

When Development is Uneven: The Neglect of Development Inequality in Coastal Areas of the Riau Islands

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ABSTRACT

The neglect of development disparities in coastal areas of the Riau Islands reflects a multidimensional failure to implement equitable and just coastal development planning in these regions. This study analyzes three main dimensions of neglect: infrastructure development gaps, disparities in the well-being of coastal communities, and marine environmental pollution. Using a qualitative approach, the analysis was conducted through a documentary study and visual observations. The results indicate that the neglect of coastal development stems from land-biased policies, thereby causing coastal areas to be neglected; the weak accountability of local governments in ensuring the sustainability of coastal development, which results in development disparities and threatens the well-being of coastal communities; and the disregard for environmental damage caused by industrial zone development which severely damages underwater ecosystems and the habitats of marine life in coastal areas. To address this, a tripartite collaboration is needed among the community, the government, and the business sector, recognizing that addressing development disparities in coastal communities involves not only restoring infrastructure but also strengthening the well-being of coastal communities through sustainable development.

Keywords: Neglect; Development; Coastal Areas

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Introduction

The neglect of development disparities in coastal areas of the Riau Islands remains a pressing issue that warrants academic examination, as it reflects the uneven distribution of development in coastal regions. This study not only addresses the negative impacts of development disparities but also analyzes the weaknesses in development planning within the social and economic contexts of coastal regions. The impacts of neglecting development disparities are evident in unequal access and social mobility (Djufri, 2025), income inequality (Adger, 2007), economic inequality in coastal areas (Windirah et al., 2020), and disparities in access to coastal infrastructure (Beauvais et al., 2022) and inequities in transportation infrastructure significantly impact economic growth (Chen et al., 2021), regional inequality & development (Williams, 2025). A lack of attention to the sustainability aspects of equitable and just development planning leads to poverty and low economic growth. Therefore, the conclusion is that inclusive and

sustainable development is necessary so that other coastal areas do not become victims of uneven development in the Riau Islands.

Literature reviews that have addressed the neglect of development disparities in coastal areas point to several main lines of research. First, coastal development policies that are land biased and lead to disparities (Hakim, 2013); inequality among coastal communities caused by unintegrated policies and the marginalization of coastal communities (Ali, 2019); and the underdevelopment of coastal areas due to structural factors, which requires policy attention, inequality among coastal communities is caused by a lack of government empowerment (Rukin, 2020), poverty in coastal areas stems from systemic issues, namely unequal access to resources (Latue et al., 2023) . Second, the failure of centralized government projects that disregard the characteristics of local communities: the failure of government projects due to a top-down approach (Garz, 2017), the failure of rural development in South Korea (Kim, 2020) , project failure due to a lack of understanding of local community characteristics (Leahy, 2018). Third, the displacement of coastal communities due to infrastructure development; conflicts over infrastructure development that restrict fishermen's access (Reis-filho et al., 2024); coastal infrastructure development marginalizes indigenous communities (Rane & Ghule, 2025); and the threat to coastal areas from plastic waste (Suyito, 2025b; Yudiantmaja et al., 2021). However, most previous studies remain descriptive and fail to delve deeply into the structural and social factors underlying the neglect of development inequalities in coastal areas. Their approaches appear repetitive and decontextualized, so their contributions to understanding the forms of neglect associated with these inequalities remain limited. Therefore, this study offers a more critical and contextual approach to understanding the neglect of development inequalities in coastal communities, with a focus on the Riau Islands.

The issue of neglecting development disparities in coastal areas raises highly complex problems at the local level. This issue is not limited to economic disparities but also includes inter-island development disparities, which hinder progress among islands in coastal regions. When coastal areas are overlooked in development planning, they face uncertainty in economic, environmental, and infrastructure aspects. This study is guided by three main questions to understand the forms of such neglect. First, how do infrastructure development disparities emerge in coastal areas? Second, what economic disparities exist in coastal areas? Third, to what extent has environmental damage occurred in coastal areas as a result of pollution? These three questions are interconnected and form the basis for analyzing how the neglect of development disparities in coastal areas has persisted systemically to this day. By addressing these questions, this research study seeks to holistically identify the root causes of the long-term impacts resulting from uneven development in coastal regions.

This research study is based on the argument that the neglect of development disparities in coastal areas is caused by various complex factors at the local level. Consequently, coastal regions bear the direct impact of development planning that is land-biased and fails to accommodate the interests of coastal communities. This neglect creates three interrelated preconditions that exacerbate disparities in coastal areas. First, the neglect of coastal development due to land-biased policies, which leads to coastal areas being sidelined. Second, the lack of accountability on the part of local governments in ensuring the sustainability of coastal development, which contributes to development disparities and threatens the well-being of coastal communities. Third, the disregard for environmental damage caused by industrial zone development—often packaged as national strategic projects (PSN)—severely damages underwater ecosystems and the habitats of marine life in coastal areas. These three preconditions indicate that the impact of development disparities in coastal areas is not caused by natural factors, but rather by the absence of equitable long-term planning in the development of coastal areas. Therefore, this study emphasizes the importance of equitable and just sustainable development in coastal regions.

Methods

This study examines the neglect of development disparities in coastal areas of the Riau Islands, which has given rise to highly complex issues due to uneven development. The primary focus of this research is to conduct a descriptive and reflective analysis of the phenomenon of development injustice in coastal regions, which continues to pose serious problems through 2025. These impacts include disparities in infrastructure development, gaps in the well-being of coastal communities, and marine environmental pollution. This phenomenon is evidenced by local media reports throughout 2025 that highlight the imbalance in the development of coastal communities in the Riau Islands, ranging from slowing economic growth and a decline in purchasing power to the degradation of the marine environment due to oil spills and mining exploitation. Information from these online media sources was used as the primary reference to assess the extent to which development disparities in coastal areas have been neglected. Thus, this study confirms that development disparities in coastal areas are not merely infrastructure gaps but also socioeconomic disparities that require serious attention within the framework of equitable, just, and sustainable development.

The analysis in this study is based on three interrelated main considerations. First, there is an imbalance in infrastructure development in coastal areas, resulting in limited inter-island connectivity. Second, economic disparities among coastal communities have emerged because the potential of the Riau Islands has not been fully harnessed, so the benefits have not yet been felt by coastal communities. Third, the degradation of marine ecosystems and coral reefs triggered by sand mining and oil spills, which threaten the economy of coastal communities. The neglect of these development disparities in coastal areas underscores the importance of in depth analysis to understand the root causes of infrastructure gaps, welfare inequalities, and ecological damage resulting from oil pollution and mining exploitation. These three considerations form the primary foundation of this study, which is oriented toward presenting a descriptive and reflective analysis of the forms of neglect regarding development disparities in coastal areas of the Riau Islands, as well as the impacts of the various issues arising from a weak commitment to implementing sustainable and non-biased development.

This research study employs a qualitative descriptive approach using both primary and secondary data sources. Primary data were obtained from various Indonesian-language online sources related to the research topic. Data collection was conducted through an in-depth search using the keyword “Neglect of Development Inequality in Coastal Areas of the Riau Islands” on the Google search engine during the period from November 20 to January 8, 2025. The selection process was carried out systematically, focusing on relevant news articles that discussed the issue of development inequality—specifically regarding the impacts of infrastructure development gaps, the economic conditions of coastal communities, and ecological damage to the marine environment caused by pollution in coastal areas. From these search results, 30 online news articles deemed relevant were identified and used as source material for this study. Secondary data was then obtained from reference books, reputable websites, and scientific journal articles that supported the context of this study. All of this data was used to comprehensively understand the forms of neglect regarding development disparities in coastal areas of the Riau Islands.

Data analysis in this study was conducted through three main, interrelated stages. First, the data organization stage involved systematically compiling and grouping all findings based on trends and their implications for the research issues. Second, thematic data obtained from an in-depth review of online news articles were then summarized and presented in the research results section to illustrate patterns.

Results

The neglect of development disparities in the coastal areas of the Riau Islands indicates a multidimensional failure to achieve equitable, just, and sustainable development in coastal regions. This situation and these conditions demonstrate that coastal areas are often treated as peripheral regions, even

though coastal communities bear the brunt of the impacts of such developmental injustices. The existence of these inequalities underscores the need to reevaluate the coastal development approach that has been implemented thus far. This failure is illustrated by three main findings in this study: limited infrastructure, disparities in the well-being of coastal communities, and environmental pollution of marine ecosystems—all of which are interrelated and exacerbate conditions in coastal areas.

Limited Infrastructure

The disparity in limited infrastructure development has a dominant impact on coastal areas in archipelagic regions but reflects uneven development planning among coastal communities. These disparities result in severely limited inter-island connectivity in coastal areas, thereby hindering the progress of the Riau Islands' coastal regions. These disparities and the limited infrastructure development can be seen more clearly in Figures 1, 2, and 3, which illustrate these conditions, as well as in Table 1, which shows the disparities in infrastructure development that hinder economic growth in the region.

Table 1. Limited Infrastructure

Impact	Narrative	Source
High Inter-Island Transportation Costs	High inter-island transportation costs due to geographical factors certainly pose a challenge for local governments in carrying out their duties to the fullest.	https://batamnews.co.id/berita-124297-batam-melaju-pesat-sementara-daerah-lain-di-kepri-tertinggal.html
Development Disparities Between Islands	This challenge has caused other regencies and cities to fall behind, resulting in disparities in development, social conditions, and economic status between Batam and other regencies and cities	https://batamnews.co.id/berita-124297-batam-melaju-pesat-sementara-daerah-lain-di-kepri-tertinggal.html
Limited Inter Island Connectivity	The archipelagic geography makes access and connectivity between islands a major challenge.	https://kepri-info.translate.goog/ketimpangan-pembangunan-di-kepulauan-riau-pada-era-desentralisasi.html
Hindering Economic Growth	However, maritime transportation infrastructure in West Tanjungpinang still faces various challenges, which could hinder economic growth and the well being of the local community.	https://kecamatananjungpinangbarat.id/meningkatkan-akses-transportasi-laut-di-tanjungpinang-barat-untuk-konektivitas-yang-lebih-baik/
Uneven Development	One sector in the port area along the coast poses a major threat to equitable infrastructure development.	https://kepri.antaranews.com/berita/41828/pengamat--pembangunan-infrastruktur-di-kepri-belum-merata
Hindering Regional Progress	Uneven infrastructure development across regions will hinder a region's progress.	https://kepri.antaranews.com/berita/41828/pengamat--pembangunan-infrastruktur-di-kepri-belum-merata

Figure 1, Figure 2, Figure 3, and Table 1 illustrate the emergence of infrastructure issues limited to coastal regions due to a focus solely on areas designated as industrial and free-trade zones. The lack of equitable infrastructure development in coastal areas has led to various problems. This situation is also driven by a development paradigm that remains land-centric, thereby adversely affecting coastal

infrastructure. This study also indicates that limited infrastructure development in coastal areas results in high transportation costs due to geographical factors, making it difficult for the government to carry out its duties. This phenomenon has resulted in other regencies and cities lagging behind Batam in terms of development. Furthermore, limited inter-island connectivity poses a significant challenge and a major threat to equitable infrastructure development. This situation demonstrates that uneven infrastructure development across regions will hinder a region's progress and adversely affect economic growth and the well-being of coastal communities.

Figure 1, Figure 2, Figure 3, and Table 2 illustrate three main contexts of limited infrastructure in coastal areas that contribute to disparities in infrastructure development across islands. First, disparities in development across islands have caused other regencies and cities to lag behind Batam in terms of economic, social, and infrastructure development. Second, limited inter island connectivity stems from the archipelagic nature of the region, creating significant challenges that hinder economic growth in underdeveloped areas. Third, the uneven distribution of infrastructure development across regions impedes progress in those areas. These three contexts demonstrate that neglecting infrastructure development in coastal areas has far-reaching consequences, affecting both infrastructure and economic growth. Limited infrastructure development in these regions exacerbates development disparities among the islands of the Riau Archipelago and severely hinders economic growth. This study underscores the importance of equitable infrastructure development in coastal regions through comprehensive regional development planning grounded in a maritime paradigm. However, the reality of development in the Riau Archipelago reflects a neglect of equitable infrastructure development.

Inequality in the Well-being of Coastal Communities

Inequality in the welfare of coastal communities has a significant impact on coastal areas in the Riau Islands. This situation reflects a form of economic and social development injustice, leading to disparities in welfare among coastal regions. These disparities are clearly evident in Figures 1, 2, and 3, which illustrate the economic conditions of coastal communities, as well as in Table 2, which highlights economic disparities and the decline in purchasing power.

Figure 1, Figure 2, Figure 3, and Table 2 illustrate the issue of inequality in community well being in coastal areas. This inequality arises because economic growth flows only upward and does not reach the grassroots level, thereby hindering poverty reduction. The lack of efforts to promote equitable economic growth in coastal areas has resulted in a decline in the purchasing power of coastal communities. This is evidenced by the emergence of fishing zones, where investments have further exacerbated the competition among fishermen for access to marine resources. This situation demonstrates that neglect of the economies of coastal areas leads to the economic inequality experienced by coastal communities. In conclusion, the economic stagnation in coastal regions is caused by regional development policies that do not sufficiently prioritize the local productive sectors of coastal communities. This serves as clear evidence of the significant economic inequality in coastal regions, which will lead to a crisis of trust and social resentment toward other, more developed regions.

Figure 1, Figure 2, Figure 3, and Table 2 illustrate the three main contexts underlying the disparity in well-being among coastal communities. First, the disparity in expenditure in the Riau Islands is caused by the Riau Islands' Gini coefficient, which stands at 0.382—higher than the national average of 0.375—resulting from misguided development. Second, the decline in the purchasing power of coastal communities due to rising prices of basic commodities is offset by an increase in fishermen's purchasing power. Third, income inequality in coastal areas stems from economic development that remains concentrated in industrial cities such as Batam, Bintan, and Karimun, while failing to reach the hinterland regions of the Riau Islands. These three contexts illustrate the existence of welfare disparities in coastal areas—a consequence of economic growth that is of poor quality and fails to reach the grassroots level.

This serves as a warning sign of smoldering inequality in development, stemming from the fact that the foundations of the coastal regions' socioeconomic life have not been strengthened.

Table 2. Inequality in the Well-being of Coastal Communities

Impact	Narrative	Source
Expenditure Inequality	However, behind the celebrations over the decline in poverty rates, there is one fact that must not be overlooked: expenditure inequality in the Riau Islands has actually worsened.	https://www.hariankepri.com/provinsi-kepri-kaya-dalam-angka-timpang-di-kehidupan-nyata/
Decline in Purchasing Power Among Coastal Communities	By mid-2025, a phenomenon emerged in which rising prices of basic necessities were not accompanied by an increase in fishermen's purchasing power..	https://www.google.com/search?q=dampak+KETIMPANGAN+KESEJAHTERAAN+MASYARAKAT+PESISIR+di+Kepri+2025&client
Shrinking Fishing Zones Due to Investment	This regulation is seen as opening up greater opportunities for the interests of large-scale investors, while small-scale fishermen lack adequate protection in the competition for marine space.	https://beritabatam.com/2025/12/pembangunan-tanpa-nurani-kammi-batam-tolak-penghilangan-ruang-hidup-nelayan-di-balik-pp-25-2025/
Income Remains Uneven	He also highlighted the economic inequality that still persists. The potential of the Riau Islands, he said, is quite significant, but the benefits have not been distributed evenly.	https://gokepri.com/hari-jadi-ke-23-provinsi-kepri-stisipol-ingatkan-tiga-pekerjaan-rumah-besar/

Environmental Pollution of Marine Ecosystems

Pollution of marine ecosystems results from waste discharged by ships, oil spills, and sand mining in coastal areas. These activities cause disruption to marine ecosystems, damage to coral reefs, and the mass death of fish and other marine life, thereby impacting the livelihoods of coastal communities. This situation reflects the lack of accountability on the part of the government and companies in protecting the marine ecosystem in coastal areas. These ecological impacts are clearly illustrated in Figures 1, 2, and 3, and Table 3, which show the degradation of the marine environment.

Figure 1, Figure 2, Figure 3, and Table 3 illustrate the ecological environmental impacts experienced by coastal areas. These impacts often manifest as a decline in the quality of aquatic ecosystems due to large-scale oil spills in coastal regions. Additionally, there has been an increase in pollution that is difficult to control, thereby threatening the environmental sustainability of coastal communities. The high level of damage to marine ecosystems is causing the destruction of marine habitats and marine life, such as fish, in coastal areas. Environmental damage also exacerbates the plight of coastal communities that have long depended on marine resources. The data in the figures and tables systematically illustrate ecological pollution and the resulting vulnerability of coastal communities in the region. In conclusion, this pollution problem has a significant impact on sustainable development in the region and requires attention.

From Figure 1, Figure 2, Figure 3, and Table 3, there are three important contexts regarding the impacts of environmental pollution on coastal ecosystems. First, the quality of coastal aquatic ecosystems is affected by large-scale oil spills. Second, marine environmental damage results from sand mining, which leads to the destruction of coral reef ecosystems and the loss of fish habitats. Third, a serious threat to the sustainability of the marine environment is caused by plastic waste and the activities of ships dumping black oil sludge in coastal areas. These three contexts demonstrate that environmental pollution in coastal areas

results from a lack of comprehensive oversight and the absence of programs to restore sustainable development following environmental damage. Ultimately, this results in a declining quality of life for coastal communities and the onset of poverty.

Table 3. Environmental Pollution of Marine Ecosystems

Impact	Narrative	Source
Aquatic Ecosystem Quality,	Academically, said Nyanyang, various studies indicate that large-scale oil spills can affect the quality of aquatic ecosystems	https://www.antaranews.com/berita/5249801/wagub-perairan-kepri-rawan-pencemaran-laut-terutama-tumpahan-minyak
Environmental Sustainability,	Marine pollution—whether from waste disposal, ship activities, or oil spills— poses a serious threat that impacts environmental sustainability, leads to a decline in the number of tourists, and reduces the income of coastal communities, including fishermen.	https://kominfo.batam.go.id/iteba-gelar-fgd-bahas-dampak-sosial-ekonomi-pencemaran-laut-terhadap-pariwisata-batam/
Disrupting the Marine Ecosystem	Oil pollution disrupts marine ecosystems, causing the death of many fish and other marine life, which in turn affects the livelihoods of fishermen.	https://muhammadiyah.or.id/2023/05/pencemaran-limbah-minyak-di-laut-kepri-anwar-abbas-minta-pemerintah-tegas-pada-perusahaan-nakal/
Marine Environmental Damage	He also highlighted the damage to the marine environment caused by sand mining, including damage to coral reefs and fish habitats.	https://metropolis.batampos.co.id/keran-ekspor-laut-kepri-akan-merusak-ekosistem-laut/
Death of Marine Habitats	The impact of marine pollution not only causes the death of fish and other marine animals but also affects human health	https://binus.ac.id/character-building/2025/04/krisis-laut-dampak-pencemaran-terhadap-ekosistem-laut/

Discussion

This study aims to analyze the neglect of development disparities affecting coastal communities in the Riau Islands Province. This region has many coastal areas directly impacted by disparities in access among coastal regions, resulting in uneven development and adversely affecting the well-being of coastal communities. The research findings reveal three forms of neglect. First, limited infrastructure in coastal areas, characterized by high transportation costs. Second, disparities in the well-being of coastal communities, characterized by the shrinking of coastal communities' fishing grounds due to investment activities. Third, pollution of the marine ecosystem, characterized by the poor quality of aquatic ecosystems resulting from large-scale oil spills. These three forms of neglect demonstrate the local government's failure to ensure the sustainability of coastal development in the Riau Islands. Consequently, development disparities in coastal areas are widening, and the well-being of coastal communities is increasingly threatened by the impacts of investment. Additionally, environmental damage resulting from ecological pollution is hindering the sustainable development of coastal communities.

The neglect of development disparities affecting coastal communities in the Riau Islands region stems from the fact that development has focused solely on large islands such as Batam, Bintan, and Karimun (BBK), which have long been designated as industrial and free-trade zones. Local governments have concentrated their attention on these areas, particularly regarding infrastructure and ports. Meanwhile, the smaller surrounding islands are often referred to as buffer zones with minimal infrastructure compared

to the central industrial zones. This neglect is also compounded by the impact of industrial zone development under National Strategic Projects (PSN), which risks displacing coastal communities and seafaring ethnic groups in coastal areas. Environmental degradation resulting from industrial zone development packaged as National Strategic Projects (PSN) severely damages underwater ecosystems and marine habitats due to overexploitation. The risk of sand mining in coastal areas of the Riau Islands—which disregards the protection of local ecosystems—has resulted in losses for coastal communities (Suyito et al., 2025). Thus, the conclusion is that the neglect of development in coastal communities in island regions stems from policy contradictions that do not prioritize the interests of the people.

The neglect of development disparities affecting coastal communities in the Riau Islands has serious implications for crises in physical infrastructure, the economy, and the environment, which can be analyzed through Andre Gunder Frank's Dependency Theory. This theory explains how the Batam, Bintan, and Karimun (BBK) regions—as special economic zones—were designed to centrally serve large-scale investors, thereby ensuring economic growth. Meanwhile, other coastal areas remain underdeveloped in terms of social and economic progress. In the context of development disparities, the neglect of infrastructure development has led to high inter-island transportation costs. The lack of efforts to address environmental pollution and degradation—such as oil spills and the destruction of mangrove forests and seagrass beds—threatens the economic livelihoods of coastal communities in the region. Forms of inequality have emerged: development in special economic zones or industrial centers with high economic growth contrasts sharply with underdeveloped coastal areas, highlighting the widening gap in inequality. Thus, the neglect of development in coastal areas reveals the structural injustice that exists (Akbar et al., 2026).

The neglect of development disparities among coastal communities in the Riau Islands stems from the absence of a paradigm shift toward maritime-based development. This is because, to date, development patterns have continued to follow a land-based development paradigm. This has prevented the implementation of equitable long-term planning for development in coastal areas. Consequently, coastal communities—whose livelihoods depend on marine resources—are often disadvantaged by a national strategic spatial planning framework that fails to prioritize coastal settlements. The lack of serious efforts to address limited infrastructure has resulted in development disparities between islands, restricted inter island connectivity, and hindered economic growth. Furthermore, the absence of economic policies aimed at the well-being of coastal communities has led to a decline in household spending, reduced purchasing power, a narrowing of coastal communities' fishing grounds, and unequal distribution of economic income among coastal communities. These conditions indicate that development in coastal communities is experiencing stagnation in infrastructure, declining community well-being, and the loss of a healthy environment.

This study focuses on understanding the neglect of development inequalities in coastal communities in the Riau Islands—an issue that has not been extensively discussed by previous researchers. Most previous studies have focused only on the striking differences between urban and coastal areas (Pinandito et al., 2020), A comparative study of inter-island inequality in Indonesia (Panggarti et al., 2022), Management of Indonesia's coastal zones in the context of conservation-based development (Trinanda, 2017), uneven development due to limited accessibility and infrastructure in coastal areas (Lovina, 2023; Samnuzulsari et al., 2026), identifying the multidimensional nature of coastal poverty (Sabarisman, 2017) and the degradation of coastal development caused by annual crude oil spills (Suyito, 2025a). This article aims to fill this gap by highlighting how the neglect of development disparities among coastal communities triggers infrastructure, ecological, and social crises—such as development disparities between islands—thereby hindering economic growth, causing damage to marine ecosystems, coral reef degradation, the loss of marine habitats, as well as disparities in spending and a decline in the purchasing power of coastal communities, and the narrowing of fishing zones due to investment. By focusing on infrastructure, ecology, and social issues, this study contributes to broadening the perspective on research regarding the neglect of development disparities in coastal communities.

The issue of development disparities in coastal communities—characterized by uneven development, the degradation of aquatic ecosystems, and economic inequality among coastal residents—calls for strong collaboration among communities, local governments, and the private sector to restore equitable development in coastal areas. Such collaboration is essential for fostering a shared understanding of the importance of fair and transparent development in coastal regions. Active participation by these three stakeholders in the planning and implementation of development allows for a holistic consideration of interests. A collaborative approach to development in coastal areas serves to prevent conflicts arising from the inequalities that have long existed in these regions. Through open and participatory dialogue, strategies for equitable development planning can be formulated, alongside improvements in social and economic conditions in coastal regions. Therefore, cross-sectoral collaboration is not merely an alternative option but an urgent necessity for sustainable coastal development. Its success depends on a shared moral commitment to building infrastructure, preserving aquatic ecosystems, and empowering coastal communities over the long term.

Conclusions

This study identifies three main dimensions of development neglect affecting coastal communities in the Riau Islands Province, which are interrelated and reinforce one another. First, the infrastructure dimension, characterized by development disparities among islands in coastal areas. Second, the economic dimension, evidenced by a decline in the purchasing power of coastal communities. Third, the ecological dimension, which encompasses damage to marine habitats, such as coral reef degradation and the death of marine life. These three dimensions form a problematic cycle that recurs and exacerbates the conditions of coastal communities, highlighting the development challenges facing coastal communities in the Riau Islands Province. This phenomenon reveals not only technical dysfunction but also systemic issues in the governance of sustainable and equitable coastal development. In conclusion, disparities in coastal development arise from inequalities in access among coastal regions, economic issues, and marine ecosystem pollution.

To address the complex issue of development neglect in coastal areas, a tripartite collaborative strategy is needed that involves communities, businesses, and the government within the framework of sustainable coastal development. This strategy must aim to bring about a paradigm shift toward equitable and sustainable management. The main recommendations include three strategic steps. First, investment in logistics infrastructure or the equitable and sustainable management of community-based marine resources in coastal areas. Second, government support through regulatory streamlining to facilitate efforts by investors or corporations to develop the economy in coastal areas in line with their potential. Third, the development of participatory mechanisms for community empowerment in coastal areas. These three steps require active cooperation and a shared commitment from all stakeholders, recognizing that addressing development disparities in coastal communities involves not only restoring infrastructure but also strengthening the well-being of coastal communities within the framework of sustainable development.

Although this study successfully identified three main dimensions of development disparities in coastal areas, there are several limitations that require further discussion. First, this study focuses on the negative impacts of development disparities in coastal areas without investigating alternative models of sustainable coastal development that have been successfully implemented in other coastal regions. Second, the methodological approach is limited to documentary analysis and visual observation; therefore, in-depth research involving interviews with all stakeholders is needed to provide a more holistic picture of the research findings. Third, the findings of this study have not yet revealed the political-economic aspects and power dynamics underlying the neglect of development disparities in coastal areas. Therefore, follow up studies should develop an evaluation model for development disparities in coastal areas to monitor

sustainable development. Additionally, it is necessary to study best practices from the implementation of coastal development in other regions.

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