



Inclusive Governance in Participatory Development: Evidence from Rangkasbitung Regency

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A B S T R A C T

This study aims to examine the performance of participatory development within the framework of inclusive governance in Rangkasbitung Subdistrict, Lebak Regency, Banten. It focuses on assessing the extent to which development processes accommodate community participation, inclusiveness, transparency, and equitable outcomes. Employing a qualitative approach with a case study design, the research utilizes the CIPP (Context, Input, Process, Product) evaluation model. Data were collected through in-depth interviews, observations, and document analysis involving government officials, community members, and relevant stakeholders. The findings reveal that, while development programs demonstrate strong contextual relevance—particularly in addressing basic infrastructure needs—the level of inclusiveness remains limited. Participation tends to be procedural and elitist, with marginalized groups such as women and youth underrepresented. Although adequate regulatory and financial inputs exist, limited institutional capacity and low community literacy hinder effective engagement. The most critical weakness lies in the process dimension, where participation is largely symbolic rather than collaborative. Consequently, although physical development outcomes are visible, social impacts such as empowerment, ownership, and sustainability are uneven. In conclusion, participatory development in Rangkasbitung is still transitioning toward genuinely inclusive governance. Strengthening institutional capacity, enhancing community literacy, and implementing collaborative, transparent monitoring mechanisms are essential to achieving equitable and sustainable development outcomes.

INTRODUCTION

Participatory development has become an important paradigm in public administration, especially in the era of decentralization that emphasizes regional autonomy and local community empowerment (Melkote and Steeves, 2015). This is in line with the spirit of reform and the implementation of regional autonomy, which provides more space for community participation in the development process. The concept of participatory development emphasizes the importance of active community involvement in all stages of development, from planning, implementation, monitoring, to evaluation (Sanchez-Soriano M, et.al, 2024). This approach emphasizes that the community is not only the object of development, but also an active subject involved in the planning, implementation, and evaluation of development programs (Dwiyanto, 2006). In the context of inclusive governance, community participation is one of the main indicators of the success of a development program, as it reflects accountability, transparency, and responsiveness in public policy (UNDP, 2021).

Currently, there are various development evaluation mechanisms, such as Regional Government Performance Evaluation, LaKIP, SAKIP, LPPD Reporting, LKPJ, and RLPPD, which should include various achievements in the implementation of government programs (Austin, T., & Chola, S, 2023). However, most of these mechanisms are still technocratic in nature. Unlike development planning, which has been carried out in a participatory and systematic manner, participatory development evaluation processes are still rarely conducted, or their implementation is highly dependent on the political will of stakeholders.

Lebak Regency, as the largest regency in Banten Province with an area of 3,312.18 km² and a population of 1,506,378 in 2024 (BPS Banten, 2024). This figure places Lebak as one of the regencies with the largest population in Banten Province. This makes Lebak an interesting laboratory for studying the performance of participatory development programs in the context of inclusive governance (Rosenbloom, et.al, 2015). Moreover, Rangkasbitung District, as the capital of Lebak Regency, has a strategic position as the center of government and an economic hub connecting the Jakarta metropolitan area with areas in southern Banten.

Furthermore, Rangkasbitung District has unique characteristics as an area undergoing transition from rural to urban areas. Rangkasbitung consists of a total of 16 villages and sub-districts, with 11 villages and 5 sub-districts. Based on data from the Banten Statistics Agency (BPS) (2024), the population of Rangkasbitung District is 144,733 people, with a population density of 1,950.13 people per km². The sex ratio is 103.69. The village with the largest population is Muara Cijung Timur Village, with a population of 19,781 people, or 13.67 percent of the total population of Rangkasbitung District. With these conditions, Rangkasbitung faces complex development challenges, ranging from infrastructure, economic, social, to environmental issues. Lebak Regency itself is one of the underdeveloped areas in Banten Province with a relatively high poverty rate. The hilly geographical conditions and most of its area are rural areas make the implementation of participatory development programs have their own challenges (Kementerian Dalam Negeri Republik Indonesia, 2019).

The complexity of governance in Lebak Regency reflects the common challenges faced by regions with diverse geographical characteristics. These range from urban areas around

Rangkasbitung to rural and coastal areas in the south. With 28 subdistricts, 340 villages, and 5 urban villages, Lebak Regency faces challenges in coordinating and synchronizing policies that require an inclusive and responsive governance approach. Based on initial observations in several subdistricts and villages, particularly in Rangkasbitung Subdistrict as the administrative center of Lebak Regency, there are actually various community-based development programs. Through a number of participation schemes, Rangkasbitung Subdistrict has tried to open up space for the community to participate in the development process. For example, at the planning stage, Development Planning Consultative Meetings are held from the village to the regency level. Unfortunately, the space for participation, which should be the main channel for residents to voice their development aspirations, shows that community participation has not been accommodated, both at the implementation and evaluation stages. In addition, there are also village community empowerment programs, as well as the Village Fund program, which is aimed at encouraging community participation for social welfare and justice. However, the implementation of these programs does not always show optimal results. Various problems have arisen, ranging from the lack of involvement of vulnerable groups, lack of transparency in budget allocation, to weak monitoring and evaluation (Bappeda Lebak, 2023). Thus, it appears that community participation in planning is still symbolic and has not fully reached all levels of the community, especially women, youth, and marginalized groups.

Similarly, the public feedback mechanism on the results of development planning deliberations is ineffective. Information regarding proposed and approved development priorities is never transparently disseminated to the public. This situation reinforces the issue that even though institutionalized participatory mechanisms such as the Musrenbang exist, participation often remains symbolic and dominated by local elites. Consequently, the planning process is elitist and top-down, with decisions being made by a handful of dominant actors (Ebdon & Franklin, 2006).

The issue of inequality between the roles of government actors and the community in the development process shows that there are challenges in realizing inclusive governance. This shows the need for a systematic evaluation of the performance of participatory development programs, especially to determine the extent to which the principles of good governance—such as participation, accountability, transparency, and inclusiveness—have been applied in development practices at the sub-district level (World Bank, 2017).

Evaluating the performance of participatory development programs is important in order to identify successes, obstacles, and opportunities for future policy improvements (Nasution, M.A, et al, 2025). The focus is on placing the community as the main actor in the development process, from the stages of needs identification, planning, implementation, to evaluation. This means that this approach emphasizes the principles of inclusiveness and empowerment, where the community plays an active role in determining the direction and priorities of development in their region (Chambers, 1997). Inclusive governance refers to a system of government that opens up broad participation to all community groups without discrimination. This concept encompasses the principles of participation, inclusiveness, accountability, transparency, effectiveness, and responsiveness (UNDP, 2021; OECD, 2016). Inclusiveness is not only quantitative involvement, but also meaningful involvement,

where the voices of vulnerable groups such as women, youth, people with disabilities, and indigenous peoples are given space and influence in public decision-making (Cornwall, 2008). Inclusive governance is also an important indicator in strengthening local democracy and sustainable development, where collaboration between the government and civil society is the key to the success of programs (Agrawal & Ribot, 1999; Annahar, N., Widianingsih, I., Muhtar, E. A., & Paskarina, C. 2023). Even in the context of public administration, participatory development is believed to be able to create policy legitimacy and encourage social accountability (Fung & Wright, 2003). Through participation, development policies become more responsive to the real needs of the community (Mulyadi, et.al, 2024).

Referring to this background, this study aims to evaluate the performance of participatory development programs in Rangkasbitung Subdistrict in the context of inclusive governance. The program evaluation is a systematic process to measure the effectiveness, efficiency, impact, and sustainability of a program (Warju, 2016). An interesting phenomenon in this study is how local governments strive to implement the principles of inclusive governance in the context of high geographical and socioeconomic diversity. Ansell and Torfing (2021) emphasize that inclusive governance requires contextual adaptation that takes into account local characteristics, especially in local government settings with high levels of heterogeneity.

Previous studies have largely discussed participation within the framework of the Village Law or at the district level. However, there remains a gap in research regarding the implementation of inclusive governance at the sub-district level as a development facilitator. Furthermore, existing evaluations tend to overlook the dimensions of representational justice for marginalized groups and the long-term impact (sustainability) of the implemented participation model. This research aims to address this gap.

The evaluation model used in the context of this study is the CIPP (Context, Input, Process, Product) Model developed by Stufflebeam (2003). This model assesses: Context: the suitability of the program to local needs and conditions; Input: the resources used; Process: the implementation of activities; Product: the results and impact of the program. In evaluating participatory development, it is important to assess not only the physical results (output) of the program, but also the extent to which the process reflects the principles of good governance. In addition, this performance evaluation research can be a tool for policy reflection and a basis for formulating strategies to increase the institutional capacity of local governments in the future.

Therefore, the novelty of this research lies in its attempt to substantively examine the quality of participation and social inclusion, going beyond an evaluative approach. This research also examines the relevance of the concept of inclusive governance in the local context of a peripheral area such as Rangkasbitung, which has its own socio-cultural dynamics, and empirically links governance practices with the level of program sustainability. Referring to the existing background, this research is expected to provide practical contributions that can be adopted by the Lebak Regional Government and other development actors to improve the quality of participation, ensure fair representation, and ensure the sustainability of development programs.

METHOD

This study uses a descriptive qualitative approach with an evaluative study type, which aims to understand and analyze in depth the performance of participatory development programs in the perspective of inclusive governance (Creswell, 2014). This approach is highly appropriate because of its ability to extract in-depth, contextual, and narrative data that quantitative figures cannot capture. Participatory governance is not just about numbers (quantitative), but also about how interactions occur. Qualitative evaluation can shed light on the quality of public engagement, from the planning stage to the evaluation stage.

The research was conducted in Rangkasbitung Subdistrict, Lebak Regency, Banten, which consists of several urban villages and villages with diverse socio-economic characteristics. The research subjects included: subdistrict and village/neighborhood government officials, community leaders and local traditional leaders, representatives of women's groups, youth, and marginalized groups, and active participants in the Musrenbang program or other development programs. Data collection techniques were carried out using several techniques: in-depth interviews with key informants; participatory observation, particularly in development planning forums; documentation studies of planning documents, activity reports, and development budget data; and focus group discussions (FGDs) to strengthen the validity of the results and capture the collective perspectives of the community.

Triangulation techniques were used to increase data validity by comparing results from various sources of information (Patton, 2002). The research instruments in this study were the researchers themselves, equipped with interview guides and observation sheets compiled based on program evaluation indicators and good governance principles (Miles, Huberman, & Saldana, 2014). The evaluation indicators refer to Stufflebeam's (2003) CIPP (Context, Input, Process, Product) model. Data analysis techniques were carried out using the interactive model from Miles, Huberman, and Saldana (2014), which includes three stages: Data reduction, through selection, simplification, and grouping of data; Presentation of data in the form of narratives, tables, or thematic matrices; Drawing conclusions and verification based on patterns of field findings.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Uncovering the Problems of Participatory Development in Rangkasbitung, Lebak

In general, Lebak Regency still faces a number of issues related to economic welfare and equity, social welfare, regional competitiveness, and various issues related to the administration of regional government affairs. Abstractly, regional development issues are formulated in several points identified as the following main issues:

1. Human Development

At the national level, human development is an aspect that receives serious attention, with human resource development being the second of the President's five visions for 2019-2024, which were established with the aim of making Indonesia more productive, competitive, and flexible in facing dynamic global challenges. This is translated by the Lebak Regency Government by incorporating the aspect of human development into the mission of the Regional Head/Deputy Regional Head through the establishment of development indicators that support the

achievement of national goals based on regional authority that is in harmony between the central and regional governments.

In its development, most human development indicators have continued to improve from year to year, but in reality, human development in Lebak Regency is still hampered by a number of problems, as reflected in the progress of improvement that is less than expected. The root causes of human development problems in the dimension of education include: suboptimal access to and quality of primary and secondary education services, suboptimal implementation of primary education and equity services, and suboptimal provision of facilities and infrastructure to support primary education services (Korten, D. C. 1990).

In terms of health, the root causes of human development problems have been identified as the suboptimal coverage of health services, health facilities and infrastructure for access to basic and referral health services, which are still relatively limited; the clean and healthy lifestyle (PHBS) of some segments of society, which is still a cause for concern; the less than ideal ratio of medical and paramedical personnel to a certain number of residents; the suboptimal implementation of the National Social Security System; as well as the suboptimal coverage of family planning services. Macro-wise, these health issues are reflected in the life expectancy, which is only around 67.21 years, the infant mortality rate, which is still around 14.4 per 1,000 live births; a maternal mortality rate that still hovers around 164 per 100,000 live births; a decline in the prevalence of malnourished toddlers, which in 2020 still reached 0.88%, and a prevalence of stunting of 9.26%; medical assistance during childbirth, which is estimated to only be around 72.60%; only 22.90% of villages are Open Defecation Free (ODF); the percentage of healthy families has only reached 18.70%; challenges in increasing basic immunization coverage, communicable disease eradication coverage, K4 pregnant women visits coverage, toddler health service coverage, and others.

In addition to the dimensions of education and health, there are also other dimensions related to human development, which are identified from a number of local government affairs related to human development issues, including: the suboptimal coverage of women's empowerment and child protection services, as reflected in the increasing trend of cases of violence against women and children during the pandemic; suboptimal youth and sports development, limited facilities, relatively low independence and life skills among young people, and youth achievements in the fields of arts and culture, sports, entrepreneurship, and others that are still unable to compete with other regions; The handling of social issues is not yet optimal, as reflected in a number of indicators, including: limited rehabilitation and social protection facilities; limited coverage of PMKS services; limited coverage of services for people with disabilities and the elderly; limited potential for social welfare; and others (Grindle, 2007).

The issue of human development is also closely related to the problem of suboptimal community empowerment and poverty alleviation, which at the macro level needs to be directed towards the agenda of reducing the percentage of poor people through socio-economic empowerment efforts so that they have food security, economic security, and social security, thereby avoiding vulnerability as a result of fluctuations in the national and regional economies. Poverty remains a major issue that must be prioritized for eradication, given the high number of poor people, which according to BPS data (2020) reached 107,930 people or

around 9.24% of the total population of Lebak Regency in 2020, an increase of 8.30% compared to 2019.

2. Good Governance

Efforts to achieve good governance will remain a central issue, although the main focus will shift to different themes in line with the progress that has been made. The 2020-2024 RPJMN, for example, focuses on deregulation related to efforts to simplify and synchronize laws and regulations in order to prevent and overcome the complexity of laws and regulations that cause overlapping rules and low legal certainty (Bappenas, 2020), as well as the theme of debureaucratization related to policies to cut echelon III and IV structural positions and the agenda of functionalizing the civil service (ASN), as well as bureaucratic structural efficiency in order to realize an appropriately sized and functional bureaucratic structure in order to increase effectiveness in achieving development goals and increase efficiency in the implementation process. Thus, the bureaucratic structure will be lean in structure but rich in function, an organizational structure that is more holacratic than Weberian bureaucracy, which is lengthy due to specialization and hierarchy.

Optimizing the use of information and communication technology will also be a central issue in realizing good governance in line with the trends of the era of disruption and the 4.0 industrial revolution. Therefore, the digital transformation agenda needs to be planned and implemented in a measured manner so that the implementation of the Electronic-Based Government System (SPBE) policy can truly be realized in the administration of government and public services in Lebak Regency. This agenda is particularly urgent amid the pandemic, which requires strict compliance with health protocols, making application-based public service platforms and similar solutions effective in breaking the chain of Covid-19 transmission. The implementation of SPBE is also believed to be able to prevent deviations from the outset of the decision-making process, thereby contributing to efforts to improve the effectiveness of the Internal Control System within the local government.

Evaluating the Performance of Development Programs in Rangkasbitung, Lebak

The CIPP (Context, Input, Process, Product) model is a holistic evaluation framework used to assess a program or project from various aspects.

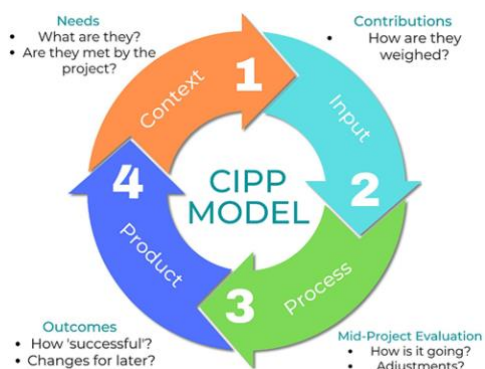


Figure 1. CIPP Model Conceptual Diagram
Source: Adapted from Stufflebeam, D. L. (2003)

This model was chosen because it provides a comprehensive overview of all aspects of the program, from context to results achieved;

1. Context Evaluation Dimensions: Community Needs and Policy Alignment

The Context phase focuses on evaluating the needs, problems, and assets in the program environment. In this case, the context is the needs of the community in Rangkasbitung District and government policies on participatory development. The research findings show that there is a great need among the community for infrastructure development such as roads, bridges, and irrigation. The policy context also provides support through regulations that require Musrenbang (development planning consultation forums) (Jreisat, 2002). From a CIPP perspective, this participatory development program has strong contextual validity because it is designed to respond to the real needs of the community. However, the context evaluation also found "limitations" in identifying the needs of vulnerable and marginalized groups, such as women and youth, who are often overlooked in the main agenda. This shows that the initial context evaluation was not fully inclusive. Development can be considered a physical success but a social failure. Marginalized groups are often neglected because the planning process fails to meet the actual needs of the community. This situation is influenced by data collection that is often not based on the actual needs of vulnerable groups (data gaps), so planning is based on assumptions rather than on the reality on the ground. Furthermore, there is an imbalance in the dominance of interests. In some cases, development planning is driven by elite or corporate interests, marginalizing the basic needs of the wider community (Moleong, L. J. 2016).

To achieve this participatory development strategy, participatory planning is absolutely necessary to capture the aspirations of the Lebak Regency community for annual and five-year development. Participatory planning is one approach in the development process. Participatory planning implemented in Lebak Regency prioritizes providing the broadest possible opportunities for the community to participate in the bottom-up decision-making process for the common good. Therefore, the focus of participatory planning is directed at mobilizing all available resources within the community. The community is invited to participate and collaborate with fellow citizens through the Sub-district and Regency Musrenbang (Development Planning Forum).

The research results show that community participation in development programs in Rangkasbitung District has two contrasting sides. Formally, participation mechanisms such as Development Planning Deliberations (Musyawarah Perencanaan Pembangunan) have been implemented routinely from the village to the sub-district level. This creates the impression that the community is involved in the decision-making process. However, a thorough analysis of the quality of participation reveals that this involvement remains ceremonial and elitist, or what can be described as elitist and passive participation. This is considered elitist because active participation tends to be dominated by community leaders, neighborhood association (RT/RW) heads, and adult males. They are the ones who most frequently attend planning meetings and have better access to information. Furthermore, the quality of participation is considered passive because the community generally plays a more beneficiary role than a planner. They come to receive information or sign

attendance lists, rather than to critically discuss or advocate for their needs.

This situation reflects that the implementation of the principle of social inclusion in governance has not been fully implemented. Yet, meaningful participation is a key characteristic of inclusive governance (Cornwall, 2008). According to the UNDP (2021), good governance must ensure that all elements of society have equal opportunities in development decision-making. This phenomenon indicates a gap in information and capacity between the government and the community.

2. Input Evaluation Dimensions: Resources and Participation Strategies

The Input phase assesses the resources allocated to the program, including human resources, budget, and strategies used. Research findings show that the resources allocated to the program, such as the budget from the Village Budget (APBDes) and labor (village officials), are available. However, the participation strategies used tend to be “conventional” (through formal Musrenbang) and lack innovation. From a CIPP perspective, this program has adequate financial and regulatory inputs. However, ineffective participation strategies are a “critical weakness” in the input stage. It can be said that participation from marginalized groups, such as women, youth, and people with disabilities, is still very minimal. One female informant said,

“We are rarely invited, or even if we are invited, our voices are not really heard. The agenda is determined from above, not from below.”

The limited capacity of village officials in preparing technical proposals is also an obstacle. This indicates that although financial resources are available, intellectual and strategic resources to ensure inclusiveness still need to be strengthened.

This paradoxical situation exists when resources (budget, technology) are available, but open participation is not forthcoming. This is due to limitations in participatory institutions, such as the inability to adopt technology, bureaucratic capacity, and a tendency toward top-down and formal policy making.

3. Process Evaluation Dimensions: Dynamics of Participation in Musrenbang

The Process phase evaluates program implementation, identifies weaknesses, and measures the extent to which the program is running according to plan. This is the most important part of measuring the quality of participation. The findings of the study show that although Musrenbang meetings and other formal meetings are held regularly, the quality of the process is still low. Interviews and observations show that community participation in development planning in Rangkasbitung Subdistrict is still “formalistic and symbolic.” Although Musrenbang forums are held regularly, the level of active community involvement, especially from vulnerable groups such as women, youth, and people with disabilities, remains low. Most Musrenbang participants are village officials and community leaders who are already socially established. The voices of marginalized groups are often ignored. As a result, transparency in budget allocation and decision-making processes remains weak (Farazmand, 2004).

An evaluation of the process using the CIPP model shows that there are “significant deviations” between the ideal plan and the actual implementation. Passive and elitist participation is a failure of the process. If the process is not inclusive, the end result cannot be considered a full representation of the needs of the entire community. This is the stage where power and information inequality is most apparent.

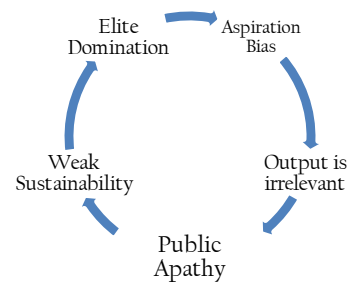


Figure 2. Sustainability Cycle Program
Source: Author's Analysis, 2025

Referring to Arnstein's (2019) ladder of participation approach, musrenbang (development planning and development planning) often gets stuck at the lowest level (tokenism). Communities are given a voice, but lack the power to ensure that voice is exercised. The physical presence of citizens serves only as administrative legitimacy. Furthermore, local elites select some citizens to participate in deliberations, but the final decision remains with them. This is a form of pseudo-participation, where citizens feel involved but have no impact on the final decision. Therefore, participation must be pushed up to the level of citizen power (partnership or delegation of power), where citizens have control over the policies being formulated.

4. Product Evaluation Dimensions: Sustainability and the Impact of Uneven Development

The Product phase focuses on the results or impact of the programme, both tangible (physical infrastructure) and intangible (increased capacity, sense of ownership). Research findings show that several programmes have successfully produced tangible physical infrastructure. However, there is still a lot of infrastructure that does not reach various regions. There are still many public facilities that are unavailable and inadequate, so that the non-physical impacts still vary. In addition, the community's sense of ownership is still low due to a lack of active involvement from the early stages. The sustainability of the project is also questionable because there is no clear maintenance mechanism. From the CIPP analysis, it can be seen that the product evaluation shows that the programme is partially successful. Thus, positive physical impacts have not been achieved, and the social impacts and sustainability of the programme are still weak. This proves that the success of a programme cannot be measured solely by its physical products. Failures in the process phase (lack of meaningful participation) have a direct impact on product quality in terms of sustainability and community ownership. From this causal link mechanism, it can be explained that sustainability is not a technical issue, but a behavioral and institutional one. If participation is merely an administrative formality, infrastructure development will become nothing more than a magnificent but functionally fragile “monument” in the long term. Social ownership is the foundation

for sustainability; without it, the development engine will grind to a halt immediately after the inauguration.

It can be argued that development programs resulting from participatory processes have not had a tangible impact, particularly in infrastructure development. Various physical projects, such as village road repairs, small irrigation projects, and integrated health posts (Posyandu) rehabilitation, have not been successfully implemented. Several critical points are made regarding this implementation (Stoker, G. 1998). First, development is not comprehensive. Development priorities tend to focus on physical infrastructure, as it is considered more visible and easily accounted for. Non-physical development aspects, such as human resource capacity building, education, or public health, are often neglected or receive very small budget allocations. This raises questions about the extent to which these programs truly address the holistic needs of the community, not just physical needs. Second, there are issues of transparency and accountability. Although program funds have been allocated, community oversight mechanisms remain weak. Many residents lack detailed information on how much the budget is being used and who is responsible. This lack of access to information creates opportunities for non-transparent practices and potentially fosters mistrust. Although development budget documents and activity reports are available at village offices, they are often difficult for communities to access or understand, both due to complex report formats and the remote location of information boards, making them difficult for wider access. Information is only disseminated through bulletin boards, and more interactive digital media are not yet utilized. This situation can certainly hinder the realization of ideal public transparency in governance. According to the OECD (2016), transparency is not only about the openness of information but also about the information's understandability for citizens. In the context of the CIPP model evaluation, this suggests that input and process indicators in development programs still need to be strengthened through inclusive and adaptive public communication strategies.

From the product dimension, the results or impacts of the development programs implemented by the Rangkasbitung government have had physical impacts in the form of road infrastructure, drainage, and public facilities. However, the benefits of the programs have not been evenly distributed and have not been significantly felt by the poor. Furthermore, aspects of economic development for small communities, such as entrepreneurship training programs or strengthening MSMEs, are still limited to certain groups registered as active in village organizations. This indicates that the principles of effectiveness and equitable distribution of benefits have not been fully achieved. Social welfare, which should be the primary outcome of participatory development, has not been fully realized (Dwiyanto, 2011). This emphasizes the importance of more inclusive program design based on micro-data from residents.

Overall, linking the research findings to the CIPP Model provides a systematic policy evaluation analysis framework. This model has helped identify successes (Context and part of Product) but also critically highlights key weaknesses (Input and Process) that must be addressed to achieve truly inclusive governance (Karatas & Fer, 2011).

Inclusive Governance: An Unfulfilled Ideal

The principle of inclusive governance remains an aspirational ideal in the context of modern democracy. The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD, 2020) report

also states that inclusive governance is a prerequisite for sustainable development, as it ensures that every community group has equal opportunities to influence the direction of public policy. Despite conceptual and practical progress, the gap between the normative ideal and implementation remains significant. Structural, cultural and institutional barriers require innovative improvements to be overcome. This is because the success of inclusive governance depends not only on the design of participation mechanisms but also on political culture transformation, institutional capacity building, and the use of increasingly sophisticated technology (ECDM, 2021).

As the centre of government and economy in Lebak District, Rangkasbitung presents a paradox. On the one hand, it is a symbol of progress in rural Banten; on the other hand, governance in this sub-district is still exclusive, elitist, and top-down. Although various participatory mechanisms have been implemented and show positive developments, significant challenges remain in their implementation. This is despite the fact that participatory governance theory emphasises that the legitimacy of development policies does not only come from state authorities, but also from the involvement of citizens in every stage of the policy process – from formulation to evaluation (Fung and Wright, 2003). This approach requires power sharing between the state and the community. However, in practice in Rangkasbitung, power is still concentrated in the hands of the bureaucratic elite and local political actors. For example, in development planning deliberations, which are procedurally open to the public, in reality they are dominated by village officials, community leaders who have close ties to the government, and representatives of formal organisations. This imbalance of power makes civil participation superficial. Arnstein (2019) refers to this phenomenon as tokenism, namely symbolic involvement that has no real influence on decision-making (Gaber, 2019). As a result, the policies produced often do not reflect the needs of citizens, especially marginalised groups.

This issue is not merely technical, but also cultural. A paternalistic bureaucratic culture is still very strong in Rangkasbitung. In this culture, the government is often seen as the only rational actor that knows what is best for its citizens. It is not uncommon for final decisions to be made by officials or senior figures, which has the potential to override proposals from groups with less bargaining power. This mindset makes citizen participation seen as an administrative burden rather than a political right. It is no wonder that many citizens are not motivated to attend deliberative forums, because they feel that their voices will not have any influence. Bourdieu's P (1993) study explains that this participation gap is not only caused by economic inequality, but also by social and cultural capital inequality. Marginalised groups often lack the political power, social networks, and knowledge to compete in the arena of local political contestation, which is dominated by a small elite (Joseph, J. 2020). The low capacity of civil society organisations in Rangkasbitung also exacerbates the situation. There are not many NGOs or community groups that consistently advocate for policy at the sub-district level. According to Gaventa and Barret (2012) in their article mapping the outcomes of citizen engagement, the existence of a strong civil society is a key factor in encouraging the state to be more inclusive. This is because without pressure from below, the government tends to maintain an elitist status quo. Of course, this condition contradicts the principle of inclusiveness, which prioritises equality in the decision-making process. As explained in the co-production

approach popularised by Brandsen and Honingh (2016), citizens should not be viewed as recipients of services, but as equal partners in designing and implementing public policy.

In addition to cultural aspects, there are also institutional issues. Participation mechanisms such as development planning deliberations do not yet provide affirmative protection for vulnerable groups. There are no provisions for quotas for women, poor citizens, people with disabilities, and young people, who often do not have a formal forum to channel their aspirations. As a result, their specific needs are overlooked in the planning process. Consequently, these deliberative forums are de facto only attended by those who already have access, time, and resources – namely the elite. This situation demonstrates the weak implementation of the principle of public accountability. In the CIPP approach (Stufflebeam, 2003), the product and process aspects have not shown complete success because decision-making is still dominated by officials and local elites rather than equal collaboration between the government and citizens. Meanwhile, the study by Fung & Wright (2003) states that horizontal accountability (involving citizens and non-governmental institutions) is an important element of empowering governance.

These findings show that the performance of participatory development programmes in Rangkasbitung Subdistrict has actually been running administratively, but does not yet fully reflect the principles of inclusive governance. The implementation of participation, transparency and accountability is still dominated by a procedural rather than a substantive approach. In this logic, the failure to realise inclusive governance in Rangkasbitung is not an 'accident' but a logical consequence of institutions that continue to maintain exclusivity. Theoretically, this is in line with criticism of participatory development, which is often only 'invited participation' rather than 'organic participation' that grows from community initiatives (Gaventa, 2006). Therefore, it is necessary to strengthen community capacity, reformulate decision-making mechanisms, and establish equal collaboration between the government and the community (Masrizal, et.al, 2025). Furthermore, these results also demonstrate the importance of evaluation as a tool for policy reflection and feedback on equitable governance. The CIPP model evaluation proved capable of identifying weaknesses in development policies in terms of context, process, and programme outcomes.

CONCLUSION

The conclusion from the results and discussion of this study is that the performance of the participatory development programme in Rangkasbitung Subdistrict, Lebak Banten, is still in a transitional stage towards truly inclusive governance. Using the CIPP (Context, Input, Process, Product) model as an evaluation framework, several important points can be summarised. First, there is strong contextual validity but weak inclusiveness. The programme launched by the government has succeeded in responding to the basic needs of the community (context), especially in infrastructure development. However, it has failed to identify the needs of vulnerable groups, indicating that the initial context evaluation was not conducted comprehensively. Second, in terms of input, the participation strategy is ineffective. Although the development programme is supported by a clear budget and regulations (input), the participation strategy tends to be conventional. The limited capacity of government officials and the community meant that

existing resources were not used optimally to encourage inclusive participation. Thirdly, the most crucial weakness was in the process stage. Participation was still elitist and ceremonial in nature, rather than an equal and strategic partnership. The voices of women, youth, and vulnerable groups were often ignored due to structural and cultural barriers. This creates a significant gap between the idealism of participation and the reality of its implementation. Fourth, in terms of output, it is evident that physical development has undergone changes, but the social impact has not been felt evenly and equitably. Low community ownership and weak sustainability mechanisms are evidence that physical development has not been accompanied by adequate social empowerment.

In summary, this study also recommends that participatory development programmes in Rangkasbitung require significant improvements in the process dimension, with a focus on increasing inclusiveness and transparency. This can be achieved by strengthening the capacity of local institutions, increasing community literacy, and developing more effective monitoring and evaluation mechanisms. Equally important is the adoption of a collaborative approach between the government, NGOs, and local communities. Without these improvements, the programme risks continuing to be a development project that does not address the basic needs of the community and is unable to realise social justice

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