



Women's Participation in Tourist Village Empowerment

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ABSTRACT: Community participation is an important part of the implementation of community empowerment, which is generally carried out in the village. Women's participation, as a form of reducing gender inequality, contributes to efforts to maintain and develop tourism villages. The research aims to analyze the practice of women's participation in Cikakak Tourism Village. The research method used is a mixed method with data collection techniques including distributing questionnaires, conducting Focus Group Discussions, conducting in-depth interviews, and observation. The research informants include women's participation actors, such as family welfare empowerment groups, women farmers groups, business groups, and the village head. The research employs a qualitative research approach with a case study methodology. The results of the study show that women's participation in Cikakak Tourism Village has been carried out voluntarily and democratically, involving them in the process of planning and decision-making for Tourism Village activities, with a tendency towards a representative system. The women have contributed in various forms, such as in-kind contributions, labor, expertise or skills, and monetary contributions, which are adjusted based on the individual's capabilities. The most common form of contribution made by women is in the form of labor.

KEYWORDS: Community; empowerment; participation; tourist village; women

1. Introduction

Tourism in Indonesia is a sector with great potential for continuous development, leveraging its natural resources, beauty, and local cultural wisdom. The tourism sector plays a significant role in the country's economic growth, including increasing income and improving people's welfare. According to statistical data from 2021 to 2022, over a span of 10 years (2009-2019), the travel and tourism industry contributed 10% to the global gross domestic product (GDP) and had a direct contribution of 3%. One model of tourism development is the concept of a tourist village. The government aims to develop tourist villages to stimulate economic growth, enhance people's welfare, alleviate poverty, address unemployment, preserve nature, and promote culture. In 2014, there were approximately 1,302 tourist villages, which grew to 1,734 villages with the potential for tourism development by 2018 (BPS, 2021). This number has further increased to 7,275 tourist villages in 2022. One notable tourist village in Central Java Province is Cikakak Tourism Village, located in Wangon District, Banyumas Regency.

Cikakak Tourism Village was inaugurated in 2021-2022 and is currently classified as an advanced tourism village. It offers various tourist attractions, including the natural beauty of Antap Tourism Market, religious tourism at the Saka Tunggal Mosque (also known as the Baitussalam Mosque), Embung Sabang Maz for fishing tours, and Aza Craft, which involves women in its production. Community participation serves as an integral element in the concept of community empowerment. The village, as part of the government, bears the responsibility of developing the region and its people. Building a tourism village necessitates active community participation, reflecting the empowerment activities within the community. Development based on a participatory approach positions the community not only as a recipient but also as an active contributor to the development process. The development of tourist villages through the empowerment of local communities exemplifies the nation's commitment to tourism development [1–4].

Women's participation in Cikakak Tourism Village plays a significant role in its maintenance and development. Women involved in family welfare empowerment and women farmers' groups contribute to the culinary and handicraft production, creating unique souvenirs representative of the tourist village. Young women who are members of Pokdarwis actively participate in dance performances during various events. In addition, women belonging to the traders' association contribute by providing a variety of culinary specialties that tourists can enjoy while visiting the village. Women's participation stands as a key determinant in the successful development of a thriving tourist village. It is expected that their involvement will help address gender inequality by ensuring better representation of women's interests [5–8]. Further research is required to explore the journey of women's participation in tourism village empowerment activities, considering both their successes and limitations. Such research would provide valuable insights into the benefits of women's actual participation in Cikakak Tourism Village and identify areas for improvement involving relevant stakeholders. Preliminary observations conducted in Cikakak Tourism Village, Wangon Sub-district, Banyumas Regency, between June and August 2022, indicate women's involvement in various empowerment activities within the village. However, during the initial observations, their participation in planning meetings and decision-making processes related to tourism village empowerment activities was not clearly evident. Additionally, specific plans for women's empowerment programs from the village government, supporting the development of tourist villages, have not been explicitly stated in writing. The phenomenon of women's participation in the empowerment activities of Cikakak Tourism Village is influenced by various internal and external factors, shaping its journey. This aspect requires further study to provide valuable insights for the development of women's participation practices. Considering the information provided, the research question becomes: How is women's participation in empowerment in Cikakak Tourism Village, Wangon Sub-district, Banyumas Regency?

2. Materials and Methods

2.1. Mixed research methods.

Mixed research methods, or mixed methods, were chosen as the basis for conducting this research. It involves combining descriptive quantitative research with qualitative research using a case study approach. The chosen design for the mixed methods approach is explanatory sequential, wherein the quantitative phase is conducted first, followed by further analysis and

investigation in the qualitative phase [9]. The research was conducted between June 2022 and March 2023, specifically in Cikakak Tourism Village, located in Wangon District, Banyumas Regency. Preliminary research was conducted in June 2022, and the selection of the research site was done through purposive sampling.

2.2. Research subject determination.

The determination of informants for the qualitative research utilized purposive sampling, which is a sampling technique based on specific considerations. On the other hand, the sample of respondents was determined using quota sampling, which involves identifying individuals based on important categories. For this study, the informants included women who were members of the Women Farmers Group, the village family welfare empowerment program, Pokdarwis, the tourism village culinary traders association, and the village head responsible for the village administration.

2.3. Research data collection.

In terms of data collection, both primary and secondary data were used. Primary data refers to information obtained directly from research subjects, while secondary data is gathered indirectly from relevant institutions related to the research topic. The data collection methods employed for the quantitative phase included distributing questionnaires, while for the qualitative phase, techniques such as interviews, focus group discussions (FGDs), and observation were utilized. A triangulation approach was applied in the data collection process, involving the simultaneous use of multiple data collection techniques.

3.3. Research analysis.

Regarding data analysis, descriptive statistics were employed for the analysis of quantitative data. Descriptive statistics involve describing and summarizing the data without drawing general conclusions or making generalizations. For qualitative research, the data reduction analysis model was applied in the data analysis process [10].

3. Results and Discussion

The history of Cikakak Village is closely intertwined with the figure of Mbah Tholih/Kyai Musholih/Syeh Abdul Kahfi. It is believed that Mbah Tholih was the first person to open up a dense forest, known as Alas Meranti, which was inhabited by wild animals and supernatural creatures. Over time, this area developed into villages and eventually became the present-day Cikakak Village. The establishment of Cikakak Village is also associated with the historic Saka Tunggal Mosque, which was initiated by Mbah Tholih in 1288. Initially, Mbah Tholih was a hermit in the forest but later received guidance to travel to Egypt. It was there that he embraced Islam after meeting a Muslim. Upon returning to the forest, Mbah Tholih spread Islam among the community. As a result, the people who were previously living without rules, engaged in gambling, and consumed alcohol began to lead a more guided life and actively contributed to the development of Islam. To this day, the Saka Tunggal Mosque has preserved both its cultural customs and religious practices. In the community, various stories exist regarding the origin of the name "Cikakak." Some believe it is derived from the name of the Crow bird, while others associate it with the laughter of drunkards, a literary dragon's battle with an intent belt, or a

combination of the Sundanese words "cai" meaning water and "kakak" meaning old, resulting in "Cikakak."

3.1. Aspects of participation involvement in planning.

Women's participation in planning can be assessed based on four indicator points from the questionnaire. The first indicator indicates the presence of meeting forums specifically discussing Tourism Villages, in Figure 1 shows that 50% stating they occur sometimes, 46% often, and only 5% claiming they always take place. The second indicator shows that respondents are involved in the planning process for tourism village empowerment, with 65% saying they are involved sometimes, 35% often, and only 5% claiming they are always involved. The third indicator pertains to women's involvement in expressing their opinions, with 80% stating they do so sometimes, 15% never, and 5% often. The fourth indicator assesses the extent to which women have the opportunity to choose or determine the planning process, with 75% saying they have this opportunity sometimes, 15% never, and 10% always.

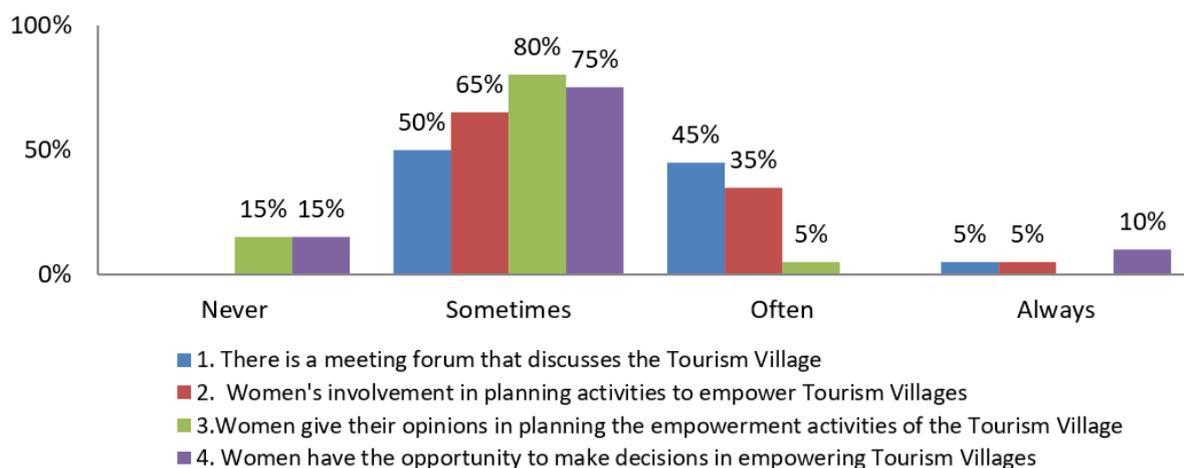


Figure 1. Participatory aspects of involvement in planning.

Women have actively participated in the initial planning of Cikakak Tourism Village activities. They have been involved in discussions alongside men in a unified forum. This demonstrates that gender-related issues are not a problem, as women hold an equal position and have the same opportunities for participation, despite the village government's policy of ensuring a minimum of 30% representation for women. This phenomenon aligns with the theory of equilibrium, which emphasizes balance and equality between women and men. Rather than being in opposition to each other, they work as partners and collaborate, particularly in social situations [11–12]. In reality, women in Cikakak Village have exhibited higher levels of participation compared to men. This could be attributed to factors such as the larger number of women in the village or their inherent enthusiasm and inclination towards gathering and socializing. However, when it comes to voicing proposals, it can be observed that only a few individuals, often considered female figures, actively contribute. These women possess the necessary skills, education, and confidence to express their opinions. On the other hand, the relatively lower participation of some women may stem from a sense of being represented or a perceived difficulty in articulating their thoughts in a coherent manner.

3.2. Aspects of participation in the involvement of decision making.

Regarding women's participation in decision-making, there are three indicator points. The findings reveal in Figure 2 that 60% of respondents stated they were sometimes invited to meetings or socializations conducted by villages or groups related to tourism village empowerment activities. Additionally, 35% mentioned being often invited, while 5% claimed they were always invited. In terms of attendance at these meetings or socializations, 75% responded with sometimes, 20% with often, and 5% with always. Lastly, concerning women's voices influencing decision-making, 70% stated that it occurs sometimes, 20% claimed it never happens, 5% responded with often, and 5% with always.

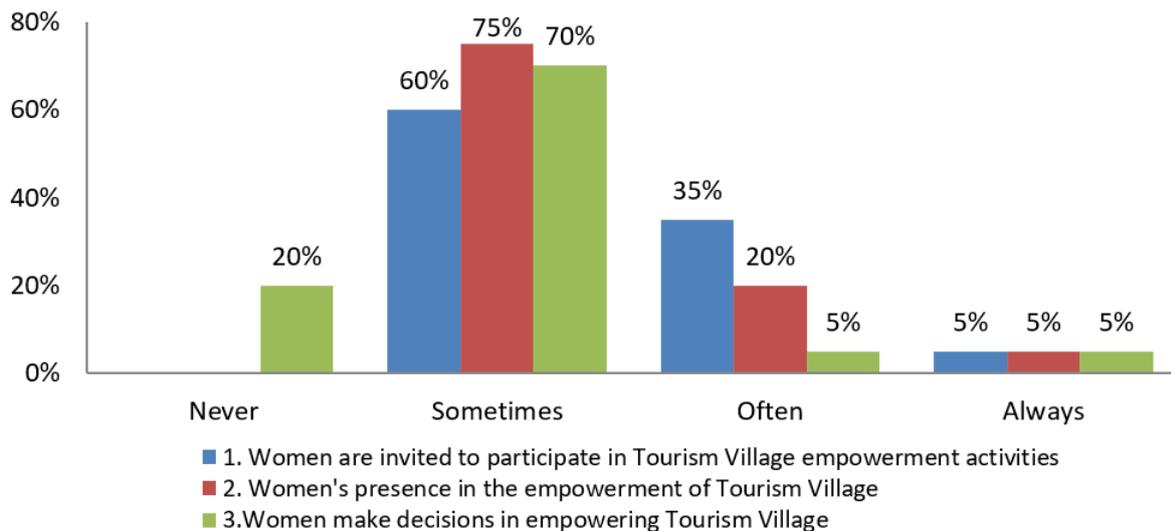


Figure 2. Aspects of participation in involvement in decision making.

The implementation of women's involvement in decision-making is evident in their active participation in submitting ideas, thoughts, input, and suggestions that significantly influence the decisions made during discussions on Tourism Village activities. This participation occurs during both the planning phase and the preparation of special events. Women are involved in decision-making processes related to goal formulation, policy development, planning, and implementation of development programs [13–16]. In this process, women's presence in meetings is based on specific invitations that are tailored to the needs of the discussion. It is emphasized that participation is based on the understanding that individuals can contribute based on their relevance, such as their abilities, expertise, and daily interests. Hence, community members can participate partially or fully in the empowerment process.

3.3. Participation aspects of contribution to the tourism village program.

The questionnaire results reveal five indicator points regarding the form of women's participation in contributing to the tourism village program. The first indicator indicates their involvement in labor contributions, such as cooperative participation, food and beverage preparation, cleaning, planting flowers at tourist sites, and other activities. Based on Figure 3 that 45% responded with sometimes, 45% with often, 5% with always, and 5% with never. The second indicator highlights their participation in contributing their skills and expertise, such as crafting, creating culinary souvenirs, performing dances, and more. 60% responded with

sometimes, 25% with often, 10% with never, and 5% with always. The third indicator pertains to women's involvement in providing financial assistance, including routine contributions, voluntary donations, and voluntary withdrawals. 55% responded with sometimes, 20% with often, 15% with never, and 10% with always. The fourth indicator focuses on women's participation in contributing goods, such as donating sugar or coffee to cooperative activities, lending tools, donating food during cultural celebrations, and other similar contributions. 70% of respondents indicated sometimes, 15% with never, 10% with often, and 5% with always.

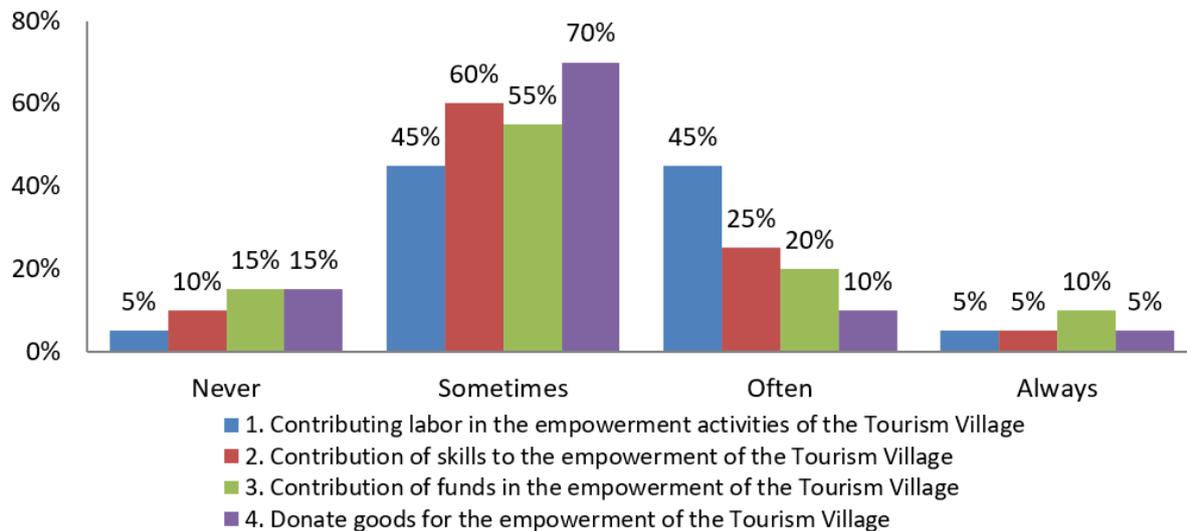


Figure 3. Aspects of participation and contribution to the program.

Women contribute labor in various ways, particularly during deliberations or community service events where they are involved in food and beverage preparation. Additionally, when there are events such as bazaars, women play a role in preparing the products for display. Some women also contribute by taking on cleaning and ticket guarding responsibilities. In terms of skills, women showcase their expertise in producing handicrafts and special food preparations that serve as souvenirs for tourists. Young women, many of whom are still attending Vocational High Schools, demonstrate their proficiency in performing traditional dances that are characteristic of the tourism village. However, women's involvement in financial contributions is not yet optimal. Monetary donations are typically made in response to official requests or for specific activities. The traders' association, comprised mostly of women, makes regular and significant contributions to increase the Tourism Village's income. They contribute by collecting and cutting coins (a substitute for currency) obtained from their daily sales. Contributions in the form of goods are primarily made by women who provide food or drink donations during traditional celebrations, such as Jaro Rojab, as well as community service events. Among the various contributions made by women to empower tourism village activities, labor contributions are the most prominent. These contributions are easier to implement and are more likely to involve individuals from all segments of society. As indicated in the research, labor contributions do not require monetary capital and are relatively straightforward, making them more accessible to the community at large [17–19].

3.4 Aspects of participation in benefits received

Regarding the benefits experienced by respondents through their participation in tourism village empowerment activities, based on Figure 4 that 85% of them reported gaining increased insight and knowledge, while 30% stated that they received additional income.

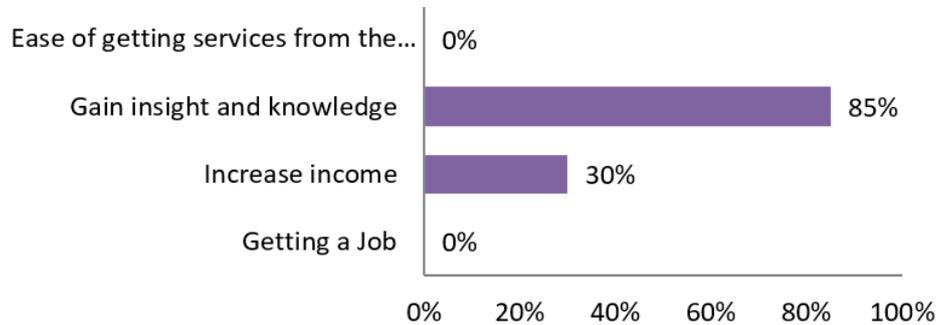


Figure 4. The benefits felt by women in participating in empowerment of tourism villages.

The form of benefits received by respondents was in the form of awards, in Figure 5 namely 40% stated that they received awards in money and goods, 20% received certificates, 20% received respect from the community and 30% received other awards.



Figure 5. Forms of appreciation that women receive in participating in tourism village empowerment activities.

The participation that has been carried out is oriented towards achieving the goal of benefiting the community. Active participants have experienced real benefits, with the most notable one being the acquisition of knowledge. Through their involvement in meetings, socialization, and training related to Tourism Villages, women have seen a significant increase in their knowledge. They approach participation as an opportunity to enhance their understanding, and the knowledge they acquire aligns with their growing experience in organizations and activities [20–22]. Additionally, another benefit that participants have enjoyed is earning income, particularly for women involved in the traders' association. They generate income through their sales. Furthermore, participants have also received financial assistance during meetings, socialization events, or other activities. They have been recognized through awards in the form of training certificates or even winning championships for their contributions to Tourism Village activities.

3.5. Aspects that determine participation in terms of age, gender, education, occupation, length of stay.

The results of the first indicator show that the Cikakak Tourism Village empowerment program involves the younger generation, especially women, in Figure 6 that with 70% of respondents agreeing and 30% strongly agreeing. Involving elderly women received a response of 90% agreement, 5% disagreement, and 5% strong disagreement. Overall, 77% of respondents agreed, 16% strongly agreed, and 5% disagreed with the involvement of all age groups in tourism village empowerment activities. Regarding the involvement of the elderly, 5% expressed disagreement and 5% strongly disagreed. Analyzing the age characteristics of the 20 respondents, the majority fell within the 30-39 years age group (40%), while the elderly (50-59 years) and young people (under 19 years) each accounted for 5%. This suggests that the elderly still maintain enthusiasm for participation, even if in smaller numbers. According to Deep Angel, middle-aged and older individuals with a stable moral and normative level tend to participate more. In the Cikakak Tourism Village, women aged 20 to 40 dominate as active participants. An interesting phenomenon is observed among school-age girls (19 years and under), as they can be empowered based on their areas of interest. Although with a smaller percentage, the elderly are also involved. Some expressed disapproval due to health and mobility limitations. However, the general consensus is that individuals of any age can be involved.

The gender aspect is reflected in four indicator points. In response to the notion that women's status hinders their participation, 65% disagreed, 15% strongly disagreed, 15% agreed, and only 5% strongly agreed. Regarding the importance of women's participation, 65% agreed and 35% strongly agreed. The third indicator shows that women's participation in activities related to the need for family support received a high agreement rate of 95%, with 5% strongly agreeing. However, negative views from the community regarding women's involvement in tourism village empowerment activities were expressed by 70% of respondents, while 20% disagreed and 10% strongly disagreed. There is a perspective of gender and subordination that assumes a lower role for one sex compared to the other. However, in the Cikakak Tourism Village, women have shown greater involvement in empowerment activities compared to men, which can be attributed to their larger numbers. They believe that their status should not hinder their movement and actively seek opportunities for involvement, driven by a strong spirit [23, 24]. The education aspect is covered by five indicators. Regarding the necessity of requiring a certain level of education for participation in tourism village empowerment activities, 70% disagreed, and 30% strongly disagreed. The importance of involvement in training as a practical education element to enhance women's skills and knowledge received a high agreement rate of 95%, with only 5% in disagreement. When asked about the beneficial and practical nature of the socialization/training sessions in which women participated, 90% agreed, 5% strongly agreed, and the remaining 5% disagreed. The fourth indicator addressed the types of training needed by women, with different responses from each respondent. Among the choices provided, 70% indicated a need for product marketing training, 20% for skills training, and 10% for other types of training.

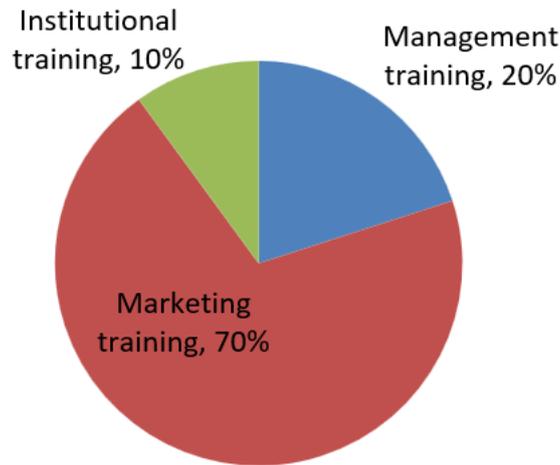


Figure 6. Types of training that women need today.

The results of the respondents' answers to the 5th questionnaire reveal the reasons why women are willing to participate. According to the information provided by the respondents, in Figure 7 that 65% cited expanding knowledge and expertise as their motivation, 35% mentioned job opportunities, 25% expressed awareness of contributing to village development, 15% mentioned channeling their talents, and another 15% stated that they participated due to appointments or invitations.

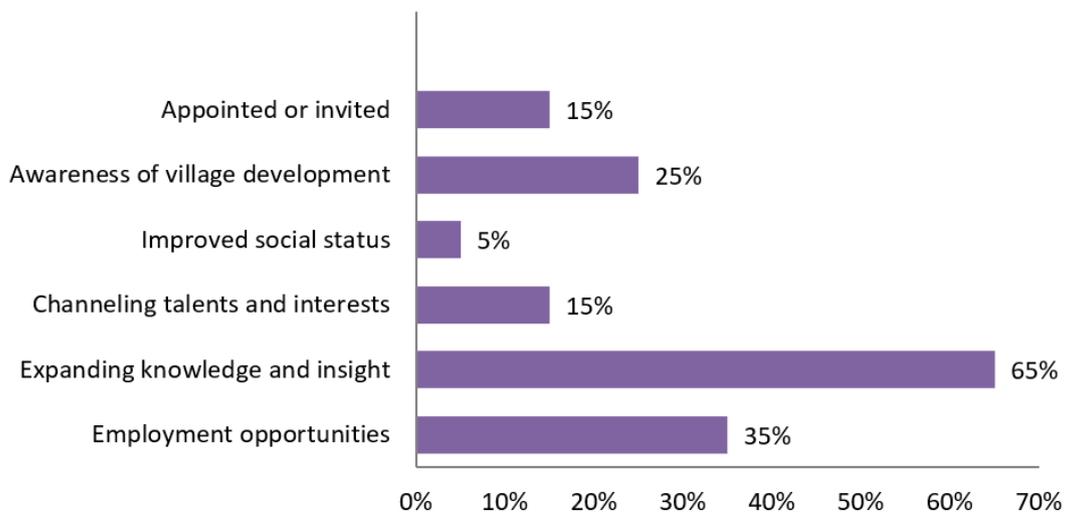


Figure 7. Reasons for women's willingness to participate in empowerment of tourism villages.

The level of education is still considered to have an impact on a person's attitude towards their surroundings and is seen as necessary for improving people's welfare. However, in the Tourism Village context, even women with only elementary education are actively involved. Women in the village demonstrate openness towards education [25, 26]. Education is not the primary factor driving their participation; instead, they believe in adjusting their contributions according to their capabilities. Training programs are designed to enhance the knowledge and skills of women. Although they recognize the value of the training, not all participants are able to apply the acquired skills due to various reasons, such as personal interests, talents, and hobbies. The questionnaire also included two indicators related to work and income, which determined women's participation in tourism village empowerment activities. The first indicator focused on the respondents' monthly income, as shown in Figure 8. The responses

varied, with 80% stating that they earn below 1 million, 10% claiming to earn 1-2 million per month, and 10% reporting earnings above 2 million per month.

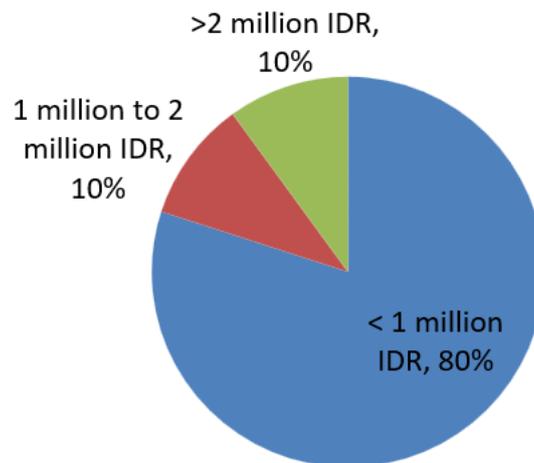


Figure 8. The amount of women's income in a month.

Individuals who do not face economic hardships are generally more likely to actively engage in community activities. However, in Cikakak Village, women with middle to lower income levels, earning around 1 million IDR per month, still actively participate. Their decision to participate is not solely determined by their working conditions or income. The questionnaire results on the aspect of length of stay in the village are presented through four indicators. The first indicator reflects the residents' sense of pride in living in Cikakak Tourism Village, with 60% agreeing and 40% strongly agreeing. The second indicator pertains to the sense of responsibility to participate, with 95% of respondents agreeing and 5% strongly agreeing. The third indicator examines the opportunities given to the residents of Cikakak Tourism Village to participate, with 85% agreeing and 15% strongly agreeing. The fourth indicator addresses whether migrant communities should also be given equal opportunities to participate, with 85% agreeing and 15% strongly agreeing. As residents who have lived in the Tourism Village for an extended period, women in general feel a strong sense of pride in being part of Cikakak Tourism Village. This feeling is further amplified by the village's remarkable achievements, such as winning the 2021 Central Java Province Tourism Village Title and ranking first in various categories. Cikakak Tourism Village has also been recognized as one of the top 50 best tourist villages in Indonesia at the Indonesian Tourism Village Award (ADWI) 2021. These accomplishments foster a sense of pride that motivates and strengthens women's participation. It is agreed upon that since their birth in the Tourism Village, they are expected to have a sense of responsibility and serve as role models inspiring other women to participate. The women also embrace an inclusive mindset, welcoming immigrants and encouraging their active involvement in the community [27–30].

4. Conclusions

This study presents the field data extraction results followed by a discussion process. Based on the discussion, the researcher concludes that women's participation in Cikakak Tourism Village encompasses various aspects. Firstly, there is voluntary and democratic involvement of women in the planning and decision-making processes of the village's activities, with an emphasis on

representative participation. Women have made contributions to the development of the tourism village in terms of goods, labor, expertise/skills, and financial resources, according to their individual capacities. Among the contributions made, labor stands out as the most prevalent form. Through their participation, women have gained diverse benefits, with the most notable being an increase in knowledge and insight. Regarding the factors influencing participation, women unanimously agree that age, gender, education, and occupation should not be barriers to their involvement. However, in practice, age tends to play a significant role in determining the level of participation among women. Women's participation in Cikakak Tourism Village has been observed across various aspects. The voluntary and democratic engagement of women in the planning and decision-making processes of the Desa Wisata activities is a notable aspect, with participation aimed at achieving representation. Women's contributions in the form of goods, labor, expertise/skills, and financial resources are adjusted based on individual capabilities, and labor contributions are the most frequent. Participation in these activities has resulted in various benefits, with the greatest impact being an increase in knowledge. External elements such as stakeholders, leaders, and relationships with the broader community can also influence women's participation. The establishment of Cikakak Tourism Village by the government as part of cultural and environmental preservation serves as a significant external driving force, attracting women's active involvement.

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