

Reconstructing the Participatory Approach to Islamic Community Development: Integrating Community Development Theory with Empowerment *Da'wah*

Rekonstruksi Pendekatan Partisipatif dalam Pembangunan Masyarakat Islam: Integrasi Teori Community Development dan Dakwah Pemberdayaan

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ABSTRAK

Tujuan: Penelitian ini bertujuan menganalisis rekonstruksi pendekatan partisipatif dalam pembangunan masyarakat Islam melalui integrasi teori *Community Development* dan dakwah pemberdayaan serta mengembangkan model integratif pembangunan masyarakat Islam. **Metode:** Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif dengan desain studi kasus di *Kabupaten Solok Selatan*. Data dikumpulkan melalui wawancara mendalam, observasi, dan studi dokumentasi, kemudian dianalisis menggunakan model interaktif Miles, Huberman, dan Saldaña. **Temuan:** Partisipasi masyarakat tidak hanya dimaknai sebagai keterlibatan formal, tetapi sebagai proses kesadaran kolektif yang mencakup perencanaan, pelaksanaan, dan evaluasi pembangunan. Dakwah pemberdayaan berperan sebagai instrumen transformasi sosial melalui internalisasi nilai *syūrā*, *ta'awun*, *ukhuwah*, dan *maslahah*. Penelitian ini menghasilkan model integratif yang menggabungkan teori *Community Development*, dakwah pemberdayaan, dan nilai-nilai Islam sebagai landasan pembangunan masyarakat yang partisipatif dan berkelanjutan. **Implikasi:** Model ini dapat menjadi acuan konseptual bagi pengembangan kebijakan dan praktik pembangunan masyarakat Islam. **Orisinalitas:** Penelitian ini menawarkan model integratif rekonstruksi pendekatan partisipatif sebagai kontribusi konseptual bagi kajian *Pengembangan Masyarakat Islam*.

Kata Kunci: *Community Development*; Dakwah Pemberdayaan; Partisipasi Masyarakat; Pembangunan Masyarakat Islam; Rekonstruksi Partisipatif.

ABSTRACT

Purpose: This study analyzes the reconstruction of the participatory approach to Islamic community development through the integration of *Community Development* theory and empowerment-oriented *da'wah* and develops an integrative model for Islamic community development. **Method:** A qualitative case study was conducted in *Kabupaten Solok Selatan*. Data were collected through in-depth interviews, observations, and document analysis and analyzed using the interactive model of Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña. **Findings:** Community participation should be understood not merely as formal involvement but as a process of collective consciousness encompassing planning, implementation, and evaluation. Empowerment-oriented *da'wah* functions as a mechanism for social transformation by internalizing the values of *shūrā*, *ta'awun*, *ukhuwah*, and *maslahah*. The study proposes an integrative model that combines *Community Development* theory, empowerment-oriented *da'wah*, and Islamic values to promote participatory and sustainable Islamic community development. **Implications:** The proposed model provides a conceptual foundation for policies and practices of Islamic community development. **Originality:** This study introduces an integrative participatory model that contributes to the development of *Pengembangan Masyarakat Islam*.

Keywords: *Community Development*; Empowerment-oriented *Da'wah*; Community Participation; Islamic Community Development; Participatory Reconstruction.

A. Introduction

Community development is a process of social change aimed at improving people's quality of life through the sustainable strengthening of individual, group, and institutional capacities. Contemporary development paradigms have shifted from *growth-oriented development* toward *people-centered development*. This shift emerged as a response to the limitations of top-down development models, which tend to position communities as passive recipients rather than active agents of development, thereby limiting local ownership, self-reliance, and program sustainability. From the perspective of *Community Development*, communities should be recognized as the primary actors who actively participate in every stage of the development process, including problem identification, planning, implementation, and evaluation, thereby fostering a strong sense of ownership toward development initiatives (Ife & Tesoriero, 2008; Sen, 1999). This perspective emphasizes that development success should not be measured solely by physical or economic outcomes but also by the enhancement of community capacity to manage local resources, strengthen local institutions, and reinforce social solidarity.

From an Islamic perspective, community development extends beyond material well-being and seeks to achieve *maslahah* through a balanced integration of spiritual, social, economic, cultural, and environmental dimensions. Values such as *shūrā* (consultation), *ta'āwun* (mutual assistance), *ukhuwah* (brotherhood), and *'adl* (justice) constitute the fundamental principles for fostering self-reliant and participatory communities. Accordingly, *da'wah* is no longer understood merely as the dissemination of religious teachings (*tablīgh*); rather, it has evolved into a process of social transformation that encourages communities to recognize their potential, strengthen their capacities, and collectively address social challenges. The principles of *Community Development* advanced by Jim Ife share substantial common ground with the Islamic concept of community development, particularly regarding empowerment, social justice, participation, and the recognition of local potential (Ife & Tesoriero, 2008). Furthermore, studies examining Jim Ife's thought from the perspective of *Pengembangan Masyarakat Islam* have demonstrated a strong convergence between the principles of *Community Development* and Islamic teachings on community empowerment.

Research on participatory development has continued to evolve over recent decades. Numerous studies indicate that community participation is a key determinant of both the effectiveness and sustainability of development programs. Participatory approaches not only enhance community involvement throughout the development process but also strengthen local capacities, expand access to decision-making, and stimulate innovations that respond to community needs (Ife & Tesoriero, 2008). Likewise, studies on empowerment-oriented *da'wah* argue that *da'wah* serves a broader function than merely conveying religious values; it also acts as an instrument of social transformation capable of improving people's quality of life through sustainable empowerment processes. Consequently, both *Community Development* and empowerment-oriented *da'wah* position

communities as the principal actors in development, although each has evolved within distinct academic traditions.

Nevertheless, a review of the existing literature reveals that *Community Development* has primarily developed within the disciplines of development studies and social work, whereas empowerment-oriented *da'wah* has been predominantly discussed within the fields of *da'wah* studies and *Pengembangan Masyarakat Islam*. As a result, these two approaches have rarely been integrated into a unified conceptual framework capable of providing a comprehensive explanation of Islamic community development. This gap underscores the need to reconstruct participatory approaches by not only adopting *Community Development* theory but also integrating the values of empowerment-oriented *da'wah* as the normative foundation of Islamic community development. Such integration is particularly important because Muslim communities possess distinctive social, cultural, and religious characteristics that shape patterns of participation in development processes (Freire, 1970; Ife & Tesoriero, 2008).

Kabupaten Solok Selatan was selected as the research site because its Minangkabau community continues to uphold the philosophy of *Adat Basandi Syarak, Syarak Basandi Kitabullah* (ABS-SBK). This philosophy constitutes valuable social capital for community development by integrating customary traditions with Islamic teachings in everyday life. At the same time, the local government, together with various community organizations, has implemented a range of *nagari*-based community empowerment programs. However, the implementation of participatory approaches continues to face several challenges, including limited community involvement in decision-making processes, the predominance of administrative approaches, and the insufficient integration of empowerment-oriented *da'wah* values into development planning. These conditions make *Kabupaten Solok Selatan* an appropriate setting for examining the reconstruction of participatory approaches to Islamic community development.

Based on this background, the novelty of this study lies in the development of an Integrative Model of the Participatory Approach to Islamic Community Development. This model integrates *Community Development* theory with the paradigm of empowerment-oriented *da'wah* through the principles of participation, empowerment, capacity building, *shūrā*, *ta'āwun*, *ukhuwah*, and *maslahah*. The proposed model is expected to enrich the body of knowledge in *Pengembangan Masyarakat Islam* while offering an alternative conceptual framework for implementing community development that is more participatory, context-sensitive, and sustainable.

B. Method

This study employed a qualitative approach using a case study design to examine the reconstruction of the participatory approach to Islamic community development through the integration of *Community Development* theory and empowerment-oriented

da'wah. The research was conducted in *Kabupaten Solok Selatan*, Indonesia, because the region represents a Muslim community that continues to uphold the philosophy of *Adat Basandi Syarak, Syarak Basandi Kitabullah (ABS-SBK)*, which integrates customary values with Islamic teachings in community life and development practices. Research participants were selected through *purposive sampling* based on their direct involvement and knowledge of community development programs. The participants included local government officials, religious leaders, traditional leaders, community empowerment facilitators, and community members actively involved in development initiatives. This selection enabled the researcher to obtain comprehensive perspectives regarding participatory development practices and the role of empowerment-oriented *da'wah* within the local context.

Data were collected through in-depth interviews, participant observation, and document analysis. In-depth interviews were conducted to explore participants' experiences and perceptions regarding participatory development, while observations were used to understand the implementation of development activities and community interactions. Document analysis was undertaken to examine relevant policy documents, program reports, and other supporting materials related to community development in *Kabupaten Solok Selatan*. The collected data were analyzed using the interactive model proposed by Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña (2014), which consists of three interrelated stages: data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing and verification. To enhance the trustworthiness of the findings, data credibility was ensured through source triangulation, method triangulation, and member checking. These procedures were employed to strengthen the validity and consistency of the research findings and to provide a comprehensive understanding of the reconstructed participatory approach to Islamic community development.

C. Results and Discussion

1. Reconstruction of the Concept of Participation in Islamic Community Development

The findings indicate that the concept of participation in Islamic community development cannot be understood merely as the formal involvement of community members in development activities. Rather, it should be viewed as a process of substantive engagement encompassing awareness, collective decision-making, implementation, and evaluation. From the perspective of *Community Development*, participation constitutes the core of community empowerment by positioning community members as the primary agents of social change. Ife and Tesoriero argue that genuine community development should enable people to identify their own needs, manage local resources, and determine the direction of development independently (Ife & Tesoriero, 2008).

However, in the practice of development across many Muslim communities, participation often remains symbolic. Community members are frequently involved only during the implementation stage, while planning and decision-making continue to be

dominated by external actors, such as government institutions or development agencies. This condition reveals a significant gap between the ideal concept of participation and its practical implementation. Chambers describes this phenomenon as *top-down participation*, referring to a form of participation that is merely administrative in nature and fails to redistribute decision-making power to local communities (Chambers, 1997).

From the perspective of empowerment-oriented *da'wah*, participation is not merely regarded as a technical mechanism of development but as an integral component of the process of community transformation through *conscientization*. Freire argues that genuine participation can only emerge when communities develop a critical awareness of the social realities they face, enabling them to undertake transformative actions independently (Freire, 1970). Within this framework, *da'wah* functions as a process of consciousness-raising that is not only normative but also transformative in cultivating the social awareness of the Muslim community.

The reconstruction of the concept of participation presented in this study demonstrates an integration between the *Community Development* approach and empowerment-oriented *da'wah*. Participation is no longer perceived merely as involvement in development programs; instead, it is understood as a process of fostering collective consciousness grounded in Islamic values. The principle of *shūrā* serves as the primary foundation for collective decision-making by providing community members with opportunities to deliberate and jointly determine the direction of development. This principle is consistent with Chambers' concept of the democratization of development, which emphasizes that communities should occupy a central role in development planning.

Furthermore, the principle of *ta'āwun* reinforces the dimension of social cooperation within participatory processes. In Islamic community development, cooperation extends beyond technical collaboration and encompasses a spiritual dimension as an expression of social worship. This finding demonstrates that participation in Islam possesses a strong normative foundation, making it not merely a methodological approach but also an expression of Islamic values in social life. Consequently, participation serves as a means of strengthening social solidarity and enhancing community resilience.

The findings further reveal that this reconstructed concept of participation gives rise to a more inclusive model of development. Within this model, communities are no longer positioned as passive beneficiaries of development but as principal actors possessing the capacity to plan, implement, and evaluate development programs. Ife and Tesoriero emphasize that capacity building is the essence of *Community Development*, as participation without adequate capacity is reduced to mere formality (Ife & Tesoriero, 2008). Within the framework of empowerment-oriented *da'wah*, capacity building is achieved through education, community facilitation, and the internalization of Islamic values. Accordingly, *da'wah* functions not only as a means of conveying religious

teachings but also as an instrument for strengthening the social capacities of communities. In this sense, *da'wah* plays a strategic role in developing communities that are not only individually religious but also socially empowered.

This reconstruction also demonstrates that effective participation depends upon equitable relationships between communities and development facilitators. Unequal power relations frequently constitute the primary obstacle to meaningful participation. Consequently, the empowerment-oriented *da'wah* approach makes a significant contribution by fostering more dialogical relationships in which communities are regarded as equal partners in the development process. Freire emphasizes that dialogue constitutes the central mechanism through which people are liberated from structures of social injustice (Freire, 1970).

Overall, the findings of this study affirm that reconstructing the concept of participation in Islamic community development produces a new paradigm that integrates structural, cultural, and spiritual dimensions. Participation is no longer viewed as a technocratic procedure; rather, it becomes a process of social transformation grounded in Islamic values that positions communities as the primary subjects of development. This finding reinforces the argument that Islamic community development requires an integrative approach that draws not only upon modern development theories but also upon Islamic values as its ethical and spiritual foundation.

2. Reconstructing Empowerment-Oriented *Da'wah* within *Community Development*

The findings indicate that *da'wah* in the context of community development can no longer be narrowly understood as the verbal dissemination of religious teachings. Instead, it should be reconstructed as a process of social empowerment aimed at transforming the structural conditions of society. In the classical perspective, *da'wah* has often been viewed primarily as an activity of *tablīgh*, emphasizing the transmission of religious values from the *dā'ī* to the *mad'ū*. However, within the context of contemporary Islamic community development, such an approach is no longer sufficient because it fails to address the root causes of social problems, including poverty, unequal access to resources, and limited community capacity.

Within the framework of *Community Development*, social change can occur only when communities possess the capacity to understand, critically analyze, and transform their own circumstances. Ife and Tesoriero argue that community empowerment is a process of strengthening collective capacities that enables communities to exercise control over the resources and decisions affecting their lives (Ife & Tesoriero, 2008). Accordingly, *da'wah*, when reconstructed from an empowerment perspective, should function as an instrument for strengthening these capacities rather than merely serving as a medium for conveying normative religious messages.

The reconstruction of empowerment-oriented *da'wah* proposed in this study demonstrates a paradigm shift from an instructive model of *da'wah* to one that is participatory and transformative. *Da'wah* is no longer conceived as a one-way process but as a form of social dialogue characterized by active interaction between the *dā'ī* and the community. Within this framework, the *dā'ī* assumes the role of a facilitator of social change who assists communities in identifying problems, formulating solutions, and fostering collective awareness to initiate social transformation. This approach is consistent with Paulo Freire's concept of liberatory education, which emphasizes that learning should be dialogical and should empower individuals to overcome structures of oppression (Freire, 1970).

In practice, empowerment-oriented *da'wah* also integrates Islamic values as the ethical foundation of the development process. The principle of *ukhuwah Islāmiyyah* serves as the basis for strengthening social solidarity among community members. Such solidarity is essential because development cannot be achieved through individual efforts alone but requires strong collective cooperation. Furthermore, the principle of *ta'āwun* (mutual assistance) reinforces the collaborative dimension of development by encouraging communities to support one another in addressing social and economic challenges. This principle aligns closely with the concept of *community-based development*, which emphasizes the importance of social capital in achieving sustainable development.

The findings further demonstrate that reconstructing empowerment-oriented *da'wah* expands the role of *da'wah* institutions beyond that of purely religious organizations to become agents of social transformation. These institutions are no longer confined to ritual and devotional activities but also engage in programs related to economic empowerment, education, and community welfare. Consequently, *da'wah* performs a dual function, serving both spiritual and social purposes. This social function is particularly significant in communities confronting structural challenges such as poverty and limited access to development resources.

From Chambers' perspective, effective development should originate from within the community itself through the principle of *putting the last first*, which prioritizes the needs of the most vulnerable groups in the development process (Chambers, 1997). Within this context, empowerment-oriented *da'wah* serves as a bridge between communities and development structures, ensuring that marginalized groups are not excluded from decision-making processes. In this way, *da'wah* becomes a mechanism through which the voices of disadvantaged communities are represented and heard throughout the development process.

This reconstruction also demonstrates that empowerment-oriented *da'wah* possesses an important epistemological dimension within *Community Development*. *Da'wah* not only transmits religious values but also shapes the way communities perceive and interpret social realities. Through the internalization of Islamic values, community

members are encouraged to recognize that development is not solely the responsibility of government institutions but rather a collective responsibility of the Muslim community. This perspective strengthens social awareness by emphasizing that every individual has a meaningful role in promoting positive social change.

Moreover, empowerment-oriented *da'wah* contributes significantly to fostering community self-reliance. Such self-reliance extends beyond economic independence to include intellectual autonomy and the capacity for independent decision-making. Freire argues that critical consciousness constitutes the foundation of human autonomy in confronting oppressive social structures (Freire, 1970). Within this framework, empowerment-oriented *da'wah* serves as a crucial instrument for cultivating critical consciousness through processes of dialogue, reflection, and collective social action.

Overall, the findings of this study demonstrate that reconstructing empowerment-oriented *da'wah* within *Community Development* produces a more comprehensive paradigm for Islamic community development. *Da'wah* is no longer viewed solely as a religious activity but also as an instrument of social development oriented toward community empowerment. The integration of Islamic values with modern development theory offers a more contextual, human-centered, and sustainable approach to Islamic community development.

3. An Integrative Model for Reconstructing the Participatory Approach to Islamic Community Development

The findings demonstrate that reconstructing the participatory approach to Islamic community development results in an integrative model that combines three principal elements: *Community Development* theory, empowerment-oriented *da'wah*, and Islamic values as the ethical and spiritual foundation of development. This model emerges as a response to the limitations of conventional development approaches, which tend to be technocratic and often overlook the moral and spiritual dimensions that shape community life. Within Muslim communities, development cannot be separated from the value system that influences people's worldview, behavior, and orientation toward social life.

Community Development provides the conceptual framework by emphasizing the importance of participation, empowerment, and capacity building throughout the development process. Ife and Tesoriero argue that effective community development should strengthen communities' control over the resources and decisions that affect their lives (Ife & Tesoriero, 2008). However, in practice, this approach often remains confined to methodological considerations without addressing the value-based dimensions that motivate social participation. Consequently, integrating empowerment-oriented *da'wah* into the development process is essential for providing the moral and spiritual foundations necessary to achieve sustainable community transformation.

Within this integrative model, empowerment-oriented *da'wah* functions as the bridge between development structures and Islamic values. *Da'wah* is no longer viewed merely as a process of religious communication but as a mechanism of social transformation that cultivates collective consciousness within the community. Through *da'wah*, values such as *shūrā*, *ta'āwun*, *ukhuwah*, and *maslahah* are internalized into development practices, ensuring that community participation is not only instrumental but also regarded as an act of social worship. Consequently, development becomes both an expression of devotion to Allah and a collective endeavor to improve the social conditions of the community.

The reconstructed model further demonstrates that participation in Islamic community development is multidimensional. At the first level, participation is technical, involving community engagement in development activities such as planning and program implementation. At the second level, participation is cognitive, involving active engagement in decision-making based on critical consciousness. At the third level, participation is spiritual, rooted in faith and in the responsibility of human beings as *khalifah* on earth. These three dimensions interact dynamically to form a comprehensive system of participation in Islamic community development.

From Paulo Freire's perspective, this process represents the transformation of consciousness from naïve consciousness to critical consciousness, which ultimately encourages transformative social action (Freire, 1970). From Chambers' perspective, the model reflects a development approach that positions communities at the center of the development process rather than as passive recipients of external intervention (Chambers, 1997). The integration of these perspectives with Islamic values produces a more holistic and contextually grounded approach to community development.

The findings also indicate that this integrative model strengthens the role of social capital in Islamic community development. Social capital in this context encompasses trust, social networks, and collective norms that reinforce cooperation within the community. The value of *ukhuwah* strengthens interpersonal trust, while *ta'āwun* enhances collaborative networks among individuals and community groups. Consequently, successful development depends not only on material resources but also on the strength of social relationships embedded within the community.

Furthermore, the model reinforces the principle of sustainability in community development. Sustainability is understood not merely as the administrative continuity of development programs but as the community's capacity to sustain and further develop development outcomes independently. Within this context, empowerment-oriented *da'wah* plays a crucial role in ensuring that the values underpinning development are continuously internalized within community life, thereby enabling social transformation to become a lasting cultural characteristic rather than a temporary outcome.

The integrative model also demonstrates that Islamic community development must be both inclusive and participatory. Inclusiveness requires that all segments of society, including vulnerable groups, have equitable opportunities to participate in and benefit from development processes. Chambers' principle of *putting the last first* is highly relevant in this regard because it emphasizes prioritizing socially and economically marginalized groups within development initiatives (Chambers, 1997). From an Islamic perspective, this principle corresponds closely with the value of social justice (*al-'adl*), which emphasizes equity, fairness, and equal opportunity in social life.

Moreover, the model affirms that Islamic community development cannot be separated from the spiritualization of the development process. Every development initiative should therefore be guided by clear moral and spiritual values aimed not only at achieving worldly prosperity but also at realizing *maslahah* in the Hereafter. Accordingly, development becomes a form of social worship that possesses a transcendent dimension. This distinctive characteristic differentiates the proposed model from secular development approaches, which are primarily oriented toward material and economic objectives.

Overall, the proposed integrative model demonstrates that reconstructing the participatory approach to Islamic community development gives rise to a more comprehensive development paradigm. This paradigm integrates structural, cultural, and spiritual dimensions into a coherent and mutually reinforcing framework. Consequently, development is understood not merely as a technical process but as a process of social transformation grounded in Islamic values and directed toward achieving both the material and spiritual well-being of society.

D. Conclusion

This study demonstrates that the implementation of the participatory approach to Islamic community development in *Kabupaten Solok Selatan* has reflected the principles of participation and community empowerment but has not yet been fully implemented in a substantive manner. Community participation remains concentrated primarily at the implementation stage, while planning and decision-making continue to be influenced by administrative and top-down practices. The findings indicate that meaningful participation should extend beyond formal involvement to encompass collective awareness, shared decision-making, and active engagement throughout the entire development process. From this perspective, empowerment-oriented *da'wah* plays a strategic role in fostering community awareness, strengthening social responsibility, and cultivating self-reliance based on Islamic values such as *shūrā*, *ta'āwun*, *ukhuwah*, and *maslahah*.

This study proposes an integrative model for reconstructing the participatory approach to Islamic community development by combining *Community Development* theory, empowerment-oriented *da'wah*, and Islamic values within a unified conceptual framework. The model integrates structural, cultural, and spiritual dimensions to position

communities as the primary actors in sustainable development while providing an ethical foundation for participation and empowerment. The proposed model contributes to the advancement of *Pengembangan Masyarakat Islam* by offering a conceptual framework that is both contextually relevant and theoretically grounded. Future research is recommended to empirically validate this model across diverse Muslim community settings and to develop operational indicators for empowerment-oriented *da'wah* to enhance its practical application in community-based development programs.

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Ethical Statement

This study was conducted in accordance with established research ethics principles, including respect for participants' rights and dignity, voluntary participation, fairness, confidentiality, and scientific integrity. Prior to data collection, informed consent was obtained from all participants, who were informed of the purpose of the study and their right to withdraw from the research at any stage. All data were collected, analyzed, and reported honestly, objectively, and responsibly.

AI Declarations

The authors declare that artificial intelligence (AI)–assisted tools were used solely to support language refinement and the literature review process, including improving the clarity, grammar, and organization of the manuscript. All conceptual development, data collection, analysis, interpretation of findings, and final scholarly judgments were undertaken by the authors, who assume full responsibility for the content of this article.