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## Women's Empowerment Policies for Indigenous Papuan Women in the Recognition and Protection of Customary Law Communities

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### Abstract

*This study aims to analyze the implementation of women's empowerment policies for Indigenous Papuan Women (OAP) based on Regional Regulation No. 1 of 2019 on the Recognition and Protection of Customary Law Communities, and to identify supporting and hindering factors in its implementation at a production house in Sebyar Rejosari Village, Tomu District, Teluk Bintuni Regency, West Papua Province. This study employs a qualitative approach with data collection techniques including observation, in-depth interviews, and documentation. The findings indicate that the implementation of women's empowerment policies in the cultural, economic, and educational sectors faces various challenges, including limited human resources, access to capital, and cultural and geographical barriers. Key supporting factors include the presence of the D'Tomu production house as a community-based economic activity center and support from the local government. Constraining factors include low participation of women in planning and decision-making, lack of skill training, and weak ongoing mentoring. Recommendations from this study emphasize the importance of strengthening the capacity of OAP women, fostering multi-stakeholder collaboration in the development of home-based industries, and integrating empowerment programs rooted in local culture to enhance the well-being and self-reliance of OAP women.*

### INTRODUCTION

Poverty issues in eastern regions are highly complex. Poverty levels in these areas differ significantly from other regions in Indonesia. Both the number of individuals living in poverty and the intensity of poverty, measured by higher expenditure compared to other regions in Indonesia, have been documented by the World Bank in 2007. Poor performance is also evident in nearly all social and economic indicators in these regions. The province of Papua

has the highest multidimensional poverty rate in Indonesia due to its poor performance on non-monetary poverty indicators. The multidimensional poverty rate in this province reached 45.91 percent, with 71.63 percent of households living in multidimensional poverty and a relatively high poverty intensity rate of 64.10 percent. Papua Province accounts for only 6.37 percent of the total multidimensional poor households in Indonesia,

despite having a higher percentage of multidimensional poor individuals than Java and Sumatra. (Ministry of Women's Empowerment and Child Protection of the Republic of Indonesia, 2016).

The regional policy review supporting the development of home industries for poverty alleviation in Papua Province is as follows: The local government is committed to supporting home industry development initiatives in accordance with the provisions of the Law on Special Autonomy for Papua Province. This assistance is provided in the form of initial funding of 3 million rupiah for domestic businesses. Additionally, the " " (Food Assistance) program, which covers living expenses, is another form of social assistance provided to support family livelihoods. Domestic industrial growth has not been significantly influenced by the business sector. Business policies to participate remain hampered by socio-cultural constraints. Despite the provision of assistance, business growth programs are hindered by a large social capital burden. This also affects their role in community empowerment.

The home industry movement has not been effectively mobilized by many community organizations. The management of community resource potential is still limited because community organizations often play a role in conveying community demands for government policies that have not or have not fully met community expectations. As an ethnic minority group in Indonesia, the people of Papua Province have a unique ethnic, religious, and regional language identity. Cultural limitations hinder Papuan women from contributing significantly to regional development. This shows that because women are not actively involved, issues affecting Papuan women cannot be addressed quickly. *Asia Justice and Rights* (AJAR) together with *the Papua Women Working Group* (PWG), given the various problems faced by women in Papua, it is crucial for women to be involved in the formulation of laws and policies. The legislative body, which is dominated by men rather than women, reflects Indonesia's patriarchal culture and produces uniform laws. (Irianto, 2000:93). Presidential Instruction No. 9 of 2000 on Gender Mainstreaming in National Development sets out strategies to achieve gender equality and justice.

These strategies aim to empower women by enabling them to participate as actors in all stages of development, access development resources, control processes, and receive equal benefits, all of which will improve their status and position to be equal with men. However, in many aspects of life, women still lag far behind men. In education, the higher the level of education, the fewer female students there are. Even monitoring shows that the number of illiterate women is very high, while in health, maternal mortality rates are quite high due to poor health and nutrition. In the economic sector, women still have relatively limited access to job opportunities. Although Law No. 23 of 2004 on the Elimination of Violence Against Women has been enacted, the legal system still handles cases of violence against women and children in an inadequate manner.

In the political sector, women's representation in the legislature is still far from the desired quota of 30%, while in the executive branch, women account for only 36% of the positions, with indications that the higher the position, the fewer the number of women. The objectives of this study, based on the existing issues, are as follows: Analyze the implementation of policies on the empowerment of indigenous Papuan women based on Local Regulation No. 1 of 2019 concerning the Recognition and Protection of Customary Law Communities in production houses

in Teluk Bintuni District. Identify and analyze the factors that hinder and support the implementation of women's empowerment for Indigenous Papuan women in production houses in Sebyar Rejosari Village, Tomu District, Teluk Bintuni Regency. Benefits of the Research it is hoped that this research process can provide positive and tangible contributions that directly impact empowerment efforts within production houses. The following are some of the benefits that can be derived, both theoretically and practically: Theoretical Benefits. This research is expected to enrich the body of knowledge, particularly in the fields of public policy studies, women's empowerment, and the protection of indigenous communities in Indonesia. The findings of the study can serve as an academic reference in developing theories on the implementation of indigenous and gender-based economic empowerment policies. Practical Benefits for the Local Government of Teluk Bintuni District: This study can provide constructive input to improve or strengthen the implementation of Local Regulation No. 1 of 2019, particularly regarding the empowerment of indigenous Papuan women in the home industry sector. Indigenous Papuan Women: This study is expected to provide a better understanding of the opportunities and challenges in their economic empowerment through the D'Tomu production house, as well as its impact on improving their well-being. Customary Law Communities: This study can assist customary law communities in understanding how policies on the protection and recognition of customary law play a role in economic empowerment, particularly for women.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

Public policy is a highly complex process. Therefore, the existence of a model that can simplify reality will be very helpful in understanding this complexity. Through various public policy analysis models, such as the policy implementation model, the implementation process can be broken down into simpler elements. This approach is useful for identifying various variables that can influence the implementation of policies. Furthermore, as previously mentioned, due to human limitations in understanding complex realities without simplification, the role of models in explaining public policy becomes very important. This is also relevant in efforts to classify policies based on their characteristics or types. Salisbury and Heinz in (Dewi, 2019) divide policy models into four types, namely:

Distributive policy is a type of policy that provides benefits to one or more groups. These benefits are provided through policy mechanisms established by the relevant authorities, with clear objectives. The provisions in this policy are usually formulated based on demand, the application process, and/or issues considered relevant to the needs of the parties concerned.

Redistributive policy is a policy that aims to redistribute resources or benefits, providing benefits to one or more specific groups at the expense of other groups. In addition, this strategy has a regulatory component because, although it benefits certain organizations, it also harms others. *Regulatory* policies are regulations aimed at controlling various activities. These regulations serve as tools to limit the behavior or actions of one or more groups that directly or indirectly affect the achievement of certain goals for those groups. Self-regulatory policies are policies that allow a group or groups to regulate themselves, including setting restrictions on their behavior or actions. Thus, these policies have the potential to increase rather than reduce the results or benefits obtained.

Understanding implementation is closely related to regulations or policies that focus on the interests of the general public or society at large. Only after a new policy is implemented will its benefits become clear. One of the most crucial phases in the entire process of creating and regulating rules and policies is implementation.

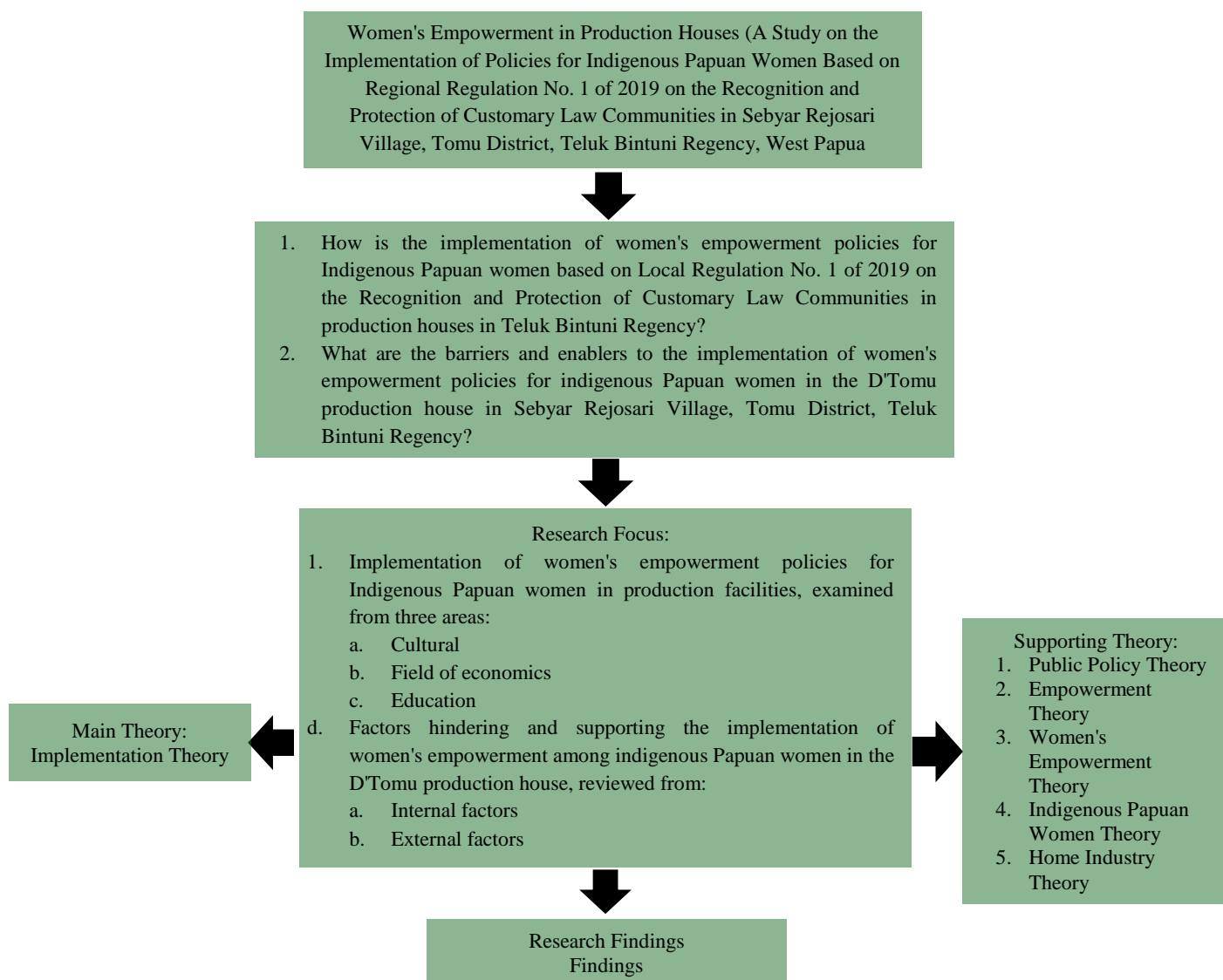
According to Oktasari (2015:1340), the term *implementation* comes from the English word *to implement*, which means to carry out or apply. Implementation refers to the provision of steps or means necessary to carry out something, thereby producing certain impacts or consequences. This implementation can take the form of the application of laws, government regulations, court decisions, or policies formulated by various government agencies in the context of the administration of state affairs.

Indigenous Women of Papua In accordance with Article 2 of the Special Regional Regulation of Papua Province Number 14 of 2016, the indigenous people of Papua are defined as members of

the Melanesian race, which includes the indigenous tribes in the province and/or individuals who have been accepted and recognized as such by the indigenous people of Papua. According to the Special Autonomy Law of Papua, the Indigenous Papuan Community (OAP) consists of members of the Melanesian race, including indigenous tribes predominantly found on the island of Papua, and/or recognized and approved as members of the OAP by the customary law community of Papua. The concept of the Indigenous Legal Community (MHA), which represents the identity of the OAP in the management of natural resources in the Papua region, is closely related to the term OAP.

“Empowerment of Women in Production Houses (Study on the Implementation of Policies for Indigenous Papuan Women based on Regional Regulation No. 1 of 2019 on the Recognition and Protection of Customary Law Communities in Sebyar Rejosari Village, Tomu District, Teluk Bintuni Regency, West Papua Province).”

**Figure 1.** Conceptual Framework



## RESEARCH METHOD

### A. Research Location

This study was conducted in Tomu District, one of the districts in Teluk Bintuni Regency, West Papua Province. Teluk Bintuni Regency is known as an area rich in natural resources, including

forest products, agriculture, and fisheries, which serve as the primary economic sources for the local community. Additionally, the regency has strong cultural and social uniqueness, particularly related to the customary law community recognized through the Teluk Bintuni Regency Regulation No. 1 of 2019.



## B. Data Type

In this study, qualitative data was used. Perreault and McCarthy (Economy & Yogyakarta, 2015) define qualitative research as a research approach that seeks to analyze material comprehensively and include all answers, not just affirmative or negative ones. The purpose of this study is to inspire participants to discuss their various perspectives on a topic without providing much guidance or advice on what they should say.

## C. Informants

Research informants are individuals who have firsthand knowledge of the issues being studied and are utilized to provide information about the context and background of the research. Five minimum requirements must be met when selecting informants: (a) complete enculturation, i.e., a thorough understanding of one's own culture; (b) direct involvement; (c) a familiar cultural atmosphere; in this case, a person will usually be more accepting of cultural actions as they are and will not be rude or insincere; (d) sufficient time; and (e) not analytical. Therefore, this study involved indigenous Papuan women who were involved in the empowerment process at the D'Tomu Production House, Sebyar Rejosari Village, Tomu District, Teluk Bintuni Regency, West Papua Province.

Table Research Informants

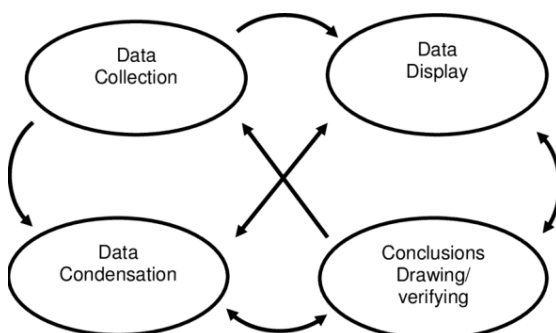
No	Position	Number
1	Female Indigenous Papuan women involved in the Production House	4
2	Tribal Chief	1
3	District Chief	1
4	Community Leader	1
5	Production House Training Assistant	1
6	Production House Owner	2
Total		10

Source: Primary data, 2024

## Data Analysis Technique

To gain a comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon of women's empowerment among indigenous Papuan women at the D'Tomu production house located in Sebyar Rejosari Village, Tomu District, this study employs a qualitative data analysis approach. To provide a more complete picture of the research topic, the researchers use qualitative data analysis to identify themes, patterns, and meanings within the data.

Figure 2. Data Analysis



Source: Miles Hubberman and Saldana, 2014

# RESEARCH DISCUSSION

# FINDINGS

# AND

## A. RESEARCH FINDINGS

One of the regencies in West Papua Province is Teluk Bintuni Regency. This area was previously a district managed by Manokwari Regency before becoming a regency. In accordance with Law Number 22 of 2002 on the Formation of Regencies in Papua Province, Teluk Bintuni Regency was established as a new autonomous entity in 2002 (State Gazette of the Republic of Indonesia Year 2002 Number 129). To ensure the welfare of its people, Teluk Bintuni Regency was established as a local government entity with the aim of providing public services quickly and efficiently. The population of Teluk Bintuni Regency is spread across several geographical zones, including lowlands, islands, valleys, coastal areas, and hilly regions. Teluk Bintuni Regency has a total area of approximately 18,637.00 km<sup>2</sup>. Most of this area consists of swamps, mangroves, and forests, and borders one province, Papua Province, as well as five regencies: South Soong, Manokwari, Fakfak, Kaimana, Teluk Wondama, and Nabire. The administrative division of this area consists of 24 districts, 115 existing villages, 145 preparatory villages, and 2 urban villages, in accordance with Teluk Bintuni Regent Regulation No. 2 of 2009.

Sebyar Rejosari Village, located in Tomu District, Teluk Bintuni Regency, West Papua Province, has distinctive geographical characteristics and is home to a community with interesting demographic and socio-cultural traits. Geographically, the village is situated at an elevation of 5 meters above sea level, indicating that the Sebyar Rejosari area is relatively low-lying and classified as a plain, particularly within a river basin (DAS). This condition influences land use patterns and local community activities.

Figure 3. Map of Sebyar Rejosari Village



Source: Sebyar Rejosari Village Secretariat, 2024

Women's empowerment in the cultural sector aims to preserve and develop traditional heritage that has been passed down through generations. In this effort, various skill-training programs have been provided to indigenous Papuan women (OAP) to enhance

their capacity in producing handicrafts and traditional cuisine with high market value. However, in practice, there are still various obstacles, particularly from a small group of people who still hold the view that women's " " (traditional roles) should remain focused on domestic duties. Additionally, support from traditional institutions in recognizing women's roles in the culture-based economy remains limited, necessitating further efforts to build awareness and collaboration between women and traditional communities.

As stated by Mrs. Weem, an OAP woman working at the Sago Cake and Flour Production House:

*"I, along with several other women in this village, process agricultural and fishery products into ready-to-sell items, such as salted fish, sago, and traditional Papuan handicrafts. In processing sago, we still use traditional methods with tools and techniques passed down from our ancestors. We also ensure that in every stage of production, the values of mutual cooperation and teamwork, which are deeply ingrained in our culture, are always upheld. The training programs for SMEs or women's empowerment here have been very helpful. We who used to only work at home can now earn our own income. However, there are still challenges, such as marketing and limited capital."*

Mr. Parman, the District Head, also shared the same perspective on the matter:

*"We support OAP women here by providing training, production tools, and market access for their products. We also collaborate with various parties so that their products can enter a wider market. Our hope is that this empowerment will preserve the cultural identity of the indigenous Papuan people. Therefore, the products must retain elements of local culture, both in the production process and in their packaging. The biggest challenge in implementing this policy is the lack of facilities and insufficient support from external parties. Additionally, many women still have to balance household responsibilities with their businesses, so they require further guidance."*

Mrs. Fitri Inai, the owner of the Fish Cracker Production House, also confirmed the above statement as follows:

*"I started about three years ago. Initially, I only processed salted fish for my family, but then I saw an opportunity to sell it at the market. I received assistance in the form of fish drying equipment and packaging training. This was very helpful in improving the quality of my products. At my production house, cultural elements play a significant role in my business, for example, the way I process fish follows traditional techniques passed down from our ancestors. I hope there will be more support in marketing and business guidance so we can sell our products outside the region and earn a better income."*

Regulation Number 1 of 2019 on the Recognition and Protection of the Rights of Indigenous Communities serves as an important foundation for empowering indigenous women in Sebyar Rejosari Village. This regulation affirms the recognition of the existence of customary law communities and their rights to preserve their

culture and develop an economy based on local wisdom. In this context, the activities carried out by Mrs. Weem and Mrs. Fitri Inai, such as processing agricultural and fisheries products into market-ready goods while maintaining traditional methods, reflect the fulfillment of the duties of customary law communities to preserve and uphold traditional values, norms, and customs. This aligns with the provisions of the regulation, particularly Article 16 (Duties and Powers of the Customary Law Community), which emphasizes the importance of the active role of the customary law community in cultural preservation and local economic development. Support from the local government related to Article 21 (Right to a Healthy Environment), as stated by Mr. Parman, in providing training, production tools, and market access for women's products from the OAP, is also an implementation of the government's responsibility to protect and empower customary law communities. However, challenges such as the lack of awareness ( ), limited facilities, and insufficient support from external parties highlight the need for further efforts to build awareness and collaboration between women and indigenous communities. Thus, Regional Regulation No. 1 of 2019 not only provides a legal basis for the recognition and protection of customary law communities but also promotes the empowerment of OAP women in cultural and economic fields, as well as strengthens local cultural identity through their active participation in the preservation and development of traditional heritage.

In the economic aspect, women's empowerment policies are aimed at strengthening their business capacity through locally-based production houses, such as the D'Tomu production house. The implementation of this policy has provided various opportunities for OAP women, particularly in terms of access to micro-business capital and production facilities that support the development of their businesses. Mr. H. Aci Kosepa, as the Village Chief, stated:

*"From my perspective as the Village Chief, this is a positive step toward enhancing the economic independence of indigenous Papuan women. In the past, they only helped at home and took care of their families. Now, they can contribute to the family and village economy. In our culture, women play an important role in managing the land and sea resources. Therefore, these home-based production businesses align with their traditional roles. However, we must ensure they can continue fulfilling their traditional and family responsibilities. We support them by providing space to work without violating traditional customs. We also teach the younger generation to value the hard work of women in these home-based production businesses."*

Mr. Tumui, a community leader, also shared similar thoughts:

*"This has a positive impact. With the production house, many women can now help their husbands meet household needs. Products from the production house are also beginning to be recognized outside the village ( ), which means the local economy is starting to grow. The biggest challenge is market access and business capital. Many high-quality products are produced, but without proper marketing, these products are difficult to sell in large quantities. Additionally, many women still need training in financial management and business. I hope there will be more support from the government and private sector to help market their products. If possible, this production house could develop into a*

*cooperative or a larger business so that the benefits can be felt by more people."*

The same sentiment was expressed by Ibu Wati Kinder, owner of the Sagu Bakar and Tepung Production House:

*"The impact of the production house on the economy of women here has been very helpful. Before the production house was established, we only relied on selling raw materials such as fresh fish or wet sago. Now, by processing them into salted fish, sago flour, and handicrafts, the selling price is higher, and we can earn a better income. There has been an improvement. Previously, our income was unstable. Now, with this collective effort, we can achieve greater economic stability. However, we still need broader access to markets, especially in urban areas. The current challenge is limited access to working capital. We need more modern production equipment to speed up the process. Additionally, marketing remains a challenge as few people outside the area are aware of our products."*

Mrs. Fitri Inai, owner of the Fish Cracker Production House, shares a similar view:

*"The production house has been very helpful, especially for women who previously had no steady income. They can work here, gain skills, and earn money without having to leave their household chores. The biggest challenge is marketing and distribution. Our products are still difficult to enter larger markets, such as supermarkets or souvenir shops. Additionally, limited capital is a constraint in increasing production. I hope there will be more support from the government and private sector, whether in the form of capital, training, or marketing. If our products can reach more consumers, more women will benefit economically from this business."*

The success of women's empowerment in indigenous Papuan households is influenced by various factors. These factors can be categorized into internal and external factors, each of which plays a role in determining how effectively empowerment policies can be implemented. The researcher explains as follows. Internal factors are aspects originating from within the production house itself, including human resources, management, and the commitment of indigenous Papuan women in running their businesses. Several factors act as enablers or barriers to women's empowerment in production houses.

## **B. DISCUSSION**

The research findings indicate that OAP women have received training in preserving and developing culture-based skills, such as weaving, traditional Papuan batik, and traditional cuisine. This policy aims to improve women's well-being while preserving local cultural heritage to ensure its continued existence and economic value. However, the implementation of this policy still faces obstacles. One of the main challenges is the strong perception among the community that women should focus more on domestic roles. This view causes resistance to women's roles in the cultural-based economy. In addition, support from traditional institutions for women's roles in economic activities is still limited, which hinders the recognition and expansion of cultural products.

Nevertheless, women who have participated in training feel more confident in developing culture-based businesses. Through this training, they not only preserve cultural values but also gain better economic opportunities. In the economic aspect, policies to empower women in production houses have had a significant impact. Government support in the form of access to micro-business capital, production training, and the provision of local markets has helped women to start and develop their businesses. However, major challenges remain, particularly in marketing. Products produced by home-based production units still face limitations in reaching wider markets. Women's limited understanding of digital marketing strategies is one of the factors making their products difficult to compete outside local markets.

Additionally, infrastructure limitations also hinder the distribution of products to other regions. Therefore, although this policy has provided benefits, further support is needed to build a broader marketing network and enhance digital literacy among OAP women so they can compete in the digital economy era.

Education is a very important aspect in the empowerment of OAP women. The training programs provided cover financial literacy, small business management, and digital skills. Through these training programs, women gain new insights on how to manage their businesses more effectively. However, the challenge encountered in implementing this policy is the low level of women's participation in training. This is due to several factors, including domestic responsibilities that are still primarily the responsibility of women and cultural barriers that prevent women from gaining access to broader education. Additionally, access to formal education remains a challenge in remote areas of Papua. The programs provided are more informal in nature, resulting in limited capacity building for women in the education sector. Therefore, women's empowerment policies in education need to be expanded by providing more affordable and sustainable formal education programs for OAP women.

## **CONCLUSION**

Based on the presentation of data and discussion of the research above regarding the implementation of women's empowerment among the indigenous Papuan people, as well as the supporting and internal inhibiting factors at the Kampung Sebyar Production House, the conclusions that can be drawn from this study are as follows: The implementation of women's empowerment among the indigenous Papuan people (OAP) in production houses shows a positive and encouraging direction. This is evident from the increased active participation of women in production activities, their enthusiasm for economic independence, and their involvement in the skills training provided. Many women demonstrate a strong desire to improve their standard of living and contribute to the family economy. However, this implementation is not without challenges, particularly in aspects of business management and the ability to market products beyond the local area, which remains limited.

Supporting factors within the D'Tomu production house itself significantly influence the success of this empowerment initiative. The high enthusiasm and motivation of OAP women, combined with the basic skills acquired through training programs, are the main assets in running the business. Additionally, the emergence of a sense of community and support among female entrepreneurs creates a conducive working environment. The internal management structure that is beginning to take shape also



facilitates the operational running of the production house and supports the sustainability of production activities. On the other hand, there are also various internal challenges hindering the optimization of empowerment. One of the main obstacles is the lack of experience in managing business finances. Many women are not accustomed to recording income and expenses or allocating profits for sustainable capital. Additionally, low digital literacy makes it difficult for most of them to utilize digital media for product marketing. Cultural factors also cannot be ignored, as some women are still influenced by traditional views that their primary role is in the domestic sphere, not as entrepreneurs.

External supporting factors such as government support and local policies are key determinants of the program's success. Local governments have contributed through training, mentoring, and access to capital assistance. However, external support is not yet comprehensive and sustainable due to limited budgets and a lack of integration between programs. In addition, strong patriarchal cultural values in some communities, as well as a lack of infrastructure such as internet networks and transportation access, are also major obstacles to developing businesses and marketing products to wider areas.

Based on these conclusions, the following recommendations can be made, which will serve as a basis for improving the implementation of women's empowerment for indigenous Papuan women in Sebyar Rejosari Village in accordance with Local Regulation No. 1 of 2019 on the Recognition and Protection of Customary Law Communities in Sebyar Rejosari Village, Tomu District, Teluk Bintuni Regency, West Papua.

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