Empowerment programs need to implement dialogical communication from the planning stage.
Wahyudi et al.	2024	Participatory case studies	Participatory and mentoring approaches increase women's capacity as agents of change in villages.	Continuous mentoring and institutional support are needed to strengthen the role of women.
Akuja & Kandagor	2024	Policy Review	Policy barriers and low participation of women reduce the effectiveness of rural development.	Development policies must be more responsive to women's needs.
P.L. Money.	2024	Literature studies	Women are the main actors of sustainable development through social, economic, and environmental contributions.	Development programs must place women as development subjects, not just beneficiaries.
Bulkis	2025	Case study of communication of women's farmer groups	Two-way and multi-directional communication patterns improve coordination and participation of group members.	Participatory communication needs to be applied to rural women's empowerment groups.
Setiawati, Firmansyah, Salsabila & Purwanto	2025	Community-based development communication study	Women's empowerment is more effective through community-based communication than a top-down approach.	Development communication strategies need to prioritize the participation of local communities.
Chandrapal	2025	Conceptual/literature studies	Gender inequality, low access to education, and socio-cultural barriers remain the main challenges for rural women.	Empowerment policies need to focus on increasing access to education, information, and strengthening women's capacity.
Makabe	2025	Strategic studies	Strategic communication is able to increase women's participation in vulnerable areas.	Local culture-based communication increases the effectiveness of empowerment.

Author	Year	Method	Key Findings	Implications
Bulkis et al.	2026	Theoretical studies of communication	Effective communication functions as a means of information exchange, collaboration, and group capacity building in the digital era.	The development of digital communication models can expand access to information for rural women.

IV. Conclusion

The Strategic and Multidimensional Role of Women in rural areas plays a crucial role, not only in managing households and educating children, but also in driving productive economic sectors (such as agriculture and micro-enterprises) and preserving the value of local wisdom. Their active involvement is the main key in accelerating inclusive and sustainable village development.

The structural and cultural barriers with great potential that rural women have have have not been optimally optimized due to real challenges. These obstacles include low access to formal education, lack of information literacy, limited economic capital, and strong conservative social norms that are gender-biased, thus narrowing the space for their participation in decision-making.

The Vital Role of Communication as a Catalyst because communication is no longer just a one-way information delivery process, but an interactive process that functions as a catalyst to build cooperation, unite opinions, and increase the critical capacity of women's groups. Through effective group communication (both bidirectional and multi-directional), women can shift from passive beneficiaries to key actors who are actively involved from planning to evaluation of empowerment programs.

The current communication pattern is still dominated by *a top-down approach* that is less responsive to the real needs of women at the grassroots. Therefore, in order for the empowerment program to be successful and efficient, it is necessary to implement a more adaptive, contextual, and sustainable communication strategy that is able to understand the characteristics and dynamics of the local socio-cultural community of the local community.

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