

Development Communication for The Empowerment of People's Weaving Business in Timor Tengah Selatan Regency

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ARTICLE INFO	ABSTRACT
Submitted : 02-04-2023	The purpose of this research is to describe the conditions and problems faced by the people in South Central Timor (TTS) Regency, especially those who do people's weaving businesses and to analyze the development communication that occurs in the weaving group assisted by the Trade, Industry and MSME Office of TTS Regency. This study uses a qualitative method with an interpretive approach. Furthermore, the author conducted direct interviews with a group of people's weaving craftsmen under the auspices of the Department of Trade, Industry, Cooperatives and SMEs in TTS Regency. This study found that development communication in an area has not led to empowerment. On the other hand, power dynamics between parents and young people will continue to be a feature of a society. Therefore, development communication must be carried out to facilitate different local cultural communication structures, in order to encourage empowerment not only for parents but also for the younger generation.
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1. Introduction

The people's weaving business is one of the hereditary businesses in South Central Timor District (TTS). This district is famous for its beautiful woven fabrics and various woven motifs from various districts and villages. The advantages of woven fabrics from TTS Regency are found in the use of natural materials (Dinas Koperasi, 2016). The woven fabric used is taken directly from the cotton tree, then processed into yarn which is made using traditional tools. Furthermore, the motifs and patterns that distinguish it from other types of weaving are the coloring techniques. There are several color variations that are obtained from natural materials that are cultivated by weavers so there is no need to take them deep into the forest, for example, Tarum leaves are used for blue color (Nitti et al., n.d.), yellow is used. noni bark (Sisillia & Eni, n.d.) and (Seran et al., 2022), and the white color is obtained from corn grits (Nomleni et al., 2019).

Along with the development of the times and technology that influenced culture, various types of new motifs emerged. In addition, there are also changes in the quality of the types of woven fabrics. Currently, the types of woven fabrics circulating in various stores are experiencing a decrease in quality, even though the prices offered are increasingly affordable. This is due to the large use of materials that are easy to obtain such as gold thread and factory thread which are common in textile shops as well as chemical dyes, besides that the lack of cotton raw materials is also an inhibiting factor in meeting market demand for quality woven fabrics with natural ingredients (Dinas Koperasi, 2016).

The Department for Trade, Industry, Cooperatives and MSMEs for the TTS Regency (2022) explained that a piece of woven cloth using the buna method, which requires a high level of complexity to be completed in three months, can be sold for IDR 1.2 million to IDR 2 million, depending on size. Weaving using the sotis method is completed in two months and sold for IDR 750,000 to IDR 1 million. Meanwhile, those that were done on a futus basis were completed within 30 days and sold for IDR 750,000. Based on this, it can be seen that one of the incomes of TTS Regency comes from the sale of woven fabrics.

In order to increase the income of TTS Regency and support the success in the development to be achieved, this development cannot be separated from the needs of the local community. Therefore, a communication is needed between the government as the party that wants to build with the community as the target of the development.

The development carried out can be as expected, of course, cannot be separated from the existence of development communication. Communication is defined as the process of delivering messages that have meaning from one person or more to another person with the aim of influencing one another or creating mutual understanding between the two parties (Cangara, 2009). Furthermore Carl Hovland defines that communication is the process of an individual who becomes a communicator sending verbal symbols to modify the behavior of other individuals (communicating). Meanwhile, the word development comes from the English develop which means an action towards development, progress and growth.

Thus, the notion of development (development) is a change towards a better lifestyle and values. Development means improving people's living conditions accompanied by improvement, progress, independence and self-awareness. Development also aims to make changes and describes a process of transformation between social, economic and political in a country. So the importance of communication in development is a communication process that contains development messages to improve the welfare, knowledge, and freedom of an individual so that they can live a more decent life on an ongoing basis until old age.

When viewed from the development side, the existence of the people of TTS Regency has poverty problems. If examined more deeply, especially in TTS Regency, the number of poor people in 2017 was 134,040 people (28.92 percent) with an increase in the poverty line which increased from 276,727 rupiah/capita/month in 2016 to 291,203 rupiah/capita/month in 2017. This poverty line is seen based on spending on basic food needs which are equivalent to 2,100 kcal/day and non-food basic needs (Pusat, n.d.).

The problem of poverty in TTS Regency is caused by the ability of human resources that has not been maximized and patterns of life that are still traditional so that in this case the role of communication is important, both communication between communities in the village and with the government as the policy maker. Sumardjo (2006) explains that the problem of poverty can be minimized by increasing capacity and developing community independence. Community awareness needs to be raised from the start in recognizing potentials and problems and being able to plan independently to realize what is expected. Furthermore, Sugihen et al., (2017) and Soetomo (2012) stated that the integration of one-way communication (linear) and participatory communication in empowerment programs in rural areas can support the achievement of the goals that have been set.

However, the current problem is that development communication processes have not taken place simultaneously, and people's weaving businesses are still faced with recurring problems such as declining sales of woven fabrics, limited access to capital and markets, as well as programs counseling from the government that has not run as expected. In addition, the condition of the Covid-19 pandemic also affected the economy of people's weaving businesses.

Economic needs make each person treat weaving differently, which originally had a very high social role until it finally entered the role of the commercial economy. Woven fabrics are eventually traded with the aim of getting money. The role of weaving is also then forced to follow economic theory, namely having to meet market needs. The market needs strong materials, lightweight fabrics, motifs that are in line with the times and of course at a lower price.

A study of the problems faced by the people's weaving business actors, the causes of the problems, alternative solutions to problems is also needed to design a relevant development communication strategy design. Without an appropriate development communication strategy, people's weaving business actors will be increasingly left behind. There are several government flagship programs in the context of development communication, but they have not had a real impact on improving the quality of life of people's weaving business actors. Therefore, this research focuses on the condition of the community members of the people's weaving business and the role of development communication in community empowerment with case research in TTS District.

The purpose of this study is to describe the conditions and problems faced by the people in TTS Regency, especially those who do people's weaving businesses and to analyze development communication that occurs in the people of TTS Regency. This research is useful for policy makers in the field of community business development (MSMEs) and is expected to contribute as a reference in developing community development communication in TTS District.

2. Materials and Methods

Research design

This study uses quantitative and qualitative methods with an interpretive approach, namely to interpret and understand social problems in the real world including understanding the behavior, perceptions and experiences of the community. The quantitative approach in this study uses a survey method. To support and deepen the data in quantitative analysis, it is supported by a qualitative approach to describe the survey results. The survey was conducted by interviewing weaving craftsmen using structured questions as outlined in the form of a questionnaire. The collection of qualitative data was obtained through in-depth interviews and field observations. Based on the samples obtained, several cases were taken which were followed up with in-depth interviews which were intended to determine the factors associated with the communication phenomenon.

Location and Time of Research

This research was conducted in South Central Timor District, East Nusa Tenggara Province which was devoted to a group of people's weaving craftsmen under the auspices of the Office of Trade, Industry, Cooperatives and SMEs of TTS Regency. The research was conducted for three months starting from October-December 2022 with the following stages: initial survey, data collection, data processing and reporting.

Data Collection and Data Analysis Techniques

Data were obtained by conducting in-depth interviews with key informants and using information produced by agencies related to the object of research. The object of this research was chosen because the community of people's woven cloth craftsmen is considered to have homogeneous characteristics with close relationships, low social mobility, and have shared habits, values and norms, and most of the population in TTS Regency has a business as people's woven craftsmen. Furthermore, to carry out data deepening, documents from written reports were used that were available at the Office of Trade, Industry, Cooperatives and MSMEs of TTS Regency. To complete other important information, the researchers also conducted in-depth interviews with one of the leaders of the weaving group and related service staff in TTS District.

3. Results and Discussions

Overview of Weaving Craftsmen and People's Weaving Business in TTS District

TTS Regency has 3 (three) indigenous tribes, each of which has distinctive weaving patterns and motifs, including the Amanuban, Amanatun and Mollo tribes (Department of Trade, Industry, Cooperatives and UMKM of TTS Regency, 2016). The occurrence of cross-breeding between the Amanuban, Amanatun and Mollo tribes caused the woven cloth motifs in TTS Regency to become diverse. Some of these new motifs indirectly modify, reduce and add to the original motifs of woven fabrics. Furthermore, currently woven motifs are not only applied to cloth, but also to other forms such as bags, wallets and clothing.

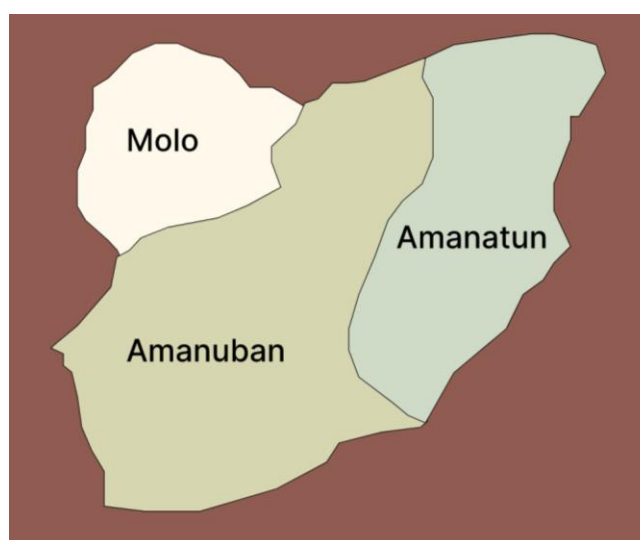


Figure 1. The distribution of tribal areas in South Central Timor

In general, woven products from TTS Regency are shawls, sarongs and blankets. The three woven products have different usage functions. Scarves are usually given to newcomers. This scarf can also be used as a scarf (neck cover) or to cover the head. Then, the sheath is quite large. Usually the sarong is used by mothers. Then, the blanket has a larger size than the sarong. Blankets are used by men, especially those who are adults.

Furthermore, the condition of the community as people's weaving business actors in TTS Regency has typological characteristics of small MSMEs with traditional weaving infrastructure. Weaving business actors in TTS Regency are generally women. Maimunah (2017) explains that weaving craftsmen have known weaving from an early age, and some people have even been taught to weave since they were not yet at school age. Furthermore,

Maimunah also mentioned that the community does not only weave cloth, sarongs, or shawls for themselves, but also weaves blankets for their brothers, fathers, husbands, sons, and the male family, as well as woven sarongs for mothers. and another sister. Based on this condition, it can be seen that the level of weaving proficiency is used as a benchmark in the eligibility of women to marry (Therik, 2021).

The traditional weaving industry has received great attention from the South Central Timor Regency Government by forming a weaving group under the Trade, Industry, Cooperative and MSME Office of TTS Regency (Table 1). Various trainings to improve the quality of weaving have been carried out including training in weaving and natural dyeing in the field of industrial business development.

Table 1. List of the number of weaving groups assisted by the Department of Trade, Industry, Cooperatives, and MSMEs in TTS Regency

No	Subdistrict	Number of Fostered Weaving Groups
1	South Mandate	5
2	North Amanatun	2
3	West Amanuban	6
4	South Amanuban	15
5	Central Amanuban	8
6	East Amanuban	3
7	White Stone	5
8	Fatukopa	3
9	Fatumna	2
10	Fautmolo	1
11	Ki'E	10
12	Kokbaun	1
13	Kolbano	3
14	I was home	3
15	Kota SoE	4
16	Kuanfatu	3
17	The strength	8
18	West Mollo	1
19	South Mollo	7
20	Central Mollo	1
21	North Mollo	16
22	Noebana	4
23	Nunkolo	6
24	Poland	5
25	santian	4
26	Toianas	2

Source: Primary Data, Processed 2023.

The results of an interview with the head of the weaving group (Mama Margaretha Seba, 53 years), the people there, in their daily lives, especially women weaving craftsmen, are not only responsible for domestic work, but also have to ensure that woven clothes are always available. Based on the results of the interview, this condition makes women

experience a double burden. Apart from taking care of the house, caring for and raising children, they also produce and process food. Furthermore, women also have to provide time and energy to weave and produce cloth that will later be made into clothes.

The various activities carried out by women in TTS Regency have made women successful in developing and improving their skills and knowledge in weaving, both in cultivating cotton and natural dyes, selecting cotton, weaving techniques and dyeing threads. For example, women from the Amanatun tribe in TTS district who live in coastal areas prefer to weave Ikat (puaf) because they can get rope to tie the threads from the gewang tree which grows around the house.

Meanwhile, in the highlands to the coast, women prefer to weave with lotis motifs which do not require tying threads for motifs and coloring. Not only do they face a double workload, the weavers also face a difficult situation for their families due to changes in their surroundings. These ecological changes occur because of various policies issued by the government that limit the space for residents to care for and utilize their nature (Maimunah, 2017).

Furthermore, the selling price of the woven products produced, for woven fabrics with original basic materials made of cotton, is sold at Rp. 2.5 million-Rp. 3 million per piece. The process of making this woven cloth is quite long, around 4-6 months. While the quality that is usually made as accessories in the form of bags with various motifs is sold at varying prices, which are around IDR 500,000-IDR 1 million.

Socio-Economic Conditions of the People's Weaving Craftsmen Community in TTS District

Weaving seems synonymous with poverty. According to (Maemunah, 2015), several villages in TTS District, weaving is often synonymous with uneducated people. The number of women who weave with cotton yarn decreases over time and most of them are over 60 years old and on average do not attend school. In reality, on the island of Timor, many poor women become weavers to earn money by selling woven fabrics. Agricultural land is no longer productive due to increasingly erratic weather changes, so weaving is the only alternative for women to earn money.

The relatively low socio-economic condition of the community has an effect on the capacity and opportunities for community participation. There is people's low income drives most of the time they are allocated to work in order to cover needs families, as a result of their opportunities and abilities to participate in the environment as well tends to be low. Besides feeling a double burden, women also feel a double role. According to Marcoes' research (2016), the woven craftsmen feel a double burden, which forces women's time and energy to be balanced in thinking and doing things related to knowledge and increasing their role economically, socially and politically in society. This condition makes it limited for women to receive information, moreover weaving work is generally done inside the house, with limited access and control over information from outside. This situation is evidenced by data from the South Central Timor Regency Government which states that the percentage of poor people in TTS Regency in 2016-2020 reached 33-35%.

Table 1. Poverty Line and Poor Population in TTS Regency 2016-2020

Year	Total Population	Poor Residents	
		Amount	Percentage
2016	461 681	138,43	33,35
2017	463 980	136,45	34,00
2018	465 970	130,63	35,67
2019	467 990	130,31	35,91
2020	455 410	128,98	35,31

Development Communication for Weaving Craftsmen

Conceptually, development communication acts as a liaison for current conditions so that the expected goals will be realized in the community as actors in the people's weaving business. Efforts to improve the quality of life of people's weaving business actors are difficult to materialize without changes in attitudes, knowledge and human resource skills. Facing these conditions, development communication needs to exist as a dialogic process in conveying ideas, information, and innovation by related parties to support the process of social change in a better direction than before. The impact of these changes can be seen at the individual, family, group, organizational, community and wider societal levels. Development communication processes will have far-reaching impacts if implemented in a sustainable manner.

Under these conditions, communication plays an important role in developing media to mobilize society and government (Hasyim & Ohoiwutun, 2017). Development programs from the government that can be communicated to the public to deal with the problems of artisanal weaving craftsmen in TTS Regency are increasing skills in using digital weaving technology, being able to manage these weaving products and increasing business management capabilities, product marketing and building networks with business partners to expand business the.

In this case, the messages in development communication to the community do not just inform, but also relate to aspects of transformation towards more advanced conditions, namely weaving craftsmen who are more independent and prosperous. There are several things that cause a lack of opportunities to manage people's weaving businesses, namely the urgent need for money, limited time and business capital, and product marketing. Thus, the orientation of development communication in this condition is quite heavy, it is not only required to be able to change the knowledge of weaving craftsmen, but also to be able to change attitudes and help strengthen the socio-economic structure of weaving craftsmen. It is hoped that this demand will make the woven craftsmen stronger in facing the challenges of advances in knowledge and technology.

The development communication strategy is not only related to increasing community participation, but also a way to create ideas or messages through the dissemination of useful information according to the needs of the community, so as to be able to bring about changes in knowledge, skills and attitudes. In this case, it is also hoped that the weaving craftsmen will be able to see their own problems and solve them without depending on other parties.

Furthermore, there is a community development program (*community development*) should be able to send communication messages so that people can become self-reliant so they can improve their standard of living and be able to optimize existing Human Resources (HR) and Natural Resources (SDA) as best they can. Planning in a development message must be carried out by identifying problems that become target needs by recognizing social conditions and local natural conditions so that solutions to problems can be found.

The potential that can be exploited in TTS Regency is natural raw materials for making weaving and the younger generation who are able to make woven fabrics manually. If the message conveyed by the communicator can answer the problems faced then what happens is a change in knowledge, skills and attitudes and even changes in income increase. This shows that the purpose of development communication is to convey development information in order to bring change to society. With these changes, people will change their behavior, have a spirit of competitiveness and be independent to solve problems and be able to meet their needs by utilizing existing potential without any dependence on other parties.

Furthermore, this research also focuses on communication programs to rural communities, which are synonymous with poverty, unemployment, hunger, population explosion, and stagnant economic development (Melkote, 2012). In this context, communication refers to a process in which different stakeholders create understanding together (Parahita, 2017), and continuously (Melkote, 2012), rather than continuously adopting technology (van de Fliert, 2014). Development communication not only facilitates social processes, but also identifies reasons for inequality and reduces the negative impacts of development (Melkote, 2012). The communication process is the process by which participation and empowerment are created (Parahita, 2017), and become an important part of development.

However, development programs in Indonesia tend to use a mechanistic approach that prioritizes technological change (Parahita, 2017). As such, the Indonesian government tended to only pay attention to necessary infrastructure, with communication seen only as a complementary element. Development projects tend to use one-way communication (top-down) without considering sustainability (Badri, 2016) or building local community knowledge and creativity (Parahita, 2017). This also happened to the weaving craftsmen, especially in TTS District.

However, this research emphasizes that the development of communication is not only based on infrastructure problems, but rather how to treat the community as the subject of the problem as recommended by several studies (Badri, 2016; IESR, 2019; Parahita, 2017; Triyono & Wibowo, 2018).

In development communication, sustainable management of natural resources must be carefully planned, developed and implemented through appropriate strategies, platforms and processes. During this process, various problems will arise, such as the involvement of many stakeholders who have separate interests that will conflict with each other (van de Fliert, 2014). Development communication comes with efforts to design a sustainable program that is in accordance with a dynamic environment (Badri, 2016). Participatory and interactive dialogue can engage and empower communities (Hennink et al., 2012). Based on this, contributions to community development and poverty reduction in the future will occur

if it is developed among stakeholders at all levels of society (van de Fliert, 2014). In this case, empowerment is defined as the process of increasing the capacity of individuals or groups to make choices and transform these choices into desired actions and outcomes (Melkote, 2012; van de Fliert, 2014) in order to improve welfare and quality of life (Hennink et al., 2012 ; Jennings *et al.*, 2006). All of society should engage in collective action for social change at the individual, organizational and community levels.

A community-based program seeks to create empowerment as a means to achieve sustainability. Through these programs, the community is expected to be able to identify problems, develop plans, and create solutions to problems (Hennink et al., 2012), so as to be able to use capacity to address important issues. When the community can develop programs in a sustainable manner, the community becomes independent in the use of economic, health, political and natural resources (Hennink et al., 2012).

Harris (1996) states that a participatory development communication approach needs to be developed to develop the community at the grassroots level through a non-formal education approach. Regarding the development approach applied in Indonesia, Waskita, (2005) observed that development has so far focused too much on physical and measurable things. This condition will eventually contribute to a communication model that shows limited interaction patterns and is related to power and service. The alternative communication model proposed is dialogic communication between people involved in the development process.

Furthermore, this study also found that direct communication between the government and local communities was only carried out during the socialization process, namely before the start of the development program. However, this process is only an activity to meet government-mandated requirements rather than creating feedback from the community and increasing community participation. As a result, communication occurs only in one direction because the government only informs the public about the planned development program. Feedback or negotiation is not expected from the community. Such a communication approach significantly limits community opportunities to actively contribute to program development.

Since the start of the program, the government should have established communication with the community. This communication, however, is conducted to ensure program continuity using a top-down approach. Public participation is more procedural in nature, not substantive. This strengthens the arguments of Parahita, (2017), Hadiyanto (2007), and Ratriyana et al., (2022) who argues that the development communication process in Indonesia remains complementary to development programs. The communication tends to be bureaucratic oriented rather than community oriented, and pays little attention to the potential for community empowerment and participation.

In the cases studied, communication was used to support government programs. This condition causes the limited role, knowledge and creativity of local communities in a program. To empower the community, the government must treat the community as an actor who maintains the community weaving empowerment program and ensures the sustainability of the program. The government should not make the people's weaving empowerment program a single program, but the community as beneficiaries must be able

to handle local programs independently, thereby encouraging long-term program sustainability.

In addition, the government must target older people in direct communication with the public. According to Ratriyana et al., (2022), the socialization process should be carried out once, namely at the main community forum attended by heads of households, most of whom are old men. The representation of the younger generation group is usually limited, so that the information obtained is also only at the adoption stage, namely on the technology that has been installed. Even then, the younger generation is given little information without significant details because they have limited knowledge. Ideally, development communication should be carefully planned, as it is essential for developing understanding among stakeholders (Melkote, 2012); (Parahita, 2017), as well as for ensuring that all community members receive and want to hear the information.

When the younger generation only receives information without engaging in proper dialogue, then they can only adopt the technology. This condition causes limited participation and empowerment potential. However, this study found that the community as a whole received the development programs that were given positively. The community views this program as beneficial and no one expresses a negative view. This finding contradicts the argument that programs received by the community are always top-down (Ellis & Ferraro, 2016). When people are given a program, they are considered to have received a mandate from the government and are thus obliged to follow and implement it.

In this condition, the government as the program owner and initiator should realize that the lack of objections from the community does not reflect active participation or empowerment. Some community members may feel rejected, marginalized and wish to be actively involved. The younger generation, as potential agents of social change, are expected to be actively involved in development programs. This happened in the cases studied. Young people recognize the limitations of access and information and want greater confidence and more opportunities to prove themselves. Thus, the younger generation should begin to be taught about the program and design plans for the future. However, this condition does not affect the community's acceptance of the development programs that have been implemented.

4. Conclusion

Weaver women in the TTS Regency have inherited the traditional weaving culture from generation to generation in their families. This condition can be said to be part of the process of communication. In addition to being able to become the identity of the local community, the inheritance of weaving culture can also be used as a form of national development. As an effort to preserve the culture of weaving, it is closely related to the process of inheritance and communication. There is no systemic and sustainable inheritance system. The production of traditional woven fabrics in the TTS district is carried out by women. They not only weave cloth, but also play a role as guardians of the cultural heritage of their ancestors in Timor.

The conclusion of this study is that development communication in an area has not led to empowerment. Power dynamics between parents and young people will continue to

characterize a society. The development communication approach in Indonesia, especially in TTS District, still adheres to a paternalistic, patrimonial and patriarchal culture that has been inherited for hundreds of years. In the process, the government carried out bureaucracy as usual for the community which had an impact on hindering sustainable development communication.

In fact, this condition should not be considered as a threat to empowerment, instead local culture, such as making woven cloth from generation to generation, needs to be part of the communication process. Therefore, development communication must be carried out to facilitate communication structures in various situations in different local cultures, to be able to encourage empowerment not only for parents but also for the younger generation.

Threats to the sustainability of traditional weaving lie in the lack of young people who have the ability to weave because many of them prefer to look for other jobs that are considered more profitable, the lack of assistance from local governments to receive assistance, both in training, marketing and capital assistance, as well as human resources (HR) weavers. The government needs to provide a bridge through building a traditional weaving organization that can accommodate future generations to learn traditional weaving, workshops and online weaving marketing training and provide internet technology facilities to increase the selling value of traditional weaving.

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