

## **CHAPTER IV**

### **Analysis of Women's Participation in Empowerment Programs in the Coastal Areas of Cirebon City**

One important stage of this research is Chapter IV, where the author will study the involvement of women in empowerment programs in the coastal areas of Cirebon City. The results of this research will discuss women's participation in empowerment programs. A comprehensive analysis will be conducted to determine the extent to which women in the coastal areas of Cirebon City are involved in empowerment programs and how their living conditions influence their participation in these programs. It is expected that this chapter will provide a comprehensive overview of the role of women in empowerment in coastal areas. Additionally, it will provide a strong basis for future policy recommendations that are more inclusive and efficient.

The analysis begins with structured steps. Initially, the author formulates a series of questions to guide interviews and gather information from various relevant sources. This includes both direct and indirect interviews with women involved in empowerment initiatives, as well as information from relevant stakeholders in the respective region. Subsequently, the collected data is carefully examined with the aim of obtaining a deep understanding of how the living conditions of women around the coastal areas of Cirebon City affect their level of participation in empowerment programs. Additionally, the analysis process also includes the data verification stage through interviews with experts and stakeholders involved in the program.

The analysis process is carried out meticulously with the aim of gaining a deeper understanding of how the living conditions of women in the coastal areas of Cirebon City influence their participation in empowerment programs. This involves a deep

understanding of the factors that affect women's participation levels, both positively and negatively. Furthermore, the analysis also includes the identification of the impact of women's participation in empowerment programs on their lives and the surrounding community. During the analysis process, the collected data is also validated through discussions with relevant experts and other stakeholders in the region. This is to ensure the accuracy and objectivity of the analysis results and to obtain a broader and deeper perspective on the conditions and participation of women in empowerment programs in the coastal areas of Cirebon City.

Specifically, the analysis also involves discussions about various challenges faced by women in the coastal areas of Cirebon City, as well as efforts that can be made to increase their participation in empowerment programs. This process aims to identify strategies or policies that can help improve the well-being and empowerment of women in the region effectively and sustainably.

#### **4.1 Analysis of Women's Participation in Empowerment Programs in Coastal Areas**

Despite many complex and diverse factors, including social, economic, cultural, and environmental conditions in coastal areas, women's participation in empowerment programs is crucial for enhancing overall well-being and progress. The level of women's involvement in empowerment programs is determined by how much they are involved in decision-making, gaining access to resources, and contributing to coastal area development. Therefore, it is essential to conduct a comprehensive study on what supports and hinders women's participation. These factors include gender awareness, access to education and training, policies supporting women, access to economic resources, and social and physical environmental conditions in coastal areas.

By thoroughly understanding the dynamics of women's participation in empowerment programs, more efficient approaches can be developed to enhance their involvement. This includes addressing structural and social barriers that hinder women's participation, improving access to education and training, strengthening women's roles and access to decision-making, and enhancing gender awareness in society. As a result, it is expected to create an inclusive and supportive environment for women to actively participate in empowerment in coastal areas.

#### **A. Level of Women's Participation in Empowerment Programs**

The city of Cirebon has focused its attention on implementing Community Empowerment programs, especially for women, by providing education, socialization, and counseling to coastal women. Based on research findings, it is explained that the Cirebon City government has implemented several empowerment programs, including those targeting coastal women. Some programs that have been carried out by the government in efforts to empower women include "Sekoper Cinta" (School for Women to Achieve Dreams), which was established by the West Java Provincial Government to empower and strengthen women in West Java, including Cirebon City. Additionally, empowerment programs such as P2WKSS (Empowerment and Protection Program for Women and Children Victims of Sexual Violence) are initiatives formed by the government to enhance women's roles in building healthy and prosperous families. One part of P2WKSS is the "100 Adopted Families" (100 KK Binaan) program, which aims to uplift 100 households from poverty to pre-prosperity and prosperity status. Moreover, the Cirebon City government has also launched the "Cirebon Family School" (Sekolah

Keluarga Cirebon) program to provide non-formal education to children, fathers, and mothers in the community.



*Picture 12. Acting Secretary (PJ Sekda) and Acting Chairperson of the PKK (Family Welfare Empowerment) Cirebon City Installing P2WKSS Program Stickers and Planting Mangroves*

Source: Beritasatu.com



*Picture 13. Documentation of Learning from the Implementation of the "School for Women to Achieve Dreams and Aspirations" (Sekoper Cinta) 2023*

Source: Sekoper Cinta DP3AKB Report, Cirebon City 2023



*Picture 14. Documentation of Learning from the Implementation of the "School for Women to Achieve Dreams and Aspirations" (Sekoper Cinta) 2023*

Source: Sekoper Cinta DP3AKB Report, Cirebon City 2023

The writer can conclude that all efforts have been made by the City Government and the Provincial Government to implement empowerment programs for women with the hope of improving the welfare of women. The participation and involvement of women in empowerment programs also serve as one of the benchmarks for the success of these initiatives.

In terms of the economy, particularly the SME (Small and Medium Enterprises) Agency (Dinas UMKM), the Cirebon City Government has also shown its involvement in empowering women. Through empowerment programs for women organized by the SME Agency of Cirebon City, it is evident that real efforts to empower women are made by facilitating access to capital for women entrepreneurs. Although not providing cash assistance, the SME Agency of Cirebon City significantly contributes to enhancing the economic independence of women by connecting them with financial institutions that offer various capital programs, such as Islamic Pawnshop (KUR) and Bank BRI. Thus, the economic empowerment of women in coastal areas, as carried out by the SME Agency of Cirebon City, has a positive impact on efforts to alleviate poverty, improve family welfare, and make a significant contribution to economic and social development at the local level.

This is also supported by statements from Neneng, who is a coastal woman working as a housewife. In an interview conducted on March 19, 2024, Neneng stated that:

*"There are many benefits from empowerment programs, the main one being gaining new knowledge, things I didn't know before, now I know. In addition, women become more independent. For example, through SME training, women can start selling and receive capital assistance from the government." (Interview conducted on March 19, 2024)*

In addition to discovering various empowerment programs implemented by the Cirebon City Government, it is also important to assess how active women are in these

programs. The level of women's participation is crucial for evaluating the effectiveness and impact of empowerment programs. Women's participation rates in coastal areas can be an indicator of the success of programs in achieving their goals. Because women are expected to directly benefit from empowerment programs and gradually gain independence and a better quality of life. Although the Cirebon City Government has launched several women's empowerment programs in coastal areas, there are obstacles related to how many women are involved in these programs. Many women in coastal areas believe that the empowerment programs implemented have not yielded significant results. This may be because women are not aware of or not interested in actively participating in these programs. Most women may not realize the importance of participating in empowerment activities or may not feel motivated to do so. As a result, although empowerment programs are available, further efforts are needed to increase awareness, encouragement, and participation of coastal women.

Based on the statements from several coastal women through interviews conducted on March 19, 2024, almost all of them expressed the same thing, which is their inability to actively participate in women's empowerment programs. An interview with Kuriah, who works as a fisherman's wife and fish trader, stated:

*"Yeah, it's still lacking a lot, so not everyone is pro yet, still lacking to participate in empowerment programs. It's because of economic issues, it's better to earn money than to attend socialization sessions. I, as a mother, if I have time, I can definitely join, sometimes I can't in the morning because of trading, but in the evening, I can leave for a while." (Interview conducted on December 4, 2023)*

Additionally, Rohyati, who works as a homemaker, also emphasized in an interview conducted on March 19, 2024, that:

*"Sometimes many are busy selling and working, so they can't participate. So, actually, they don't participate because they already have their own activities. In my opinion, it's very important to participate in the programs provided by the government, so that we know, for example, how to manage food, if we have*

*knowledge, we can manage it for selling." (Interview conducted on March 19, 2024)*

The same sentiment was also expressed by Neneng regarding participation in women's empowerment programs in coastal areas. Based on an interview conducted on March 19, 2024, Neneng also provided similar explanations as to why coastal women still cannot actively participate in women's empowerment programs.

*"Usually, most women who cannot participate are busy, many also still have small children and work. As for me, I usually attend socialization sessions, for example, about family planning (KB) or issues like stunting, teenage problems, and various others." (Interview conducted on March 19, 2024)*

The interview conducted with Ella on March 19, 2024, as a coastal woman, also provided her response regarding her dual role, which prevents her from participating in empowerment programs.

*"I am busy because I have a baby at home, so I don't have time to participate in those programs. I also have to sell things, so I have two roles: selling and taking care of the baby, so I can't join those programs. Honestly, I'm not really into participating in such activities because I'm already tired from work, so I'm not interested in adding those activities." (Interview conducted on March 19, 2024)*

In addition to being busy with their respective jobs and having dual roles as coastal women, such as having to work and take care of children, make coastal women unable to allocate time to actively participate in every empowerment program. The lack of information about empowerment programs also prevents coastal women from having the opportunity to actively participate in government-implemented empowerment programs. Based on the interview conducted on March 19, 2024, with Ros, a coastal woman and a merchant, she stated that:

*"Because no one invites me or comes to me, like for example, training on making shrimp paste, usually there are several groups, but no one comes to me directly so I lack information and don't know about the program, so I don't participate." (Interview conducted on March 19, 2024)*



In efforts to improve the welfare and empowerment of coastal women, the level of participation of women in empowerment programs is an important element that needs to be considered. However, there are often obstacles to increasing this participation rate. One of them is the low number of women involved in the planning and implementation process of programs. Many coastal women are not involved in the decision-making process regarding the empowerment programs to be implemented. This can be caused by various factors, such as limited opportunities for women to participate in forums or meetings that determine the programs. Additionally, there are challenges such as lack of social support for active participation, limited access to information, and time constraints due to household chores. To increase women's participation in empowerment programs and make the programs more beneficial for women in coastal areas, it is important to identify and address these barriers.

Based on the information from Aan, the Head of the Women's Empowerment Division, through an interview conducted on February 13, 2024, the author learned that many coastal women are still less actively participating in government-run women's empowerment programs.

*"The current condition is like that because young mothers feel it's more important to work outside than to participate in social activities. The strategy implemented by the Department includes: When the reason for mothers is work, the Department will conduct counseling or educational activities in the afternoon or on holidays. Now the focus of the department is to establish youth integrated health posts so that in every neighborhood there are youth integrated health posts, youth family planning counseling, and youth community groups, because the hope is that with these activities, the teenagers who are accustomed to participating in organizations will also care. Creating youth cadres so that in the future they can become successors who will drive activities in the community to replace the older cadre mothers." (Interview conducted on February 13, 2024)*

This is also supported by previous research conducted on December 4, 2023, with Kuriah, one of the coastal women who is also a fishmonger, stating:

*"The factors that make coastal women unwilling to participate in empowerment programs are laziness and a perception that socialization or meetings are not important. Because the important thing is to make money for additional income, they still feel indifferent to socialization. But sometimes in coastal areas, the community is still unfamiliar, and the activities are not yet regular. So, sometimes when there is a socialization invitation, some attend, and some do not. Maybe the people here are still busy looking for money for food or other activities." (Interview conducted on December 4, 2023)*

The Cirebon City Women's Empowerment and Child Protection Office has provided significant support in promoting women's empowerment through various programs, such as education programs and Forum Group Discussions (FGDs). Through direct interaction with the community, they have observed that many women feel less confident, have low self-esteem, and feel they have less meaningful roles in society. However, through participation in these empowerment programs, women can feel more confident and brave enough to voice their opinions, especially in forums like FGDs. Strategies involving direct engagement in the daily lives of the community, such as listening to the complaints and problems faced by mothers in their environment, have proven effective in providing education and understanding to women.

The participation of women in empowerment programs is of utmost importance in the context of enhancing their welfare and independence. In various empowerment initiatives in the city of Cirebon, the active role of women in various forms of participation has been key to achieving inclusive and sustainable development goals. These forms of participation encompass not only economic aspects but also social aspects, decision-making, and overall development. By actively involving women in empowerment programs, their capacity to influence policies, enhance knowledge and skills, and strengthen supportive social networks can be improved. Therefore, a profound understanding of the various forms of women's participation in the context of

empowerment programs is crucial for designing effective strategies to enhance their welfare and independence.

In an interview conducted on March 19, 2024, Ros, a coastal woman and a trader, provided a statement regarding her involvement in women's empowerment programs in the coastal area.

*"If I participate, I become a posyandu cadre. In posyandu, there are many cadres, for example, there are counseling, data collection, weighing, usually, each cadre has their own tasks, for example, I handle stunting. There are usually two people for stunting, me and the leader, so the cadres are already divided, focusing on stunting, TB, etc., there are people for that. To become a cadre, I am chosen by the head of the neighborhood association, and there is also training to become a cadre, so our learning comes from senior cadres/previous cadres, so, for example, how to collect data or other things, it is taught by the previous cadre. Besides, we are also taught by the health center, usually, we attend meetings at the health center, so we know a little bit. As a coastal woman and a cadre, my participation is only in posyandu activities, such as posyandu for toddlers, adolescents, and the elderly." (Interview conducted on March 19, 2024)*



*Picture 15. Activities at the Elderly Posyandu (Elderly Blood Pressure Check)*

Source: Personal documentation of Ros, as a posyandu cadre

Furthermore, Ella shared her experience participating in coastal women's empowerment programs during an interview conducted on March 19, 2024.

*"I participate in activities at the community health center, assisting in making supplementary food (TMT) for children suffering from stunting. So, the Health Department through the health centers distributes it to each posyandu, and then*

*each cadre in each neighborhood chooses community members who can help. Usually, there are three people assisting in each posyandu." (Interview result on March 19, 2024)*

The statement given by Lusi in an interview on March 19, 2024, also confirms her involvement in coastal women's empowerment programs.

*"Here, many programs are provided by the government not only for women but also for teenagers and the elderly, usually from the posyandu. For women, there are more cooking training programs for seafood products to be sold. So, it's more about training to provide creative ideas for culinary dishes that can be developed for sale. I participate, but mostly in making food for children because I have toddlers, like, for example, free meals for stunting. So, for example, for one month, we get free lunch every day for one month, and then for the next month, it will be selected again, maybe due to budget constraints, not everyone can get it. I also once participated in training to make processed seafood." (Interview result on March 19, 2024)*

Based on the research conducted through interviews with several informants such as coastal women and the Women's Empowerment and Child Protection Agency, the author can conclude that coastal women are not yet actively participating in the government's empowerment programs, and the level of participation has not reached the expected level and is still relatively low. Although the government has implemented several women's empowerment programs, such as the School for Women to Achieve Dreams (Sekoper Cinta), the Empowerment and Protection Program for Women and Children Victims of Sexual Violence (P2WKSS), and the Cirebon Family School, these programs do not guarantee that they can improve or significantly change the lives of coastal women for the better.

That can be seen from the statements of informants, including the Women's Empowerment and Child Protection Agency, indicating that coastal women are still unwilling to actively participate in every government-provided program. Based on the interview data, there are several factors hindering women's participation, such as busy work schedules and dual roles in the family, lack of information about empowerment

programs, and a lack of awareness of the importance of participating in empowerment activities. Interviews with several coastal women indicate that they feel hindered by work demands and family responsibilities, lack of knowledge about empowerment programs, and a lack of interest or motivation to participate.

However, some women are actively involved in empowerment programs, such as being posyandu cadres or assisting in educational and training activities. However, this participation does not yet cover most coastal women or only selected few. Further efforts are needed to increase women's participation in empowerment programs, including providing better information, adjusting activity schedules to women's busy schedules, and raising awareness of their importance in development.

Overall, despite efforts made by the government and related agencies, the level of women's participation in empowerment programs remains low, and further efforts are needed to increase their participation. Additionally, it is necessary to ensure that women's participation in empowerment programs is not merely mobilization but also has a meaningful impact on improving the welfare and independence of women in coastal areas of Kota Cirebon. In the context of this research, the importance of women's involvement is increasingly emphasized, especially since the current development goals aim to improve human quality, including that of women. Programs such as those conducted by the Women's Empowerment and Child Protection Agency in Kota Cirebon demonstrate that increasing women's participation and capacity are crucial in achieving empowerment. By involving women in development, both in identifying problems, planning, decision-making, implementation, and evaluation of development programs, it will strengthen the foundation for more inclusive and sustainable development. Therefore, concrete steps such as empowerment programs conducted by local governments become highly relevant in achieving these goals.

## **B. Forms of Women's Participation in Empowerment Programs**

From various empowerment programs launched in Kota Cirebon, we can identify several crucial forms of women's participation in efforts to improve their welfare and independence. Some forms of women's participation in empowerment programs include:

### **1. Participation in Empowerment Programs:**

Kota Cirebon has launched various women's empowerment programs, such as the School for Women to Achieve Dreams and Aspirations (Sekoper Cinta) and the Empowerment and Protection Program for Women and Children Victims of Sexual Violence (P2WKSS). The Sekoper Cinta and P2WKSS programs aim to empower women by providing education, socialization, and counseling to coastal women.



*Picture 16. Documentation of the Implementation of the School for Women to Achieve Dreams and Aspirations (Sekoper Cinta) 2023*

Source: Sekoper Cinta DP3AKB Kota Cirebon 2023 Report

### **2. Participation in Economic Activities:**

Women, especially those working as fish traders in coastal areas, are involved in economic activities such as trade. The Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises

(MSMEs) Agency of Kota Cirebon has assisted in empowering women by facilitating access to capital for female entrepreneurs.



*Picture 17. Documentation of Knitting Class Training in P2WKSS Activity 2022*

Source: DP3AKB Kota Cirebon Report

### **3. Participation in Social Activities:**

Coastal women are invited to participate in forums such as Forum Group Discussion (FGD) organized by the Department of Women Empowerment and Child Protection. Women's participation in social and educational activities aims to enhance their independence, knowledge, and self-confidence. Coastal women also participate as cadres, such as posyandu cadres, to assist in guiding and accompanying various community activities and providing education to the community.



*Picture 18. Documentation of Socialization About Gender Mainstreaming and the Role of Women in Development by the Department of Women's Empowerment and Child Protection (DP3APPKB) of Cirebon City*

Source: DP3AKB Kota Cirebon Report

In the context of national development, women's participation plays a crucial role in uplifting families living below the poverty line, especially housewives. The primary focus in improving the welfare of fishing families should be on women. They can become the primary drivers in the economic activities of coastal communities, which in turn will transform their roles from mere housewives to breadwinners. However, women's participation in fishing families has not been optimal. Their knowledge and skills are still limited and have not received the necessary technological innovations.

In the implementation process of empowerment programs, cooperation from all relevant departments is needed to ensure that the empowerment programs can be carried out, despite many challenges in the process. The Secretary of the Regional Secretariat also plays an important role in facilitating communication among relevant institutions and overseeing ongoing programs. The Secretary of the Regional Secretariat is responsible for ensuring that women's empowerment programs run smoothly and



successfully because the Secretary of the Regional Secretariat is the highest coordinator at the regional executive level. Facilitating communication among relevant institutions is the primary responsibility of the Secretary of the Regional Secretariat. This includes communication between the Department of Women's Empowerment and Child Protection and other relevant institutions as well as between the regional government and the community. This is done to ensure good coordination in program implementation and proper activity planning to meet the needs of coastal communities.

This is also supported by the statement of Giri, the sub-coordinator of territorial administration at the Regional Secretariat, through an interview on February 16, 2024, regarding the role of the Secretary of the Regional Secretariat in empowerment programs and supervision.

*"At the beginning of each year, in the Cirebon City regional government, there is something called musbangkel, community participation in musbangkel needs to be increased because here the role of the community in providing aspirations related to the area is very necessary. If from the Regional Secretariat itself, especially in community empowerment, there are policies related to the neighborhood community institutions, here there are 6 elements of LKK, including RT, RW, LPM, Youth Organization, Women's Family Welfare Movement (PKK), and Integrated Health Post (posyandu). When it comes to the role of women, we accommodate them in the PKK and posyandu for development at the neighborhood level. The next policy is infrastructure development and community empowerment in villages and neighborhoods, at the level of the Regional Secretariat, it only monitors these neighborhoods to see if they are doing well and if there are any obstacles. For example, if there is stunting but there is no follow-up, the Regional Secretary will reprimand the neighborhood authorities to create activities to address the stunting issue. One of the roles of the Regional Secretariat itself is to facilitate communication among institutions, one of them being BSMSS activities in collaboration with the military through activities such as the distribution of basic necessities and infrastructure development in their area." (Interview result on February 16, 2024)*

In addition to supervision, the local government also creates strategies to increase women's participation in empowerment programs. For example, for the short term, there is coaching provided to the community every year, creating a regeneration

for participation. Meanwhile, for the long term, the local government collaborates with all regional apparatuses.

Active participation of women in empowerment programs is crucial in efforts to achieve gender equality and improve women's welfare. However, in many coastal areas, including in Cirebon City, there are still several issues hindering women from participating in government empowerment programs. Due to this limited participation, women are unable to improve their personal and family welfare. This also hampers inclusive and sustainable development. Therefore, it is essential to understand the supporting and hindering factors that affect the participation of coastal women in empowerment programs. This is necessary to create better plans to address these issues and enhance women's roles in development.

#### **4.2 Benefits Derived from Participation**

Active participation of women in various development programs, especially those reaching coastal areas, brings widespread and profound impacts on communities and the environment. Firstly, through this participation, women become strong agents of change in their communities. They have unique insights into local challenges and needs, thus can contribute valuable input in designing suitable and sustainable solutions. Their involvement also enables greater recognition of their rights, including access to education, health, and economic resources. Thus, women's participation not only helps reduce gender disparities but also creates a more inclusive and fair environment for all members of society. Additionally, through this participation, women also have the opportunity to develop new skills, expand social networks, and enhance their confidence. This is beneficial not only for their personal development but also for the overall economic and social progress. Therefore, women's participation in

the development of coastal areas is not just about individual empowerment but also about creating a more resilient, sustainable, and competitive society in the future.

In an interview conducted on March 19, 2024, Lusi, a coastal woman, participated in the government's women empowerment program through training in processing seafood. Through the interview, Lusi felt profound benefits from actively participating in the empowerment program. Lusi stated:

*"In my opinion, with the existence of empowerment programs such as training in processing seafood, it can increase knowledge and income as well. Additionally, women gain new inspiration in processing seafood to increase its market value. For example, not all coastal communities can afford expensive and delicious food, but with this program, women can make delicious food." (Interview results on March 19, 2024)*

In addition to participating in every training provided by the government, Ros, who also actively serves as a cadre in the coastal area, experienced benefits after participating in empowerment programs, as conveyed in the interview on March 19, 2024.

*"Yes, there are benefits. I became more knowledgeable and gained insights, like how to check blood pressure. I didn't know before, but now I know, so it broadened my knowledge, like going to school." (Interview results on March 19, 2024)*

The same sentiment was expressed by Rohyati in an interview on March 19, 2024, stating:

*"The benefit is that I gained new knowledge that can be developed for selling, for example, with the fish processing training program, I can sell the products."*

Through the analysis of the benefits of women's participation in various development initiatives, the author can understand the importance of their role in creating positive change. From increased access to education to inclusive economic development, women's involvement brings broad and profound impacts on society and

the environment. In this context, understanding the implications and potential of women's participation is key to designing effective and sustainable programs. Based on the research conducted, the author can delve deeper into the benefits derived from women's active participation in empowerment programs in coastal areas, including:

- 1. Increased Individual and Family Welfare:** Women's participation in empowerment programs enables them to enhance their quality of life and that of their families. Through access to education, training, and economic programs, women can increase household income and achieve economic independence. Additionally, the programs provided also assist in addressing the social and economic issues faced by women, such as the double burden of work within the family.
- 2. Economic Empowerment:** Empowerment programs provide women with access to training, economic resources, and financial support, which in turn enhances their opportunities to participate in economic activities and contribute to improving the economic conditions of their families. This benefits not only women individually but also contributes to economic growth and poverty reduction in coastal areas.
- 3. Increased Awareness and Empowerment:** Empowerment programs also help increase women's awareness of their rights, their roles in society, and their ability to reach their full potential. Through participation in training, discussion forums, and socialization activities, women can feel more confident and motivated to take an active role in the development of coastal areas.
- 4. Skill and Knowledge Development:** Women's participation in empowerment programs provides them with access to education, training, and useful information to enhance their skills and knowledge. This helps increase women's capacity in

various aspects of life, ranging from health to economic skills, enabling them to become agents of change in society.

Therefore, women's participation in empowerment programs in coastal areas brings significant benefits not only to the women themselves but also to their families and the community as a whole. By increasing women's participation in empowerment programs, it can be expected that the level of welfare and progress of coastal areas as a whole will improve.

#### **4.2.1 Challenges Faced in Participation**

In the implementation of empowerment programs and the participation of coastal women, there are factors that both support and hinder their level of participation. The success of women's participation in community empowerment efforts is greatly influenced by inhibiting factors that hinder their participation in empowerment programs and driving factors that encourage them to actively engage in empowerment programs.

Apart from being busy with their respective jobs and household chores, coastal women also face other obstacles to participating in women's empowerment programs in coastal areas. Soniah, in an interview on March 19, 2024, also shared reasons why coastal women are still hindered from participating in government-run empowerment programs.

*"Because some are busy, some have businesses, like selling. Besides, people usually only want to participate in empowerment programs if they are given 'money'. So, if there's money as compensation, they'll participate. Actually, if you want to progress, you have to gain knowledge so that coastal women can develop. However, coastal women here find it difficult. They don't want to participate in training or empowerment programs provided by the government for free. However, if the implementation of empowerment programs like training doesn't involve payment, the purpose of the training itself is to share knowledge." (Interview results on March 19, 2024)*

Lusi, who is a coastal woman, also reaffirmed the barriers faced by women in participating in women's empowerment programs based on an interview conducted on March 19, 2024.

*"It depends, sometimes chosen by the cadre, so not everyone can participate and those who participate have to take turns. That's because of limited space and costs, and not everyone can participate. So actually, maybe the women are willing to participate in empowerment programs, but sometimes due to limited space or other factors, not everyone can participate. Besides, many of them still have young children at home, so they can't leave them and can't participate in empowerment programs. But, if they are regular housewives, many of them participate." (Interview results on March 19, 2024)*

Novita also provided the same information in her interview on March 19, 2024, regarding the barriers to women's participation in empowerment programs.

*"Sometimes those who participate in empowerment programs are chosen by the neighborhood head (RT), it's not that I don't want to, but I've never been chosen by the neighborhood head (RT). Besides, I'm usually busy and have to take care of my children at home, so I haven't been able to participate in empowerment programs." (Interview results on March 19, 2024)*

Based on the research conducted, the author can conclude the inhibiting factors for the participation of coastal women in empowerment programs:

#### **A. Inhibiting Factors**

There are several factors that hinder active participation of women in coastal community empowerment programs:

- 1) Prioritization of work outside the home: Young women tend to prioritize work outside the home over social activities or empowerment programs.
- 2) Low perception of socialization activities: Coastal women still perceive socialization activities or meetings in empowerment programs as less important, thus lacking motivation to participate actively.

- 3) Concerns about daily needs: Some coastal women are concerned about their daily needs and other commitments, thus hindering active participation in empowerment programs.
- 4) Lack of awareness of the importance of participation: Some coastal women are not fully aware of the importance of participating in empowerment programs, thus lacking motivation to engage.
- 5) Expectation of Material Incentives: Some people are only willing to participate in empowerment programs if there is a financial reward, such as money. This indicates a lack of awareness of the importance of education and training for their advancement.
- 6) Limited Space and Costs: Limited space and costs are obstacles for women to participate freely in empowerment programs.
- 7) Responsibility for Childcare: Most women cannot attend empowerment programs because they have to take care of their children at home.
- 8) Selection by Cadres or Neighborhood Heads (RT): The selection conducted by cadres or neighborhood heads creates uncertainty for women who want to participate because not everyone has the same opportunity to be involved.

## **B. Supporting Factors**

There are several factors that encourage active participation of women in coastal community empowerment programs:

- 1) Awareness of Contribution: Women realize the importance of their role in local community development.
- 2) Economic Motivation: They aim to improve their family's welfare by seeking economic opportunities.
- 3) Family Support: Support from family members gives them confidence.
- 4) Opportunities and Access: Opportunities and access provided by the government facilitate their participation.
- 5) Environmental Support: Supportive environments strengthen women's motivation to get involved.

### **4.3 Analysis of Research Results on Women's Participation in Empowerment Programs**

In this subsection, the author will analyze the research findings related to women's participation in empowerment programs in coastal areas. The focus will be on gaining a deep understanding of various aspects of women's participation, including factors influencing their level of involvement, their potential, and the challenges they face. This research not only seeks to understand the dynamics of women's participation in empowerment programs but also aims to explore broader implications.

By tracing the key findings of this research, we will gain deeper insights into women's contributions to coastal area development and the steps that can be taken to strengthen their involvement in empowerment efforts. In addition to providing a comprehensive overview of women's roles in the context of coastal development, this



analysis also has significant implications in the academic realm. The implications of these findings may include refining existing theories, developing new models in gender and development studies, and gaining a deeper understanding of the social and economic dynamics in coastal areas.

A deeper understanding of women's roles in coastal empowerment programs not only enriches academic literature on gender and development but also helps formulate more effective and sustainable policy recommendations. Thus, this discussion aims not only to present empirically rich and relevant research results but also to make a meaningful contribution to the development of theory and practice in coastal area development and gender studies in general.

The essence of empowerment refers to the process of giving power to individuals, groups, or communities so that they can become self-sufficient. Self-sufficiency here encompasses the ability and motivation to make decisions and improve livelihoods. The concept of empowerment also has a close relationship with the process and goals to be achieved. The empowerment process involves a series of activities aimed at strengthening vulnerable groups within society. Meanwhile, empowerment focused on its goals aims to create social change by increasing community participation in meeting their livelihood needs (Soeharto, 2008).

The concept of empowerment plays a crucial role in advancing overall community progress. Empowerment provides opportunities for individuals, groups, or communities to take an active role in addressing the challenges they face and improving their quality of life. Through empowerment, people can feel in control of their own lives, which in turn enhances self-esteem and self-reliance. Furthermore, empowerment also encourages active participation in the development process, enabling communities to become agents of change in addressing their local issues. This is important because

each community has different needs and challenges, and empowerment provides them with the tools to find solutions appropriate to their own context. However, to achieve effective empowerment, commitment and cooperation from various stakeholders are needed, including the government, non-governmental organizations, the private sector, and the community itself. Additionally, it is important to pay attention to aspects such as gender equality, access to resources, and social justice to ensure that empowerment is truly inclusive and sustainable. Overall, the concept of empowerment is a strong foundation for building empowered, fair, and sustainable communities.

According to Sujarwo's perspective (2017) in Fadliyanti, et al. (2021), the community plays a crucial role in empowering women, although supporting institutions have a role as facilitators, the community as a whole has a greater role in determining the success of women's empowerment. Although efforts to increase women's participation in development are evident, discrimination against them still prevails. This is due to traditional views in society that consider women to only have a role in the household.

It is acknowledged that women, including those living in coastal areas, have great potential for progress. However, several obstacles hinder their progress, especially related to low human resource quality caused by lack of education and skills. According to research conducted by Mubyarto et al. (in Soengkono, 2002), poverty among fishermen is a complex issue. Although Indonesia has many islands and vast seas, many fishing families still live below the poverty line. Therefore, solutions are needed to improve the economy of fishing communities. Specific gender role-related phenomena are also clearly demonstrated through productive activities between men and women, where men dominate the fishing process, while women only participate in managing the low-value economic catch. This research reveals that women in coastal

areas still face major challenges related to low education and skills, which can hinder their ability to maximize their contribution to development and the economy. Coastal communities should be rich in natural resources from the sea, capable of improving their livelihoods, but in reality, coastal communities still live in poverty. This clearly indicates inequality in the distribution and utilization of economic resources.

Considering this phenomenon, the empowerment of women fishermen is needed because the level of women's empowerment in coastal areas is still low. Although coastal women should play a significant role in the utilization of marine resources, they still face many issues. These include low education levels, cultural influences that limit them, the double burden of work in the family, and a lack of recognition of their roles. Tjiptaningsih (2018) stated that women often face obstacles in their activities due to skill limitations, low education levels, limited job opportunities, and still-binding perceptions of their roles in the household. Women are often overlooked in terms of work and economic contributions, even though they have rights and obligations equal to men. Because of these limitations, women find it difficult to find job opportunities, which ultimately affects their role in improving the family economy. Therefore, recognition of women is often based on their economic contributions, while other roles and contributions are often overlooked. This theory is also supported by the results of research conducted by the author, where many coastal women are still hindered from participating in women's empowerment programs due to the double burden of work in the household, where women not only have to work but also take care of children. On the other hand, if women do not work, their roles in society or the family will be overlooked because recognition of women's roles is often based on their contributions to improving the economy.

Women's economic empowerment is an important aspect in achieving broader development goals, such as economic growth, poverty reduction, health, education, and welfare, as well as protecting women's rights. Kabeer's view (2012), as conveyed through Fadliyanti et al. (2021), emphasizes that the success and progress of women in the economic field, as well as their ability to make and implement economic decisions, reflect women's economic empowerment. Women's involvement, especially in access to capital, has been proven to increase family opportunities to avoid poverty, although not yet optimal in increasing family income. This theory has successfully proven where women's success in the economic field, especially their ability to make and implement economic decisions, is a benchmark for the success of women's economic empowerment. This has been proven through research conducted by the author where with women's empowerment programs by making processed seafood to increase the selling value. Coastal women who have received training or participated in these empowerment programs can use them to resell the products produced. In addition to adding economic value, coastal women also gain new skills and capabilities in processing marine catches, allowing them to help improve family economies and welfare. However, to achieve this, women must be able to increase their role in actively participating in every empowerment program provided by the government.

Research conducted by Azehari (1991) in Fadiah (2022) shows several findings, because of the influence of local social norms, limited skills, and traditional roles as housewives, coastal women tend to have a static participation rate. This makes coastal women have limited economic opportunities. Moreover, the proportion of women in the coastal community population is also decreasing because men take over or have a more dominant role in economic activities, while women have low skills due to lack of training, making them increasingly cornered in helping family needs, therefore

women's economic empowerment is needed. This is in line with research conducted by Widodo (2011) which revealed that the role of women in fishing families is still insufficient to prosper or improve family economics, including in managing marine catches. As explained in other studies, one of the obstacles to women's economic roles is limited education and skills, in research conducted by Widodo also explains that coastal women still have not experienced technological advancements and have limited knowledge and skills, so their lives remain marginalized and poor because they do not have decent jobs. Widodo in his research also explains that in the case of marine fisheries in the Bengkulu Coastal area, there are gender role differences in production between men and women. Men are responsible for the production process, while women are only involved in post-production management, which only generates very low economic added value.

Research on coastal women conducted by Azehari (1991), Suharti (1991), Achmad (1992), and Fitriyah (1990) in Widodo (2011) states several findings:

1. Coastal women tend to have a static role influenced by local social norms.
2. Coastal women have relatively low levels of life skills.
3. Coastal women tend to be bound by traditional roles as wives responsible for household affairs, thus having low opportunities to participate in other social activities.

In his research, Widodo (2011) also emphasizes by providing a solution that to produce effective empowerment programs, a bottom-up approach is needed rather than a top-down approach. This is because the bottom-up approach tends to meet the needs of each target area without neglecting existing potentials. Whereas the top-down approach often fails due to low community participation and motivation in the program

planning process. However, the opposite applies if the bottom-up approach is believed to be successful because it involves the community in every stage of the program. This theory has been proven successful through research conducted by the author, as stated by the Women's Empowerment and Child Protection Office of Cirebon City, one key to the success of empowerment activities is by conducting bottom-up lining, for example, empowerment programs formed by the Ministry will not be as effective as empowerment programs originating from the community that requires forming an activity based on their willingness because it means it will be based on their needs.

To facilitate empowerment program activities, coastal women can be organized into groups known as target women's groups. Based on research conducted by Widodo, he successfully formed coastal women's groups through FGD (Forum Group Discussion) activities whose members are housewives and teenage girls living in coastal areas, with each group consisting of at least 10-15 coastal women. With the formation of coastal women's groups, the initial stage of coastal women's empowerment activities has been achieved. However, to ensure that the formed groups remain solid, group strengthening needs to be done to prepare them for empowerment programs. This is consistent with research conducted by the author, which also reveals that the government has successfully implemented women's empowerment programs, including for coastal women through programs such as Sekoper Cinta, P2WKSS, and 100 Binaan KK. The strategy employed is almost the same, namely through FGD activities, so that coastal women can share experiences or knowledge. In addition, these activities can increase the confidence of coastal women to express their opinions, because so far coastal women may have often been underestimated by people because they are

considered to have no abilities and potentials, so the office provides a lot of support and appreciation to them so that they are willing to continue learning and developing.

The research conducted by the author also reveals several valuable findings in understanding the level of women's participation in empowerment programs in coastal areas, especially in the city of Cirebon. By employing in-depth qualitative research methods, this study was able to explore various factors influencing the level of women's involvement in existing empowerment programs. One aspect that stands out is the complexity of social, economic, and cultural dynamics that play a significant role in shaping women's participation patterns. Although the government has implemented various programs to enhance women's participation, there are still significant challenges that need to be addressed. According to Juniazti et al. (2017), factors affecting women's participation in program implementation are very significant. Internal factors such as awareness and income have a significant impact on community empowerment programs. In addition, external variables such as government leadership and the availability of facilities and equipment also influence how actively women are involved in these programs. One major challenge is the lack of awareness among women about the importance of participation in empowerment programs. This is often caused by factors such as limited access to information and formal education. Furthermore, traditional gender roles continue to hinder women's participation, with the double burden of household chores often acting as a barrier to active involvement in empowerment programs.

This is further emphasized by the research conducted by Azzahra et al. (2021), which also explains several factors hindering women's participation in community empowerment processes, including:

1. Double burden: Many women involved in empowerment programs have responsibilities as homemakers and breadwinners. This double burden hampers their participation even though there are rewards from these activities. However, this double burden does not always stop their participation if they have a strong determination to empower themselves.
2. Timing of activities: Consultation meetings (related to empowerment programs) held in the evening are considered ineffective because women have to manage household chores and other tasks. Nevertheless, the available time is considered short.
3. Education level: The majority of women involved in empowerment programs have only completed junior high school (SMP) and senior high school (SMA). This low level of education can slow down the process of receiving information related to community empowerment program development.

However, this research also highlights concrete steps that have been taken by the government and related agencies to increase women's participation. Programs such as "Sekoper Cinta" and "P2WKSS" demonstrate concrete efforts to empower coastal women through various educational, training, and economic empowerment activities. Through in-depth interviews with coastal women, this research reveals that despite the challenges faced, there is still enthusiasm and great potential to increase women's involvement in empowerment programs. Challenges such as busy schedules with work and dual roles in the family pose real obstacles to active participation of women in empowerment programs. However, some women still show interest and involvement in activities such as becoming village family planning cadres or participating in offered training sessions. This indicates the significant potential to increase women's



participation in empowerment programs in the future. The research conducted by Azzahra et al. (2021) also explains several factors that encourage women's participation in community empowerment programs, such as:

1. Women's awareness to advance their region: Some members of society, including women, will recognize the importance of participating in community empowerment programs to improve the welfare of the areas where they live. This awareness is a primary factor that can encourage women to participate in empowerment programs.
2. Economic needs to be fulfilled: Empowerment programs will provide opportunities for women to earn additional income through the processing of marine products because the continuously increasing economic needs drive them to actively participate in such programs.
3. Family support: Family support, especially from husbands, significantly influences women's participation in empowerment programs. Families that agree and are supportive will make women feel more comfortable to actively participate in the community empowerment process.
4. Opportunities for women's participation: Empowerment programs provide women with opportunities to participate regardless of gender or skills, allowing everyone to participate in these programs.
5. Supportive environmental factors: One's environment, such as friends, neighbors, family, or people they encounter in daily activities, can contribute to women's motivation to participate in empowerment programs and actively engage in the community empowerment process.

Additionally, this research also reveals how the contribution of women's participation, especially coastal women, in empowerment programs plays a role in supporting discussions on gender inclusion and coastal development more broadly. By exploring insights from women's active participation in empowerment programs, we can understand the significant impacts on social, economic, and environmental changes. First, women's participation strengthens their role as agents of change in their communities. With unique insights into local challenges and needs, women can make important contributions to designing appropriate and sustainable solutions. This not only helps reduce gender disparities but also creates a more inclusive and fair environment for all community members. Second, through this participation, women have the opportunity to develop new skills, expand their social networks, and boost their confidence. This is beneficial not only for their personal development but also for overall economic and social progress. Furthermore, research conducted by Azzahra et al. (2021) also indicates the benefits gained by coastal women who actively participate in community empowerment programs, including:

- a. Improving their capabilities by helping women become better through teaching them skills and knowledge about processing marine products, such as fish filleting, smoking fish, salted fish processing, etc. Thus, women who previously could only cook fresh fish for daily meals can now produce processed fish that can increase economic value.
- b. Enhancing economic status through active participation in empowerment programs. Coastal women can produce products or processed goods that can increase their income. Moreover, this will provide both material and non-material benefits, such as the ability of women to earn additional income and

improve their skills in processing marine products, so they can meet basic needs and live better lives.

Furthermore, women's participation in empowerment programs also impacts the improvement of individual and family welfare. With access to education, training, and economic programs, women can increase family income and achieve economic independence. This not only benefits women individually but also contributes to economic growth and poverty reduction in coastal areas. Women's participation also paves the way for them to play a role in decision-making related to these programs, giving them a voice in the development process. This not only enhances inclusion in decision-making but also ensures that policies and programs designed reflect the needs and aspirations of the entire community.

However, there are several barriers that need to be overcome to increase women's participation in empowerment programs. Factors such as work priorities outside the home, low perception of socialization activities, concerns about daily needs, and expectations of material rewards as incentives still pose challenges that need to be addressed. To overcome these obstacles, comprehensive efforts from the government, related institutions, and the community as a whole are needed. This includes providing easy and flexible access to empowerment programs, offering appropriate incentives, raising awareness of the importance of women's participation, and involving families and communities in supporting and facilitating women's participation in coastal development.

According to Azzahra et al. (2021) in their research, they explain several strategies that can be implemented to enhance women's participation in empowerment programs, which have been tailored to the characteristics of the local community. Strategies that can be undertaken include: Initial socialization, deliberation,

organization, and participatory review. Initial socialization is conducted to introduce the program to the community at large so that they are aware of the program to be implemented and feel involved in it. Furthermore, deliberation is carried out to obtain input from the community before the program is implemented. Deliberation is also an important aspect in the success of the program because the program aims to empower the community, so the opinions or inputs of the community are crucial in deliberations to determine exactly what the community needs. The organizational stage will involve the arrangement and implementation of the program, while the participatory review is used to evaluate the program's performance periodically. With these strategies in place, it is hoped that community participation, especially that of women, can be increased in empowerment efforts.

Based on previous research and considerations from conducted studies, the author can conclude several approaches that should be applied to address the barriers hindering women's participation in empowerment programs, including:

1. Encourage women to learn about their roles in development and discuss them.
2. Ensure that empowerment programs are easily accessible and attended by women, for example by arranging convenient timing and locations for them to participate.
3. Women should receive skills training to enhance their abilities and self-confidence.
4. Assist women by involving families and communities to support and appreciate their roles.
5. Create women's communities to share support and experiences.
6. Local governments or related institutions can provide non-material incentives such as certificates or recognition for their involvement in empowerment

programs besides financial incentives. This can increase the desire to learn and raise awareness of the value of training and education.

7. Local governments should ensure a fair and transparent participant selection process for empowerment programs. To ensure equal opportunities for participation, the entire community should be involved in the selection process.