BESTUURSKUNDE
Journal of Governmental Studies

The Author(s). (2025). *Bestuurskunde: Journal of Governmental Studies, 5*(2), 105-117
https://doi.org/10.53013/bestuurskunde.5.2.105-117

OPEN ACCESS

Article

Projecting the Village Law Implementation Gap:

A Comparative Study of Developed and Underdeveloped Regions in Indonesia

Fauzan Hidayat

Abstract: This study examines the gaps in the implementation of the revised Village Law (Law No. 3 of 2024) across Indonesia. A qualitative approach was employed to assess the experiences, perspectives, and interpretations of various stakeholders, including village governments, local communities, and experts in village administration. Through in-depth interviews, observations, and document analysis, the study identified factors that facilitated or hindered the implementation of the Village Law. The findings indicated that implementation challenges were largely driven by the inadequate capability of village government officials, limited access to financial and technical resources, and infrastructure disparities, particularly in underdeveloped regions such as Eastern Indonesia. These gaps impede equitable development and negatively affect the well-being of the village. The study emphasizes that enhancing the institutional capacity of the village, accelerating the development of basic infrastructure, and establishing a more integrated coordination strategy between central and regional governments are crucial. Furthermore, the study considers information technology a potential solution for increasing transparency and efficiency in village fund management. This study recommends implementing more responsive and adaptive policies to address regional needs, ensuring that the benefits of the revised Village Law are distributed equitably across Indonesia.

Received
30 August 2024

Accepted
26 September 2025

Published online
October 2025

Author(s)
Corresponding Author
Fauzan Hidayat
-
fauzan9130@gmail.com
Ministry for Food Affairs

Keywords: Implementation of the Village Law; Village Development Disparities; Village Governance;

About the Author(s)

Fauzan Hidayat is a Policy Analyst at the Coordinating Ministry for Food Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia.

I. Introduction

The amendment of the Village Law (Law No. 3 of 2024) is intended to address challenges identified in the implementation of the previous regulation (Law No. 6 of 2014), which exposed significant disparities in development outcomes across villages. Villages in developed regions tend to utilize village funds more effectively, while underdeveloped villages continue to face structural and institutional constraints. Since the enactment of Law No. 6 of 2014 on Villages, Indonesian villages have experienced significant developments and encountered new challenges, thereby necessitating regulatory reforms to accommodate these evolving dynamics (Aprilia et al., 2025)

The formulation of the Village Law is grounded in the recognition that villages are socio-political entities with the right to regulate and manage the interests of their communities in accordance with their local customs (Pratama, 2022, p. 9). Since the enactment of Law No. 6 of 2014, villages have received significant budget allocations from the central government through the State Budget (APBN) (Tang et al., 2022, p. 390). This village fund allocation aims to accelerate village development, reduce socio-economic disparities, and increase village independence.

This study investigates gaps in the implementation of Law No. 3 of 2024 by comparing villages in developed and underdeveloped regions to identify the factors influencing these disparities. These factors encompass difficulties in managing village funds, incidences of corruption, limited administrative capacity among village officials, and the uneven distribution of the policy's benefits across Indonesia (Suharto, 2019, p. 13; Suyanto et al., 2024). Furthermore, this amendment is influenced by other national policies, such as the Job Creation Law, which necessitates adjustments to ensure that existing regulations remain relevant and effective in achieving national development goals (Fahira et al., 2023, p. 53; Li & Sahari, 2025, p. 7).

The amendment of Law No. 3 of 2024 introduces several significant changes, including the restructuring of the village government ecosystem, the affirmation of village status, the allocation of village funds, and new regulations on retirement benefits for village heads, Village Consultative Bodies (BPD), and village officials. One of the most prominent changes is the adjustment to the village head's term of office, a crucial issue given their role as leaders who directly interact with the community at the grassroots level (Lei, 2024).

The restructuring of the village government ecosystem is designed to build a more cohesive and robust governance structure capable of managing administrative, financial, and social challenges (Rizal et al., 2022, p. 83). The revised law places greater emphasis on villages as autonomous entities, aiming to expand their role in development processes and decision-making related to community welfare (Purnomo & Purwandari, 2025).

This amendment also introduces new regulations regarding the allocation of village funds, with the goal of strengthening transparency and accountability in village fund management (Chen et al., 2025). This issue is crucial given the substantial funds disbursed directly to villages and the potential for misuse if effective oversight and management are not implemented (Egger et al., 2022).

Previous studies have examined the implementation of the Village Law; however, most have been retrospective, with limited attention to post-amendment implementation across developed and underdeveloped regions. Although the amendment of Law No. 3 of 2024 carries significant implications for village governance, funding, and institutional structures, its future implementation trajectories remain underexplored. This gap highlights the need for studies that project and analyze the potential outcomes of the revised law.

Ensuring equitable implementation of the amended Village Law remains a major challenge. Indonesia, as a vast archipelagic country, has highly diverse social, economic, and geographic characteristics, resulting in substantial differences in the capacity of regional and village governments to implement national policies such as the Village Law (Wahyudi, 2016, p. 101). The gap between developed and underdeveloped regions in human resource capacity, infrastructure, and access to information and technology is a key factor likely to influence the successful implementation of this law (Bunkley et al., 2025).

Villages in developed areas, such as those on Java Island, generally have better access to resources and infrastructure, enabling them to manage village funds and implement development programs more effectively (Nasir, 2022). In contrast, villages in underdeveloped regions, particularly in Eastern Indonesia, face significant constraints in financial access, skilled labor, and infrastructure (Royandi et al., 2019, p. 164). This gap potentially may widen development disparities between regions, contradicting the primary objective of the Village Law, which seeks to promote equitable and just development (Toumbourou et al., 2025).

Gaps in the implementation of the Village Law affect not only infrastructure development but also social and political conditions at the local level. Villages that struggle to implement policies effectively may lag in development, leading to community dissatisfaction and increased social instability. Furthermore, these gaps can trigger inequities in the distribution of benefits from government programs, with more developed villages often receiving greater benefits than less developed ones.

The government recognizes this potential gap and has introduced various programs and policies to address it. One such initiative includes providing technical assistance and training to village officials in underdeveloped regions, as well as strengthening village institutional capacity through mentoring and coaching programs. However, these initiatives continue facing challenges related to resource availability and coordination between central and regional governments (Martitah et al., 2020, p. 23).

Furthermore, the information and communication technology (ICT) is expected to minimize this gap by providing villages in underdeveloped areas with easier access to information and resources For instance, the Village Information System (SID) program developed by the government aims to enhance transparency and accountability in village fund management and to improve access to information for the villagers (Bhushan et al., 2022; Febrianto, 2021, p. 12) .

To ensure that the amended Village Law is implemented consistently across Indonesia, an effective monitoring and evaluation system is essential. The government needs to develop clear indicators to measure implementation progress across different regions and to identify the obstacles faced by villages in underdeveloped areas. This data can be used to design more targeted interventions to reduce the implementation gaps.

The amendment of the Village Law represents a crucial measure to strengthen village governance and improve the welfare of rural communities. Its successful implementation, however, relies largely on the government's capacity to address existing disparities between developed and underdeveloped regions. By proactively addressing these issues, the amended Village Law is expected to deliver more equitable benefits to all villages in Indonesia.

Accordingly, the primary objective of this study is to identify the factors contributing to gaps in the implementation of the Village Law (Law No. 3 of 2024) across different regions in Indonesia. The amendment of the Village Law aims to strengthen village governance and improve the welfare of its residents. However, the gaps in capacities and resources between villages in developed and underdeveloped regions pose a risk of unequal implementation.

This study examines these disparities using several key parameters: the capacity of village officials, access to basic infrastructure (such as electricity and internet), the availability of training and technical assistance, and the level of community participation in village decision-making processes.

Accordingly, the study focuses on exploring how the experiences and perspectives of village governments and communities influence the implementation of this policy at the local level; identifying the main obstacles faced by underdeveloped villages; and analyzing the extent to which community participation can play a significant role in reducing implementation gaps between regions. The findings are expected to provide tangible contributions to the development of more responsive, equitable, and contextually appropriate village development policies.

II. Methods

This study employed a descriptive qualitative approach to identify and explore gaps in the implementation of the Village Law (Law No. 3 of 2024) across various regions in Indonesia. The analysis was conducted using four main parameters: village government capacity, infrastructure, access to resources, and community participation. This approach enabled an in-depth understanding of socio-political and policy dynamics through narratives, perceptions, and implementation practices at the village level. Primary data were collected through purposive, in-depth interviews with 22 key informants, including village officials from developed and underdeveloped regions, community leaders, relevant ministry officials, academics, and policy practitioners. Interviews were conducted both in person and online using a semi-structured guideline.

Secondary data were obtained from workshop reports, public discussions, online media articles, scientific publications, previous research, and recordings of public interactions on social media and podcasts. The analysis was conducted systematically using a combination of thematic analysis—to identify key patterns or themes such as institutional aspects, infrastructure, participation, and resource distribution—and discourse analysis—to examine how implementation issues are framed in the public sphere. All data were subsequently reduced, categorized, and interpreted using theoretical indicators to ensure valid and credible findings.

III. Results and Discussion

The implementation of the Village Law (Law No. 3 of 2024) faced complex challenges due to differences in the geographic, social, and institutional conditions of villages across Indonesia. This study examined how village government capacity, infrastructure quality, and community participation influenced the effectiveness of policy implementation in developed and underdeveloped regions. Margogung, Sleman, represented a developed village with strong governance, adequate digital infrastructure, and regular support from the local government and NGOs. By contrast, villages in Yahukimo and Asmat, Papua, faced severe constraints in electricity, internet access, human resources, and technical assistance, leading to recurrent delays in manual reporting and undermining the quality of development planning.

This disparity was reflected in both administrative and socioeconomic indicators, including electricity and internet access, timeliness of reporting, availability of training, and community participation in village deliberation meetings. During the data collection period, in Sleman, planning and reporting documents were accessible online, more than 85% of households had clean water and 24-hour electricity, and MSME empowerment programs were operating actively. In contrast, in Papua, clean water access was below 60%, the economy was largely subsistence-based, and community participation was low, indicating persistent structural inequalities that continue to affect the quality of village governance. The following table presents a comparison between regions based on field interviews, policy document analysis, and secondary statistics.

Table 1. a comparison between regions based on field interviews, policy document analysis, and secondary statistics

Indicator	Developed Region (example: Sleman, Yogyakarta)	Underdeveloped Region (example: Yahukimo, Papua)
Access to Electricity	98% households	<60% households
Access to Internet	±85% households (Saputra et al., 2024)	±15% households (Saputra et al., 2024)
Access to Training for Village Apparatus	Routine and facilitated by regional governments/NGOs	Not routine, limited by distance and resources
Access to Village Fund Technical Assistance	Intensive and scheduled	Very limited and sporadic
Financial Reporting	Real-time, Online	Manual, prone to error
Community Participation	High and deliberative	Low and ceremonial

This comparison indicates that villages in developed regions possessed stronger foundations for efficient and accountable governance, marked by transparent online reporting and high levels of public participation.

By contrast, villages in underdeveloped regions were hampered by limited infrastructure and resources, which resulted in slower administrative functions, less effective aid distribution, and weaker empowerment programs. This situation underscores the ongoing relationship between the quality of village governance and regional development inequality.

A. The Influence of Village Governments' and Communities' Experiences and Perspectives on the Implementation of the Village Law

This study identified significant gaps in the implementation of the Village Law (Law No. 3 of 2024) between developed and underdeveloped regions, as reflected in differences in the quality of financial reporting, frequency of official training, access to technological infrastructure, and levels of community participation. Developed villages, such as Margogung Village in Sleman, utilized the Village Financial System (Siskeudes) for quarterly reporting and held at least four training sessions per year. In contrast, underdeveloped villages, such as those in Yahukimo and Asmat, relied on manual reporting, conducted infrequent training, and often failed to address local needs.

Infrastructure emerged as a key differentiator. Margogung had stable electricity and internet access that supported administrative activities and communication, while the underdeveloped village faced frequent power outages, limited internet connectivity, and low community participation in village deliberations, which were largely ceremonial in nature. In Sleman, community participation was higher and more substantive, engaging a diverse range of community groups in the decision-making process.

By contrast, in underdeveloped areas, financial constraints, low human resource capacity, and a lack of ongoing technical assistance hampered the effective management of village funds. Reports on fund utilization were often delayed, budget planning was weak, and allocations tended to follow annual sub-district templates for generic physical projects without considering the effectiveness or sustainability of benefits.

These patterns aligned with previous findings by Asmawati & Basuki (2019), showing that villages in underdeveloped areas frequently failed to manage village funds optimally due to weak managerial capacity, insufficient training, and minimal technical assistance. Furthermore, data from the Papua Inspectorate's 2022 monitoring report indicated that approximately 38% of villages in mountainous areas had not submitted complete reports on the utilization of village funds for the year. This evidence demonstrates that the problem of suboptimal village fund management is not merely normative but is grounded in technical indicators that can be empirically verified.

In an interview, Mr. Aditya Arif Perdana, the Village Head of Margogung Village in Sleman Regency, Yogyakarta, stated:

"In Java, they had easier access to various resources, including training and technical assistance." This access greatly helped us maximize the use of village funds and improve the quality of development programs. For example, village officials in Margogung could easily access financial management training provided by local governments and non-governmental organizations (NGOs)."

This statement was supported by data from the Sleman Village Development Planning Agency (DPMK), which recorded that Margogung participated in five technical training sessions in 2023 covering village financial management, use of the Village Financial Management System (Siskeudes), preparation of the Village Work Plan (RKPDes), and electronic reporting. Attendance lists and activity reports are available on the official DPMK website. This finding is reinforced by statements from two informants from neighboring villages who confirmed similar training intensity, indicating that the practice in Margogung represents a systemic pattern of facilitating the capacity of village officials in the area. Access to this training contributed to the village's ability to develop participatory development plans, implement activities on time, and submit accurate financial reports on schedule.

In contrast, Ms. Maria, a village official in Yahukimo Regency, Papua, described very different challenges:

“We have a very hard time getting internet access here; even electricity isn’t always available. Training or technical assistance is very rare in our area. This makes it difficult for us to implement our planned programs.”

In developed areas, such as Margogung Village, Sleman, basic infrastructure was relatively complete during the study period, including 24-hour electricity, stable internet with 85% penetration, and paved roads connecting to the sub-district center. This infrastructure enabled village financial reporting through the Village Financial Management System (Siskeudes), interactive village meetings with digital presentations, and extensive community involvement.

By contrast, in Yahukimo and Asmat, Papua, electricity was available only a few hours a day, the internet was unstable or entirely unavailable, and access roads were mostly dirt and difficult to navigate. As a result, village fund reporting remained manual, was frequently delayed, and technical assistance was severely hampered. This infrastructure gap emerged as a key driver of the Village Law’s implementation success.

The Director of General Transfer Funds at the Ministry of Finance also emphasized:

“In developed areas like Margogung Village, Sleman, village programs are running effectively thanks to infrastructure support, human resource capacity, and regular support from the local government. Financial reports are prepared and submitted digitally through the Village Financial Management System (Siskeudes) on a quarterly basis, and village planning training is conducted at least four times a year.” These practices demonstrate that decentralization can function optimally when supported by robust institutional arrangements.

In contrast, in Habulama Village, Yahukimo, Papua, the 2023 village fund utilization report was submitted in May 2024 due to a shortage of administrative staff, limited internet access, and insufficient technical assistance. Training was infrequent—typically lasting only one day—and was not adapted to the local context.

This disparity is evidenced by data from the Papua Inspectorate (2022), which shows that 38% of mountain villages had not submitted complete village fund utilization reports, compared with Sleman, which achieved 96% compliance in online reporting. These findings indicate that the institutional capacity of underdeveloped villages remains weak, limiting their ability to fully realize the benefits of fiscal and administrative decentralization. Without systemic and sustainable interventions—such as enhanced infrastructure, strengthened human resources, and locally tailored technical assistance—this gap is likely to widen, thereby undermining the objectives of the Village Law.

Analysis of the results of a national workshop titled “Management and Use of Village Funds,” held by the Directorate General of Fiscal Balance (DitjenPK) of the Ministry of Finance in September 2023, revealed that villages in developed regions often receive more intensive technical assistance and regulatory outreach. During the presentation session, Mr. Jamiat Aris, Head of the Village Fund Sub-Division, stated: “The distribution of aid and support is often uneven, with villages in Java and Bali receiving more attention due to easier access and greater capacity.”

This statement was corroborated by data on the 2023 budget allocation for village supervision and mentoring from the Directorate General of Village Development Planning (DGPK). The data showed that of the 425 training and technical assistance programs funded by the State Budget under the village fund category, 62% were concentrated in Java and Bali, while eastern Indonesia—including Papua and East Nusa Tenggara—received only about 18% of similar activities. This disparity was also reflected in field findings in Habulama Village, Yahukimo, where village officials reported not having received direct training in village financial management since 2022, despite submitting several requests to the relevant district office.

Government efforts to address this imbalance are reflected in affirmative action programs such as the Disadvantaged and Frontier Village Fund (3T) and in a revised village fund allocation formula that incorporates geographic difficulty and the village development index as factors determining allocation weights. However, an interim evaluation by Bappenas (2024) revealed that the program’s implementation still faced obstacles in distribution, cross-ministerial coordination, and uneven training delivery in the 3T areas.

Thus, the statement by the Directorate General of Village Development (DGPK) official at the workshop, supported by quantitative data on the distribution of technical programs and field data, demonstrated that the imbalance in attention between developed and underdeveloped regions was not merely a perception but a verifiable empirical finding.

The study highlighted the need for more targeted policies and affirmative interventions in underdeveloped villages, particularly to enhance institutional capacity and access to basic infrastructure. The implementation of the Village Law in this region remained partial and reactive, marked by late reporting, minimal technical training, low community participation, and weak budget oversight. In Habulama Village, the 2023 fund utilization report was submitted five months late due to the absence of a Village Finance System (Siskeudes) operator and a lack of mentoring. Meanwhile, monitoring by the Papua Inspectorate in 2022 recorded that more than a third of mountain villages had not prepared their Village Work Plans (RKPDes) on time.

This situation contrasted sharply with villages like Margogung in Sleman, which had already implemented a system-based online reporting process, achieved village deliberation participation exceeding 70% of the community, and accessed technical training at least four times a year. These indicators—timeliness of reporting, frequency of village official training, and level of community participation—serve as systematic measures for mapping inequalities in policy implementation.

Drawing on input from the sources of information, the findings highlight the need for a more inclusive and targeted intervention strategy to address these disparities. This includes the permanent placement of technical assistants in 3 T Villages (outermost, remote, and underdeveloped villages), the provision of local context-based training, the provision of sufficient ICT infrastructure, and the strengthening of fiscal incentives for local governments to support underdeveloped villages. Without these needs-based interventions, implementation gaps will persist, and the Village Law's goal of promoting equitable and just village development will be unattainable.

This finding indicates that the implementation of the Village Law has had a more significant impact in developed regions than in underdeveloped regions. In Margogung Village, village funds were allocated to strengthen MSMEs, develop productive infrastructure, and provide digital entrepreneurship training, resulting in over 90% program implementation and a marked increase in the number of micro-enterprises. Conversely, in Habulama Village and the Yahukimo region, village funds were primarily used for basic infrastructure such as road and retaining wall repairs, with minimal allocation for economic empowerment, and frequent delays due to logistical and technical limitations.

Data from the Yogyakarta Regional Development Planning Agency (DPMK) and the Papua Inspectorate in 2023 showed that villages in Sleman utilized 95% of their village funds with timely reporting, while in Yahukimo, only 64% were utilized with delays of 2–5 months. This inequality reflects differences in institutional capacity and technical readiness, resulting in development delays and limited access to basic services in underdeveloped areas, which in turn increases socio-economic disparities and has the potential to trigger social tensions.

A study by Arsyad & Ahmad (2024) revealed that access to technical training plays a crucial role in enhancing the capacity of village officials in developed regions. Regular training on financial management and development planning, often facilitated by regional governments and NGOs, has increased transparency and accountability in the use of village funds. Furthermore, such training fosters a learning ecosystem that enables villages to adapt more readily to new policies (Harsanto & Wahyuningra, 2025, p. 10). These findings are consistent with conditions observed in Margogung Village, Sleman—the focus of this study—where the village government actively participates in training organized by the Yogyakarta Special Region Community and Village Empowerment Agency (DPMK).

According to the 2023 Sleman DPMK evaluation document and interviews with the Carik of Margogung, the village takes part in at least four thematic training sessions annually, covering Siskeudes (Village Financial System), RKPDes (Village Work Plan) preparation, APBDes management, and program monitoring. Supported by local NGOs, Margogung reports its finances in real time through an online dashboard and has achieved increased community participation in village meetings.

These data demonstrate that regular training not only strengthens the administrative capacity of villages but also contributes to an institutional learning ecosystem that enables villages to respond more effectively to evolving policy dynamics—as emphasized by Harsanto & Wahyuningra (2025). The effectiveness of the training in Margogung was not merely a theoretical proposition but a demonstrable, evidence-based finding, underscoring its potential for replication as a policy model in other regions.

The advantage of developed villages lies in their access to digital infrastructure. In Java, for example, internet penetration reached 85%, enabling online reporting and monitoring of village funds, which increased administrative efficiency and public participation. By contrast, villages in Papua, with only about 15% internet penetration, continued to rely on slow and error-prone manual reporting. Findings from Margogung (Sleman) and Habulama (Yahukimo) demonstrated that digital infrastructure was a prerequisite for effective governance. Margogung utilized the Village Financial System (Siskeudes) with real-time reporting. In contrast, Habulama, constrained by the absence of internet connectivity, relied on physical documents that had to be transported over a 3–5-hour distance. This challenge was further compounded by limited electricity availability (only 4–6 hours per day) and inadequate road infrastructure. Without interventions such as renewable energy development and improved road construction, the capacity of underdeveloped villages to adopt online reporting, participate in training, and implement data-driven programs will remain limited. This conclusion was supported by interviews, program evaluations, and evidence of a persistent mismatch between village fund potential and the technical capacity for implementation.

B. Barriers to the Implementation of the Village Law in Underdeveloped Regions

Four key factors contributed to the implementation gaps of the Village Law in Indonesia: the capacity of village governments, the quality of infrastructure, the availability of resources, and the level of community participation. The interaction of the four factors creates different challenges in each village, depending on the local conditions (Megawati et al., 2025).

a. The Capability of the Village Government

The capability of the Village government is one of the key determinants of the successful implementation of the Village Law. Villages with officials with higher levels of education and sufficient experience in government management were generally more successful in managing village funds and implementing development programs.

Mr. Isharyanto, Head of Sidorejo Village, Sleman Regency, Yogyakarta, stated,

"Education and training are crucial. In our village, many officials have sufficient educational backgrounds, and we also attend regular training. This greatly helps us understand regulations and utilize village funds more effectively."

This statement is supported by data from the Sidorejo Village Profile (2023), which records that 80% of village officials hold at least a bachelor's degree, including the village treasurer and the head of planning affairs. Furthermore, documentation from the Sleman Community and Village Empowerment Office (DPMK) shows that Sidorejo Village was an active participant in routine training—at least four times a year—covering development planning, Village Budget (APBDes) management, and financial reporting using the Village Financial System (Siskeudes) application.

Empirically, the effectiveness of village fund management was reflected in indicators such as the timeliness of financial reporting, the minimal number of corrections from internal audits, and the successful realization of both physical and non-physical programs in accountability reports. The 2023 Sidorejo Village Budget (APBDes) evaluation report recorded a budget realization rate of 96%, with reports submitted online on time every quarter. Routine sub-district and district audits identified no significant findings.

The higher levels of experience and education of the village officials enhanced their ability to understand regulations and administrative procedures, enabling them to optimize the use of available resources.

In contrast, villages with lower government capacity—such as Habulama Village, Yahukimo Regency, Papua—faced far more complex challenges in implementing the Village Law. Interviews with the Village Secretary revealed that most village officials had not received training in village financial management since 2021 and remained unsure about using the village fund reporting format. Of the six village officials, only two possessed an educational background beyond high school. When preparing planning documents, the village relied heavily on assistance from the sub-district office due to the absence of competent planners at the local level.

These findings demonstrate that low institutional capacity, both in terms of human resources and administrative experience, directly impacts the effectiveness of program implementation. As a result, many village fund programs could not be implemented on schedule and were not aligned with the actual needs of residents. This finding highlights the critical importance of enhancing village officials' capacity as a prerequisite for effective policy implementation in underdeveloped areas.

Lack of training and education limited the ability of village officials to implement programs effectively, which in turn affected community welfare.

b. Infrastructure

Infrastructure also played a crucial role in shaping the gaps in the implementation of the Village Law. Villages with better access to basic infrastructure—such as roads and information technology—were able to manage and report the use of village funds more efficiently.

A researcher at the Center for Rural and Regional Studies at Gadjah Mada University (UGM) stated,

Conversely, villages in underdeveloped areas remain significantly constrained by inadequate infrastructure. Mr. Lukas, the village head of Asmat Regency, Papua, noted,

"Good road infrastructure and internet connectivity enable villages to accelerate administrative, communication, and reporting processes. Without adequate infrastructure, many villages are left behind in program implementation due to these limitations." The findings indicate that physical and digital connectivity provides villages with a marked advantage in implementing development programs.

"Damaged roads and long distances made it difficult for us to communicate with outsiders, let alone access technical or financial assistance. This situation left us behind in many ways."

Field observations and data from the 2023 Asmat Regional Development Planning Agency (Bappeda) indicated that over 70% of villages lacked permanent road infrastructure, forcing them to rely primarily on river routes or temporary dry-season footpaths. This condition limited visits by village facilitators—for example, Sawa Erma received only two short visits in 2023—which in turn hindered the delivery of technical assistance, completion of administrative forms, and fund disbursement. Such constraints structurally reduced village participation across the entire development cycle.

c. Access to Resources

Access to financial, technical, and human resources emerged as another significant factor influencing the implementation of the Village Law.

Mr. Joko, an official at the Ministry of Villages, Development of Disadvantaged Regions, and Transmigration, stated,

"Villages in developed regions tend to have easier access to additional funding, technical assistance, and competent human resources, while villages in underdeveloped regions often struggle to obtain basic necessities such as training or technical guidance."

This disparity in access widened the gap between developed and underdeveloped villages, as reflected in the field data collected for this study.

C. Public Participation

Community participation is not the ultimate goal of implementing the Village Law (Law No. 3 of 2024); rather, it serves as a strategic prerequisite for achieving the law's primary objectives—enhancing community welfare, strengthening village autonomy, and promoting equitable development across regions. Within this framework, this study identified community participation as a key supporting variable that influences the effectiveness of policy implementation at the village level.

This study applied public participation theory by Lauria & Slotterback (2020), which highlights the essential role of meaningful community engagement throughout all stages of public decision-making. Thus, participation in these villages is not merely a symbolic presence in deliberations but functions as a deliberative process that strengthens policy legitimacy and enhances village government accountability.

To assess the extent to which participation supports the implementation of the Village Law, this study applied three indicators: (1) the level of public involvement in village deliberation forums, (2) access to public information (including the Village Budget and accountability reports), and (3) public participation in the monitoring and implementation of village programs. These indicators serve as mechanisms of citizen engagement that directly contribute to the effective implementation of village development programs, particularly in improving policy responsiveness, budget execution efficiency, and program sustainability.

a. Comparison of Developed and Underdeveloped Regions

This study compared two regional contexts:

- Developed villages, represented by Margogung Village in Sleman Regency, Yogyakarta Special Region, and
- Underdeveloped villages, represented by several villages in Asmat and Yahukimo Regencies, Papua Province.

Findings show that villages in developed regions demonstrate substantively higher levels of participation, with residents actively involved in every stage of the deliberation process, from planning to evaluation. As Mr. Suroto, a village head in Bantul Regency, explained,

"Every time there is a village deliberation, almost all levels of society attend and express their opinions." This strengthened the sense of ownership and enhanced transparency because all decisions were made collectively.

This situation encouraged greater transparency and accountability, as well as a more targeted use of village funds.

Conversely, in underdeveloped villages such as Yahukimo and Asmat, community involvement remained low. Participation was often formalistic and even symbolic. Mrs. Mirna, a village official in Boven Digoel, stated:

"Many residents did not participate in deliberations because they felt it was useless. They also rarely knew what was being discussed."

These findings showed that barriers to participation stemmed not only from cultural factors but also from non-inclusive village communication and governance structures. The experiences of residents like Mr. Andi, a youth leader in Loura Village, Southwest Sumba, reinforced this conclusion.

"We were often invited to attend meetings, but usually the decisions had already been made. We were only required to attend and sign."

Such forms of pseudo-participation eroded community trust in village governance processes. Village deliberations served only as formal legitimation of elite decisions, not as a forum for collective deliberation.

Low community participation in underdeveloped areas hampered the effective implementation of the Village Law. This study confirmed that community participation needed to be transformed from passive attendance to meaningful involvement, ensuring residents' ability to articulate their aspirations and influence decisions.

To encourage this transformation, the following are needed:

- Improved communication and facilitation capacity by village officials,

- Redesigning village deliberations to be more participatory and inclusive,
- Educating villagers regarding their participatory rights in public policy.

The level of participation was proven to be directly proportional to the effectiveness and sustainability of village programs (Lancaster & Massingham, 2010). Therefore, community empowerment strategies needed to be designed not merely as a form of unilateral socialization but as a space for social negotiation between the state and citizens.

Table 2. Comparison of Factors Between Developed and Underdeveloped Villages

FACTORS	DEVELOPED VILLGES	UNDERDEVELOPED VILLAGES
Village Official Capability	Higher levels of education and regular training	Limited education and lack of training
Infrastructure	Good roads and stable internet access	Damaged roads and limited internet access
Access to Resources	Easy access to additional funding and technical assistance	Difficulty obtaining technical assistance and limited funding opportunities
Community Participation	High, active involvement in deliberations	Low, minimal communication and restricted information sharing

Community participation could not be measured simply by general citizen involvement. Findings from the workshops revealed that participation was often reduced to administrative formalities rather than engaging with the substantive aspects of decision-making. This involvement was not fully inclusive, especially for vulnerable groups such as women and youth.

In some village deliberations observed, women's attendance was recorded administratively, but this did not always reflect their specific aspirations in program formulation. This was emphasized by one female participant in an online discussion forum, who stated that women's voices and needs were often not adequately accommodated:

"We were invited to attend, but we did not know what to say. Even if we raised issues such as mothers health or early childhood education, they were often dismissed as unimportant."

This situation indicates that women's participation is often limited to fulfilling representation quotas rather than genuinely incorporating their aspirations into program formulation.

Similarly, questions arise regarding the authenticity of youth participation and who truly represents the voices of village youth. In some cases, the so-called "youth leaders" present at deliberations are not representatives of youth groups, as they are closer in age and orientation to the village elite. One youth participant from a village in Sleman remarked:

"When young people propose ideas, these are sometimes dismissed as not being substantive. But our youth leaders are people in their forties, so they're somewhat distant from our issues, such as digitalization, online MSMEs, or job training."

These practices demonstrate that village participation structures remain predominantly elitist and male-dominated, thereby undermining the inclusivity of the development planning process.

The findings of this study extend the academic discourse on decentralization and village governance in developing countries by showing how institutional factors, infrastructure, resource access, and community participation interact to shape the success or failure of local policies, as revealed through thematic and discourse analysis.

This study also extends the application of institutional theory (North, 1990), infrastructure development theory (Todaro & Smith, 2009), social capital theory (Putnam, 2020), and public participation theory (Lauria & Slotterback, 2020) to the specific context of Indonesian villages, particularly by presenting field evidence from underdeveloped regions such as Papua.

Furthermore, by framing the amendment of Law No. 3 of 2024 as the prevailing policy framework, this study initiates a theoretical discourse on the anticipated implementation of area-based policies. This aspect remains comparatively underexplored in the literature on Indonesian village governance. By identifying implementation indicators based on village readiness (such as digital connectivity, apparatus capacity, and levels of substantive participation), this study also introduces a new analytical framework that can be used in future village development policy studies.

IV. Conclusion

This study examined the dynamics and gaps in the implementation of the amended Village Law (Law No. 3 of 2024), with a focus on differences between developed and underdeveloped villages. Drawing on qualitative fieldwork in Sleman and Papua, it identified four key factors that shape the successful implementation of village policies: village government capacity, infrastructure availability, access to technical and fiscal resources, and the level of community participation.

The findings demonstrate that disparities in capacity and resources between regions are major obstacles to achieving the goals of village decentralization. Villages in the developed regions tend to implement programs in a more structured and transparent manner, whereas villages in the underdeveloped regions remain constrained by limited infrastructure, minimal training opportunities, and low community participation. This disparity affects not only the efficiency of Village Law implementation but also contributes to broader socio-economic inequalities.

At the same time, this study highlights the future potential of Law No. 3 of 2024, which introduces several significant changes, including extending the term of office of village heads, digitizing reporting, and expanding opportunities for community participation and the role of the Village Consultative Body (BPD). Based on field data, it can be projected that the future success of this law's implementation will depend heavily on:

- The readiness of digital infrastructure to support online reporting and transparency,
- The quality and resilience of village institutions,
- The establishment of substantive, participatory mechanisms rather than merely administrative measures; and
- The adoption of affirmative, region-specific interventions rather than uniform, centrally driven approaches.

In this context, the study recommends that the future implementation of Law No. 3 of 2024 adopt a progressive–asymmetric model, tailoring intervention designs to the readiness and specific characteristics of each village. Without such a context-based approach, national policies risk exacerbating rather than reducing existing disparities.

Acknowledgment

The author expresses sincere appreciation to the informants from village governments, ministry officials, academics, and civil society organizations who generously contributed their time and shared their perspectives during interviews and public discussions, providing an essential foundation for this research. The author also extends gratitude to the Directorate General of PK, Ministry of Finance; the Center for Rural and Regional Studies, Gadjah Mada University (UGM); and colleagues at the Coordinating Ministry for Food for their invaluable data support and insightful input throughout the writing process.

V. References

Aprilia, D., Jaelani, A. K., Mulyanto, Isharyanto, & Kurniawan, I. D. (2025). Regulatory Model for Tourism Villages in Forest Areas Based on Sustainable Tourism. Legality: Jurnal Ilmiah Hukum, 33(1), 286–306. https://doi.org/10.22219/ljih.v33i1.40177

Arsyad, S. N. S., & Ahmad, B. (2024). Dinamika Kebijakan dan Implementasi Program Desa Maju: Studi Literatur dan Rekomendasi Kebijakan. PAMARENDA: Public Administration and Government Journal, 4(2), 285–295.

Asmawati, I., & Basuki, P. (2019). Akuntabilitas pengelolaan keuangan desa. Akurasi: Jurnal Studi Akuntansi Dan Keuangan, 2(1), 63–76.

Bhushan, M., Iyer, S., Kumar, A., Choudhury, T., & Negi, A. (2022). Artificial Intelligence for Smart Cities and Villages: Advanced Technologies, Development, and Challenges. In Artificial Intelligence for Smart Cities and Villages: Advanced Technologies, Development, and Challenges. https://doi.org/10.2174/97898150492511220101

Bunkley, N., McCool, J., & Garton, K. (2025). Stakeholder perceptions on the impact of trade and investment agreements on nutrition policy space in small island developing states. Globalization and Health, 21(1). https://doi.org/10.1186/s12992-024-01091-3

Chen, S., Yuan, L., Wang, W., & Gong, B. (2025). Decentralization, local information, and effort substitution: Evidence from a subnational decentralization reform in China. Governance, 38(2). https://doi.org/10.1111/gove.12884

Egger, D., Haushofer, J., Miguel, E., Niehaus, P., & Walker, M. (2022). General Equilibrium Effects of Cash Transfers: Experimental Evidence From Kenya. Econometrica, 90(6), 2603 – 2643. https://doi.org/10.3982/ECTA17945

Fahira, J., Harianja, R. A., & Akbar, F. T. (2023). Peran Pemerintah Daerah dalam Implementasi Undang-Undang Desa. JURNAL PENELITIAN SERAMBI HUKUM. https://api.semanticscholar.org/CorpusID:261794245

Febrianto. (2021). Panduan Fasilitasi Replikasi dan Pelembagaan Pengembangan Sistem Informasi Desa (SID). 1–34.

Harsanto, B. T., & Wahyuningra. (2025). Managing human resource in the rural tourism sector: evidence from Indonesia. Cogent Business and Management, 12(1). https://doi.org/10.1080/23311975.2025.2493312

Lancaster, G., & Massingham, L. (2010). Essentials of Marketing Management. Taylor & Francis. https://books.google.co.id/books?id=WfctCgAAQBAJ

Lauria, M., & Slotterback, C. S. (2020). Learning from Arnstein's Ladder: From Citizen Participation to Public Engagement. Taylor & Francis. https://books.google.co.id/books?id=hnP2DwAAQBAJ

Lei, Z. (2024). The Fiscal Logic of Responsiveness: Public Finance, Elections, and Public Goods Provision in Rural China. Studies in Comparative International Development, 59(1), 1 – 26. https://doi.org/10.1007/s12116-023-09383-2

Li, Y., & Sahari, F. (2025). Evaluation of Landscape Resources and Legal Protection Boundary Setting in Xinchang County, China. Nature Environment and Pollution Technology, 24(2). https://doi.org/10.46488/NEPT.2025.v24i02.D1708

Martitah, Arifin, S., & Sugiarto, L. (2020). Penguatan Kapasitas Aparatur Desa dalam Pengembangan Inovasi Kebijakan Program Pembangunan Desa yang Berkelanjutan. Jurnal Pengabdian Hukum Indonesia , 3(1), 14–28. https://journal.unnes.ac.id/sju/index.php/JPHI/index

Megawati, V., Otok, B. W., & Purnomo, J. D. T. (2025). Moderating Technology Acceptance Model on Resident Empowerment in Support for Sustainable Tourism. Sustainability (Switzerland), 17(9). https://doi.org/10.3390/su17094217

Nasir, M. (2022). Protecting Forested Areas in Non-Forest Zone through The Ecological Fiscal Transfer Scheme in Indonesia: A case study from Kutai Timur district. Forest and Society, 6(1), 399 – 421. https://doi.org/10.24259/fs.v6i1.19193

North, D. C. (1990). Institutions, institutional change and economic performance (Vol. 332). Cambridge university press.

Pratama, F. S. P. (2022). Impelementasi Uu No. 5 Tahun 1979 Lewat Program Manunggal Sakato dalam Sejarah Pembangunan Desa di Sumatera Barat 1984-1991. Mozaik Jurnal Ilmu-Ilmu Sosial Dan Humaniora. https://api.semanticscholar.org/CorpusID:268152587

Purnomo, S., & Purwandari, S. (2025). A Comprehensive Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprise Empowerment Model for Developing Sustainable Tourism Villages in Rural Communities: A Perspective. Sustainability (Switzerland), 17(4). https://doi.org/10.3390/su17041368

Putnam, R. D. (2020). Bowling Alone: Revised and Updated: The Collapse and Revival of American Community. Simon & Schuster. https://books.google.co.id/books?id=C7cCEAAAQBAJ

Rizal, A., Triandani, S., April, M., & Alkadafi, M. (2022). Pengembangan Kapasitas Aparatur Pemerintah Desa dalam Penataan Administrasi Pemerintahan Desa Berbasis Teknologi Informasi (*E-Government*). Jurnal EL-RIYASAH. https://api.semanticscholar.org/CorpusID:258582261

Royandi, E., Satria, A., & Saharuddin, S. (2019). Kelompok Kepentingan Dan Relasi Kuasa Dalam Pengelolaan Sumber Daya Laut Palabuhanratu. Jurnal Kebijakan Sosial Ekonomi Kelautan Dan Perikanan, 8(2), 163–173.

Saputra, R. D., Putri, D. M., & Parhusip, J. (2024). Proporsi Individu yang Memiliki Telepon Genggam 2021–2023 dalam Perspektif Teknologi Informasi dan Komunikasi (TIK). Informatech: Jurnal Ilmiah Informatika Dan Komputer, 1(2), 183–188.

Suharto, S. (2019). Pemerintahan Desa Dalam Mendukung Keberhasilan Implementasi Uu Desa Di Jawa Tengah 2018. https://api.semanticscholar.org/CorpusID:209970322

Suyanto, Alif Almughni, M. A., Standsyah, R. E., Mustofa, A., Haryati, E., Ramadhan, D. S., & Possumah, B. T. (2024). Regional Financial Management towards Village Development Independency in Indonesia Lacking Regions. Journal of Ecohumanism, 3(3), 357 – 374. https://doi.org/10.62754/joe.v3i3.3351

Tang, S. A., Maro, Y., Gorang, A. F., & Maruli, E. (2022). Pengaruh Alokasi Dana Desa dan Dana Desa Terhadap Kesejahteraan Masyarakat Desa. Jurnal Ilmiah Wahana Pendidikan, 8(9), 384–399.

Todaro, M. P., & Smith, S. C. (2009). Economic Development. Pearson Addison Wesley. https://books.google.co.id/books?id=VODtAAAAMAAJ

Toumbourou, T. D., Dunphy, M. B., Mulyani, L., Auwalin, I., Rumayya, Hartoto, A. S., Aji, G. B., Utomo, M. M. B., Amin, N. A., Yaman, Y., Fakhrani, F. A., Yasmin, P. A., Afriyani, A. A., Masri, Arisanti, D., Tjawikrama, D., Friedman, R. S., & Rawluk, A. (2025). Social forestry for a good life? The uneven well-being benefits of Indonesia's social forestry scheme. People and Nature, 7(6), 1443 – 1463. https://doi.org/10.1002/pan3.70042

Wahyudi, A. (2016). Implementasi rencana strategis badan pemberdayaan masyarakat dan desa dalam upaya pengembangan Badan Usaha Milik Desa di Kabupaten Kotawaringin Barat. Jurnal Ilmiah Administrasi Publik, 2(2), 99–103.