

ENHANCING RURAL COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT THROUGH POLITICAL TRANSPARENCY

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Abstract :

Political transparency plays a pivotal role in strengthening active participation and awareness of rural communities in local development processes. The lack of political information access and involvement in decision-making can pose serious barriers to achieving sustainable progress at the rural level. This study aims to analyze the role of political transparency in shaping empowered and resilient rural communities. The primary focus is to understand the positive impact of political transparency on active participation of village residents, enhancing accountability of local government, and driving sustainable development. The research employs a qualitative descriptive analysis approach, combining primary and secondary data. Primary data is gathered through interviews with local leaders, community figures, and village residents, while secondary data is derived from official documents and relevant literature studies. The findings indicate that the implementation of political transparency significantly enhances the participation of rural communities in the development process. Greater openness in information access strengthens social oversight over local government policies and promotes accountability in resource management. Political transparency plays a crucial role in building inclusive and empowered rural communities. Improving information access and involving village residents in decision-making are key steps in advancing sustainable rural development and making a positive contribution to the well-being of the local population.

Keywords : *Innovation, Sustainability, Well-being.*

1. Introduction

Political transparency is a fundamental principle in democratic systems aimed at providing open access and clear information to the public regarding policies, processes, and political decisions. In the context of rural community development, political transparency plays a crucial role in ensuring active citizen participation, building trust, and realizing collective well-being. Rural communities play a strategic role in the social and economic structure of a country. However, they often face challenges related to accessibility to information and involvement in political processes. Therefore, enhancing political transparency at the rural level is key to strengthening the quality of governance, reducing corruption, and improving the effectiveness of public policies.

In this context, this research aims to examine the role of political transparency in shaping stronger and empowered rural communities. Through in-depth analysis of political transparency practices and their impact on rural development, it is hoped that concrete solutions and recommendations can be identified to strengthen citizen participation and optimize development outcomes at the rural level. This research will adopt an interdisciplinary approach, integrating political, social, and economic aspects to provide a comprehensive overview of the interconnections between political transparency and rural community development. Thus, the expected outcome of this research is to make a significant contribution to efforts aimed at improving the quality of life and well-being of rural residents, as well as strengthening the foundations of democracy at the local level.

The occurrence of transparency at the village level brings several benefits, as it enables the community to directly monitor the political activities undertaken by the Village Head, serving as a means of evaluation in cases of misconduct. The transparency exhibited by the Village Head yields various advantages, including the prevention of corruption, identification of policy strengths and weaknesses, enhancement of

accountability for measuring the performance of the village government, instilling trust in the commitment of the village government, and reinforcing social cohesion due to the establishment of trust in the community-government relationship (Andrianto, 2007).

A higher level of community involvement in various village activities indicates a greater degree of transparency in the village government's interactions with its residents. As part of the repercussions of a lack of transparency, the village government contributes to an increase in poverty rates. Despite the mandate of Law Number 6 of 2014, which allocates funds to villages (Dana Desa) as a solution to address the disparities in urban and rural development, the impact of this lack of transparency extends beyond physical development, affecting human resource development through community empowerment programs (Adnan, 2019).

The Indonesian experience reflects a tendency towards normativity and uniformity, often neglecting local variations that embody the authenticity, interests, and lifestyles of local communities. This inclination can divert attention from real issues faced by society, such as poverty, inequality, low productivity, limited employment opportunities, and the like. Development should ideally focus on addressing these dimensions. This perspective aligns with Dudley Seers' view that the best sign of development success is the reduction or elimination of poverty, unemployment, and inequality, without neglecting economic growth (Leonard, 1982). Subsequently, David C. Korten asserts that large-scale community development programs in developing countries are merely a set of new programs and targets formulated at the central level using conventional bureaucratic structures. These programs are not responsive to the preferences or needs of local communities (Kumorotomo, 1992).

The impact of these perspectives is evident in the realization that, following 9 years of the Village Fund being distributed in every village with a substantial amount of funds in 2023, based on the Village Development Index (VDI) status, there remain 4,850 Highly Underdeveloped Villages and 7,154 Underdeveloped Villages. Meanwhile, 28,766

villages have a Developing status, 23,035 villages are classified as Advanced, and 11,456 villages have an Independent status. Additionally, 4 villages do not have an assigned VDI status due to not meeting population criteria (VDI Ranking, Ministry of Village, 2023).

This situation is anticipated to worsen due to the current economic crisis affecting Indonesia, causing financial difficulties for both the government and the private sector. Many private companies are forced to cease operations. More alarmingly, the impact of this crisis has led to an extremely high level of unemployment, both in urban and rural areas.

The threat of poverty in villages is a complexity that involves several interrelated factors. Firstly, limited access to resources is a major constraint. Villages often face difficulties in obtaining adequate infrastructure, such as clean water, sanitation, and electricity. This has the potential to hinder economic growth and the well-being of the community. Furthermore, many villages rely on the agricultural sector as their primary livelihood. Fluctuations in agricultural commodity prices, climate change, and natural disasters can exert significant pressure on village income and economic stability. This uncertainty can directly impact the economic conditions of the rural population.

Moreover, limited access to education and healthcare services poses a serious challenge. Villages often encounter difficulties in providing quality education and adequate healthcare services for their residents. This constraint can impede the community's ability to develop human capacity and improve the quality of life. Another issue is the lack of decent employment opportunities. Villages often struggle to create stable job opportunities that generate sufficient income for their residents. Consequently, unemployment rates or reliance on informal employment, which does not ensure well-being, tend to increase. Social and economic inequalities also present a significant obstacle. Villages often experience significant disparities in the distribution of resources and access to economic opportunities. A small portion of the population may have

greater control over resources and political decisions, while the majority may face limited access. Corruption practices and a lack of transparency in village governance are also critical factors. Misuse of public resources can hinder inclusive development and negatively impact public trust in the government. Villages located in disaster-prone areas face serious threats as well. Floods, droughts, earthquakes, or landslides can cause significant economic and social losses, especially if infrastructure and disaster warning systems are inadequate. Lastly, limited access to technology and information can also be a hindering factor. Villages may have restricted access to information and communication technology, reducing their opportunities to access information and economic opportunities that could enhance their quality of life.

To address the threat of poverty in villages, a holistic approach involving various stakeholders, including the government, non-governmental organizations, local communities, and the private sector, is needed. Concrete steps such as improving access to education, healthcare, infrastructure, as well as training and skill development can help reduce poverty levels in villages. Additionally, efforts to increase productivity in the agricultural sector and support economic diversification in villages are crucial. Therefore, the key to effective village governance (Good Governance) begins with policies, regulations, programs, budgets, and activities that are open to the public (Sukmawati, 2019).

Hence, in order to achieve transparency in village governance, community participation in future village management is essential. Community participation influences the financial quality of the village, directly correlating with higher community participation resulting in better financial management of the village. A village government capable of effectively implementing transparency principles will foster quality governance towards a self-sufficient village (Andriani, 2019). Transparency has an impact on village finances, meaning that if transparency is effectively implemented, the financial management of the village will improve (Putra, 2017).

This research commences by identifying issues related to the level of transparency in the utilization of village funds. The researcher conducts a literature review to comprehend the context and previous studies on the transparency of village fund utilization. The findings from the literature review form the foundation for formulating research hypotheses. Employing a qualitative approach, this study aims to gain a comprehensive understanding of the transparency of village fund utilization. The selection of the research location and time period is meticulous, taking into account seasonal aspects and changes in environmental conditions. Data collection is executed through interviews, questionnaires, and document analysis from various sources, including village government officials, local communities, and relevant authorities. Data collection techniques such as in-depth interviews, observations, and document studies are applied in line with the research objectives. Data analysis is conducted using a qualitative approach, such as content analysis, for qualitative data. The conclusions drawn from this research are based on the results of the analysis and provide recommendations for enhancing the transparency of village fund utilization.

2. Research Findings

2.1 Transparency in Alleviating Poverty in Rural Communities

The primary challenge faced by rural areas is poverty, as the inhabitants have limited opportunities to secure employment that provides adequate income, which is insufficient to meet daily living needs (Mubyarto, 1988). Development programs for the rural poor encompass land use planning, agricultural technologies suitable for impoverished farmers, market development, and the supply of materials to enhance crop yields, basic healthcare services, increased labor for rural road construction, the establishment of clean water systems, and other village community projects.

Effective organization is essential in the implementation of these programs. Preparedness should include a strong commitment from the implementers or officials,

their ability to identify resources and potentials, technical skills, adaptability, and community participation in village development. Strong commitment from program implementers or officials is crucial to optimizing potentials, including existing community institutions in rural areas. Accurate analysis is required to understand the capabilities of these institutions in addressing diverse rural issues. Local population participation in programs helps gather information and harness local potential, accelerating social change and necessary technological transformations for improved well-being. Local participation begins with building a sustainable public service demand structure. Development programs for rural communities require mature organization, involving preparation from program implementers, including commitment, technical skills, adaptability, and local community participation. The ethics and morals of implementers are also necessary to avoid conflicts of interest.

Community participation is necessary for gathering information, mapping local potential, and determining program priorities in accordance with local needs. External technical assistance should be viewed as a temporary stimulus. The selection of strategies in rural development programs depends on the social and environmental characteristics of the program. It is crucial to ensure that programs reach the impoverished and provide specialized services for them. The success of program implementation also depends on contextual factors such as the potential for inequality or injustice, the presence of local elites, differences in interests, and interactions with social structures. Development programs should strive for equity and justice without exacerbating disparities, especially for the rural poor.

There are several aspects that need to be considered in implementing development programs to prevent disparities in the distribution of benefits to the community. These aspects include:

1. The program should provide evenly distributed benefits to enhance the well-being of all layers of society, such as improving sanitation, constructing accessible

roads for all villages or surrounding areas, and supporting significant economic participation.

2. The program should utilize the abundant workforce from the impoverished population. This will yield direct benefits through employment and contribute to economic stability as income increases with the growth of job opportunities.
3. The program should focus on addressing broad issues or opportunities, especially for the impoverished, such as sanitation facility improvements, efforts to prevent water source contamination, and initiatives to enhance crop yields.
4. The program should ensure supply meets demand by increasing production efforts through the support of community-based organizations, with government subsidies if necessary.
5. The program requires stringent regulations to avoid special requests from local elites that may lead to injustice.

To facilitate the identification of program characteristics that can lead to disparities or not, the following considerations can be observed:

- a. Programs that focus on individuals or families rather than the community, such as village electrification projects.
- b. Programs where demand exceeds supply, for example, home renovation projects for residents.
- c. Programs whose quality can be improved at the expense of quantity.
- d. Programs that require resources not available to the poor, such as credit programs with collateral requirements.
- e. Programs where service providers passively wait for the target group, resulting in only those closest coming forward.

Furthermore, for programs aimed at avoiding disparities in their implementation, they exhibit the following characteristics:

- a. Program benefits cannot be divided and apply to the entire community.
- b. The program requires contributions from a large segment of the community (labor), such as labor-intensive projects.
- c. The program provides services primarily needed by the impoverished.
- d. The program supply exceeds demand.
- e. Satisfaction with the program is low because needs have already been met, as seen in family planning programs.
- f. The program provides more services than what is needed by local elites.

The importance of development aimed at empowering the poor in rural areas requires leaders with commitment and concern for them. Several criteria can be used for assessment, but the most crucial is whether leaders can accommodate and advocate for the interests of their followers and the community at large in their environment, without distinguishing between elites and non-elites. The presence of local elites, who often lead the community, either directly or indirectly, cannot unilaterally impose their interests in the midst of society, especially among the poor. The understanding of local elites regarding the needs and interests of their community, particularly the poor, as well as social interactions within society, will influence the compatibility of local elites with the interests of the poor. This can expedite the achievement of program goals fairly and evenly, without causing disparities.

In inclusive local governance, local elites are expected to become more effective by reducing differences in interests among them and facing challenges from competition and options from various parties. This will encourage the creation of leadership committed to the interests of the community at large, with clear and directed programs. Strong commitment from local elites to the poor, as well as programs aimed at justice

and equalization, is a prerequisite for good decentralization implementation. Conversely, if the commitment from local elites is low, and the programs lead to inequality, decentralization needs to be evaluated and perhaps better returned to the central level.

Sustained commitment from local elites to the community, especially the poor, requires responsiveness to the interests of the majority. This can be achieved through three interrelated conditions in leadership: the presence of competition in leadership, support for the poor as a necessary component and strategy, and the seriousness of local elites in advocating for the interests of the poor. In addition to competent and committed individuals in each program, institutions with a positive commitment to implementing empowerment programs for the poor are also required. However, implementation heavily depends on national politics and institutions that prioritize national development. External support, professionalism, and institutional patterns also influence this. However, the most potential support lies in the availability of resources and organizational power, including authority in oversight and preparation for progressive change, referred to as the decentralization structure.

The interaction between program objectives and the interests of local elites has a significant influence in determining the type of decentralization and the type of organization to be developed. Responsiveness from local leaders, inclusive organizations, preparation for local government autonomy, and the presence of alternative local organizations collectively supported by external forces are crucial factors in advocating for the poor in rural areas. Furthermore, for a program to be effectively implemented, it is important to align it with the organizational capacity. Some aspects that need to be considered include:

- a. Technical aspects: To achieve program success, organizations need appropriate technology and individuals with the necessary technical skills to implement it.
- b. Operational scale: To achieve efficiency or leverage technology, programs should consider demands in terms of size or scale, whether on a large or small

scale, such as economic scalability, geographical location, or effective local units in management.

- c. Administrative complexity: Program implementation involves various units operating independently and often not coordinated with each other. Therefore, good coordination between units is necessary to carry out different activities.
- d. Efforts to obtain contributions from external organizations: This requires the organization's ability to collaborate in line with the existing administrative capacity.
- e. Financial aspects: Organizations must have the ability to seek and manage the funds needed to run each program. For programs managed by local organizations with financial assistance from the central government, this can be of significant importance to the local community in making a meaningful contribution.

2.2 Politics of Community-Oriented Decentralization for Rural Poverty Alleviation

Decentralization in its implementation is anticipated to exploit and unearth all potential within a region to enhance more effective public services, particularly those related to the well-being of rural communities. As posited by Ranis and Stewart, the positive effects of decentralization policy are expected to increase attention on the utilization of resources for social and economically beneficial infrastructure in providing basic needs and small-scale infrastructure projects. This is aimed at enhancing economic participation through a shift or redirection of expenditure towards small-scale infrastructure projects, improving efficiency in resource utilization, and promoting income distribution equality within a specific area and its surroundings (Rainer Rohdewohld, 1995).

The implementation of decentralization is expected to imbue meaning and attention to how the well-being of the community can be maximally enhanced, free from

the shackles of poverty. This is accomplished by leveraging and optimizing the resources or potentials for community well-being through small-scale economic infrastructure programs. The objective is to improve equality and income distribution in the region. Through the adoption of small-scale programs, it is hoped that all citizens can have the opportunity to participate and enjoy the benefits equitably.

Decentralization in rural development demands a continuous exploration of resource potentials by granting full authority to local governments to adapt to local conditions across various sectors. This may involve the central government in providing financial assistance or supporting with the necessary resources. In this context, it is crucial to find the right balance for the involvement of both organizations without favoring a choice between central or local entities in village development. What is more important is to create a complementary combination, whether through the division of responsibilities, close cooperation, or mutual support as a strong and effective system in advancing the village.

It is essential to ensure that local organizations can provide the necessary information to identify and utilize existing potentials, as well as ensuring the participation of the affected community in the program. This can take the form of support, criticism, perspectives, or actions to ensure that the program remains aligned with its objectives. Decentralization implemented through regional autonomy reflects a democratic governance system, where the central government grants full freedom to local governments to manage their affairs independently with complete responsibility, in accordance with the needs and aspirations of the local community.

Implementation of development programs focusing on empowering the impoverished, involving local participatory structures and inclusive governance targeting the entire population and regions, often encounters conflicts of interest leading to imbalances or injustices. Therefore, empowerment-oriented rural development programs for the impoverished should be more exclusive, with services specifically aimed at

improving their well-being and managed by impoverished individuals or institutions fully prioritizing the interests of the impoverished. It is also crucial to consider programs focused on the majority of the impoverished without being bound by local participatory structures or organizations restricting their membership exclusively to the impoverished. Alternatively, organizations are needed to protect community groups from the dominance of local elites and eliminate potential harm to group interests.

Excessive dominance of local elites not only affects administrative issues but also influences community life as a whole. Bureaucracies wielding power must be respected and adhered to, as negligence in this regard can lead to arrogance and diminish their value in providing effective and efficient public services. The emergence of alternative organizations is a result of the community's lack of trust in development programs deemed unfair or prone to producing disparities. The benefits of these programs are not maximized, especially for the impoverished, as services intended for them are accessed by wealthy individuals or local elites with dominance.

To enhance the effectiveness of development programs targeting the impoverished, it is essential to consider reducing government involvement due to the competence of officials and the progress of programs not reaching their maximum potential. Moreover, competition and specific interests among various stakeholders can lead to disparities and injustices in program implementation. Therefore, it is crucial to provide broader opportunities to non-government entities, such as businesses or voluntary organizations in the community, to compete in delivering services to the impoverished. This is expected to improve the overall coverage and quality of services provided to the impoverished.

Based on the above phenomenon, the implementation of decentralization needs to consider a development concept focused on active citizen participation, as emphasized by Korten. This concept integrates a top-down approach to regulated development with a participatory strategy. Therefore, in the implementation of village

development, it should not only involve social mobilization but also the delegation of power (devolution of authority). The question is how to create institutions and policies that enable communities to take the initiative and manage their projects independently? According to Korten, the solution lies in: 1) continuous interventions to enhance community capacity in managing resources independently, 2) developing organizational structures and processes based on the principles of self-regulating systems, 3) developing production and consumption systems organized based on regions while considering local ownership and control (Korten and Rudi Klaus, 1984).

Furthermore, Korten introduces a system of local resource management (community-based resources management) that transforms the role of government bureaucracy from planners and implementers of development for the people to facilitators in creating conditions that enable communities to build themselves. In other words, the government acts as a catalyst in accelerating the development process focused on local self-reliance (Tjokrowinoto, 1999). Ultimately, for the successful implementation of decentralization, particularly concerning the empowerment of the impoverished in rural areas, management by local governments and their organizational structures is required. This management should possess commitment, managerial skills, as well as ethical and moral integrity in the context of democratic governance.

2.3 Political Transparency in Development Programs

Therefore, the imperative of governmental engagement in ameliorating the welfare of rural communities necessitates realization through tailored developmental initiatives, attuned to the specific needs and aspirations of the local populace. These programs should provide avenues for autonomous problem-solving within communities, concomitantly receiving robust and responsive governmental support. The overarching objective is to engender a cohesive development framework that emanates from both the grassroots and central government spheres, thus fostering sustainable

developmental trajectories through the employment of a dual-pronged approach—namely, the bottom-up and top-down methodologies.

Concomitant with the principles of decentralization and expanded autonomy devolved by the central government to regional entities, as delineated in Law No. 22 of 1999 on Regional Government and subsequently refined through the provisions of Law No. 32 of 2004 on Regional Government, the overarching aim is to empower regional administrations in the autonomous management of affairs pertaining to policy formulation, strategic planning, execution, and judicious resource allocation. This strategic empowerment is facilitated through collaboration with regional agencies, ensuring that hitherto centrally dominated developmental policies exhibit efficacy and efficiency in catering to the multifaceted welfare needs of the populace.

Aligned with the theoretical framework advanced by Reiner Roddewohld (1995), the decentralization paradigm anticipates optimizing the utilization of local resources and latent potentials in regional developmental endeavors. This optimization, in turn, endeavors to attain heightened efficiency and efficacy in the provisioning of public services, reflecting an acute responsiveness to the distinctive attributes of regional landscapes.

Consequently, the effective implementation of rural developmental programs aimed at elevating community well-being necessitates unwavering commitment and earnest involvement from all pertinent stakeholders. Paramount among these requisites is the inculcation of governmental accountability, which commences with meticulous organizational orchestration and preparatory endeavors undertaken by program implementers. This comprehensive preparedness encompasses not only commitment and technical proficiency but also adaptive capabilities, ensuring requisite resilience in the face of evolving challenges. Furthermore, the active engagement and participation of local communities assume pivotal significance in the overall success of these programs. In addition, the imperative of strong leadership among program implementers

serves as a linchpin, acting to mitigate conflicts of interest that may arise among diverse stakeholders during the execution phase.

2.4 Community Participation

The engagement or participation of local residents in the implementation of programs is anticipated to play a crucial role in mobilizing local resources, facilitating the gathering of essential information needed for program adaptation to local conditions, and fostering active involvement of the local community in developmental initiatives. Such involvement serves as a catalyst for social change and contributes to the transformation of societal procedures and mechanisms. Realizing local participation begins with the establishment and prioritization of structures for continuously budgeted or funded public service demands.

In this context, community participation is essential for gathering information and mapping the capacities and strengths of local potentials to be maximally tapped. Furthermore, local participation expedites the processes of social change and technological transformation, both integral to enhancing well-being. For field implementers, local participation aids in situating and determining the priority scale of programs in accordance with the desires and needs of the local community.

In tandem with these considerations, active and voluntary participation from the community is essential in formulating, implementing, and monitoring village development strategies. This principle is closely tied to the application of democratic principles, where everyone has the right to be involved in public affairs. Consequently, there is a need for practical capacity development among the grassroots population, which requires guidance through collaboration with local organizations, the formulation of plans for local technician assistance, training, financial support, regulations, and representation, emphasizing an instinctual approach to guide them effectively.

These initiatives form a sequence of activities designed to stimulate collective endeavors within the community and explore optimal alternatives for improving the quality of life in local rural communities. This conceptual framework stems from the perspective that the involvement of rural communities in the rural development movement has not yet achieved a balanced role relative to their potential and capabilities. Consequently, there is a deliberate focus on fostering self-reliance, defined as the endeavor to enhance capabilities by leveraging human and natural resources to attain a more independent and improved way of life.

The provision of external technical assistance is regarded as a transient stimulus and must be valued within the reach and understanding of the community, acknowledging its temporary nature. This underscores the importance of empowering communities to independently recognize and access such technical support.

2.5 Implementation Strategies

The effectiveness of rural development programs targeting impoverished communities faces the challenge of reducing or minimizing the role of the government. This is attributed to the incomplete competence of government officials, suboptimal progress in program implementation, and conflicting interests among various stakeholders, leading to imbalances and injustices in program execution.

In this context, the implementation of rural development programs needs to consider a people-centric development concept, as emphasized by Korten. This concept amalgamates the delivered development strategy, or a top-down approach, with participatory development, involving active community participation. Thus, the process of rural development implementation not only involves social mobilization but also entails the devolution of power.

The question then arises: How can institutions and policies be created to empower communities to take initiative and control their own development? Korten suggests three

approaches to address this issue: 1) the need for sustained intervention to enhance community capacity in independently managing resources, 2) the necessity for the development of organizational structures and processes based on self-organizing system principles, and 3) the development of production and consumption systems organized based on local ownership and control.

Furthermore, Korten (as cited in Tjokrowinoto, 1999) introduces a system of local resource management that transforms the role of government bureaucracy from planners and implementers of development for the people to facilitators in creating conditions that enable the people and communities to build independently. In other words, the government's role becomes a catalyst in expediting the development process centered on local self-reliance.

2.6 Leadership of Rural Administrators

The importance of fostering and empowering impoverished communities in rural areas demands the presence of leaders who exhibit commitment and concern for the welfare of the underprivileged. Various criteria can serve as benchmarks; however, the paramount consideration lies in whether a leader can attend to and represent the interests of their constituents while maintaining equilibrium within the community, encompassing both the elite and non-elite members.

Local elites, who dedicate a substantial portion of their time to leading the community, cannot unilaterally address the diverse interests present, particularly amidst the majority of the impoverished populace. The profound understanding of local elites regarding the needs and interests of the community, especially the underprivileged, coupled with their interaction with the social structure, will influence the alignment between local elites and the interests of the underprivileged. This will impact the pace of achieving program objectives, either ensuring fairness and uniformity or, conversely, potentially exacerbating disparities.

In an inclusive local governance setting, local elites face the demand to be more effective in managing the array of interests among them, competing, and considering available options. This dynamic necessitates the emergence of leadership committed to the general welfare, with clear and directed programs aimed at desired objectives. Strong commitment from local elites to the underprivileged, along with programs targeting justice and equity, is a prerequisite for the success of decentralization. Conversely, if the commitment from local elites is lacking, and program objectives tend to perpetuate disparities, reconsideration of decentralization options becomes imperative.

Sustainable commitment from local elites is essential in influencing communities, especially in catering to the interests of the majority of the underprivileged. This can be achieved through three leadership-related conditions: 1) the presence of competition in leadership, 2) support for the underprivileged as a critical component and strategy in leadership execution, and 3) the earnestness of local elites in advocating for the interests of the underprivileged in their leadership.

Apart from competent and highly committed individuals, the success of any empowerment program for the underprivileged also requires institutions with positive commitments in their implementation. However, in practice, this heavily depends on national politics and institutional structures that prioritize national development.

2.7 Institutional Framework

To ensure the effectiveness of programs in their implementation, it is crucial to align them with the capacities of the institutions involved. Several aspects warrant consideration, including:

- a. **Technical Aspect:** Achieving program success necessitates the use of appropriate technology and individuals with technical skills to manage it effectively.

- b. **Operational Scale:** Programs employed in operations should account for demands related to scale, be it large or small. Considerations such as economies of scale, regional location, or the efficient scale of local units in management should be taken into account.
- c. **Administrative Complexity:** Program implementation involves various independent work units, making effective coordination among units essential to executing diverse activities seamlessly.
- d. **Collaboration with External Organizations:** Organizations must possess the capability to establish collaborations that align with their administrative capacity, allowing them to leverage contributions from external entities.
- e. **Financial Aspect:** The organization's ability to secure the necessary funding for each program is paramount. Programs managed by local organizations, supported, for instance, by financial aid from the central government, can significantly contribute to the achievement of program objectives.

3. Conclusion

The enhancement of the quality of life for impoverished communities should be the primary focus of any development program implemented by the government. These programs ought to be meticulously designed through collaboration between the central government, local authorities, and grassroots organizations. The overarching objective is to collectively empower the impoverished, thereby elevating their well-being. The increased prosperity of impoverished communities, particularly in rural areas, serves as a key indicator of the success or failure of government development initiatives. Decentralization aims to delegate authority to local governments to harness local potential for the improvement of the well-being of the populace.

Regrettably, development programs targeting impoverished communities often fall short of their optimal outcomes. This can be attributed to competition between the impoverished, the affluent, and local elites for services originally intended for the impoverished. Consequently, the quality of services delivered through these programs does not meet expectations. To address this issue, efficient organization is imperative in the decentralization of rural development programs for impoverished communities. Strong commitment, adept utilization of local resources and potential, technical proficiency, and adaptability from implementers or officials, along with community participation, are necessary components of every executed program.

A robust commitment from local elites will lead to more equitable programs, whereas low commitment may result in exacerbating disparities. Hence, the choice between decentralization and centralization in the implementation of development programs should consider the commitment levels of relevant elites. Village development programs should be tailored to the needs and desires of the community, affording them opportunities to address their own issues, with the government providing appropriate support and response.

Lastly, for the effective execution of rural development programs, particularly those related to the empowerment of the impoverished, active involvement from local governments and their officials, as well as the entire community, is essential. They must demonstrate commitment, managerial skills, ethical conduct, and moral integrity within a democratic governance framework. These programs should also be aligned with the needs and desires of the community, providing them with opportunities to solve their own problems, with the government offering support and responsive action. This ensures a balanced approach to development from both grassroots and top-down perspectives.

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