

Examining the Implementation of Participatory Village Autonomy: Models of Community Engagement and Application in Strengthening Inclusive Governance in Indonesia

Muhammad Mutawalli Mukhlis
ORCID <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-4286-6964>
Sekolah Tinggi Agama Islam Negeri Majene, Indonesia

Maskun
ORCID <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-6102-7838>
Faculty of Law, Universitas Hasanuddin

Ahmad Masum
ORCID <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-5671-0365>
Universiti Islam Sultan Sharif Ali (UNISSA), Brunei Darussalam

Muhammad Saleh Tajuddin
Universitas Islam Negeri Alauddin Makassar, Indonesia

Wa Ode Intan Kurniawati
ORCID <https://orcid.org/0009-0005-2351-1238>
Faculty of Law, Universitas Sulawesi Tenggara

Yusuf Ibrahim Arowosaiye
ORCID <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-3482-7853>
Universiti Islam Sultan Sharif Ali (UNISSA), Brunei Darussalam

Naswar
ORCID <https://orcid.org/0009-0005-6329-8267>
Faculty of Law, Universitas Hasanuddin, Indonesia

✉ Corresponding email: muhammadmutawalli@stainmajene.ac.id

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Abstract

This study rigorously examines the practical implementation of participatory village autonomy, a linchpin for inclusive governance in Indonesia. Despite formal recognition by Law No. 6 of 2014 and its 2024 amendment, significant hurdles persist, including elite domination, financial mismanagement, limited community engagement, and insufficient institutional capacity. Employing a normative legal methodology, this inquiry identifies effective models of community engagement and application for the Indonesian context. Findings affirm that village autonomy's democratization requires comprehensive legal reform, institutional strengthening, transparent administration, and active citizen involvement. Beyond mere electoral procedures, true democratization demands cultural adaptation, community empowerment, and robust accountability mechanisms to prevent elite capture. Synergistic collaboration among central, regional, and village governments is paramount for genuinely responsive local governance. Lessons from diverse precedents underscore the necessity of community-driven planning and legally mandated public participation for sustainable village development. This research concludes that empowered village autonomy can substantially foster an equitable and resilient Indonesian governance landscape, contingent upon holistic systemic reforms and diligent application of innovative engagement models.

KEYWORDS *Village Autonomy, Village Government, Community Participation, Village Legal Regulations*

Introduction

Village autonomy, a concept deeply entrenched within Indonesia's socio-political fabric, fundamentally represents the inherent right, authority, and solemn obligation of village entities to meticulously regulate and judiciously manage their governmental affairs and community interests. This profound prerogative directly stems from their ancestral origins and the deeply ingrained socio-cultural values that have historically flourished within these communities, enabling organic growth and progressive development commensurate with evolving village

dynamics.¹ Such a foundational principle, recognizing the village as a primordial self-governing unit, underscores its enduring significance in the broader national administrative framework, establishing a unique decentralized paradigm where local agency holds considerable sway. The very essence of this autonomy, therefore, posits a self-determining entity, not merely a recipient of delegated state power, but a vibrant nucleus of indigenous governance with a long-standing historical trajectory.²

The trajectory of Indonesian governance witnessed a pivotal transformation with the promulgation of Law No. 6 of 2014 on Villages, marking a watershed moment in the formalization and standardization of village administration across the archipelago. This landmark legislation unequivocally bestowed upon villages a comprehensive mandate, granting them expansive authority to orchestrate their own developmental pathways and manage local exigencies with unprecedented independence. Crucially, the law simultaneously unlocked substantial financial resources for these grassroots entities, empowering them with the prerogative to judiciously allocate and administer these funds to catalyze accelerated village development and foster localized prosperity. This legislative enactment thus endeavors to cultivate a robust and self-reliant village ecosystem, capable of charting its own course while contributing meaningfully to national aspirations.³

In the course of Indonesian governance, the village government system has again begun to be standardized through Law Number 6 of 2014 concerning Villages. The birth of Law Number 6 of 2014 concerning

¹ Sejati, Wulan. "Pelaksanaan Otonomi Desa Pada Masa Hindia Belanda Sampai Masa Reformasi." Thesis, Fakultas Hukum Universitas Muhammadiyah Surakarta, 2010..p. 9.

² Mustofa, Ilham, Bambang Tri Sasongko Adi, Oman Sukmana, dan Vina Salviana. "Leadership and Cultural Changes: Village Head Elections in Shaping Traditional Values, Indonesia's Case Study." *International Journal of Research in Engineering, Science and Management* 7, no. 5 (2024): p.144

³ Nasrullah, I Gusti Ayu Ketut Rachmi Handayani, Lego Karjoko, Agus Budi Susilo, dan Mohd Ziaolhaq Qazi Zada. "Optimizing the Role of Information and Communications Technology within the State Administrative Court Environment." *Jurnal Media Hukum* 32, no. 1 SE-Articles (2025):p. 78.

Villages has at least two important implications. First, villages have full authority to develop because their existence is recognized and given autonomy to decide and manage their own local needs. Second, villages have large sources of funds and have the right to manage their own funds to accelerate village development.⁴

Villages, serving as the foundational bedrock of the broader Indonesian society, command an indispensable role in propelling equitable national development, fortifying local economies, and meticulously preserving the nation's rich cultural heritage. Their intrinsic importance transcends mere administrative demarcation; they function as vital conduits for grassroots participation, embodying the democratic ideals of self-determination and collective stewardship. The vitality of these local units directly correlates with the overall societal well-being, influencing the distribution of resources, the provision of essential services, and the cultivation of social cohesion. Consequently, a robust and empowered village sector becomes an imperative for achieving comprehensive and sustainable national advancement, reflecting the aspirations of a truly democratic and prosperous populace.⁵

Despite the legislative scaffolding provided by Law No. 6 of 2014, the actual implementation of village autonomy frequently encounters formidable impediments that persistently challenge its intended efficacy. Pervasive elite domination often distorts decision-making processes, channeling benefits towards a select few rather than the entire community, thereby undermining the principles of equitable distribution and inclusive governance. Instances of fiscal malfeasance further erode public trust and divert crucial developmental funds, significantly impeding progress in infrastructure and social welfare initiatives.

⁴ Abustan Abustun, "Implementasi Percepatan Pembangunan Desa dalam Mewujudkan Pembangunan Berkelanjutan Berdasarkan Undang-Undang Nomor 6 Tahun 2014 Tentang Desa," *Jurnal Gagasan Hukum* 1, no. 02 (2019): 216–27, p. 217.

⁵ Abdillah, Lalita Ika Pertiwi. "Partisipasi Masyarakat dalam Pengambilan Keputusan Pembangunan Desa (Studi di Desa Rungau Raya, Kecamatan Danau Seluluk, Kabupaten Seruyan)." *Journal Ilmu Sosial, Politik dan Pemerintahan* 9, no. 2 (2021): p.74

Moreover, attenuated community involvement in planning and oversight mechanisms, coupled with suboptimal institutional capabilities among village administrators, collectively conspire to stymie the full realization of genuine village self-governance. These multifaceted challenges necessitate a rigorous examination to unravel their intricate dynamics and devise efficacious countermeasures.

The pressing urgency of this discourse lies in the imperative to ensure that village autonomy genuinely translates into enhanced community welfare and augmented citizen participation in local governance. While the legal framework ostensibly grants substantial autonomy, numerous villages continue to grapple with systemic deficiencies, including a conspicuous lack of transparency, pervasive corruption, and an enduring deficit in administrative capacity. Such persistent aberrations can severely impede the authentic democratization at the village level, culminating in pronounced inequalities in the implementation of national policies and a discernible disconnect between policy intent and practical outcomes. Addressing these profound disparities requires a concerted effort to recalibrate existing frameworks and foster a more responsive and accountable local administration.

Existing scholarly endeavors, while illuminating various facets of village autonomy, frequently exhibit a discernible lacuna in their comprehensive exploration of practical models for effective participatory implementation and robust community engagement. Much of the prevailing literature predominantly dissects the legal recognition and theoretical underpinnings of village autonomy, or meticulously chronicles the challenges encountered during its execution. However, a detailed exposition on how to systematically cultivate genuine community involvement, how to design and apply concrete intervention models for empowerment, and how to bridge the chasm between policy aspirations and grassroots realities remains largely underdeveloped. This scholarly

void underscores a critical need for research that not only diagnoses problems but also furnishes actionable frameworks for their resolution.

The discernible lacuna in practical models necessitates the development and diligent application of concrete, context-sensitive frameworks that directly address the identified gaps and foster authentic participatory governance. Such innovative models must transcend mere theoretical constructs, offering tangible methodologies for cultivating active citizen involvement in every echelon of village administration, from strategic planning to meticulous oversight.⁶ These frameworks should prioritize the empowerment of local communities, enabling them to collectively articulate their needs, contribute their indigenous knowledge, and actively shape their own developmental trajectories. The imperative thus shifts from simply acknowledging autonomy to actively facilitating its vibrant, democratic manifestation through structured and sustained engagement.

Bridging the theoretical recognition of village autonomy with tangible, inclusive outcomes necessitates a concerted effort to integrate robust models of community engagement and practical application. This involves transforming abstract legal principles into actionable programs that foster genuine dialogue, cultivate local leadership, and strengthen the institutional capacities of village apparatuses. Such an endeavor transcends conventional top-down directives, instead advocating for a reciprocal relationship where community insights inform policy formulation and local initiatives receive sustained support. The success of this transformative process hinges upon the diligent cultivation of a participatory culture, where every villager perceives their voice as

⁶ Abustun, Abustan. "Implementasi Percepatan Pembangunan Desa dalam Mewujudkan Pembangunan Berkelanjutan Berdasarkan Undang-Undang Nomor 6 Tahun 2014 Tentang Desa." *Jurnal Gagasan Hukum* 1, no. 02 (2019): 216–27

consequential and their contribution as indispensable to collective progress.⁷

This research, therefore, posits a vital contribution to the existing body of knowledge by meticulously examining the intricate dynamics of participatory village autonomy and subsequently proposing innovative models for community engagement and practical application. We aim to elucidate how a more profound and sustained involvement of local communities can not only surmount the perennial challenges of elite capture and administrative inefficiencies but also fundamentally reshape the landscape of local governance. By furnishing a comprehensive framework that integrates theoretical insights with actionable strategies, this study endeavors to illuminate a path towards more equitable, resilient, and genuinely democratic village governance in Indonesia, ultimately fostering a more prosperous and self-determined populace.

Method

This article is written based on community engagement activities in the field of village governance and legal empowerment. The method applied is a community-based legal empowerment model which focuses on participatory dialogue, community legal awareness strengthening, and collaborative analysis of village autonomy policies.

This community service utilized a socio-legal approach supported by document study and focus group discussions (FGDs) involving village officials, community leaders, and relevant stakeholders. Legal materials were collected from statutory regulations, village governance guidelines, and relevant decisions by the Constitutional Court. In addition, field data were gathered from community discussions, participatory mapping, and

⁷ Ari Dwipayana. 2003. *In Participatory Rural Renewal*. Jakarta: Pustaka Pelajar

structured interviews conducted during the legal dissemination and facilitation programs.

The data were analyzed using qualitative content analysis, and the results are presented descriptively to support public legal education and policy recommendations for democratization of village autonomy.

This scholarly inquiry meticulously erects its methodological scaffolding upon a normative legal framework, concurrently embracing a comparative paradigm to engender a more profound and substantive appraisal of village autonomy. Such a judicious selection of combined methodologies proves indispensable; it permits a comprehensive illumination of the subject matter, transcending a mere examination of Indonesia's domestic legal architecture. The chosen approach specifically facilitates a nuanced understanding of democratic principles' application within village governance, discerning the intricate interplay between legal norms and their practical manifestations. This holistic methodological stance thus empowers a more robust and insightful dissection of the complex dynamics inherent in local self-governance.

The normative legal approach, foundational to this investigation, encompasses a tripartite analytical lens: the statutory, the conceptual, and the historical. The statutory lens meticulously scrutinizes the panoply of regulations that constitute the legal bedrock for village autonomy's implementation, particularly delving into Law Number 6 of 2014 on Villages and its pertinent implementing enactments. A conceptual excursion subsequently delves into the intricate ideations of democratization and autonomy, discerning their theoretical underpinnings as applied within the nuanced context of village governance. Concomitantly, historical tracing illuminates the evolutionary trajectory of village autonomy within the Indonesian archipelago, providing an indispensable temporal dimension to the overarching analysis.

This analytical endeavor further embraces a comparative paradigm, systematically juxtaposing legal frameworks, institutional constructs, and

policy outcomes pertaining to village autonomy across diverse national experiences. The comparative lens meticulously dissects how various jurisdictions address similar challenges in local self-governance, extracting valuable insights and identifying divergent approaches. This cross-national examination aims to unearth salutary practices and alternative models that possess the inherent capacity to enrich and fortify Indonesia's existing legal and institutional apparatus for village administration. Such a parallel appraisal invariably deepens the comprehension of universal principles while respecting contextual specificities.

The acquisition of pertinent data for this investigation primarily transpired through extensive bibliographical inquiry, meticulously encompassing a wide array of legal documents, authoritative academic journals, insightful policy papers, and rigorous comparative legal studies. This comprehensive data gathering process ensured the compilation of a rich evidentiary corpus, providing ample material for subsequent analytical endeavors. Each piece of literature underwent careful scrutiny, contributing to a nuanced understanding of the legal and practical dimensions of village autonomy. The systematic collection of these disparate sources laid a robust foundation for the ensuing analytical processes.

The collected evidentiary corpus subsequently underwent a meticulous qualitative exegesis, employing content analysis as its principal analytical instrument. This rigorous qualitative appraisal commenced with the systematic identification of overarching themes and salient challenges inherent in the democratization of village autonomy. The analytical process further involved a critical assessment of the extent to which existing regulatory frameworks have genuinely supported the attainment of these stipulated objectives. Such an interpretive approach allowed for the discernment of underlying patterns and the extraction of profound meanings from the textual data, moving beyond superficial observations.

The unveiling of the research outcomes assumes a descriptive-analytical posture, meticulously articulating the findings derived from the comprehensive data appraisal. This culminating phase of the investigation emphasizes a judicious evaluation of the applicable legal norms within Indonesia, critically informed by the illuminating insights gleaned from the comparative analysis. Furthermore, this rendition proposes concrete recommendations for policy enhancement and legal refinement, meticulously formulated to better achieve the aspirational objectives of democratic village governance. The presentation thus synthesizes complex information into coherent and actionable conclusions, offering a roadmap for future advancements.

Result & Discussion

Village Autonomy within the Architecture of the Indonesian Governance System

Village Autonomy originates from the Greek language, specifically *autos* and *nomos*; *autos* signifies 'self', while *nomos* denotes 'command', thus autonomy translates to 'self-governance'. A village entity unequivocally represents a juridical community unit wielding the authority to meticulously regulate and manage the interests of the local community, grounded in their ancestral origins and established customs recognized within the national governance system. This autonomy finds its implementation within regency territories; it inherently implies the village's inherent capability to govern itself independently, firmly rooted in traditional rights and local wisdom, without undue intervention from higher echelons of government. This fundamental right, authority, and responsibility encompass the meticulous arrangement and regulation of

governmental affairs and community interests autonomously, aligning seamlessly with inherent rights and existing socio-cultural values, thereby enabling the village to burgeon and evolve commensurate with its evolving needs.⁸

Village autonomy, a concept deeply embedded within Indonesia's intricate administrative framework, fundamentally embodies the inherent right, sovereign authority, and profound responsibility to meticulously manage and regulate governmental affairs alongside communal interests with unyielding independence. This foundational principle, deriving its legitimacy from the primordial rights and deeply ingrained socio-cultural values prevalent within each locale, empowers villages to organically burgeon and progressively evolve in consonance with their intrinsic needs and aspirations. The very essence of this self-governance, therefore, posits a dynamic entity capable of charting its own trajectory, distinguishing it from mere administrative subdivisions.⁹

The administration of governmental matters intrinsically linked to a village's historical genesis invariably devolves upon the village itself, even when such competencies ostensibly fall under the purview of regency or city governments. This devolution signifies a profound recognition of local agency, allowing communities to address their unique exigencies with bespoke solutions. The overarching concept of village autonomy thus interprets the inherent capacity and proactive initiative of village communities to orchestrate and implement the multifarious dynamics of their existence based on their intrinsic capabilities. Such a paradigm inherently advocates for the systematic reduction, if not outright

⁸ Haryanto, Andi Ilmi Utami Irwan, dan Yusriah Amaliah. "Elections, Governance, and Polarization in Indonesian Villages." *Asian Journal of Political Science* 32, no. 2 (2024): p. 173..

⁹ Muhtar, Entang Adhy, Abdillah Abdillah, Ida Widianingsih, dan Qinthara Mubarak Adikancana. "Smart Villages, Rural Development and Community Vulnerability in Indonesia: A Bibliometric Analysis." *Cogent Social Sciences* 9, no. 1 (2023):p. 8..

elimination, of external interventions, thereby fostering genuine local self-determination.¹⁰

The intrinsic nature of village autonomy manifests as a pure and unadulterated form of self-governance, implying its aboriginal existence predating the formation of the modern state; it does not constitute a mere transference of authority from the central government. This primordial status bestows upon villages a unique legitimacy, rooted in historical continuity and communal consensus, rather than solely on state mandate. The enduring presence of this authentic autonomy fundamentally positions villages as the vanguard of a fully independent and genuinely democratic system, embodying a grassroots democratic ethos that resonates deeply with local traditions and communal aspirations.¹¹

Villages have territorial boundaries to have the authority to regulate the interests of local communities based on community initiatives, ancestral rights and/or traditional rights that are recognized and respected in the government system of the Republic of Indonesia.¹² Villages have autonomy rights derived from customary law, which allow them to determine the structure of government, manage household affairs, and have rights to all existing wealth and assets. With this crucial position, the existence of the village must be emphasized to achieve the welfare of the village community.

The very existence of village autonomy serves as a pivotal harbinger of a fully autonomous and genuinely sovereign democratic system. This profound assertion stems from the comprehensive authority vested in village governments to meticulously manage their own internal affairs, a characteristic vividly exemplified by the direct and independent election of

¹⁰ Mukhlis, Muhammad Mutawalli, Maskun, Muhammad Saleh Tajuddin, Dewi Andriani, Rizal Muchtasar, dan Ahmad Masum. "Regional Government Autonomy in Indonesia: The Ambiguity of the Federalism or Republic Model." *Malaysian Journal of Syariah and Law* 13, no. 1 (2025): p.41.

¹¹ Nurlinah, dan Haryanto. "Transmigration Village Development: The State and Community Organizations in Rural Indonesia." *Frontiers in Political Science* 6 (2024): p. 13.

¹² Republik Indonesia, Pasal 1 *Undang-Undang Republik Indonesia Nomor 6 Tahun 2014 Tentang Desa* (Jakarta: Sekretariat Negara, 2014).

village heads by the local populace itself. Such a direct electoral mechanism significantly fortifies the bonds of communal unity, fostering a palpable sense of collective ownership and shared responsibility among the citizenry. However, this nascent democratic edifice remains susceptible to various perturbations in the execution of its governmental functions.

Despite their pivotal role, village governments have historically received insufficient attention from higher administrative tiers, particularly concerning the cultivation of their human resources, which often remain less accessible or adequately developed. Recognizing this critical lacuna, Law No. 6 of 2014 was meticulously introduced; this legislative instrument aims to ensure the continuous and effective functioning of village governance in precise alignment with its overarching objectives. The law endeavors to professionalize local administration, furnishing the necessary legal and structural scaffolding for villages to thrive as self-governing entities.

Villages, by their very definition, possess distinct territorial boundaries, granting them the inherent authority to meticulously regulate the interests of their local communities [3]. This regulatory power emanates from the collective initiatives of the populace, deeply rooted ancestral rights, and/or time-honored traditional rights, all of which garner explicit recognition and profound respect within the intricate governance system of the Republic of Indonesia. Furthermore, villages inherently possess autonomy rights derived from their customary laws, which empower them to autonomously determine their governmental structures, manage their domestic affairs, and assert entitlements over all existing communal wealth and assets.¹³

The implementation of Law No. 6 of 2014 concerning villages, when meticulously dissected, can be systematically categorized into five

¹³ Pasaribu, Anjelina, Agnes Sitanggang, dan Julia Ivanna. "Kolaborasi Antara Pemerintah dan Masyarakat dalam Pembangunan di Desa Percut Sei Tuan Dusun 1." *Madani Jurnal Politik dan Sosial Kemasyarakatan* 16, no. 01 (2024): p. 265.

overarching domains of profound significance. These encompass its rigorous application in regional development initiatives, the strategic cultivation of human resources, the comprehensive mitigation and accelerated reduction of poverty, the judicious structuring of functional relationships between the Regional House of Representatives (DPRD) and regional governments, and the concerted enhancement of inter-agency coordination or teamwork. Each of these areas represents a vital pillar in the comprehensive strengthening of village autonomy, aiming to foster holistic and sustainable local development.

The actualization of regional autonomy, while granting considerable latitude to local governments, does not automatically abrogate the inherent duties, pivotal roles, and overarching responsibilities of the central government. This nuanced interplay underscores that the autonomy conferred is not boundless; rather, it operates within a defined framework that ensures national coherence and strategic alignment. The pattern of regional development meticulously unfolds through the delegation of central government tasks to regional administrations, with these delegated responsibilities subsequently executed and rigorously accounted for by the regional governments themselves [4]. This intricate system aims to balance local responsiveness with national strategic objectives.¹⁴

The duties and functions intrinsic to regional development comprehensively encompass the fundamental principles of general governance. These include the meticulous implementation of central government directives within regional territories, the astute facilitation and accommodation of regional policies, and the assiduous maintenance of harmony between central and regional governmental entities. Furthermore, these responsibilities extend to the establishment of public order and security, the diligent preservation of orderly cross-border

¹⁴ Santoso, Lukman. *Hukum Pemerintahan Daerah: Mengurai Problematika Pemekaran Daerah Pasca Reformasi di Indonesia*. Yogyakarta: Pustaka Pelajar, 2015, pp. 117-118.

relations, the precise ascertainment of regional boundaries, the rigorous implementation of regional authority, and the execution of any other authorities specifically mandated by law. Regional development officials, typically embodied by regional heads, meticulously discharge two distinct categories of governmental affairs: those pertaining to regional specificities and those encompassing broader general governmental functions.¹⁵

The implementation of regional autonomy invariably bestows upon regions the crucial authority for human resource development, a formidable undertaking given the prevalent challenges. This formidable task often proves arduous for regions, as human resources frequently exhibit suboptimal levels of competence, attitude, and behavior. In this era of heightened autonomy, regions bear the imperative responsibility to meticulously cultivate human resources that precisely align with their evolving needs, adhering rigorously to principles of openness and unwavering accountability. The central government, recognizing this critical need, endeavors to foster a cadre of civil servants who are inherently responsive, creative, and demonstrably capable of performing their duties with efficacious precision.

To bolster regional performance within the intricate framework of cooperation between regional and central authorities, local governments necessitate human resources possessing an exceptional aptitude for network development and collaborative teamwork, alongside a demonstrably high standard of work quality. Such a skilled workforce becomes paramount in navigating complex intergovernmental relations and delivering effective public services. For the optimal cultivation of human resources, regional governments are exhorted to meticulously construct open organizational structures, thereby fostering environments conducive to innovation and collaboration. They must also diligently provide platforms that enable civil servants to exercise creativity and forge

¹⁵ Santoso, p. 121.

novel breakthroughs, actively encouraging a culture of proactive problem-solving and continuous improvement.¹⁶

Poverty, an enduring and pervasive problematic, consistently represents a paramount concern for local governments, demanding concerted and multifaceted interventions. The alleviation of poverty constitutes a pivotal mandate articulated within Law Number 25 of 1999, wherein regional governments are vested with expansive authority and supported by substantial financial allocations from the Regional Budget (APBD) [6]. Poverty alleviation programs inherently necessitate integrated execution, meticulously tailored to the unique characteristics of the local populace and geographical region, demanding seamless coordination among all pertinent agencies. Developmental initiatives within the context of poverty alleviation must prioritize the active engagement of both the community and the private sector, fostering investments capable of generating employment and cultivating markets specifically for the impoverished segments of society.¹⁷

The relationship between the executive branch of local government and the legislative body, the DPRD, has historically witnessed periods of disharmony, particularly during the era of economic transition. This disharmony necessitates resolution through the intrinsic spirit of autonomy, which unequivocally grants regions the authority to regulate their own domains in response to the multifaceted problems confronting their populace. Such problems encompass the intricate administration of government, the dynamic processes of development, and the provision of essential public services. The principles of autonomy, as articulated in Law No. 22 of 1999, fundamentally delineate this framework, guiding the interplay between local executive and legislative functions.

¹⁶ Sidik, Fajar, dan Muchtar Habibi. "A Prize for the Village Ruling Class: "Village Funds" and Class Dynamics in Rural Indonesia." *Journal of Contemporary Asia* 54, no. 3 (2024): p. 391.

¹⁷ Erni Irawati, "Peningkatan Kapasitas Desa Berdasarkan Pada Undang-Undang No. 6 Tahun 2014 (Sebuah Kajian Tentang Otonomi Desa)," *Jurnal Inovasi Penelitian* 2, no. 2 (2021): 635–42, p. 638.

Law No. 22 of 1999 delineates the principles of autonomy, which include the comprehensive delegation of authority from the central government to regional governments, with specific exceptions in critical domains such as law, foreign affairs, justice, religion, monetary policy, and fiscal management. This legislative framework also stipulates the delegation of central authority to governors, who serve as direct representatives of the central government within their respective regions. Furthermore, it outlines the provision of assistance, entailing the assignment of specific tasks by the central government to regional governments, accompanied by requisite financing, facilities, infrastructure, and human resources, with a clear obligation for reporting and accountability.¹⁸

Coordination, a perennially serious problematic within local government administration, frequently impedes the efficient delivery of public services and the effective implementation of developmental initiatives. Instances of disjointed efforts, such as the recurrent dismantling and reinstallation of facilities by various utility providers—including PAM (water), PLN (electricity), and Telkom (telecommunications)—vividly underscore the historical prevalence of weak coordination. Within the expansive framework of autonomy, where local governments possess the inherent authority to regulate domains beyond the six areas explicitly managed by the central government, they can meticulously orchestrate the coordination of vital real sectors. Such sectors encompass transportation networks, essential facilities and infrastructure, agricultural endeavors, and the burgeoning landscape of small businesses, alongside other authorities specifically delineated by law.

Weak coordination, a persistent challenge during the era of regional autonomy, has demonstrably yielded detrimental impacts on various facets of local governance and development. The underlying causes for this

¹⁸ Fandi Hi Hi Latif and Irwan Soleman, "Pseudo Otonomi Desa: Problematika Implementasi Kebijakan Otonomi Desa di Desa Juanga," *Musamus Journal of Public Administration* 6, no. 2 (2024): 670–80, p. 672.

pervasive lack of synergy within local governments during the regional autonomy period are multifaceted. These include a discernible absence of a shared vision among various agencies, a critical deficiency in long-term development planning that often results in non-strategic policy directions, and a lamentably low willingness among entities to engage in collaborative efforts. Furthermore, a prevailing commando-style leadership, coupled with deficient skills, compromised integrity, and a general lack of self-confidence among officials, collectively exacerbate the coordination deficit, thereby stymying efficient and effective governance.

The problematic of poverty that persistently afflicts numerous villages across Indonesia remains inextricably linked to a constellation of fundamental challenges that continue to plague the majority of these local entities. According to Suwardjo (2009), the multifarious issues confronting village governments conspicuously include a palpable limitation in the quantity and qualitative proficiency of staff or employees, alongside a suboptimal quality and quantity of assistance, specialized training, and vigilant monitoring for village development initiatives [9]. Geographical isolation further exacerbates these challenges, rendering community accessibility to public service centers minimal and contributing to a persistently low level of village welfare, particularly concerning the provision of basic services and the stimulation of local economic growth.

Beyond the identified developmental challenges, the recurrent instances of corruption at the village level represent a grave impediment to the realization of effective village autonomy and sustainable village development. These illicit practices not only directly inflict financial detriment upon village coffers but also profoundly erode public trust in village institutions and the broader local governmental structures. Such systemic malfeasance severely curtails the intended impact of government programs and fundamentally compromises principles of transparency and accountability. Therefore, the imperative for heightened supervision and

transparency in the utilization of village funds becomes crucial; this preempts corrupt practices that demonstrably undermine village development and societal well-being, fostering a more equitable distribution of resources.

Examining the Implementation of Village Governance Regulations in Fortifying Village Autonomy

The meticulous application of Law No. 6 of 2014 concerning villages, when subjected to thorough scrutiny, systematically bifurcates into five pivotal domains, each contributing to the robust fortification of village autonomy. These encompass its rigorous actualization in regional development initiatives, the strategic cultivation of human resources, the comprehensive mitigation and accelerated reduction of poverty, the judicious structuring of functional relationships between the Regional House of Representatives (DPRD) and regional governments, and the concerted enhancement of inter-agency coordination or teamwork. This multi-pronged approach underscores a holistic vision for empowering local governance, fostering self-reliance, and ensuring equitable progress across the archipelago.

The actualization of regional autonomy, while granting considerable latitude to local governments, does not automatically abrogate the inherent duties, pivotal roles, and overarching responsibilities of the central government. This nuanced interplay underscores that the autonomy conferred is not boundless; rather, it operates within a defined framework that ensures national coherence and strategic alignment. The pattern of regional development meticulously unfolds through the delegation of central government tasks to regional administrations, with

these delegated responsibilities subsequently executed and rigorously accounted for by the regional governments themselves. Such a mechanism prevents a complete disjunction from national priorities, maintaining a delicate balance between local self-determination and broader state objectives.

The duties and functions intrinsically linked to regional development comprehensively encompass the fundamental principles of general governance, ensuring a seamless continuum of state presence at the local level. These include the meticulous implementation of central government directives within regional territories, the astute facilitation and accommodation of regional policies, and the assiduous maintenance of harmony between central and regional governmental entities. Furthermore, these responsibilities extend to the establishment of public order and security, the diligent preservation of orderly cross-border relations, the precise ascertainment of regional boundaries, the rigorous implementation of regional authority, and the execution of any other authorities specifically mandated by law. Regional development officials, typically embodied by regional heads, meticulously discharge two distinct categories of governmental affairs: those pertaining to regional specificities and those encompassing broader general governmental functions.

The conferral of authority for human resource development upon regions, a direct consequence of regional autonomy's implementation, presents a formidable undertaking given the prevalent challenges in local administrative capacities. This formidable task often proves arduous for regions, as human resources frequently exhibit suboptimal levels of competence, attitude, and behavior, necessitating targeted interventions. In this era of heightened autonomy, regions bear the imperative responsibility to meticulously cultivate human resources that precisely align with their evolving needs, adhering rigorously to principles of openness and unwavering accountability. This strategic imperative ensures

that local administrations are adequately equipped to manage their expanded responsibilities effectively.¹⁹

To bolster regional performance within the intricate framework of cooperation between regional and central authorities, local governments necessitate human resources possessing an exceptional aptitude for network development and collaborative teamwork, alongside a demonstrably high standard of work quality. Such a skilled workforce becomes paramount in navigating complex intergovernmental relations and delivering effective public services. The government, recognizing this critical need, endeavors to foster a cadre of civil servants who are inherently responsive, creative, and demonstrably capable of performing their duties with efficacious precision, thereby enhancing overall administrative prowess.

For the optimal cultivation of human resources, regional governments are exhorted to meticulously construct open organizational structures, thereby fostering environments conducive to innovation and collaboration. They must also diligently provide platforms that enable civil servants to exercise creativity and forge novel breakthroughs, actively encouraging a culture of proactive problem-solving and continuous improvement. This includes promoting a willingness to embrace calculated risks, establishing robust reward systems for demonstrable achievements, cultivating effective communication paradigms among civil servants, and fostering an innovative work atmosphere. Concurrently, efforts must concentrate on mitigating bureaucratic impediments, precluding external interventions that might compromise professional integrity, and judiciously delegating responsibilities to optimize operational efficiency.²⁰

¹⁹ Rahmat, Diding, Sudarto Sudarto, Sarip Sarip, Sujono Sujono, dan Muhammad Faiz Aziz. "The Urgency of Administrative Law in Light of Ius Constituendum Regarding the Role of Village Heads." *Volksgeist: Jurnal Ilmu Hukum dan Konstitusi* 7, no. 1 (2024): p.67..

²⁰ Noer Fauzi and R Yando Zakaria, "Democratizing Decentralization: Local Initiatives from Indonesia," in *Paper Submitted for the International Association for the Study of Common Property 9th Biennial Conference, Zimbabwe, 2002*.

Poverty, an enduring and pervasive problematic, consistently represents a paramount concern for local governments, demanding concerted and multifaceted interventions. The alleviation of poverty constitutes a pivotal mandate articulated within Law Number 25 of 1999, wherein regional governments are vested with expansive authority and supported by substantial financial allocations from the Regional Budget (APBD). This legislative framework underscores the state's commitment to addressing socio-economic disparities at the grassroots level, providing the necessary fiscal instruments for localized interventions. The imperative thus shifts towards designing and executing programs that genuinely uplift vulnerable populations.

Poverty alleviation programs inherently necessitate integrated execution, meticulously tailored to the unique characteristics of the local populace and geographical region, demanding seamless coordination among all pertinent agencies. Developmental initiatives within the context of poverty alleviation must prioritize the active engagement of both the community and the private sector, fostering investments capable of generating employment and cultivating markets specifically for the impoverished segments of society. This paradigm shift involves transforming the regional government's role from a mere implementer to a proactive facilitator, from issuing directives to providing genuine service, from rigid regulation to empowering the community, and from simply fulfilling mandates to achieving profound developmental missions.²¹

Through democracy, the general definition of power also applies in the Village, namely that power comes from and is in the hands of the people. Based on this definition, it means that the Village community or residents are the true owners of power (Village), not the elite or organizers of the Village Government. The Village Government Organizer is merely an

²¹ Mar Atun Saadah, Erida Erida, and Try Syeftiani, "Transforming Village Governance: What Does It Take to Turn into Digital," in *2nd International Conference on Democracy and Social Transformation (ICON-DEMOST 2023)* (Atlantis Press, 2024), 119–23.

implementer of the power of the Village people, not the owner of power or even the owner of the Village. The second background is related to the progress marked by the Village Law in viewing the position of the Village. One of the most important parts of the Village Law is the State's recognition of the original rights of the Village (called the principle of recognition) and the determination of local-scale authority and local decision-making for the benefit of the Village community (called the principle of subsidiarity). With these two principles, the Village has very great authority to manage itself.²²

The relationship between the executive branch of local government and the legislative body, the DPRD, has historically witnessed periods of disharmony, particularly during the era of economic transition, often stemming from divergent priorities or interpretations of mandates. This disharmony necessitates resolution through the intrinsic spirit of autonomy, which unequivocally grants regions the authority to regulate their own domains in response to the multifaceted problems confronting their populace. Such problems encompass the intricate administration of government, the dynamic processes of development, and the provision of essential public services. The principles of autonomy, as articulated in Law No. 22 of 1999, fundamentally delineate this framework, guiding the intricate interplay between local executive and legislative functions.

Law No. 22 of 1999 delineates the principles of autonomy, which include the comprehensive delegation of authority from the central government to regional governments, with specific exceptions in critical domains such as law, foreign affairs, justice, religion, monetary policy, and fiscal management. This legislative framework also stipulates the delegation of central authority to governors, who serve as direct representatives of the central government within their respective regions.

²² Rosyadi, Ihyauddin, Bambang Tri Sasongko Adi, Oman Sukmana, dan Vina Salviana. "Transforming Village Governance: The Impact of Village Development Boards on Community Participation, Indonesian Case Study." *International Journal of Research in Engineering, Science and Management* 7, no. 5 (2024): p.94.

Furthermore, it outlines the provision of assistance, entailing the assignment of specific tasks by the central government to regional governments, accompanied by requisite financing, facilities, infrastructure, and human resources, with a clear obligation for reporting and accountability to the central government.

The regional head, as the principal executive authority, possesses the prerogative to orchestrate the implementation of regional government, operating within the policy parameters meticulously established by the DPRD. This executive figure bears direct accountability to the DPRD and is obligated to furnish a comprehensive report on the execution of regional governance to the president, channeled through the Minister of Home Affairs, at least once annually. Concurrently, the DPRD, in this era of enhanced autonomy, wields significant authority and undertakes multifarious tasks; these include the election of governors/deputy governors, regents/deputy regents, or mayors/deputy mayors, the meticulous formulation of regional regulations, and the judicious determination of regional revenue and expenditure budgets.

The Role of Democracy in Consolidating Village Governance and National Development

The intrinsic role of village democratization presents a complex endeavor, transcending mere procedural adherence to formal democratic mechanisms. This complexity arises because democratization fundamentally involves the profound internalization of specific values and principles that demand tangible manifestation in daily practice, shaping the very fabric of communal interactions. It necessitates a deep-seated commitment to transparency, accountability, and inclusivity, ensuring that

the spirit of self-governance permeates every facet of village life. Such an intricate process requires continuous cultivation and adaptation, fostering a dynamic interplay between formal structures and informal community norms.

Democratization, at its very core, undertakes the imperative endeavor of redefining the intricate relationship between the village community and the elite or the administrators of village governance, encompassing the village head, staff, and the Village Consultative Body (BPD). Through the pervasive influence of democracy, the generic definition of power applies unequivocally at the village level; power originates from and resides within the grasp of the populace. This fundamental reorientation of authority ensures that the collective will of the citizens becomes the ultimate arbiter of local affairs, fostering a more equitable distribution of influence.²³

Based on this foundational definition, the village community or its citizens unequivocally represent the rightful proprietors of village power, not the elite or the administrators of village governance. The village governance administrators merely serve as executors of the village populace's power, not its owners, much less the proprietors of the village itself. This paradigm shift fundamentally reconfigures the power dynamics, ensuring accountability and responsiveness to the collective will of the community, thereby safeguarding against authoritarian tendencies and promoting a more participatory administrative ethos.

The spirit of Law No. 6 of 2014, which unequivocally recognizes the Village as a subject under the overarching principles of recognition and subsidiarity, fundamentally underpins this democratic transformation. The deliberate choice of this legislative phraseology aims to unequivocally demonstrate that the Village is not a mere vacuous geographical expanse, detached from the socio-cultural tapestry of its inhabitants. On the

²³ Santoso, Lukman. *Hukum Otonomi Desa: Mewujudkan Kemandirian Desa Menuju Masyarakat Sejahtera*. Yogyakarta: Zahir Publishing, 2021..

contrary, the Village stands as a territorial or regional entity, intricately interwoven and profoundly bound to the lives of its populace, along with the time-honored traditions and customs that propel that very existence. This profound legislative acknowledgment thus lays the groundwork for a truly indigenous form of self-governance.²⁴

Viewed from the perspective of the intrinsic interests of the Village community, the principles of recognition and subsidiarity collectively furnish ample opportunities for the Village to actualize the collective will in the vibrant spirit of Village development. The Village thus emerges as a proactive subject, meticulously planning and compiling its own developmental priorities, unfettered by the directives or dictates emanating from higher echelons of government or regional administrations. This newfound autonomy empowers local initiatives, fostering a sense of ownership and responsibility among the populace for their collective future.

However, the mere legislative conferral of recognition and subsidiarity, absent robust democratic safeguards, also presents a latent vulnerability; it creates an unintended opening for the resurgence of feudal and elitist characteristics among the organizers of Village Government. In such a context, democracy becomes an indispensable tool for cultivating the social capital of the Village community, enabling them to effectively navigate and manage Village power dynamics. Through the pervasive influence of democracy, an heightened awareness is anticipated to burgeon within the Village community regarding its intrinsic position as the ultimate source and rightful owner of power, thereby fostering vigilance against potential abuses.

The principles of recognition and subsidiarity, serving as the foundational tenets of Village regulation, inherently carry profound implications for the meticulous design of democracy cultivated within the

²⁴ Amir Muhiddin, "Partisipasi Masyarakat dalam Pembuatan Peraturan Daerah (PERDA)," *Otoritas: Jurnal Ilmu Pemerintahan* 3, no. 1 (2013), p. 6.

Village. Village democracy possesses its own distinct emphasis and unique nuances that cannot be simplistically equated with democratic practices at the national level. The inherent rights of origin, the deeply ingrained socio-cultural patterns of the Village, the peculiar characteristics of the Village community, and the intricate sociological realities of its populace collectively demand a bespoke adaptation from any modern system, including democracy, if it is to function efficaciously at the local level. This adaptive imperative ensures that democratic processes resonate with local contexts.

The democratization of village autonomy plays an essential role in promoting inclusive and sustainable village development. When village communities acquire more significant authority and control, the democratization of village autonomy empowers them to participate actively in decision-making processes and the management of village resources. This profound shift yields a positive impact across various facets of village development, fostering a more equitable and responsive local environment. The increased agency of the community ensures that developmental initiatives are genuinely aligned with their needs and aspirations, thereby maximizing their efficacy and long-term sustainability.

The enhancement of Community Participation emerges as an impressive outcome of village autonomy's democratization; this phenomenon vigorously encourages community involvement in diverse aspects of village development. Villagers possess the capability to articulate their aspirations, needs, and innovative ideas within village deliberation forums, thereby enabling their active participation in determining the trajectory of village development that precisely aligns with their inherent needs and priorities. This direct engagement fosters a sense of ownership and collective responsibility, ensuring that developmental plans are not merely imposed but organically emerge from the grassroots, reflecting the genuine will of the populace.

Furthermore, the democratization of village autonomy profoundly encourages transparency and accountability in the meticulous management of village governance and its financial resources. Village communities gain the capacity to vigilantly monitor the utilization of village funds and demand accountability from village heads and officials. This crucial oversight mechanism efficaciously helps to prevent corruption and assures that village funds are deployed with optimal effectiveness and efficiency for comprehensive village development. Such a system cultivates public trust and reinforces the integrity of local administration, fostering a more responsible and responsive governance framework .

The democratization of village autonomy, by providing equitable opportunities for all villagers to participate in decision-making, assures that the needs and aspirations of every community group receive due accommodation. This inclusive approach inherently fosters justice and equality in village development, mitigating disparities and ensuring that marginalized voices are heard and considered. Moreover, this democratic framework empowers village communities to manage resources and development programs with greater efficiency and effectiveness. By possessing an intimate understanding of their own needs and priorities, communities can design and implement development programs with enhanced precision, leading to more impactful and sustainable outcomes.

Finally, the democratization of village autonomy vigorously encourages sustainable village development. By intricately involving village communities in the pivotal processes of decision-making and resource management, the democratization of village autonomy assures that village development is executed in a manner that is both environmentally sound and socially enduring. This holistic approach cultivates a sense of collective stewardship over local resources, fostering practices that preserve the natural environment for future generations while simultaneously promoting socio-economic well-being. Such a model

embodies the true spirit of sustainable development, balancing present needs with long-term ecological and social imperatives

Articulating Models for Participatory Village Autonomy and Community Engagement

The theoretical recognition of village autonomy, while foundational, necessitates the articulation of practical, actionable models to bridge the chasm between legislative intent and tangible grassroots realities. The prevailing scholarly discourse often meticulously dissects the challenges inherent in implementing democratic principles at the local level, yet it frequently omits a comprehensive framework detailing how to systematically cultivate genuine community involvement and how to design concrete intervention strategies for empowerment. This discernible lacuna underscores a critical demand for research that not only diagnoses endemic problems but also furnishes prescriptive blueprints for their efficacious resolution, thereby transforming abstract concepts into palpable progress.

This scholarly endeavor, therefore, proposes a tripartite model for the application of participatory village autonomy, meticulously constructed upon three mutually reinforcing primary pillars. The first pillar centers on the imperative fortification of local institutional capacity, recognizing that robust governance structures are indispensable for effective self-determination. The second pillar champions the strategic digitalization of governance, leveraging technological advancements to enhance transparency and efficiency in administrative processes. The third, and equally vital, pillar emphasizes the astute facilitation of multistakeholder dialogue, ensuring that diverse voices contribute to collective decision-

making and fostering a collaborative environment for sustainable development. The initial pillar, focusing on the invigoration of local institutional capacity, necessitates the implementation of comprehensive training programs specifically tailored for village officials and members of the Village Consultative Body (BPD). These meticulously designed trainings must encompass a broad spectrum of critical competencies, including astute financial management, efficacious project governance, and the cultivation of superior communication skills essential for engaging with the community. Such targeted capacity-building initiatives aim to equip local administrators with the requisite expertise to judiciously manage resources, navigate complex administrative procedures, and foster responsive interactions with their constituents, thereby professionalizing local governance.

The second pivotal pillar, advocating for the strategic digitalization of village governance, endeavors to harness the transformative power of technology to enhance transparency, optimize administrative efficiency, and augment citizen access to vital information and essential services. This involves the development and deployment of user-friendly digital platforms that facilitate the dissemination of village budgets, development plans, and administrative procedures, making them readily accessible to all community members. Such technological integration not only streamlines bureaucratic processes but also empowers citizens with the knowledge necessary for active participation and vigilant oversight, thereby fostering a more accountable and responsive local administration.²⁵

The third integral pillar, the astute facilitation of multistakeholder dialogue, underscores the imperative for structured platforms that enable meaningful interaction among the village government, the broader community, civil society organizations (CSOs), and the private sector.

²⁵ Muhammad Syukri, "Indonesia's New Developmental State: Interrogating Participatory Village Governance," *Journal of Contemporary Asia* 54, no. 1 (2024): 2–23.

These deliberative forums serve as vital conduits for diverse perspectives to converge, fostering consensus-building and collaborative problem-solving. By providing a neutral and inclusive space for dialogue, this pillar ensures that developmental plans and policy formulations are not solely top-down directives but rather organically emerge from collective wisdom and shared aspirations, thereby enhancing the legitimacy and effectiveness of local governance.

Designing efficacious community engagement programs demands adherence to overarching principles that prioritize genuine empowerment and the systematic transfer of practical knowledge. These programs must move beyond tokenistic consultations, fostering an environment where citizens are not merely recipients of information but active co-creators of their developmental trajectories. This involves cultivating a sense of shared ownership and responsibility, recognizing that sustainable progress hinges upon the collective agency of the community. The design process itself should be inherently participatory, reflecting the needs and aspirations articulated directly by the local populace, ensuring relevance and resonance.

A specific and paramount element of program design involves the meticulous structuring of participatory planning workshops for the Village Medium-Term Development Plan (RPJMDes) and the Village Government Work Plan (RKPDDes). These workshops must transcend conventional bureaucratic exercises, transforming into truly inclusive forums where all strata of society, from traditional leaders to representatives of vulnerable groups, actively contribute their insights and priorities. The deliberate inclusion of diverse voices ensures that developmental plans genuinely reflect the multifaceted needs and aspirations of the entire community, fostering a sense of collective ownership and commitment to the planned initiatives.

Another crucial element of program design centers on developing comprehensive digital literacy modules and establishing accessible

information platforms. These initiatives aim to empower communities by providing them with the necessary skills to navigate digital tools and access vital information regarding village development with transparency and accountability. Such digital inclusion not only bridges the information gap but also fosters informed participation and vigilant oversight, enabling citizens to actively monitor and contribute to local governance processes. The accessibility of information is a prerequisite for genuine democratic engagement, ensuring that all citizens can exercise their rights effectively.²⁶

Decision making is the process of choosing actions to solve problems. Planning is part of decision making that deals with things in the future, so it requires a complex process. Decision making aims to solve problems, while planning focuses on achieving certain goals in the future. Participation in decision making is related to determining alternatives with the community to reach an agreement on various ideas that concern common interests.²⁷ Participation in decision making is very important, because the community demands to participate in determining the direction and orientation of development. Its forms:

- a. Meeting attendance is participation, physical and mental availability of the community to the meeting activities.
- b. Contribution of ideas is a contribution of ideas, opinions or constructive thoughts, both to compile programs and also to realize them by providing experience and knowledge to develop the activities that are followed.
- c. Discussion is a negotiation to exchange ideas about a problem to reach an agreement, as well as a joint decision about a problem being discussed.

²⁶ Winarno, "Implementasi Konsep Reinventing Government dalam Pelaksanaan Otonomi Daerah." p. 4

²⁷ Ilham Mustofa et al., "Leadership and Cultural Changes: Village Head Elections in Shaping Traditional Values, Indonesia's Case Study," *International Journal of Research in Engineering, Science and Management* 7, no. 5 (2024): 142–49.

- d. Response or rejection of the program offered. Response is conveying support or criticism of the ideas and concepts that have been presented in the meeting.²⁸

Cross-sectoral collaboration proves determinant for the success of these comprehensive community engagement programs, seamlessly integrating resources and expertise from various stakeholders. Regional governments play a strategic role as both regulators and facilitators, meticulously ensuring a conducive policy environment for village empowerment. Academic institutions contribute invaluable research, the development of specialized training curricula, and technical assistance, thereby providing the intellectual scaffolding for sustainable development. Concurrently, civil society organizations (CSOs) serve as advocates and community mobilizers, articulating grassroots aspirations and ensuring that the voices of the marginalized are heard and addressed.

The private sector can significantly participate through robust corporate social responsibility (CSR) programs, judiciously investing funds in sustainable local economic development projects that yield tangible benefits for the community. This multifaceted collaboration leverages diverse strengths, creating a synergistic ecosystem that maximizes the impact of developmental initiatives and fosters shared responsibility for progress. The long-term viability of these models necessitates a rigorous evaluation framework and robust institutional mechanisms. Evaluation will meticulously measure key performance indicators (KPIs) such as the level of community participation, the enhancement of village governance capabilities, and the attained economic and social impacts, ensuring continuous improvement and adaptability.

Community participation in the implementation of Village Development Planning Deliberations to the Village Government is

²⁸ Lalita Ika Pertiwi Abdillah, "Partisipasi Masyarakat dalam Pengambilan Keputusan Pembangunan Desa (Studi di Desa Rungau Raya, Kecamatan Danau Seluluk, Kabupaten Seruyan)," *Journal Ilmu Sosial, Politik Dan Pemerintahan* 9, no. 2 (2021): 67–74, p. 69.

interpreted as the involvement or participation of the community in the implementation of the program, starting from the planning stage, implementation, evaluation and maintenance of activity results, as well as direct community contributions.²⁹ In the implementation of development planning deliberations, community aspirations are collected to obtain data or information from the community as input in the future village development planning process.³⁰

One real example of collaboration is in the development of village infrastructure. The village government budgets funds to build roads, bridges, and other public facilities. Meanwhile, the community plays an active role in the planning, implementation, and maintenance of infrastructure. For example, the community is often involved in mutual cooperation activities to build and repair village roads, so that the infrastructure created can meet their needs.³¹

Collaboration between the government and the community is also important in social and cultural empowerment. The village government initiates various programs that support education, health, and local arts. The community actively participates in these activities, such as holding and participating in training, health counseling, and cultural festivals. Thus, this collaboration not only improves the quality of life of residents but also maintains and preserves local cultural values.³²

Village democratization must at least pay attention to the following four things. First, social relations in the village are built from personal social interactions between fellow villagers that have been going on for a

²⁹ Haryanto, Andi Ilmi Utami Irwan, and Yusriah Amaliah, "Elections, Governance, and Polarization in Indonesian Villages," *Asian Journal of Political Science* 32, no. 2 (2024): 175–93.

³⁰ Anjelina Pasaribu, Agnes Sitanggang, and Julia Ivanna, "Kolaborasi Antara Pemerintah dan Masyarakat dalam Pembangunan di Desa Percut Sei Tuan Dusun 1," *Madani Jurnal Politik dan Sosial Kemasyarakatan* 16, no. 01 (2024): 268–75, p. 271.

³¹ Ihyauddin Rosyadi et al., "Transforming Village Governance: The Impact of Village Development Boards on Community Participation, Indonesian Case Study," *International Journal of Research in Engineering, Science and Management* 7, no. 5 (2024): 187–94.

³² Pasaribu, Sitanggang, and Ivanna, p. 272.

long time. In fact, the many villages in Indonesia that are much older than the Republic of Indonesia indicate that these social relations have been formed for a very long time. If nationalism or national feelings at the state level are formed imaginatively, as stated by an anthropologist, feelings as fellow villagers grow empirically and personally, namely the result of daily interactions including kinship relationships. These relationships often form patterns of attitudes and social behaviour.³³ In general, for example, the relationship between older and younger people, close relatives and distant relatives, related or unrelated. Second, the relationship between the village and space also takes place with very high intensity. For the village, the land and space they live in are not merely dead spaces that can be abandoned at any time or processed and monetized (sold) at will. Space for the village is as important as life itself. The attachment to the space is not merely economic, namely as a source of livelihood, but is often accompanied by the treatment of space as something that is alive and alive. From this kind of attachment model, local wisdom emerges which is actualized in the form of environmentally friendly actions of the Village community, respect for land, air, and water.

Third, long-term, intense, and ongoing association in a living relationship with space, creates or unique Village socio-cultural patterns. Village life does not take place as a collection of people who are contractually and formally related, but rather a collection of people who have shared experiences, as well as being driven by traditions that are formed in the course of history, and are bound to space. Each Village has different customs, traditional political institutional systems, and their own

³³ Vuzio Fernanda, Yan Patmos, and Fauzi Syam, "The Influence of Political Configuration in The Creation of The New KUHP (An Examination of the New Wave of Indonesian Democracy in the Reformation Era)," *AL-MANHAJ: Jurnal Hukum dan Pranata Sosial Islam* 6, no. 1 (2024): 99–118.

history. For example, many Villages still use lineage or descent as a reference for assessing who is worthy of becoming Village Head.³⁴

Fourth, the solidarity formed in the Village is usually mechanical with a strong collectivistic nuance. In this form of solidarity, the Village community becomes a subjective category of its own that is bound by a sense of togetherness and mutual support. Village communities as subjects or actors can act as individuals. In the perspective of modernization-development of the new order model, such characteristics of the village are seen as obstacles to development. On the contrary, in the Village Law these characteristics are recognized and accepted as objective facts that have their own potential for the progress of village communities, including in terms of democracy.³⁵

Based on Law Number 6 of 2014 concerning Villages, one of the tasks of the village government is to prepare a village development program in the form of a Village Medium-Term Development Plan (RPJM Des) and a Village Government Activity Plan (RKP Des). Basically, before the Village Law was enacted, the village government was also obliged to prepare the RPJM Des and RKP Desa. However, in the era of implementing the Village Law, the mechanism for preparing the Village development program (RPJM Des and RKP Des) is more comprehensive than before. Village development planning is the initial step in determining the direction of village development, namely determining the priority of village programs and activities that can support the realization of village development according to the vision and mission of the village government. According to him, if the village government is unable to plan properly, then it is certain that the direction of village development cannot realize the vision and mission of the village government, in the end the objectives of the Village Law cannot be realized properly. Therefore, the village government

³⁴ Piers Andreas Noak, "Political Clientelism in Rural Areas: Understanding The Impact on Regional Head Elections in Indonesia," *Journal of Ecohumanism* 3, no. 7 (2024): 3898–3909.

³⁵ Noman Kresna Martha, "Derajat Demokratisasi Desa di Indonesia," *Madani Jurnal Politik dan Sosial Kemasyarakatan* 12, no. 1 (2020): 61–73.

must understand and carry out village development planning properly and correctly. Development planning is the process of determining the best way to manage development that concerns the priority of activities, people, infrastructure, costs and time in order to achieve the desired goals of community welfare. To realize good village development planning (good planning development), the active role of the community is needed in it. As the definition of village autonomy in the Village Law states that the village government has the right to manage village potential by involving the community, therefore village development planning must involve the community. One of the objectives of community involvement in development planning is to formulate and create activity programs that are in accordance with the needs and potential of the local village.³⁶

Strengthening village institutions through Community Institution Capacity Building activities that are in accordance with the spirit of the Village Law is intended to optimize the role and function of institutions as partners of the village government in a harmonious working relationship. The Village Community Empowerment Institution (LPMD) is tasked with empowering the village community or participating in the role of planning and implementing development, as well as improving village community services.

In the era of village autonomy, the village government is mandated by the central government through the Village Law to manage the village budget which is much larger than before the Village Law was enacted. Regulation of the Minister of Home Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia Number 113 of 2014 concerning Village Financial Management With the Grace of God Almighty Minister of Home Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia Article 2 explains the principles of village financial management, namely:

³⁶ Dayana Lengauer, "Emergency Activism: Indonesia's Eroding Democracy, Activist Students, and the Art of Protest. An Interview With Frans Ari Prasetyo," *ASEAS-Advances in Southeast Asian Studies* 17, no. 2 (2024): 213–28.

- a. Village finances are managed based on transparent, accountable, participatory principles and are carried out in an orderly and disciplined budget.
- b. Village financial management is managed within a period of 1 (one) budget year, namely from January 1 to December 31.

Furthermore, Government Regulation No. 60 of 2014 concerning village funds sourced from the State Budget emphasizes that village funds must be managed in an orderly manner, in accordance with the provisions of laws and regulations, efficiently, economically, effectively, transparently, and responsibly by paying attention to a sense of justice and propriety and prioritizing the interests of the local community. Law Number 6 of 2014 states that a Village or what is called another name is a legal community unit that has territorial boundaries that are authorized to regulate and manage the interests of the local community, based on local origins and customs, which are recognized and respected in the Government system of the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia.

Thus, the Law recognizes the autonomy possessed by the village. This means that Village Autonomy is given the opportunity to grow and develop following the development of its own community, thus the village has a very strategic position so that it requires balanced attention in the implementation of regional autonomy, because with the strength and stability of the village it will directly affect the realization of regional autonomy.³⁷

There are several solutions that can be applied regarding the democratization capacity of village autonomy in the construction of the Indonesian state system.

³⁷ Muhammad Noor, Muhammad Riyandi Firdaus, and Farid Zaky Yopiannor, "Model Penguatan Kapasitas Pemerintah Desa Sebagai Agenda Utama Optimasi Pengelolaan Desa Menuju Kemandirian (Studi Kasus Desa Maibe Kecamatan Paju Epat Kabupaten Barito Timur)," *PubBis: Jurnal Pemikiran dan Penelitian Administrasi Publik dan Administrasi Bisnis* 3, no. 1 (2019): 66–86, p. 76-83.

- a. Revise and improve the village law and related regulations to ensure that village authority is exercised independently and clearly without overlapping with central and regional policies.
- b. Integrated training programs that focus on improving administrative competence, financial management, and village governance need to be held periodically.
- c. Villages can expand community involvement in the decision-making process through village deliberation forums, village development planning deliberations (Musrenbangdes), and involving community groups such as youth, women, and indigenous groups. The central and regional governments can encourage community participation through routine socialization and political education.

Conclusion

The democratization of village autonomy in Indonesia marks a pivotal transition towards a more participatory and inclusive form of governance. This profound shift is firmly anchored in Law No. 6 of 2014 and its subsequent amendments, which unequivocally empower villages to meticulously manage their own affairs, drawing upon their inherent local values and primordial rights. True democratization, however, transcends mere formal electoral processes; it necessitates active civic engagement, robust institutional capacity, profound cultural alignment, and an unwavering commitment to transparency. This comprehensive approach ensures that the spirit of self-determination permeates every facet of local administration, fostering a more responsive and accountable governance framework.

To fully realize the potential of genuine village autonomy, it is imperative to systematically address persistent challenges such as limited human and financial resources, the pervasive influence of elite domination, and the enduring deficits in accountability mechanisms. The

innovative models for participatory village autonomy and community engagement, as meticulously articulated in this discourse, offer a prescriptive pathway forward. These models advocate for strategic interventions in human resource development, the judicious application of technology for enhanced public services, and the cultivation of local economic initiatives to generate sustainable livelihoods. Ultimately, by fostering active community participation, fortifying local infrastructure, and empowering economic endeavors, rural community development can efficaciously attain its overarching objective: cultivating a more equitable, prosperous, and self-determined existence for all villagers..

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