

# EMPOWERMENT OF INDIGENOUS COMMUNITIES IN PRESERVING LOCAL CULTURE AMID MODERNIZATION

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## Abstract

Empowering indigenous communities is the key to preserving local culture amidst modernization. This empowerment involves increasing the community's capacity to actively participate in preserving customs in the era of modernization. Modernization is a change in society's mindset and culture from a traditional one to a society with a modern mindset. In this increasingly advanced era, various challenges arise that can eliminate local cultural identity and local community knowledge about traditional traditions that have existed for generations. The method used in compiling this journal is a literature approach, namely by analyzing 50 national and international journals available on Google Scholar. The aim of this research is to help indigenous peoples adapt in the era of modernization without eliminating their customs and cultural values that have existed for a long time. From the results of this research, it can be illustrated that modernization has had a positive impact on easy access for people to learn about various customs and cultures in Indonesia. However, it will have a negative impact if people do not maintain their cultural identity.

Keywords: Community Empowerment, Cultural Preservation, Modernization

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## I. Introduction

Empowering indigenous communities in the midst of increasingly modern advances has become an urgent need, in order to maintain their threatened cultural identity. Indigenous communities are rich in value systems, customs and traditional knowledge that have been passed down from generation to

generation, and are an integral part of the nation's cultural wealth. However, the challenges brought by modernization and globalization are enormous, such as loss of cultural identity, socio-economic marginalization, and changes in lifestyle that can destroy their traditions and local wisdom.

For this reason, empowering indigenous communities does not only focus on improving economic and social welfare, but also on recognizing, protecting and promoting the traditional rights inherent in these communities (Obed Livingstone Banda et al., 2024). In this context, it is important for the empowerment of indigenous communities to involve responsive and participatory public policies, making indigenous communities the main subjects in making decisions that affect their lives.

This approach must include strengthening capacity through education and training, as well as the use of modern technology, such as digital literacy. This will help indigenous peoples access information, communicate with the outside world, and preserve their traditions more effectively in the digital era (Ummah, 2019).

On the other hand, modernization can be a threat to the continuity of culture and traditional values which are the foundation of the lives of indigenous peoples. This phenomenon requires appropriate empowerment efforts, so that indigenous peoples can adapt to the changes that occur without losing their identity and rights (Rann et al., 2023).

Empowering indigenous communities in the era of modernization is an important issue that needs serious attention from various parties, including the government, academics and the general public. With effective empowerment, it is hoped that indigenous communities can increase their capacity, manage resources sustainably, and participate actively in national development. Therefore, this research aims to examine strategies for empowering indigenous communities in facing the challenges of modernization, with an emphasis on

aspects of cultural adaptation, use of technology, and public policy support (Suryani, 2024).

Thus, empowering indigenous communities in the era of modernization is an effort to balance technological progress and preserving cultural values, so that indigenous communities can adapt without losing their identity and existence amidst ever-changing social dynamics. Every change that occurs in one area will bring changes in other areas. This is because in the structure of society, each area is interconnected with each other. Apart from that, every change that occurs will have both positive and negative impacts. Because all these changes have different impacts on people's lives (Wati et al., 2023). The most visible impact of modernization is lifestyle, such as how to dress, how to study, increasingly advanced technological applications and how to speak (language use). What is certain is that slang will always appear and develop according to each era, which can eliminate traditional identities. Implementing social and cultural innovations faces significant challenges, particularly resistance to change and limited resources, especially in societies with strong traditional ties. A community-based approach that encourages dialogue and active participation is essential to overcome these obstacles, because it fosters a sense of ownership in the empowerment process (Dewi & Wikrama, 2023).

Empowerment of indigenous communities in the era of modernization has shown significant development. However, this achievement is still partial and is faced with various complex challenges. On the one hand, the existence of digital technology and digital literacy has created new opportunities for indigenous peoples to access information, communicate with the outside world, and document and preserve their culture more effectively. For example, communities such as the Dayak and Baduy tribes have succeeded in utilizing digital media to record oral history and promote their cultural values to a wider audience, so that their traditions are not eroded by developments over time (Febrianty & Ryendra, 2024).

Digital literacy training programs tailored to the needs of indigenous communities, as well as collaboration between village governments, non-profit organizations and technology service providers, are key to increasing their digital capacity.

However, the success of empowering indigenous communities also depends greatly on the support of public policies and legal recognition of their rights. The government has a very important role in providing a strong legal foundation to protect the rights to land and natural resources of indigenous peoples, as well as integrating customary legal values into the national legal system (Tobing, n.d.). However, indigenous peoples often still face discrimination and injustice, including the removal of their land rights. Efforts to revitalize customary law through documentation, education and institutional strengthening are important strategies so that customary law remains relevant and supports inclusive and sustainable development (Pratiwi et al., 2024).

Tradition-based economic empowerment is also an important indicator in assessing success. The development of local businesses, such as handicrafts, cultural tourism and traditional products, can improve the welfare of indigenous peoples without sacrificing their cultural values. The active involvement of the community, especially the younger generation, in decision making and implementing empowerment programs further strengthens the independence of traditional communities and maintains the continuity of their traditions (Simatupang et al., 2024).

However, there are still challenges that must be faced, such as limited access to technology in traditional areas, low levels of digital literacy, and modernization pressures that lead to individualism. Therefore, empowering indigenous communities in the era of modernization needs to be carried out with a holistic and sustainable approach, combining technological, legal, economic and cultural aspects, with full support from the government, academics and the wider community (Widayati et al., 2023).

Overall, the empowerment of indigenous communities in the modern era has shown progress in several aspects, especially in the use of digital technology and strengthening culture through customary law. However, this success has not been evenly distributed and requires more synergistic collaboration so that indigenous communities can adapt and develop sustainably, without losing their identity and rights.

## **II. Theoretical Review**

### **Strategy for Empowering Indigenous Peoples Through Education and Policy**

Empowerment increases the ability to choose and opens up opportunities to choose, which means increasing the ability to make decisions and opening up opportunities to participate in decision making, especially those related to their own lives (Lubis, 2025). Empowerment has more essential or deeper aims and objectives, namely having a direction towards a process of empowerment, as well as providing a greater role or function to society. In moving towards a goal, society is the main agent or actor so that the function of society is a source of strength in moving the wheels of development. Ideas or thoughts to move the motor of development must be accompanied by economic power. The economic conditions of the community must be able to provide guarantees so that they can play a role. As a material for further development, society must be able to understand its potential (Rochman, 2017). Meanwhile, according to Irwin, empowerment is the process of providing opportunities and creating various special contributions in the form of insight, skills, certain energy or in the form of providing attention to others (L. Hayar Satar, 2002:21).

So efforts to empower the community are carried out, apart from placing the community as the main actor, it must also be supported with economic assistance and equipping them with various skills and knowledge. The insightful knowledge and skills possessed will increase creativity which will help in

making decisions, seeing and exploiting opportunities and overcoming obstacles that arise in their implementation. In this way the results obtained will also be better (Media, 2025).

Local communities who better understand their needs and problems must be empowered so that they are better able to recognize their needs, formulate plans and carry out development independently and independently. In other words, people-centered development is development of, by and for the people, which is more popularly known as people empowerment (Africa & HeavyQingshi Design Institute, 2011). In order for the program to be implemented in accordance with the potential and needs of the community, the community must be involved starting from determining or selecting the program, implementation, monitoring and evaluation. The people involved will feel trusted so that a sense of responsibility will arise to carry it out as well as possible because the success of the program will be felt by the community itself (Prayana & Articles, 2023).

Based on several sources, it can be concluded that empowerment in the era of modernization has a number of characteristics that can speed up the process. One of the important characteristics of empowerment in the digital era is access to technology and information. Digital technology not only creates new channels for social interaction, but also provides the resources and tools necessary to increase society's capacity in managing resources, information, and in decision making. The existence of technology also plays a crucial role in increasing the competitiveness and productivity of businesses, including in the micro, small and medium enterprise (MSME) sector, which is an important pillar in national and global economic development (Munir et al., 2021)

Social and environmental sustainability is an important aspect in the community empowerment process in the current global era (Nurhasanah et al., 2021). This aspect emphasizes that empowerment efforts do not only aim to increase the economic capacity of individuals or communities, but must also pay attention to their impact on social welfare and environmental sustainability (Baidowi &

Hasan, 2024). A focus on development that is oriented towards people and the environment is very necessary.

Social sustainability can be realized if development places equal access as a top priority. This means that every member of society must be given equal opportunities to access resources, education, and economic opportunities without discrimination based on gender, race, or economic background. Apart from that, development must also uphold social inclusion, by empowering vulnerable and marginalized groups, such as women, people with disabilities and indigenous communities. Therefore, increasing capacity is very important so that these marginalized groups have strength, competitiveness and bargaining power. This can be achieved by strengthening the social capacity of society, including the ability to collaborate, organize and influence public policy.

#### The Role of Communities in Preserving Local Traditions

Local wisdom is a knowledge system that develops in society based on experience and interaction with the surrounding environment. This is reflected in various aspects of people's lives, including culture, customs and social practices passed down from generation to generation. Community culture within the framework of local wisdom often functions as a foundation in strengthening group identity and social relations between community members (Opietha, 2023).

To grow village community participation, a leader is needed who understands the aspirations and desires of the community. According to Sumitro Maskun, the leadership system in villages, whether based on religion or community organizations, is a system that is able to mobilize community participation and revive the initiative, creativity and productivity of village communities. The leader must be someone who has a positive attitude towards the program to be implemented, has the responsibility and desire to improve the welfare of the community, can be trusted and has the ability and creativity that are very necessary to support the success of the program. These leaders can come from regional leaders such as sub-district heads, village heads, hamlet heads, RT/RW

heads, leaders of activity groups such as farmer groups or fishermen groups. Apart from that, institutional development is also carried out, which is an effort to mobilize the community according to their individual interests. Community institutions are a forum for community aspirations and inspiration. Furthermore, to improve the quality and capacity of the community, government assistance and technical assistance are needed, namely a village community development program, which comes from both government and non-government

Culture is a whole way of life that is developed and shared by a group of people, which is passed down from generation to generation. Culture includes various aspects of life such as language, art, customs, belief systems, norms, and technology. Culture has a very important role in human life and society. Culture provides identity to individuals and groups, allows them to understand their origins, identity and relationships with others, and maintains the continuity of traditions from generation to generation. Culture establishes norms and values that govern individual behavior, including rules about what is considered right or wrong, good or bad. The process of socialization and education is greatly influenced by culture, where individuals learn and adapt to the norms and values of society through formal and informal education. Culture also enables coordination and cooperation between individuals through a shared understanding of customs, language and cultural practices (Zuliyah, 2010).

Recognition and protection of traditional rights is important because it ensures environmental sustainability, cultural preservation and socio-economic sustainability of indigenous communities. However, in practice, the implementation of policies that support traditional rights is often faced with various challenges, including conflicts of interest between indigenous peoples and the government and private sector, a lack of understanding and awareness of traditional rights, and rapid social and environmental changes. Therefore, reviewing the role of public policy in empowering indigenous communities is important to understand the challenges, opportunities and prospects towards gender equality and social justice for indigenous communities (Tobing, n.d.).



So based on the explanations above, this discussion presents findings from various sources which examine in a comprehensive and up-to-date manner the dynamics, strategies and challenges in empowering indigenous communities in the era of modernization. With policy support and collaboration from various parties, indigenous peoples have the opportunity to face the challenges of modernization while taking advantage of existing opportunities to improve their welfare and preserve their culture. This article combines findings from various sources which comprehensively and up-to-date discuss the dynamics, strategies and challenges in empowering indigenous communities in the era of modernization (Budi Setyaningrum, 2018).

Indonesia, with its rich and diverse traditions and culture, shows how differences can be united within a national cultural framework. Culture plays an important role in shaping national identity as well as the character and lifestyle of society. However, in the midst of globalization and modernization, local culture is at risk of being impacted by more dominant foreign cultures. Therefore, maintaining and preserving local culture is very important as part of the nation's identity and heritage. Efforts such as education and cultural promotion must continue to be carried out to ensure that Indonesia's cultural riches are maintained and passed on to future generations. Even though there are challenges faced due to the influence of global culture, a commitment to preserving local culture will ensure that Indonesia's cultural richness remains an integral part of the nation's identity (Samongilailai & Utomo, 2024).

### The Impact of Modernization on the Culture of Indigenous Peoples

Modernization is a form or form of transition from conditions or circumstances that are less developed or advanced to ones that are superior, advanced and experiencing improvement in various fields or aspects of people's lives. The rapid increase in scientific and technological progress as seen now is evidence of modernization (Opietha, 2023). In simple terms, modernization is defined as a

transformation process from the habit of doing things traditionally to the habit of doing things in a modern way. This is confirmed by (Muetya et al., 2022).

Modernization is a series of changes in a society's habits from traditional to more advanced in various aspects of life. Modernization is a society's old or traditional habits or ways becoming new varieties or ways that are superior or advanced, with the aim of improving the benefit and welfare of society. The concept of modernization in the context of social change seeks to transform people's lives from traditional ones to a more modern form of society (Suharto, 2010).

The characteristics of modernity can be seen from several important aspects, namely the level of sustainable economic development as well as increasingly rapid and sophisticated growth and progress in the field of technology. Among these characteristics, there is competition in meeting human needs, acceleration of technological innovation, and the need for goods and services that are effective, appropriate and efficient in a modern social context. This is also reinforced by the statement (Sidiq & Sulistyani, 2017) which states that the characteristics of modernization include a diverse society, high social mobility, an open stratification system, actions taken with rationality, and ignoring customs. Apart from that, there is a tendency to place higher personal interests, a drive to pursue achievement, objective thinking, and attention to specifications.

Modernization drives significant changes in people's lifestyles. In this era, modern humans prioritize rationality rather than believing in things that are supernatural or metaphysical. Through the development of rationality, humans build a new civilization which we know as the era of modernization. On the journey towards modernization, old elements are often replaced by new elements that are considered more advanced (Sidiq & Sulistyani, 2017).

Modern society tends to prioritize compliance with formal rules rather than existing customs and norms. This causes many traditional values and native culture to begin to be marginalized. Social changes that occur in a society are often triggered by advances in science and its application in everyday life. These

changes have deep meaning, which can lead to both positive and negative developments (Timbasz et al., 2020).

Basically, change occurs as a response to human actions triggered by evolving expectations and needs, which are largely caused by technological advances. This has also resulted in transformation in various aspects of people's lives and changes in thinking patterns to become more advanced (Pratama et al., 2024). Modernization in the educational context can be understood as a transformation process that aims to improve teaching and learning activities. This process focuses on developing students' potential, so that they can have spiritual strength, the ability to control themselves, a good personality, intelligence, noble morals, and the necessary skills. This change leads from traditional learning methods to more modern ways. Both modern and traditional societies need to make adjustments to their values, attitudes and behavior, and be able to adapt quickly to the changes that are currently occurring. In this case, the role of education is very crucial, because society needs to be able to filter various existing changes, while continuing to create new innovations in the development of science and technology (Rizik et al., 2021).

### Challenges and Prospects for Cultural Empowerment of Indigenous Peoples

Cultural empowerment of indigenous communities currently faces a number of complex challenges amidst the currents of modernization and globalization. One of the main problems is the lack of adequate legal recognition of the rights of indigenous peoples to the land and natural resources they own. Many of the claims made by indigenous communities to their territories often clash with the interests of large companies, such as plantations and mining, leading to land grabbing and environmental damage. This situation not only threatens the continuity of culture and traditions, but also threatens the livelihoods of indigenous peoples who are very dependent on their living environment (Atsar, 2017). In addition, limited technical capacity and financial resources often worsen

the ability of indigenous communities to manage resources sustainably, thereby hampering effective empowerment processes.

Beyond legal and economic challenges, rapid social changes resulting from modernization and globalization have also had a significant impact on the culture of indigenous peoples. External cultural influences that enter through mass media and digital technology often shift the traditional values that have been the foundation of their lives. This condition is exacerbated by the younger generation's declining interest in local customs and languages, because they tend to be more interested in modern lifestyles which are considered more relevant and promising. If there are no serious efforts to revive and instill cultural values in future generations, this could threaten the sustainability of indigenous people's culture and identity (Rodríguez, Velastequí, 2019).

However, the prospects for cultural empowerment of indigenous communities are still wide open with various opportunities that can be exploited. Strengthening traditional institutions is an important strategy to maintain local wisdom and ensure active community participation in managing culture and natural resources. Education and training tailored to the needs of indigenous communities, including digital literacy, can increase their capacity to face the challenges of modernization without losing their cultural identity. Support from the government through policies that recognize the rights of indigenous communities, as well as providing funding and infrastructure, is crucial to supporting the sustainability of empowerment programs (Agustana, 2020).

Furthermore, collaboration between indigenous communities, government and non-governmental organizations can open access to new technologies, markets and knowledge that are beneficial for the cultural and economic development of indigenous communities. Examples of successful empowerment programs involving joint business groups show that with the right support, indigenous communities are able to improve their welfare while preserving their culture. An inclusive and sustainable approach allows indigenous peoples to navigate social

and economic change without losing their identity and cultural heritage (Zelfia et al., 2024).

To realize these positive prospects, a nuanced approach is needed that respects the local context. Cultural empowerment of indigenous communities must pay attention to existing customs and traditions, and actively involve the community in program planning and implementation. This approach must also be able to accommodate social changes, including the role of women and the younger generation in maintaining and developing culture. Thus, empowering indigenous peoples' culture is not only a preservation effort, but also empowerment that is able to improve their quality of life and independence in this modern era (Rodiyah, 2018).

### **III. Methodology**

The method used in this research is descriptive exploration. This chapter discusses the journal search process, questions that guide when reviewing journals, and the limitations of selecting journals used in literature reviews. Journal searches were carried out through Google's international journal provider database, namely Google Scholar (Ajani et al., 2024). This approach aims to complement research with relevant information and previous findings. This method adopts a qualitative descriptive approach in delivering the material. Apart from using qualitative methods, this article utilizes a phenomenological approach to obtain discussion results. Phenomenology can be said to be an experience that arises or is felt by someone. Apart from using qualitative methods, this article utilizes a phenomenological approach to obtain discussion results. The phenomenological approach is a science that has an explanatory orientation regarding visible events or realities (Salim, 2006).

### **IV. Results**

As mentioned above, modernization is a total change in society which is a fast process. The emergence of modernization can be caused by advances in science and technology. Consciously or not, we experience various socio-cultural phenomena that occur in our society. This phenomenon can take the form of changes in lifestyle, social procedures, changes in social systems, or things that can trigger social problems that arise due to technological developments. Technology also makes the natural environment comfortable to live in, safe and efficient to cultivate. However, on the other hand, technology also has other unexpected impacts, giving rise to quite complicated social problems. A concrete example that is easy to understand is the invention of audio-visual technology such as television. Television has created various phenomena for us (Malik, 2018). Changes in lifestyle in a society cannot be avoided as a result of the exchange of cultural information via television media. Modernization has had many impacts on everyone's lives, from children to the elderly. The impact is not only a positive impact, but also a negative impact, especially for members of society who do not have many moral values, especially religious norms.

#### 1. Adaptation and Existence of Indigenous Peoples in the Era of Modernization

Indigenous peoples show an extraordinary ability to adapt to modernity, thanks to advances in science and technology that encourage changes in mindset from traditional to modern. This adaptation process can be seen through a progressive mental attitude, rational thinking, entrepreneurial spirit, and a clear orientation towards the future. However, modernization also brings a number of challenges, such as an increase in juvenile delinquency and a decline in national identity due to the growth of individualistic attitudes.

#### 2. The Role of Digital Literacy in Empowering Indigenous Communities

Digital literacy has become an important means for empowering indigenous communities. By opening access to information, facilitating communication with the outside world, and documenting traditional knowledge, digital literacy plays a crucial role in preserving cultural heritage. Through training and increased

access to technology, indigenous peoples are able to preserve traditions while actively participating in modern communities. Successful examples from the Dayak and Baduy tribes prove that technology can function as an effective tool in preserving culture (Febrianty & Ryendra, 2024).

### 3. Natural Resource Management as an Empowerment Strategy

Customary forest management is a strategic opportunity for empowerment that not only preserves the environment, but also improves community welfare. Strengthening customary institutions, education, training, and support from the government in the form of legal frameworks, funding and partnerships are needed to ensure that customary forest management occurs sustainably and effectively (Bang et al., 2018).

### 4. Public Policy as Empowerment Support

Public policies that recognize, protect and promote the rights of indigenous peoples are essential in the midst of modernization. This kind of policy must pay attention to the role of indigenous peoples as subjects who participate in decision making that affects their lives, especially in terms of land rights, natural resources and traditional governance systems.

### 5. Active Participation of the Community and Village Government in Empowerment

Harmonious cooperation between indigenous communities, village governments and the younger generation is the key to success in the empowerment process. In Embonatana Village, for example, the active participation of the community and youth in a training program for making compost and the formation of an agricultural cooperative has brought positive changes in the welfare of indigenous communities. This involvement not only strengthens the sovereignty of indigenous communities but also increases their capacity in managing local resources.

## 6. Preserving the Knowledge and Culture of Indigenous Peoples

Preserving the knowledge of indigenous peoples in the modern era is very urgent to maintain national culture. The application of traditional knowledge in everyday life can provide significant benefits for the environment and culture, while strengthening the identity of indigenous peoples.

Empowering indigenous communities in the midst of modernization requires a holistic approach, including adaptation to technology and science, increasing digital literacy, sustainable management of natural resources, public policy support, and active participation from the community and government. With this strategy, indigenous peoples can maintain their identity and culture while increasing their welfare in facing various challenges faced due to modernization (Milojević & Inayatullah, 2018).

## Discussion

Modernization is a process of social, economic and cultural transformation that is taking place quickly and comprehensively, having a significant impact on the lives of indigenous peoples. Technological developments, globalization, and the influx of foreign cultures have resulted in major changes in the lifestyle of indigenous peoples. One of the main impacts of modernization is the loss of traditional values and local culture, which have been their identity and guide to life (Carr et al., 2016). Traditions that were once respected are starting to be abandoned, especially by the younger generation who are exposed to foreign cultures through mass media and digital technology. This creates a cultural gap between the older and younger generations, and weakens the feeling of love and pride for ancestral heritage.

Apart from that, modernization also triggers changes in social structures and interactions between members of indigenous communities. Collective values such as mutual cooperation, kinship and social solidarity are starting to be



replaced by more striking individualist and materialist attitudes. Society tends to prioritize personal interests and consumerism, causing concern for culture and traditions to decrease. With the widespread use of social media and communication technology, interactions have shifted from face-to-face to virtual, which has the potential to weaken social ties within indigenous communities. This situation has an impact on the erosion of socio-cultural values that have been the glue of society (Rayner, 2018).

Furthermore, the impact of modernization has also resulted in the loss of regional languages, an important aspect of indigenous culture. Local languages that are rich in wisdom and historical values are often replaced by global languages, such as English, or more dominant national languages. The use of foreign languages not only threatens the preservation of regional languages, but also reduces people's understanding and appreciation for their native culture. In addition, local arts and traditions—such as dance, music and handicrafts—are also experiencing a decline in interest and existence, considering that the younger generation is more interested in popular culture and modern lifestyles which are considered more interesting and relevant (Tuafuti & McCaffery, 2005).

Modernization also presents the phenomenon of cultural commodification, where elements of traditional culture are transformed into commercial products for market consumption. While this can increase the income of indigenous communities, it often diminishes the spiritual and social significance of the culture itself. Culture which should be identity and ancestral heritage turns into merchandise that loses its essence (Voyle & Simmons, 1999). In addition, social and economic inequality due to modernization makes it difficult for some indigenous communities to maintain their traditions amidst the pressure of pressing economic needs. Communities that are able to adapt to global change tend to be more advanced, while others are marginalized and experience more rapid cultural erosion (Sokk, 2024).

However, not all impacts of modernization are negative. This process also opens up opportunities for indigenous peoples to access science, technology and information that they can use to preserve and develop their culture. Adaptations made by society, such as the use of digital technology to document traditions and expand social networks, show that modernization can be a tool for cultural empowerment if managed wisely (Sartika et al., 2018). Therefore, it is important to find a balance between technological progress and cultural preservation, so that indigenous peoples can maintain their identity while taking advantage of the opportunities offered by modernization to improve their welfare.

Formal and non-formal education aimed at indigenous communities needs to be designed taking into account their specific cultural characteristics and needs. One effective way is through the use of mother tongue in the learning process, which can increase understanding and participation of indigenous students. This is important so that they do not feel isolated in the national education system which is often homogeneous (Shaturaev, 2021). In addition, entrepreneurship education and relevant technical skills training can empower them to develop businesses based on local potential, such as handicrafts, organic farming and ecotourism. Thus, education not only functions as individual capacity development, but also as a basis for strengthening the economy of indigenous communities collectively (Wulansari et al., 2024).

Furthermore, public policies that support indigenous communities are a vital pillar in the process of their empowerment. Policies that recognize indigenous peoples' rights to land, natural resources and customary legal systems must be implemented consistently. This legal recognition provides certainty and protection that allows indigenous communities to manage their resources sustainably, without fear of losing land rights or being marginalized by outside interests (Evolution, 2024). Therefore, the government needs to develop regulations that are inclusive and participatory, by involving indigenous communities in the policy formulation process so that their aspirations and needs are truly taken into account.

Implementation of empowerment policies must be supported by concrete programs, such as funding for capacity development, access to technology and infrastructure support. For example, digital literacy training programs and internet access in indigenous areas can create new opportunities in education and marketing of local products. In addition, the government and related institutions need to establish partnerships with civil society organizations and academics to strengthen the capacity of traditional institutions, so that they are able to manage resources and advocate for their rights independently and effectively (Haldane et al., 2019).

Overall, strategies for empowering indigenous communities through education and policy must work in synergy in a sustainable manner. Education that focuses on strengthening cultural identity and improving practical skills should be supported by policies that ensure the protection of indigenous rights and the provision of adequate resources. Only through this holistic approach can indigenous peoples face the challenges of modernization without losing their identity, while increasing their welfare and role in national development. Sustainable empowerment will pave the way for indigenous peoples to become active and empowered subjects in modern society (Trenggano et al., 2020).

## 1. Context and Challenges of Modernization for Indigenous Peoples

Modernization brings significant changes in various aspects of indigenous people's lives, from thought patterns, technology, to social interactions. Indigenous communities face challenges in maintaining their identity and culture amidst rapid globalization and modernization. The positive impacts of modernization such as advances in science and technology make it easier to access information and communication, but also pose risks such as the erosion of traditional values and the emergence of individualistic attitudes (Rochman, 2017).

## 2. Adaptation of Indigenous Peoples to Modernization

Research shows that indigenous peoples are able to adapt to modernity through changing their mindset from traditional (irrational) to modern (rational), with an advanced mental attitude, entrepreneurial spirit, and future orientation. This adaptation allows them to continue to exist and develop in a modern context without losing their entire identity.

### 3. The Role of Digital Literacy in Empowerment

Digital literacy is the key to empowering indigenous communities in the modern era. Through digital literacy, indigenous peoples can access important information, communicate with the outside world, and document and preserve their culture digitally. Successful examples such as the Dayak and Baduy tribes show how technology can be used to maintain traditions and expand the reach of traditional knowledge to the wider community. Strategies to increase digital literacy include training, technology access, customized programs, and collaboration with educational institutions and non-profit organizations (Suryani, 2024).

### 4. Preservation of Indigenous Knowledge and Culture

Preserving the knowledge of indigenous peoples in the modern era is an important effort to maintain the sustainability of the nation's culture. Traditional knowledge adopted into modern life can provide significant environmental and social benefits. This preservation is also a form of resistance to cultural homogenization due to modernization.

### 5. Public Policy as a Supporter of Empowerment

Public policy has a strategic role in recognizing, protecting and promoting the rights of indigenous peoples, especially regarding rights to land, natural resources and traditional governance systems. Empowerment through public policy places indigenous peoples as active subjects in making decisions that affect their lives. Government support in the form of legal assistance, economic programs based on local culture, and access to public services without

discrimination are very necessary for the survival of indigenous communities in the modern era (de la Peña, 2005).

#### 6. Strengthening Institutions and Community Participation

The success of empowerment also depends on strengthening traditional institutions and active participation of the community, including the younger generation. Real examples in several villages show that skills training, forming cooperatives, and collaboration with village governments can improve the welfare and independence of indigenous communities while maintaining their traditions.

### V. Conclusion

It can be concluded that empowering indigenous peoples in public policy, especially in the context of traditional rights, has very important implications for environmental sustainability, social justice and inclusive development. The importance of empowering indigenous communities also highlights the need for a human rights-based approach in the development of public policy. The traditional rights of indigenous peoples are part of broader human rights, and the recognition and protection of these rights is an obligation of states in accordance with international law. Therefore, it is important to ensure that development policies and programs not only respect the rights of indigenous peoples, but also strengthen them. Empowering indigenous communities in the era of modernization demands a holistic approach that combines technological and scientific adaptation, cultural preservation, inclusive public policies, as well as institutional strengthening and community participation. Digital literacy is an important tool to connect indigenous peoples with the modern world without losing their cultural identity. With policy support and collaboration from various parties, indigenous peoples can face the challenges of modernization while

taking advantage of opportunities to improve their welfare and cultural sustainability.

This discussion combines findings from various sources that discuss the dynamics, strategies and challenges of empowering indigenous communities in the era of modernization in a comprehensive and up-to-date manner.

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