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CUSTOM, ECONOMIC ROLES, AND ISLAMIC VALUES IN SHAPING THE COMMUNICATION PATTERNS OF COASTAL WOMEN IN BENGKULU CITY, INDONESIA

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Abstract

This study examines how custom, economic roles, and Islamic values shape the communication patterns of coastal women in Bengkulu City, Indonesia. It argues that women's communication in coastal communities should be understood as a socially constructed and domain-specific practice rather than merely as a gendered speaking style. Using a qualitative approach with a *focused ethnography* design, the study was conducted in three coastal sub-districts: Malabero, Berkas, and Sumber Jaya. Data were collected through semi-structured in-depth interviews, participant observation, and document study involving 24 women, including fish traders, fishermen's wives, seafood processors, and members of women's fisher groups. The data were analyzed thematically. The results indicate that *Melayu Bengkulu* customary norms tend to shape women's communication as careful, indirect, and oriented toward politeness in family and community forums. Economic roles in fish trading and seafood processing create more assertive communicative spaces, particularly in markets and household economic decision-making. Islamic values operate ambivalently by reinforcing norms of *adab* while providing moral legitimacy for women to speak, ask questions, and share experiences in *majelis taklim*. This study demonstrates that the communicative agency of coastal women is contextual, negotiated, and shaped by the forms of legitimacy available across customary, economic, and religious domains.

Keywords: *Coastal Women; Communication Patterns; Custom; Economic Roles; Islamic Values; Bengkulu*

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A. Introduction

Coastal communities in Indonesia are shaped by sustained interaction among marine ecosystems, maritime culture, fisheries-based livelihoods, and locally embedded social structures. Dependence on marine resources tends to influence more than household income and occupational patterns. It also affects social relations, gendered divisions of labor, normative expectations, and everyday communicative practices (Fitria et al., 2024). Bengkulu City, located along the western coast of Sumatra, is home to fishing communities and fish traders whose social lives are closely associated with *Melayu Bengkulu* custom, Islamic traditions, and the economic dynamics of coastal households. Within this social setting, women occupy a position that is both significant

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and contested. They contribute to household survival through fish trading, seafood processing, and the management of family finances, yet their communicative roles continue to be shaped by customary expectations and gender relations that may restrict women's open participation in public community forums.

This condition is particularly relevant in the coastal areas of Bengkulu City. Statistical data used in this study indicate that part of the population in coastal sub-districts is engaged in the fisheries sector, while women play a meaningful role in fish processing and fish selling. Data on capture fisheries production in Bengkulu Province also suggest that Bengkulu City is among the areas with relatively high fisheries production volume and value compared with other districts and municipalities in the province. These conditions indicate that the fisheries sector functions as more than an economic base for coastal communities. It also constitutes a social arena in which women build relationships, networks, and communicative practices. However, women's economic contribution does not always correspond with their position in community forums, local deliberations, or decision-making spaces.

The communication of coastal women cannot be adequately understood as a simple difference between women's and men's speaking styles. A social construction perspective suggests that communication patterns are formed through continuous social processes embedded in everyday life. Berger and Luckmann argue that social reality is constructed through interaction, institutionalized through habituation, and subsequently perceived as natural by members of society (Berger & Luckman, 1966; Dharma, 2018). In this sense, women's decisions to speak, remain silent, communicate indirectly, or adjust their tone in particular settings should be understood as socially situated practices. These practices are associated with customary norms, economic roles, religious values, and social expectations that are reproduced within families, markets, *majelis taklim* (Islamic study gatherings), and community forums.

In coastal Bengkulu society, this social construction appears to operate through several interconnected arenas. Customary norms encourage women to maintain propriety, position themselves appropriately, and avoid dominating conversations, particularly when interacting with older men or figures regarded as socially authoritative. At the same time, women's economic activities as fish traders and seafood processors create communicative spaces that tend to be more assertive, direct, and pragmatic, especially in market transactions and household economic decision-making. Islamic values also shape women's communication in an ambivalent manner. Norms of *adab* (proper ethical conduct), modesty, and self-restraint may reinforce certain boundaries in public communication. Religious forums such as *majelis taklim*, however, may provide moral legitimacy for women to ask questions, share experiences, and discuss family or social concerns.

Existing studies on coastal communities in Indonesia have examined economic life, ecology, conservation, tourism, religion, tradition, social relations, marriage, and women's labor in fisheries-based communities (Agustina, 2023; Firdausi et al., 2021; Prakasa & Purwo, 2019; Putri Ayu Pratna Paramita, 2023; Suhan et al., 2022). Studies on

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communication in coastal communities has also been conducted, although much of it remains focused on communicative style, linguistic expression, politeness, or ethnography of communication in a more general sense (Fajrie, 2018; Nurhidayah, 2017). More specific attention to how the communication patterns of coastal women are simultaneously constructed by custom, economic roles, and Islamic values, particularly in Bengkulu City, remains relatively limited. This gap is important because women's communication concerns more than speech practices. It also relates to access to social spaces, the capacity to articulate interests, and women's position within the social structure of coastal communities.

Based on this gap, the present study examines the sociocultural constructions that shape women's communication patterns in the coastal communities of Bengkulu City. The study does not position women as passive subjects who simply absorb social norms. Rather, it views them as social actors who adjust, respond to, and negotiate communicative practices across different social arenas. This study therefore aims to identify the sociocultural constructions that shape the communication patterns of coastal women in Bengkulu, analyze how women respond to and negotiate prevailing communicative norms within families, markets, community forums, and religious spaces, and elucidate the implications of these communication patterns for women's social position and communicative agency in coastal communities.

B. Methods

This study employed a qualitative approach with a *focused ethnography* design to examine how sociocultural constructions shape women's communication patterns in the coastal communities of Bengkulu City. This design was considered appropriate because the study did not seek to measure relationships among variables, but rather to interpret meanings, practices, and communicative negotiations within a specific social context. The research was conducted in three coastal sub-districts: Malabero, Berkas, and Sumber Jaya. These sites were selected purposively because they represent coastal communities characterized by fisheries-related activities, fish trading, seafood processing, and the presence of women's fisher groups relevant to the focus of the study.

The study involved 24 women aged between 20 and 60 years who lived and carried out social or economic activities in the coastal areas of Bengkulu City. Participants were selected through purposive sampling based on three criteria: they had lived in one of the research sites for at least five years, were involved in the economic or social life of the coastal community, and were willing to participate voluntarily. Limited snowball sampling was also used to reach relevant participants through recommendations from earlier participants. The participants consisted of fish traders, fishermen's wives, seafood processors, and members of women's fisher groups, as presented in Table 1.

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Table 1.
Categories of Research Participants

No.	Participant Category	Number of Participants	Main Social or Economic Role
1	Fish traders	10	Selling fish in traditional markets and fish auction areas
2	Fishermen's wives	5	Managing household finances and processing fish at the household scale
3	Seafood processors	4	Processing salted fish, dried fish, or traditional seafood products
4	Members of women's fisher groups	5	Participating in coastal community-based women's organizations

Source: Primary research data, 2024.

Data were collected through semi-structured in-depth interviews, participant observation, and document study. The interviews were conducted to explore women's experiences of communication within families, markets, community forums, and religious spaces. Participant observation was carried out between October and December 2024 in fish markets, participants' households with prior permission, women's group meetings, *majelis taklim* (Islamic study gatherings), and public community forums. Document study was used as supporting data, particularly through records of women's group activities, relevant community norms or rules, and local information media. All participants received an explanation of the study's purpose, the confidentiality of their identities, and their right to decline any question or withdraw from participation at any stage.

The data were analyzed through thematic analysis as developed by Braun and Clarke (2019). The analysis involved repeated reading of interview transcripts and field notes, initial coding, grouping codes into themes, reviewing and refining themes, and developing interpretations based on the relationship between empirical data and the framework of social construction. Data credibility was maintained through source triangulation, methodological triangulation, member checking with selected participants, and comparison between interview findings and observational data. The analysis focused on three major constructions that emerged from the data: customary norms, women's economic roles, and Islamic values. It further examined how these constructions shaped variations in women's communication patterns across different social domains.

C. Results and Discussion

1. Results

Women's communication in the coastal communities of Bengkulu City is shaped through the interaction of customary norms, economic roles, and Islamic values. These three sociocultural constructions do not produce a single, uniform pattern of communication. Rather, they operate across different social domains and create varying forms of communicative restraint, opportunity, and negotiation. Table 2 provides an

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analytical overview of how these constructions are associated with women's communication practices in family settings, customary forums, markets, household economic decision-making, and religious gatherings.

Table 2.
Sociocultural Constructions and Communication Patterns of Coastal Women in Bengkulu

Sociocultural Construction	**Communication Domain**	**Women's Communication Pattern**	**Form of Limitation**	**Form of Agency or Negotiation**
Melayu Bengkulu customary norms	Family settings, customary forums, community deliberations, and communal ceremonies	Soft, indirect, tone-conscious, and oriented toward avoiding conversational dominance	The norm of "knowing one's place," unwritten restrictions on speaking too prominently, and limitations on women's speech before men or elders	Senior women or women with recognized social status tend to have greater space to speak
Economic roles as fish traders and seafood processors	Markets, fish auction areas, and household economic management	Firm, direct, assertive, and expressive in bargaining and transactions	Greater freedom of speech is largely accepted in economic arenas and does not always extend to customary or community forums	Economic contribution strengthens women's confidence and makes their opinions more likely to be heard in household matters
Islamic values	*Majelis taklim* (Islamic study gatherings), religious instruction, and other religious spaces	More open to asking questions, sharing experiences, and discussing family or social concerns	Norms of *adab* (proper ethical conduct) continue to require politeness, gentleness,	Religious legitimacy provides a moral space for women to express opinions and strengthen

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	and self-restraint in speech	their communicative capacity

Source: Primary research data, 2024.

The patterns summarized in Table 2 indicate that women's communication cannot be read through a single axis of restriction or empowerment. Customary norms tend to regulate women's speech through expectations of politeness and social hierarchy. Economic activities, by contrast, create a more pragmatic arena in which assertiveness is recognized as necessary for livelihood. Religious spaces occupy a more ambivalent position because they reinforce ethical restraint while also legitimizing women's speech when it is framed as part of religious learning, family improvement, or moral responsibility. The following subsections elaborate these patterns through participants' accounts and field-based observations.

1) Customary Norms and the Formation of Women's Communicative Politeness

In the coastal communities of Bengkulu City, *Melayu Bengkulu* customary norms constitute an important social framework through which women learn how to speak, when to speak, and how far they may express themselves in particular social settings. These norms are most visible in expectations concerning politeness, self-positioning, restraint, and sensitivity to social hierarchy. Several participants described that, since childhood, they had been taught to "speak in the proper place," which meant avoiding conversational dominance, refraining from interrupting elders, maintaining a controlled tone, and avoiding forms of speech that might be perceived as too forceful or confrontational.

These expectations were rarely transmitted through formal rules. They were cultivated through family instruction, everyday correction, and observation of older women's behavior. Women gradually learned that appropriate speech was evaluated through multiple social considerations: who was speaking, to whom the message was addressed, where the conversation took place, and how the speaker managed tone and bodily comportment. This pattern was especially apparent in domestic settings and community forums involving older men or socially respected figures. In such contexts, women tended to use softer, indirect, and carefully measured language in order to avoid being judged as disrespectful or as violating customary propriety. One participant described this form of social learning as follows:

> "Since we were little, we were taught to know our place. When older men are speaking, we stay quiet first and wait for our turn. It does not mean that we have no opinion, but that is how we show respect. A woman who talks too much in front of many people, especially in front of older men, is seen as arrogant and as someone who does not understand custom." (Interview with SR, fish trader, 42 years old)

This statement suggests that silence or delayed speech should not automatically be interpreted as the absence of opinion. In many situations, it functions as a social

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strategy to preserve dignity, prevent negative judgment, and remain within the boundaries of customary expectations. At the same time, these norms do not apply uniformly to all women. Older women, women with broader social experience, and women recognized as influential community figures tended to have greater latitude to speak openly. Custom therefore does not simply restrict women's speech. It also produces internal hierarchies among women, shaped by age, experience, social standing, and their recognized position within the community.

2) Economic Roles as Arenas of More Assertive Communication

Women's economic activities, particularly in fish trading and seafood processing, create a communicative arena that differs markedly from domestic and customary spaces. In contrast to family settings or customary forums, where careful speech is expected, the market allows women to speak more directly, raise their voices, negotiate prices, defend their position, and interact with multiple actors without necessarily being perceived as impolite. Within the economic domain, assertive speech is commonly understood as part of work rather than as a violation of customary norms.

In fish markets, women sell fresh fish and processed seafood while maintaining relationships with buyers, other traders, suppliers, and actors involved in fish distribution. These interactions generate communication patterns that differ from those used at home or in community deliberations. Women who speak softly and indirectly in domestic settings may become more expressive and pragmatic in the market. They adjust their communicative style to the demands of an economic environment that is competitive, time-sensitive, and dependent on persuasion. One participant articulated this distinction clearly:

> "In this market, the one who stays quiet loses. We have to bargain, call out prices, and compete for buyers. If we are too shy, the fish will not sell and our children will not eat. Here, we are all the same, men and women. What matters is being able to sell. It is different once we return home. That is another matter." (Interview with WD, fish trader, 46 years old)

The statement illustrates a clear distinction between the market and the household. In the market, women's voices become part of an economic strategy. The ability to speak firmly, quickly, and persuasively is needed to complete transactions and sustain household income. Yet the same participant also emphasized that this communicative style does not necessarily carry over into the domestic sphere. Women do not rely on a single mode of communication across all social settings. Instead, they shift between communicative styles according to the social domain they enter.

Economic participation also influences women's communicative position within the household. Several participants indicated that women who contributed to household income were more likely to be heard in family decision-making, particularly in matters concerning finances, children's education, and household needs. One seafood processor stated:

> "Since I started managing the money from selling fish, my husband listens to me more when I talk about money and the children's schooling. Before, I mostly

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> stayed quiet. Now I make suggestions and decide many things at home. Money makes our voice heard." (Interview with Seafood processor, 40 years old)

This statement suggests that economic contribution can strengthen women's speaking position within the family. However, this strengthened position remains contextual. Women may gain greater authority in household economic matters, but this authority does not necessarily extend to customary forums or broader community deliberations. Economic roles therefore open space for communicative agency, yet they do not fully dissolve the social boundaries shaped by custom and gender relations.

3) Islamic Values and the Moral Legitimacy of Women's Speech

Islamic values also play an important role in shaping women's communication in the coastal communities of Bengkulu City. Their influence operates in two directions. On one side, religious teachings concerning *adab* (proper ethical conduct), modesty, self-restraint, and careful social interaction reinforce expectations that women should speak gently, politely, and with composure in public settings. In this respect, Islamic values often converge with customary norms that emphasize propriety and respect for social hierarchy.

At the same time, religious spaces such as *majelis taklim* (Islamic study gatherings) provide women with socially accepted opportunities to speak, ask questions, share experiences, and discuss family or social concerns. Several participants described these gatherings as safer communicative spaces than more formal community forums. In such settings, women could discuss rights, obligations, household relations, children's education, and broader social issues under the moral legitimacy of religious learning. One participant described this experience in the following terms:

> "In *majelis taklim*, we are free to ask questions and tell our stories. The female religious teacher says that Islam does not forbid women from speaking about religion, our rights, or household matters. We are required to know. This is the only place where I feel my voice is valued, where I am not seen as improper when I ask questions or express an opinion." (Interview with EM, participant in a religious study gathering, 50 years old)

This account suggests that *majelis taklim* functions as more than a space of worship or religious instruction. It also operates as a social communication arena in which women may develop confidence to speak because their questions and opinions are framed as part of religious knowledge-seeking and family improvement. Islamic values therefore do not merely regulate women's communication through norms of propriety. They may also provide a moral basis through which women expand their communicative space.

The three patterns presented above indicate that women's communication in coastal Bengkulu is shaped through the intersection of customary norms, economic roles, and Islamic values. In family spaces and customary forums, women tend to communicate with caution because their speech is mediated by expectations of politeness, age hierarchy, and gendered authority. In the market, they may speak more directly and assertively because economic activity legitimizes pragmatic and persuasive communication. In *majelis taklim*, women gain a more open space for speech because

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their questions and opinions are situated within the moral framework of religious learning. These variations suggest that women's social position is not uniformly subordinate across all domains. Their communicative agency appears through the ability to adjust speech styles, identify spaces that allow them to speak more freely, and draw on economic contribution or religious legitimacy to strengthen their position within the family and community.

2. Discussion

The results of this study indicate that the communication patterns of coastal women in Bengkulu cannot be adequately explained as a fixed expression of gendered speech style. They are better understood as socially situated practices produced through repeated interaction, normative internalization, and women's practical adjustments across different domains of everyday life. The interaction among *Melayu Bengkulu* customary norms, women's economic roles, and Islamic values creates a communicative order in which women are expected to speak carefully in some settings, act assertively in others, and use morally legitimate spaces to articulate concerns. This pattern supports the social construction perspective, which views social reality as produced through habitualized interaction and subsequently treated as natural within a community (Berger & Luckman, 1966; Dharma, 2018).

Customary norms in coastal Bengkulu operate as a mechanism of communicative socialization. Women learn that appropriate speech is not determined solely by the content of what is said, but also by social position, age hierarchy, gender relations, and the setting in which communication occurs. The expectation that women should "know their place" reflects a broader cultural process through which restraint, indirectness, and tone control become signs of propriety. Similar patterns have been observed in studies of coastal women in Indonesia, where women's participation in public interaction is frequently shaped by patriarchal traditions, internalized cultural norms, and unequal access to decision-making spaces (Firdausi et al., 2021). In the present study, however, customary norms do not silence all women in the same way. Senior women and women with recognized community status tend to possess broader communicative space, which suggests that gendered restraint is mediated by age, experience, and social recognition.

This interpretation extends previous work on coastal communication in Indonesia. Studies on coastal women's communication have shown that women's public engagement requires communicative competence because interaction across social groups may generate misunderstanding, conflict, or social tension (Fajrie, 2018; Nurhidayah, 2017). The Bengkulu case adds a more specific explanation by showing that communicative competence is not merely a linguistic or interpersonal skill. It is also a form of social navigation. Women adjust how they speak by reading hierarchy, occasion, audience, and the moral expectations attached to each domain. Their silence, indirectness, or delayed speech should therefore be interpreted cautiously. These practices may express subordination in some contexts, yet they may also function as strategic ways to preserve dignity and avoid social sanctions.

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Women's economic roles provide a different communicative grammar. In markets and fish-trading spaces, directness and assertiveness are not necessarily interpreted as improper. They are treated as practical requirements for sustaining transactions, attracting buyers, and protecting household income. This pattern resonates with broader fisheries literature showing that women's labor in processing, trading, and other post-harvest activities is central to fisheries economies, although it often remains undervalued or insufficiently recognized (Weeratunge et al., 2010). In Indonesia, studies on fisheries-based livelihoods have similarly shown that women are frequently involved in productive economic activities, group-based enterprises, and household financial management, even when formal recognition and gender-transformative support remain limited (Fitrianggraeni, 2019; Stacey et al., 2019).

The Bengkulu case suggests that economic contribution may strengthen women's communicative authority within the household, especially in decisions concerning money, children's education, and daily needs. This is consistent with studies of coastal communities in Indonesia showing that women's productive and reproductive roles are closely linked to household resilience, access to resources, and decision-making capacity (Handayani et al., 2023; Zulham et al., 2020). Yet this authority remains domain-specific. Women who speak loudly and persuasively in the market may still return to more restrained communication in customary forums. Economic participation therefore creates an important space of agency, but it does not automatically transform gender relations across all social domains.

This domain-specific character of agency is important because fisheries development programs often treat women's participation as a matter of economic inclusion alone. Studies on small-scale fisheries have warned that gender programs may reach women without necessarily empowering them or transforming gendered power relations (Lawless et al., 2021; Mangubhai & Lawless, 2021). The present study supports this caution. Women's access to economic activity can make their voices more audible in certain contexts, yet the legitimacy of that voice depends on where they speak, to whom they speak, and whether the setting recognizes economic contribution as a valid basis for authority. Economic empowerment, therefore, should not be assumed to produce communicative empowerment in a linear way.

Islamic values add another layer to this communicative order. In coastal Bengkulu, religious norms of *adab* (proper ethical conduct), modesty, and self-restraint reinforce the expectation that women should speak politely and avoid excessive public display. At the same time, religious spaces such as *majelis taklim* (Islamic study gatherings) provide women with a socially accepted arena for asking questions, sharing experiences, and discussing household or social concerns. This ambivalent role of religion aligns with studies of women's *majelis taklim* in Indonesia, which show that these groups have gradually become spaces through which women's interests and voices can be articulated in public life (Fadillah, 2023). In the Bengkulu context, women do not necessarily speak by rejecting religious norms. They often speak through the moral language that religious spaces make available.

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This pattern can be read alongside Mahmood's argument that Muslim women's agency does not always appear as direct resistance to religious or cultural norms. Agency may emerge through the inhabiting, reinterpretation, and practical use of available moral frameworks (Mahmood, 2011). In this study, *majelis taklim* becomes a socially legitimate communicative space precisely because women's speech is framed as religious learning, moral reflection, and family improvement. The religious setting makes certain forms of speech acceptable that might otherwise be considered improper in customary forums. Women's communicative agency is therefore expressed through moral positioning as much as through public assertion.

Theoretically, these results indicate that women's communicative agency in coastal Bengkulu is relational, contextual, and unevenly distributed. Collins's analysis of intersecting domains of power helps clarify why women's positions differ across household, market, customary, and religious spaces (Collins, 2000). The same woman may be relatively constrained in a customary meeting, economically assertive in the market, influential in household budgeting, and more open in a religious gathering. Such variation challenges any simple classification of coastal women as either subordinated or empowered. Their agency is situated in the ability to move across domains, adjust speech styles, and use available sources of legitimacy, including age, economic contribution, religious knowledge, and community recognition.

The findings also refine gender and small-scale fisheries scholarship by bringing communicative practice into discussions that are often centered on labor, resource access, and policy recognition. International studies on gender and Blue Justice have argued that fisheries governance frequently overlooks women's contributions because institutional attention remains largely oriented toward activities at sea, while women's work in processing, trading, household management, and community reproduction receives less visibility (Gustavsson et al., 2021). The Bengkulu case suggests that this invisibility also operates communicatively. Women's marginalization is not limited to whether their labor is counted or whether their economic roles are formally acknowledged. It is also shaped by the social conditions under which their voices are heard, postponed, moderated, or legitimized. Communication therefore becomes a critical site through which gendered power in coastal communities is reproduced and negotiated.

This interpretation complicates a linear understanding of empowerment in coastal communities. Economic participation may increase women's confidence and household bargaining position, yet its communicative effects remain uneven when women move into customary or community deliberative spaces. Similarly, Islamic values do not function solely as a normative constraint; religious gatherings may create a morally authorized space in which women can speak without being perceived as transgressing local expectations of propriety. These patterns indicate that women's agency in coastal Bengkulu is produced through movement across domains rather than through a single act of resistance. The same woman may speak cautiously in a customary forum, persuasively in the market, more authoritatively in household financial matters, and more openly in *majelis taklim*. Such variation supports the argument that communicative agency among

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coastal women is relational, situated, and contingent on the forms of legitimacy available in each social arena.

D. Conclusion

This study demonstrates that the voices of coastal women in Bengkulu are not simply silenced by custom, economic structures, or religion. Rather, they are negotiated differently across social arenas. Women's communication patterns are shaped through the interaction of *Melayu Bengkulu* customary norms, women's economic roles in the fisheries sector, and Islamic values embedded in community life. Customary norms tend to encourage careful, indirect, and politeness-oriented communication in family settings and community forums. Economic roles as fish traders and seafood processors create more assertive communicative spaces, particularly in markets and household economic decision-making. Islamic values operate in an ambivalent manner: they reinforce norms of *adab* (proper ethical conduct) in public communication, yet they also provide moral legitimacy for women to ask questions, share experiences, and express opinions in religious spaces such as *majelis taklim* (Islamic study gatherings).

The study contributes to gender communication and coastal community scholarship by showing that women's communicative agency is contextual and domain-specific. Coastal women may speak cautiously in customary spaces, more directly in economic arenas, and more openly in religious forums. Their agency does not always appear as open resistance to patriarchal structures. It is more often expressed through the ability to read social situations, adjust communicative styles, identify spaces in which speech becomes socially acceptable, and draw upon economic contribution or religious legitimacy to strengthen their position within families and communities. This interpretation broadens the understanding of coastal women's communication by treating it as a socially constructed practice shaped by the intersection of custom, economy, and religion.

Practically, these findings suggest that efforts to empower coastal women should not be limited to economic capacity-building. They also need to strengthen women's communicative capacity and participation in culturally and religiously legitimate public spaces. Women's groups, community-based economic forums, and *majelis taklim* may serve as strategic arenas for expanding women's participation while remaining sensitive to local custom and Islamic values. This study is limited to three coastal sub-districts in Bengkulu City and was conducted between October and December 2024; therefore, its findings cannot be generalized directly to all coastal communities in Indonesia. Further research could compare coastal communities with different customary and ethnic backgrounds and examine how digital media is reshaping the communicative spaces of coastal women in contemporary Indonesia.

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