

Integrated Women's Leadership As Strengthening The Implementation Of The Women And Child-Friendly Village Policy

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Abstract

This study aims to analyze the strengthening of women's leadership in the implementation of the Women- and Child-Friendly Village (Desa Ramah Perempuan dan Peduli Anak/DRPPA) policy and to formulate an integrated women's leadership model as an approach to strengthening the policy. This study employs a Systematic Literature Review (SLR) by reviewing and synthesizing previous studies on women's leadership, women's empowerment, village development, and DRPPA implementation. The findings indicate that women have actively contributed to social activities, community empowerment, and the protection of women and children. However, such involvement has not always been accompanied by increased representation of women in strategic positions or village decision-making processes. This condition is influenced by structural and cultural barriers, including patriarchal norms, gender stereotypes, limited leadership capacity, and suboptimal institutional support and gender-responsive policies. Based on the literature synthesis, this study formulates an Integrated Women's Leadership Model comprising women's organizing, capacity building, the expansion of participation spaces, the strengthening of village institutions, and gender-responsive systemic support. The model is expected to strengthen women's position as development actors and support the implementation of DRPPA in a manner that is inclusive, participatory, gender-equitable, and sustainable.

Keywords: Women's Leadership; Village Development; Gender Equality.



INTRODUCTION

Sustainable development is not solely oriented toward economic growth but also emphasizes the importance of inclusive, participatory, and gender-responsive social development. In the context of village development, women are important actors with the potential to contribute to development planning, decision-making, community empowerment, and the protection of women and children. Therefore, women's involvement in village development should not be understood merely as participation in social activities but also as involvement in leadership and decision-making processes.

One of the policies that promotes inclusive and gender-responsive village development is the Women- and Child-Friendly Village (Desa Ramah Perempuan dan Peduli Anak/DRPPA) policy. This policy positions women and children as important components of village development by strengthening participation, empowerment, protection, and the quality of life of the community. In its implementation, DRPPA is expected to create opportunities for women to participate in the planning, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of village development.

To contextualize the operational baseline of DRPPA implementation at the village level, empirical indicators from Toapaya Utara Village, Bintan Regency, are presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Contextual Indicators of DRPPA Policy Implementation

No.	Indicator	Data/Condition	Relevance to the Study
1	Population of Toapaya Utara Village	1,528 people (2023)	Indicates the population scale within which DRPPA implementation takes place
2	Area of Toapaya Utara Village	8,139.52 hectares	Describes the geographical scope and development context of the village
3	Women's participation in community activities	Women are actively involved in Family Welfare Empowerment (PKK), Integrated Health Service Posts (Posyandu), health cadres, and community empowerment activities	Demonstrates that women already have opportunities to participate at the community level



4	Women's participation in formal village leadership	Still limited	Indicates a gap between women's community participation and their representation in strategic leadership positions
5	Women's involvement in village decision-making	Not yet optimal	Indicates a gap between the objectives of DRPPA and the actual practice of women's participation in decision-making
6	DRPPA policy focus	Promotes women's representation in village government, Village Consultative Body (BPD), village community institutions, and customary institutions	Provides a policy basis for examining opportunities for women's leadership
7	Women's leadership development	Requires capacity building, women's organizing, expanded participation spaces, institutional strengthening, and gender-responsive policy support	Supports the need for an integrated women's leadership model

Source: Synthesized from Bintan Regency and Toapaya Utara Village Documentation (Kepri Post, 2024; Website Pemerintah Desa Toapaya Utara, 2026).

The data presented in Table 1 indicate that women in Toapaya Utara Village already have a significant presence in community-based activities. However, their involvement in community activities does not necessarily translate into proportional representation in formal village leadership and decision-making structures. This condition illustrates a gap between women's



participation and women's leadership, particularly in terms of access to strategic positions and the ability to influence village development processes.

This gap is not only related to the number of women involved but also to their ability to influence development processes. Patriarchal culture, gender stereotypes, limited leadership capacity, restricted access to information and resources, and suboptimal institutional support may constrain women's involvement in strategic positions. Therefore, strengthening women's leadership needs to be pursued through an approach that focuses not only on individual capacity building but also on organizing women, expanding participation spaces, and strengthening institutional support within villages.

Previous studies have shown that strengthening women's leadership through training, organizing, mentoring, and increased participation can improve women's capacity, self-confidence, and involvement in village development. On the other hand, program implementation continues to face structural and cultural barriers, resulting in increased capacity not always being followed by greater representation of women in decision-making processes. These findings indicate that strengthening women's leadership requires an integrated approach that connects individual capacity, women's organizations, village institutions, and policy support. Based on these conditions, an integrated women's leadership model is needed to strengthen the implementation of DRPPA.

THEORETICAL STUDY

Synthesis of Empirical and Policy Literature

To formulate a comprehensive analytical baseline, previous studies examining rural women's leadership and DRPPA policy implementation were systematically reviewed and synthesized in Table 2.

Table 2. Systematic Synthesis of Previous Literature on Women's Leadership and DRPPA

<i>Researchers & Year</i>	<i>Research Title</i>	<i>Research Findings</i>
<i>Damayanti & Istania (2023)</i>	<i>Evaluation of Rural Women's Leadership Policy in Supporting Village Development in</i>	<i>The rural women's leadership program was found to improve women's capacity through leadership training and was considered worthy of continuation. However, its</i>

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Researchers & Year	Research Title	Research Findings
	<i>West Nusa Tenggara Province</i>	<i>implementation still faces challenges related to coordination, limited resources and funding, and suboptimal monitoring and evaluation. The study recommends strengthening collaboration among actors involved in program implementation.</i>
Hakim, Prastiwi, & Haliim (2025)	<i>Initiating Women's Organizing and Strengthening Women's Leadership</i>	<i>Women's organizing can increase critical awareness, self-confidence, the ability to express aspirations, and women's participation in development. The study demonstrates that strengthening women's organizations and leadership capacity is an important strategy for increasing women's involvement in decision-making at the grassroots level.</i>
Prastio, Abdillah, & Nurlia (2021)	<i>Women's Leadership in Local Government: A Study of Women's Leadership in South Tangerang</i>	<i>Women's leadership can encourage greater attention to issues concerning women and children and contribute to more inclusive and gender-responsive policies. Its success is determined not merely by the leader's gender but also by leadership capacity, communication, proximity to the community, and the ability to direct the bureaucracy.</i>
Kadir & Husen (2024)	<i>Strengthening Women's Roles in Leadership: Technical Guidance in Galala Village, Tidore Islands City</i>	<i>Leadership training increases women's self-confidence, communication skills, managerial abilities, and readiness to participate in village forums and decision-making processes. However, patriarchal culture, limited access to</i>

<i>Researchers & Year</i>	<i>Research Title</i>	<i>Research Findings</i>
		<i>technology, and insufficient continuous support remain significant barriers.</i>
Darmaningrum & Ardiansyah (2024)	<i>The Role of Women's Leadership in Community Development in Sinangoh Prendeng Village as a DRPPA Pilot Project in Pekalongan Regency</i>	<i>Women play a role as drivers of development in DRPPA implementation through decision-making, economic empowerment, the protection of women and children, and increased community participation. However, patriarchal culture, stereotypes regarding women's leadership, limited resources, and insufficient policy support remain challenges.</i>
Putra (2025)	<i>Gender-Based Village Development: Analysis of the Women and Child-Friendly Village (DRPPA) Model as an Instrument of Equitable Development in Denpasar City</i>	<i>DRPPA can increase women's participation, strengthen the protection of women and children, and expand vulnerable groups' access to public services and decision-making. Its success is influenced by village government commitment, inter-institutional collaboration, community participation, and regulatory support.</i>
Puspaningrum, Aji, Subekti, & Fauzia (2023)	<i>Development Communication in the Women and Child-Friendly Village Program (DRPPA) as an Effort to Empower Women and Children</i>	<i>Development communication through socialization, education, mentoring, and women's involvement in village forums can improve women's understanding, awareness, and participation. The study emphasizes the importance of participatory communication and capacity building in women's empowerment.</i>
Hidayaturahmi, Rosidanti, & Anita (2025)	<i>The Development Model of Women-Friendly and Child-Caring Village from</i>	<i>DRPPA encourages women's participation in deliberation and decision-making while strengthening women's economic</i>

<i>Researchers & Year</i>	<i>Research Title</i>	<i>Research Findings</i>
	<i>the Perspective of Women in Development</i>	<i>empowerment and leadership capacity. However, patriarchal culture, limited resources, inadequate policy support, and coordination among stakeholders remain challenges.</i>

Source: Systematic Literature Review Synthesis (Damayanti & Istania, 2023; Darmaningrum & Ardiansyah, 2024; Hakim et al., 2025; Hidayaturahmi et al., 2025; Kadir & Husen, 2024; Prastio et al., 2021; Puspaningrum et al., 2023; Putra, 2025).

Based on the synthesis of previous studies, research on women's leadership and DRPPA has developed in several directions. First, studies on women's leadership emphasize capacity building, self-confidence, communication skills, organizing, and decision-making abilities. Second, studies on government leadership demonstrate that female leadership encourages greater attention to women, children, and vulnerable groups (Prastio et al., 2021). Third, DRPPA studies indicate that the program expands participation and empowerment (Putra, 2025).

Nevertheless, previous studies tend to examine these aspects separately. Some focus primarily on individual capacity building, while others emphasize DRPPA administrative execution, development communication, or social participation. Therefore, an opportunity remains to integrate representation, capacity, participation, access to decision-making spaces, and the ability to influence decisions as interconnected components of women's leadership.

Women's Leadership in Public Administration

Women's leadership is defined as women's ability and structural opportunity to actively participate, hold positions, and exert influence in village development decision-making processes (Dinafilah et al., 2024; Malihah et al., 2024). Leadership extends beyond basic participation; participation refers to involvement in activities, whereas leadership encompasses decision-making authority, policy leverage, and driving collective change.

Women- and Child-Friendly Village Policy (DRPPA)

DRPPA is a national policy framework designed to integrate gender equality, child protection, and women's empowerment into village governance processes (KPPPA RI, 2023; Syukri, 2023). From a public policy implementation perspective, DRPPA execution requires translating formal mandates into institutional setups, budgetary support, and substantive leadership opportunities within Village Consultative Bodies (BPD) and local administrative units.

Formal versus Substantive Representation

Women's representation must be evaluated through two distinct dimensions: formal representation (the presence of women within institutional structures) and substantive representation (the capacity of women to articulate gender-responsive interests and shape policy outcomes). DRPPA implementation requires moving from numerical representation to substantive leadership.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study employs a Systematic Literature Review (SLR) method to identify, analyze, and synthesize existing peer-reviewed literature and official policy documents regarding women's leadership, village governance, and DRPPA policy execution (Kitchenham, 2019; Sauer & Seuring, 2023).

The review protocol followed five systematic steps:

- **Focus Definition:** Formulating core research questions centered on structural barriers to female village leadership and integrated policy mechanisms for DRPPA.
- **Search Strategy:** Querying academic databases (Google Scholar, Scopus, SINTA) using Boolean search strings: ("women's leadership" OR "kepemimpinan perempuan") AND ("village development" OR "pembangunan desa") AND ("DRPPA" OR "Desa Ramah Perempuan").
- **Screening & Selection:** Applying inclusion criteria (peer-reviewed journal articles, books, and policy reports published between 2019 and 2025 focusing on Indonesian local governance).
- **Data Extraction & Categorization:** Extracting study objectives, methodologies, findings, structural barriers, and policy recommendations into a thematic matrix.



- **Synthesis & Model Building:** Conducting thematic synthesis to bridge empirical research gaps and construct the Integrated Women's Leadership Model.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Implementation of Women's Representation in DRPPA Policy

The empirical synthesis indicates that while women actively drive community empowerment, healthcare (Posyandu), and social welfare (PKK) initiatives, their presence in formal village decision-making structures remains constrained. Women are heavily involved as program implementers and service facilitators, yet remain underrepresented in strategic planning, budgetary allocation (APBDes), and legislative village forums (Musrenbangdes).

This persistent gap between social participation and formal leadership stems from intersecting structural and cultural obstacles:

1. **Patriarchal Cultural Norms:** Deeply entrenched gender stereotypes position formal governance as a male domain while confining female agency to domestic and auxiliary social roles.
2. **Capacity and Resource Limitations:** Restricted access to formal leadership training, digital technology, and policy literacy reduces women's confidence in public negotiation.
3. **Weak Institutional Affirmation:** Suboptimal implementation of affirmative rules (such as the minimum 30% quota in BPD and village executive committees) results in tokenistic presence rather than substantive influence.

The Integrated Women's Leadership Model

To transform female participation from administrative implementation into substantive policy leadership, this study formulates the Integrated Women's Leadership Model. The operational structure, inputs, process components, supporting enablers, and expected outcomes of this model are illustrated in Figure 1.





Figure 1. Integrated Women's Leadership Model as a Strategy for Strengthening DRPPA Implementation

Source: Synthesized from Literature Review Analysis, 2026

As conceptualized in Figure 1, the model integrates five core operational components:

1. **Women's Organization (Grassroots Level):** Mobilizing informal women's collectives (PKK, health cadres, MSME groups) to build critical gender consciousness, solidarity, and shared policy agendas.

2. **Capacity Building and Empowerment:** Delivering structured leadership training, communication skills, negotiation techniques, and policy literacy to prepare female leaders for public defense of community needs.
3. **Active Participation and Engagement Space:** Opening formal avenues within village planning assemblies (*Musrenbangdes*) and policy evaluation processes to ensure female voices influence outcome decisions.
4. **Access to Village Structures and Institutions:** Enforcing affirmative representation rules (minimum 30% quota) across Village Consultative Bodies (BPD), BUMDes management, and executive village posts.
5. **Communication, Collaboration, and System Support:** Aligning village budgeting (APBDes), sex-disaggregated data systems (SIGA), and multi-stakeholder support to sustain gender-responsive village development.

These five components are mutually reinforcing. Grassroots organizing builds collective solidarity; capacity building provides technical capability; expanded participation creates public access; institutional integration grants legal authority; and systemic policy support secures long-term sustainability.

CONCLUSION

This study concludes that implementing the Women- and Child-Friendly Village (DRPPA) policy requires moving beyond numerical or purely administrative female participation toward substantive women's leadership. While women actively drive grassroots empowerment and protective social activities, structural patriarchal culture, gender stereotypes, limited policy literacy, and weak institutional affirmation continue to restrict their entry into strategic village decision-making spaces.

The Integrated Women's Leadership Model offers a systematic framework to resolve these structural gaps. By connecting grassroots organizing, capacity building, expanded participation spaces, institutional affirmative access, and gender-responsive policy enablers (such as SIGA data and APBDes budgeting), the model provides a practical roadmap for creating inclusive, gender-equitable, and sustainable village governance.

FUTURE DIRECTIONS / SUGGESTIONS

Based on the conceptual findings, the following strategic measures are recommended:



1. **Regulatory Affirmation:** Regional and village governments should enact binding village regulations (*Perdesa*) mandating a minimum 30% female representation quota within BPD leadership, executive work units, and BUMDes boards.
2. **Gender-Responsive Budgeting (ARG):** Institutionalize gender-responsive budgeting allocations within the Village Revenue and Expenditure Budget (APBDes) to fund continuous female leadership training and protective programs.
3. **Data Integration (SIGA):** Accelerate the adoption of Village Gender and Child Information Systems (SIGA) to provide reliable sex-disaggregated data for evidence-based village planning.
4. **Empirical Action Research:** Encourage future empirical researchers to conduct longitudinal field evaluations testing the operational impact of the Integrated Model across diverse rural jurisdictions.

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