



## Women's Participation in Cultural Tourism Based Community Empowerment

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**Abstract:** *Kampung Batik* is one of the cultural tourism destinations and has been the largest Batik producer in Semarang city since the 18<sup>th</sup> century. Most of the population consists of women who are actively involved in Batik cultural activities. The research aims to describe the stages, the forms, and the impact of women's participation in community empowerment. The study was designed with a descriptive qualitative approach involving three female members, including the Tourism Assistance Community of Kampoeng Djadhoel chairman, the Neighborhood Head of *Kampung Batik*, and the *Kampung Batik* community. Data were collected through participatory observation, interviews, and documentation. Data validity testing was carried out using triangulation of sources and techniques. The stages of data analysis were data collection, data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing. The results showed that the stages of women's participation included decision-making, activity implementation, monitoring and evaluation, and utilization of development results. The positive impact of women's participation is increased employment, income, and skills; the negative effect is the problem arising from Batik waste management. This research can be a reference for the government, society, and women to improve women's welfare through empowerment.

**Keywords:** cultural tourism, community empowerment, women's participation

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### INTRODUCTION

Development is an effort to advance society's welfare (Hains et al., 2021). In 2023, development in the country of Indonesia has increased. It is indicated by an increase in the Human Development Index (HDI) figure in 2023, which increased by 0.84 percent (Statistik, 2023). This increase suggests significant progress towards access to development programs on human welfare. Development efforts involve the government, non-governmental organizations, the private sector, and the community. Community development is projected through programs to improve living standards, and opportunities are expected to be found (Hasdiani et al., 2022). These programs are designed based on local potential and carried out through empowerment (Nusantoro, 2020).

Empowerment aims to change the consciousness of individuals from situations that make them marginalized (Edwards et al., 2021). Empowerment efforts become an organized space to increase control over a larger life (Grabe & Dutt, 2020). Empowerment refers to providing capabilities to a person individually or in groups, especially those belonging to vulnerable and less empowered groups. Through empowerment activities, individual and social strengths are increased, and freedoms are realized. This freedom includes the ability to



voice opinions and freedom from hunger, ignorance, and pain (Mulyono et al., 2023). Capacity building in the empowerment process includes meeting the needs felt by the community, having more open access to resources, managing local organizations, and paying attention to social aspects (Khalid et al., 2019). Based on the results of research (Setyowati et al., 2023)(Sujarwo et al., 2022), there was an increase in family income after empowerment activities through training. Similar research was conducted (Shofwan, 2022) in educational units through empowerment efforts for teachers and school employees, which impacted increasing school cooperative income.

The main principle that must be followed in the implementation of development is the active involvement of the community (Riyanto & Kovalenko, 2023). Community involvement is the key to the success and smoothness of the development process following the plans that have been set. Cohen classifies participation into four categories: participation in the planning process, implementation, decision-making and utilization, and monitoring and evaluation (Power et al., 2021; Soleh, 2014). Gordon W. Allport (Sastropetro, 1986) said that community involvement is not only physical presence but the complete physical and psychological presence, more than just carrying out responsibilities. Participation can be observed through transformation and evolution in line with the level of individual development (Lennon & Dunphy, 2024).

Attention to women's participation is essential to achieving a healthy society. Women's active participation is the basis for changing poverty conditions and improving community welfare (Sherka, 2023). The impacts of women's participation include a positive relationship between women's participation and income (Kahsay et al., 2021), creating social change (Jaysawal & Saha, 2023), increasing the chances of reaching agreements and successful implementation of peace in critical areas (Krause et al., 2018), accelerating economic growth in the digital era (Arbarini et al., 2023), alleviating poverty and creating jobs (Annisa, 2023; Mahlaba et al., 2022). Women's participation has a positive relationship with environmental quality, as they actively manage the natural resources around them with a high selling value (NurSeki & Sepiarti, 2023). Efforts to involve women must continue on an ongoing basis to find appropriate roles (Vukovic et al., 2023). Not only limited to the family but also to the environment and society as a whole.

Semarang City is one of the regions in Indonesia that has succeeded in improving development. In 2023, Semarang City was awarded the best planning and achievement category at the city level and the regional development award (PPD) at the provincial level (Pemerintah Kota Semarang, 2024). One of the programs implemented is *Kampung Tematik*. Implementing *Kampung Tematik* aims to open local wisdom-based tourist destinations through empowerment activities (Syarif & Wijaya, 2019). One of them is *Kampung Batik*.

*Kampung Batik* was approved as a thematic village through Semarang Mayor Decree No. 050/799 on the Determination of Thematic Village Locations and Themes in Semarang City in 2016. Geographically, *Kampung Batik* is in Rejomulyo Village, East Semarang District, Semarang City. This area has been a Batik center since 1945, but *Kampung Batik* was burned down during the battle of Semarang. In 2023, *Kampung Batik* won awards, including the award certificate of the Tourism Village Assisted by the Ministry of Tourism and Creative Economy of Indonesia *Anugerah Desa Wisata Indonesia*, second place in the Tourism Assistance Community /Pokdarwis Jamboree in Semarang City in the category of institutional and cultural titles, first place in the Pokdarwis Jamboree in Semarang City in the category of stands and exhibitions. The empowerment activities carried out were able to transform *Kampung Batik* into a village that was previously known as a slum environment and had high crime cases into a cultural village and became one of the cultural tourist destinations in the city of Semarang.

Ismayanti identifies cultural tourism through archaeological sites, historical and cultural elements, people's way of life, arts and crafts,

local economic activities, and cultural festival celebrations (Dadtun et al., 2020). Activities in *Kampung Batik* include the process of making batik, traditional dance training, stories about the history of Semarang City and the history of batik conveyed through paintings and carvings, the Batik Day Festival, the Battle of Semarang, traditional games, and a wide selection of souvenirs such as typical Semarang batik sold by the community in *Kampung Batik*. *Kampung Batik* is a development resulting from cooperation between the community and various parties, including the government, universities, and companies participating in corporate social responsibility (CSR). The Semarang City government provides training coaching and promotes it through government communication channels. Another way is to form an association that has a legal entity. The association aims to facilitate access to assistance from the government, state-owned enterprises, companies, or other institutions. Through the CSR Bina Lingkungan program of PT Perusahaan Listrik Negara as a State Electricity Company, Batik development coaching activities, provision of Batik equipment, certification for Batik artisans, and other programs were carried out.

Previous research conducted by (Sopar et al., 2023)(Kusumawardani, E., Sujarwo, S., & Prasetyo, 2023) shows that women's participation is in development, management, and empowerment activities in tourist destinations. This study equally describes women's involvement with qualitative methods. However, the difference is that researchers conduct studies not only on development, management, and empowerment activities. Instead, it describes the stages of women's participation: decision-making, implementation of activities, monitoring and evaluation, and utilization of development results. Another difference lies in the condition of the subject of study.

The research findings (Sherka, 2023) show that various factors support women's participation in empowerment activities. This research has something in common: the discussion on women's participation, which describes the activities carried out. The difference in research lies in the method used. This study uses a quantitative approach, while researchers use a qualitative approach to describe women's participation.

Women have a strategic role in development, as in *Kampung Batik*. They are involved in preparing for tourist visits by preparing Batik equipment. In addition, during tourist visits, women also become instructors for Batik training and traditional dances. Some women also sell Batik supplies and Semarang specialties. In cultural tourism management, women are involved through the Tourism Assistance Community of *Kampoeng Djadhoel*, where nine out of 25 members are women. The involvement of women in accommodating their roles through cultural tourism-based community empowerment activities is still not optimal. Based on the background, researchers will identify the stages and forms of women's participation in community empowerment in Semarang *Kampung Batik* and the impact of women's participation in cultural tourism-based community empowerment activities.

## **METHOD**

This research used a qualitative descriptive approach to describe the problem and research focus. Indications of this research phenomenon were women's participation in cultural tourism-based community empowerment, (1) The women's participation could be explained from the stages of the decision-making, implementation, monitoring and evaluation, and utilizing development results in cultural tourism activities (2) The form of women's participation was explained as the participation of thoughts, energy, property, and the skills carried out by women in cultural tourism activities (3) The impact of women's participation can be explained from the changes seen, felt, and experienced by the community with cultural tourism activities. The research was conducted in *Kampung Batik*, Rejomulyo Village, East Semarang District, Semarang City. Primary data sources were obtained with participatory observation and semi-structured interviews. The research informants consisted of three female members of the *Pokdarwis Kampoeng Djadhoel*, the chairman of the *Pokdarwis Kampoeng*

Djadhoel, the Neighborhood Head of *Kampung Batik*, and two representatives of the *Kampung Batik* community. Secondary data sources were obtained from archival documentation of cultural tourism activities, the cultural tourism guidebook of *Kampoeng Djadhoel*, articles on previous research results, social media of *pokdarwis Kampoeng Djadhoel*, and supporting articles related to women's participation in *Kampung Batik*. The validity testing of this study used methods and data source triangulation. The data analysis technique used the Miles and Huberman analysis model: data collection, data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing (Milles et al., 2014).

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

*Kampung Batik* is a cultural tourism destination located in Rejomulyo East Semarang District, Semarang City. *Kampung Batik* has a variety of potentials, such as cultural tourism, handicraft home industries, handicraft MSMEs from Batik cloth, Batik souvenir, and food home industries, such as cassava chips, sweet bread, and fresh bread. This potential can certainly be a supporting factor in developing the economy of *Kampung Batik* itself. One of the prominent aspects of *Kampung Batik* is cultural tourism activities. Cultural tourism activities in *Kampung Batik* centered on the Central *Kampung Batik* section, known as *Kampoeng Djadhoel*. *Kampoeng Djadhoel's* writing comes from the old language derived from "Dja," meaning snacks, and "Dhoel," meaning play. So, *Kampoeng Djadhoel* is a place for snacks while playing.

Cultural tourism activities that are the main attraction for this village are 1) Performing attractions during the battle of Semarang festival and the celebration of Batik Day, 2) Educational tours of the history of *Kampung Batik* and Semarang city through murals along the walls of *Kampung Batik*, 3) Batik training activities for every tourist, 4) Semarang traditional dance training, 5) culinary tours of Semarang specialties provided jointly by the *Kampung Batik* community, 6) souvenir tours of Semarang Batik and *Kampung Batik* knick-knacks. Cultural tourism activities are carried out to empower communities to live more empowered, independent, prosperous, and sustainably. The success of the empowerment program is inseparable from community participation.

The population in *Kampung Batik* is in the productive age group of 464 females, or 50.37% of the total population. This number is greater than the male population of 458 people or equivalent to 49.62% (Source: *Monographic Data of Rejomulyo Village, East Semarang District, 2024*). The education level of the *Kampung Batik* community is in Table 1.

Table 1. Education Data of *Kampung Batik* Residents, Semarang City in 2024

No	Group	Total	%
1	Not yet enrolled in school	231	25,05 %
2	Not yet graduated from elementary school/equivalent	115	12,47 %
3	Graduated from elementary school/equivalent	43	4,63 %
4	Junior High School / Equivalent	121	13,12 %
5	High School / Equivalent	302	32,75 %
6	Diploma I/II	1	0,10 %
7	Academy/Diploma III	23	2,49 %
8	Diploma IV/bachelor's degree	72	7,80 %
9	Master's degree	14	1,51 %
10	Doctoral Degree	-	

(Source: *Monographic Data of Rejomulyo Village, East Semarang Subdistrict, 2024*)

*Kampung Batik* residents comprised 302 (32.75%) high school / equivalent graduates, followed by 231 (25.05%) residents who are not / not yet enrolled in school. The residents who graduated from Junior High School and have not graduated from elementary school/equivalent are 121 (13.12%) and 115 (12.47%), respectively. The residents who have a bachelor's degree, elementary school/equivalent, Diploma III, Master's degree, and Diploma I / II are 72 (7.80%), 43 (4.63%), 23 (2.49%), 14 (1.51%) and 1 (0.10%) respectively. Based on educational background, the *Kampung Batik* community is still dominated by High School graduates/equivalent, as many as 302 (32.75%). This data illustrates the lack of public attention to education, especially attention to higher education. Prananda & Banyuwangi (Prananda & Banyuwangi, 2018) state that education level and perception simultaneously affect community participation. The importance of education in society is to improve the development of human resources, especially in planning, implementing, and supervising development (B et al., 2021). Litwin states that the characteristics of the community in participatory development lie in their knowledge of participation through the efforts. This level of knowledge will be positively correlated with the level of education the community possesses (Dewi et al., 202). It can be concluded that there is a positive relationship between the level of education and the level of participation, where individuals with education tend to have a higher level of involvement than individuals who do not have education.

### **Stages of Women's Participation in *Kampung Batik* Empowerment**

Based on the research results in developing the cultural tourism potential of *Kampung Batik*, there are several stages of participation carried out by women, from planning implementation to the evaluation stage. Yadav (Mardikanto & Soebiato, 2019) states that the stages of participation in development include the stages of decision-making, implementation of activities, evaluation, and utilization of results. A similar theory is mentioned by Cohen and Uphoff (Rahmawati & Agustina, 2023). Participation has four stages: participation in decision-making, implementation, receiving benefits, and evaluation.

#### **1. Women's Participation in Decision-Making**

Participation in decision-making, according to (Mardikanto & Soebiato, 2019), is involvement in development through forums that foster direct participation in the decision-making process regarding development programs in the local area. Based on the results of observations and interviews, women's involvement in decision-making in *Kampung Batik* is accommodated through Musrembang Kelurahan Rejomulyo (Musrembangkel), the Pokdarwis Kampoeng Djadhoel forum and Family Empowerment and Welfare (PKK) at the RT, RW and Kelurahan levels. Four women are involved in managing the Kampoeng Djadhoel Tourism Awareness Group (Pokdarwis), and all *Kampung Batik* women are involved in PKK membership. Women have not been fully physically involved in conveying their ideas. This is due to women's limited time to fulfill their housewife roles.

Women are not physically present, but their ideas can be communicated through other women's representatives during meetings and online media. The presence of women is more dominant in PKK than in Pokdarwis. Through the PKK and Pokdarwis forums, women in *Kampung Batik* are given the same opportunity to convey ideas. It can be concluded that women's participation in decision-making through the PKK forum has shown significant progress and has become bolder compared to previous years. However, there is still a need to increase physical presence, as not all women are present in the forum.

#### **2. Women's Participation in Implementation**

Mardikanto defines participation in implementing activities as involvement through labor, cash, and other forms of involvement proportional to the benefits of the activity implementer (Mardikanto & Soebiato, 2019). Women in *Kampung Batik* are actively involved

in tourist visit activities. The role of women is very diverse in these activities, including as tour guides, Batik training instructors, traditional dance trainers, and various other roles involved in logistical preparation for tourist visit activities. The participation of women in *Kampung Batik* is shown through service involvement and their contribution in the form of money and energy. Other participation is shown through voluntary cooking activities. Participation is through cooking activities and collecting traditional games for tourists to rent out. *Kampung Batik* women are also involved in cooperation activities to maintain the beauty of *Sapta Pesona*. Based on the research results (Wahyuni, 2019), participation in implementing activities is shown through the contribution of thoughts, materials, and active involvement in activities.

### **3. Women's Participation in the Monitoring and Evaluation Program**

The form of monitoring and evaluation participation, according to Mardikanto, is related to activities to collect information on the development of activities and the behavior of apparatus in the development (Mardikanto & Soebiato, 2019). Women's involvement in program monitoring and evaluation aims to understand the extent to which the program is successful. Women's participation in evaluation activities will impact the development of further activities (Sopar et al., 2023). At this stage, not all women were involved in evaluation activities. Only community leaders and members of the *Kampung Batik* organization were involved in implementing the evaluation. In addition, only a few parties dared to convey criticism and suggestions for implementing the tourism village. The suggestions and criticisms are expressed during village meetings through the Musrembangkel forum or internal Pokdarwis management meetings held regularly after activities. Musrembangkel is a forum that is conducted to plan development programs. As mentioned in the research conducted by (Ulum et al., 2021), it was found that not all community members were involved in the evaluation stage. Only community leaders were involved in the evaluation process and dared to convey criticism and suggestions for developing tourist villages during management meetings. Thus, based on the results of the study, women's participation in program monitoring and evaluation is still limited.

### **4. Women's participation in the utilization of development results**

According to Mardikanto, participation in the utilization of development results is the involvement of feeling the results of development to stimulate willingness and volunteerism always to participate (Mardikanto & Soebiato, 2019). One form of participation in utilizing development results is feeling the benefits of facilities and infrastructure and having a sense of responsibility to take care of development results. The funds used in cultural tourism activities in *Kampung Batiks* result from collaboration between the government, community participation, and tourist visit revenue (Latif et al., 2023). Funding assistance provided by the government is used to build physical facilities and infrastructure that support tourism activities. Meanwhile, funds for implementing events and tourist visits are obtained from tourist revenues, which are also used to maintain and care for tourist villages.

Pokdarwis is directly responsible for managing the finances generated from implementing the tourism village. In this case, all parties involved have equal rights to benefit from the event. Revenues derived from tourist visits, primarily through tour packages, have been divided according to the agreement in the meeting before the formation of the package. The income results are intended for everyone involved in the event as providers of services and goods.



**Figure 1.** Participation of Women MSMEs during Tourist Visits

Cultural tourism activities have a positive impact on women, who are involved in benefiting from the development of *Kampung Batiks*. Women in *Kampung Batik* benefit from cultural tourism-based community empowerment activities, such as creating jobs as tutors, opening food stalls, and selling Semarang Batik trinkets. Another benefit is the increase in sales of Batik products. In utilizing the results, women's participation has positively impacted the economy and increased skills in managing the tourism village. However, the benefits of implementing tourism villages have only been felt by some groups, especially women involved in managing tourism villages, such as Pokdarwis, MSME players, and the government.

### **Forms of women's participation in *Kampung Batik* empowerment**

Based on the results of observation, interviews, and documentation, it was found that the forms of women's participation in developing cultural tourism are real participation and intangible participation. Real participation, according to (Azizah & Ilyas, 2023), is in the form of participation of labor, property, skills, and social participation, while intangible participation is in the form of ideas. According to Hamidjojo (Sastropetro, 1986), the types and institutions of participation are the participation of ideas, skills, labor, property, and money.

#### **1. Women's participation in the form of thoughts**

Choresyo defines thought participation as conveying ideas, thoughts, experiences, and knowledge (Choresyo et al., 2017). Based on the results of the study, the forum for community participation in the form of the thoughts in the tourist village is accommodated through the forum for deliberation of the village development plan (Musrebangkel) involving the community in the development planning process (Sari & Rifai, 2020). Musrebangkel activities in *Kampung Batik* are held annually and centered in Rejomulyo Village, where representatives of community leaders and community organizations are involved. In addition, participation in decision-making is also carried out through routine Pokdarwis activities. The results of the involvement of women include ideas in the form of tour packages with traditional dance training activities, as well as the opening of UMKM stands during tourist visits.

Women's thought participation is also represented in evaluation activities. Through evaluation activities, women provide suggestions and criticism of the activities that have taken place. Women's participation in conveying ideas is done directly and by submitting online to represent their presence. Based on the research results (Syamsudin, 2019), the participation form of thoughts is realized by responding to development plans in the formulation process and implementing ongoing and existing plans. The presence and activeness of women in *Kampung Batik* are still less optimal because only a few women's physical presence and development affairs were carried out by authorized community leaders.

#### **2. Women's participation in the form of labor**

The form of labor participation, according to Huraerah (Azizah & Ilyas, 2023), is participation in the form of physical or labor assistance and participating in *gotong royong* activities. “gotong” means “carrying” and “royong” means “together” or “communally.” Therefore, the combined phrase “gotong royong” can be paraphrased as “jointly carrying burdens” or “collective effort.” This phrase represents the spirit of cooperation and community involvement in working together towards a common goal. Based on the findings in the field, labor participation is carried out by women in tourist visit activities. They are part of the visit implementation committee and are responsible for preparing the event from start to finish.

During preparation, women clean the location and prepare tools and materials. During the implementation of activities, women act as tutors in Batik training and traditional dance. According to Mrs Ida, a community leader in *Kampung Batik*, women’s involvement had started since the beginning of development in 2006, when they became Batik training participants. Until now, they have been actively involved in *gotong royong* activities to clean and build simple shelters for tourist visits. These findings are following the results of research that has been conducted (Ira & Muhamad, 2020). Community participation in the form of labor contribution is seen through physical involvement in developing tourist village facilities or infrastructure.

### **3. Women’s participation in the form of Property**

Based on the results of research conducted (Alizah et al., 2021), property participation is involvement manifested in the form of donating personal property for program implementation.



**Figure 2.** Tourist activity center

Women contribute to cultural tourism in *Kampung Batik* by contributing their assets. One form of women’s involvement carried out by Mrs Christine is using her house as a place for tourists to visit. She provides the necessary equipment and makes her house the center of the *Kampung Batik* visit location. Other women, such as Mrs Basya, also voluntarily offer their homes as places for tourists to stay. Women in *Kampung Batik* voluntarily collect funds for the development of *Kampung Batik* through the PKK forum, and this activity is carried out regularly every month. Their participation in property donations supports the implementation of cultural tourism while reducing the cost of program implementation. Property participation supports efforts to achieve development program goals by making contributions that facilitate progress (Adissa et al., 2023) (Suharta & Kusumawardani, 2021).

### **4. Women’s participation in the form of skills**

Skill participation is a form of involvement shown by contributing expertise. One of the skills participation can be done with activities that support program implementation (Fitrisna Widayari et al., 2022). *Kampung Batik* has several tour packages, one of which is an educational tour package. In supporting the development of cultural tourism in



*Kampung Batik*, some women play a role by contributing their skills to be integrated into tour packages. Some women are actively involved as tutors in educational tours. For example, Mrs. Christine acts as a tour guide when explaining the history of *Kampung Batik*. Other women are also engaged as tutors in Batik training. In addition to being a guide in explaining the history of *Kampung Batik*, women contribute with their cooking skills. During tourist visits, women in the *Kampung Batik* work together to prepare Semarang dishes. In cultural tourism management, women show their expertise by joining as members of Pokdarwis and taking roles as administrators according to their divisions or abilities. Based on this, it can be concluded that women take a role by contributing their skills to the development of cultural tourism, following Hamidjojo's theory (Sastropetro, 1986).

### **The impact of women's participation in cultural tourism-based community empowerment**

The development of *Kampung Batik* into a tourist destination certainly impacts the community. The effects of changes the community feels around the tourism development area include positive and negative impacts (Santi & Trisanti, 2021). The positive effects felt by the community include (1) The *Kampung Batik* community feels that the presence of cultural tourism activities can increase income, (2) There are fewer unemployed youth and mothers, (3) *Kampung Batik* is becoming an increasingly advanced, clean and organized place, (4) increasing the skills of the surrounding community. The increased skills felt by the community specifically is an increase in Batik skills and skills in entrepreneurship. Currently, *Kampung Batik* is a Batik center and an attractive tourist destination with its unique culture. The negative impact felt by the community is Batik waste, which pollutes the environment. This finding aligns with the research results showing that Batik waste has contributed to environmental pollution (Indrayani, 2018)(Kusumawardani et al., 2023). The solution to these negative impacts has been a joint deliberation, and an agreement has been reached that large-scale batik production is not carried out in the *Kampung Batik* environment.

### **CONCLUSION**

Women's involvement in community empowerment activities based on cultural tourism in Batik Village has run optimally. They deeply understand the information provided and are involved through PKK, Pokdarwis, and Musrenbangkel forums. They show high enthusiasm for developing ideas for developing cultural tourism activities. In implementing activities, they are involved by acting as traditional dance trainers, batik trainers, and tourist guides. The forms of participation provided by women include thoughts, energy, material possessions, and skills. Participation by women has a positive impact, namely an increase in income, skills, and employment. However, if participation does not run optimally, it impacts poor waste management. To increase women's participation, efforts are being made to develop skills training programs through women's communities such as the women's community (PKK) and *pokdarwis*.

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