

Implementation of Village Fund Allocation Policy Reviewed from the Bureaucrats' Discretion in West Seram District Western Seram Regency

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Abstract— This research aimed to examine the practice of discretion conducted by bureaucrats in every stage of the implementation of ADD policy in West Seram District Western Seram Regency. The research focused on discretionary actions by frontline bureaucrats, like village officials, including village heads, village secretaries and two employees in Piru and Eti villages, respectively, in implementing the Village Fund Allocation Policy. The interactive analysis model in this research began by reviewing all available data from various sources, such as interview results, observations which were already written in field notes, documents and so on. Once being read, studied and reviewed, then the next step was to conduct data reduction, data presentation and conclusion. Based on the results of the research, it was known that there are 3 (three) forms of discretionary practices conducted by the apparatus in relation to the implementation of ADD in Piru and Eti Villages, which are: (1) restricting access to services, (2) technical changes in the allocation of microeconomic assistance, and (3) technical changes in the preparation of reports.

Keywords— discretion, bureaucracy, of village fund allocation

I. INTRODUCTION

Discretion is a crucial issue in public services in line with demands for bureaucratic apparatus to provide more responsive, effective, and accountable public services. So far, the performance of the bureaucracy in providing public service seems still halfhearted and not maximized. The performance of the bureaucracy still seems traditional. This is marked by the existence of a model of service that is very obedient to the operational and technical guidelines rigidly applied so that often the services provided cannot respond to new demands and dynamics developing in society.

Bureaucracy is also less creative and innovative. The bureaucracy sometimes refuses to respond to things that are beyond the existing tasks, subjects, functions, and rules while assuming that those are out of their responsibility. In consequence, lots of delayed community issues are not even resolved. The orientation built here is loyal to the leader, instead of to the community.

Street Level Bureaucracy itself is a public service employees who are directly involved with citizens.[1] The examples are officers, police, social service workers,

administrators, medical workers, and paramedics. Street Level Bureaucracy has substantial discretion to execute policies whose decisions have direct implications for citizens. In carrying out the general policy execution, Street Level Bureaucracy is relatively autonomous from the organizational authority in making interpretations about the execution of policies and further has discretionary authority in executing the policy. Those working in the Street Level Bureaucracy level are the spearhead of the policy determined by the elite.[2]

Obedying the rules is indeed an obligation for the government apparatus, but keep in mind that the policies made are still very limited and not necessarily appropriate to the context, situation, and conditions in the field. As far as we know, the development of society is so dynamic that the context is also always changing. With increasingly complex challenges and strong demands for more responsive, efficient, fast and satisfactory service, an operational policy called discretion is necessary. Consideration of carrying out this discretion is that empirically a policy or regulation will not be able to respond to all aspects and interests of all parties. Such issue is due to the limited predictions of regulators or stakeholders in the formulation of a policy or regulation. Speaking of which, discretion becomes a solution.

Bureaucratic discretion is a series of actions performed by the service apparatus based on creativity, initiative, and independence against rigid operational guidelines. In carrying out their functions, the bureaucracy follows out the ways oriented towards the efforts of satisfying the public interest. The indicator is that they can overcome difficulties when the leader is not in place, can solve problems or hardship based on their own creativity and initiative within the corridor of applicable rules.[3].

When applied in providing public services, discretion can make various adjustments so existing rules can still answer the community demands, aspirations, and dynamics. However, this discretion must meet certain conditions like having it done in the corridor of the vision, mission, and objectives to be achieved by the government; for the public interest; within the boundaries of their authority; and without violating the general principles of good government.

Implementation of regional autonomy as contained in the meaning of Law number 32 of 2004 is for the realization of regional independence based on local potential empowerment. Although the emphasis of autonomy is placed at the Regency/City level, essentially, the independence should start from the lowest level of government, which is the village, so that regional development should focus more on empowering the community and the village. For all this time, the development of the village is still largely dependent on the original income of the village and community self-reliance whose number and nature cannot be predicted.

In addition, villages also receive development assistance from agency/institutions of Regency government, where the selection of programs is more determined by the agency/institution itself (top down). Even when the program is good, it does not meet with the principle of benefit as it is not in accordance with what is needed by the village. Hence, we frequently encounter people being less concerned in supporting this program and maintaining it. Based on Government Regulation No. 76 of 2001 on General Guidelines on Arrangement on Villages, it is mentioned that the village is a legal community unit which has the authority to regulate and manage the interests of the local community built upon local origins and customs that are recognized in the national government system and are in the regions district. To carry out this authority the village government has sources of revenue used to finance the activities undertaken. The important thing to consider in supporting the implementation process of development in each village is the certainty for its financing. Stipulation of financing for development purpose can come from various sources such as from the Government, private and public.

Some regencies have made innovations with the allocation of funds directly to villages from their Regional Revenue and Expenditure Budget to support development in village areas. The allocation of funds to this village has proven to be able to encourage the handling of some problems faced by the village communities independently, without waiting for programs from the regency government. The Village Fund Allocation (ADD) is the village finance portion obtained from the regional tax revenue share and part of the Central and Regional Fiscal Balance Funding received by the Regency. As stated in the Regulation of the Minister of Home Affairs Number 37 of 2007 on Guidelines for Village Financial Management in Article 18, it is explained that the Village Fund Allocation (ADD) is derived from the Regency/City Budgets sourced from the Central and Regional Fiscal Balance Funding received by the Regency/City for Villages, at least 10% (ten percent).

Western Seram Regency is one of the regencies responsive to village demands in every district. The local government has allocated funds for a village called the Village Fund Allocation (ADD) expecting that development will be evenly distributed to the village level. As a public policy, this program should be implemented in accordance with the policy direction. However, a policy or program is frequently unable to be properly implemented in accordance with technical guidelines

or implementation instructions. This often creates a dilemma for bureaucrats, thus generating a tendency for discretion. In the administration of government, discretion is the freedom of action or freedom of decision of the Board or Official of governmental administration in its own opinion as a complement of the principle of legality when applicable law is unable to solve certain sudden arising problems, but biased due to the fact that the rules do not exist or because the existing rules governing the subject are not clear.

The implementation of ADD policy covers several stages: preparatory, planning, implementation, control and evaluation monitoring, reporting, completion and maintenance and conservation stage. This research is deemed necessary to examine the practice of discretion by bureaucrats in every stage of the implementation of ADD policy in Western Seram Regency.

II. METHODOLOGY

The research approach used was qualitative approach. In conducting the research, the researcher did not only express explicitly but also the meaning on the expression, and so did the thoughts or views of respondents. Thus the researcher will be able to get deep and comprehensive explanation and understanding about social phenomenon and give holistic description (intact). [4]. Data sources in descriptive research are words and actions, the rest are additional data such as documents and others. [4] The words and actions of the observed or interviewed people were the primary data source. The main data sources were recorded through written records, through recording, and photo capturing. The research focused on discretionary actions by frontline bureaucrats, like village officials, including village heads, village secretaries and two employees in Piru and Eti villages, respectively, in implementing the Village Fund Allocation Policy. In this research the writer used the apparatus in two villages and the community in West Seram District as research informants. In addition, the writer conducted in-depth interviews with key informants such as the village head, village secretary and 2 employees respectively in Piru and Eti Villages. In this regard, the researcher used an interactive analysis model from Miles & Huberman, beginning with reviewing all available data from various sources, like interviews, observations which were already written in field notes, documents and so on. Once being read, studied and reviewed, then the next step was to conduct data reduction, data presentation and conclusion. [5]

III. RESULT AND DISCUSSIONS

A. Result

a. Restricting Access to Services

In this research, restricting access to services is intended when proposals submitted by groups or members of community are not fully approved. Based on the observations, the writer found that usually restricting to type of public service is due to the lack of funds to be allocated.

Here's from the interview with the Village Head that:

“not all the wishes or expectations of the community can be served, one of which is the provision of social assistance conducted by the village government such as: making houses of worship, traditional events, poor family education, all of which were based on the budget post we created together. Those were all contained in the Budget Work Plan (interview, August 17 2015).

It was further stated by the secretary of Piru Village that:
Every year we keep budgeting unexpected funds even though the funds are not used as until now, no emergency stutaion happened in Eti village. For these funds not to be returned, some of which were transferred to other activities. (interview August 17 2015)

Discretionary practice in the form of restricting access to services, besides the lack of funds to be allocated, it is also caused by the availability of supporting facilities and infrastructure. As it is known that the facilities and infrastructure is one of the influential factors in the success of the management of Village Fund Allocation (ADD) in the West Seram District. Based on the results of interviews with some respondents and informants it is known that the number of facilities and infrastructures prepared by the government in supporting the activities of the allocation of Village Funds (ADD) is inadequate. Nevertheless, limited facilities and infrastructure should not be a barrier for the authorities in implementing various activities. Such minimal facilities and infrastructure must be managed well for maintaining the technical age and economic value in order to be utilized optimally.

The condition of facilities and infrastructure of two villages in West Seram District of Western Seram Regency still need to be improved. It is very realistic that in writer's observation the condition of the facilities and infrastructure owned is indeed limited. It can be proven that some facilities that support the smooth implementation of the task are vehicles, such as a very limited motorcycle. According to one of the officers in Piru Village, less vehicles would affect the mobility of the apparatus in case they were to visit a field which is hundreds of kilometers away. Given the condition of rural roads that are very far and not fully paved, it is possible to be a major obstacle for apparatus who want to make a visit to a particular village.

b. Technical Change of Microeconomic Fund Allocation

One form of ADD in Piru and Eti Village is microeconomic assistance. It is mentioned in the rules that this microeconomic assistance is intended for the development of community enterprises individually. However, in Piru and Eti Village, the implementation of ADD undergoes a technical change of allocation, namely the provision of assistance in groups, in the form of community enterprise groups. This is done to get around the lack of ADD in both villages. Technical allocation in groups is done as an effort to equity funds that are still minimal and carried out without favoritism.

The interview result with TZ (47 years old) explained the allocation of the following microeconomic assistance:

As far as I'm concerned, this division of funds should be shared individually, but the village officials said that the funds were less, so they were distributed in groups, their explanation was done without any distinction. As I have already explained that the village government and its apparatus did not do favoritism in serving the community. Serving the community is fair and wise whether it is from the poor or rich society; they are all the same as it already exists in the regulations of the country. (Interview, Saturday, August 17 2015).

The interview result with other respondent, BDE (51 years old), explained that the technical changes of the fund allocation have been agreed by all communities and village officials, so it is deemed to be in accordance with the rules. The interview quote is as follows:

Following the rules means the village government has a village rule; they work according to the rules so that we work in accordance with the rules set by the village government and the community so that the results are governed by the village rules. Just as the distribution of funds made in groups is in accordance with the agreement, so no longer feel distinguished (interview, Saturday, August 17 2015)

From both explanations above, it can be understood that village officials are trying to allocate micro economic assistance through different technicalities, such as in groups. This is done in an effort not to discriminate between one community member and the others. As it is known that there is a feudalism service system, but in the implementation of the Village Fund Allocation (ADD) in the West Seram District Central Maluku Regency, there is no service influenced by feudalism, which is usually built on asymmetric relations, exclusiveness, because of the distinction in age, position, role, title, or status of a person. Patriarchal culture allows officials to provide different services between one community and another. The following is an excerpt from an interview with AD (37 years old) explaining that the services provided are not favoritism, as follows:

They are really good Maam. As I said they had always been there. They always gave a hand and we would held a meeting together, supporting each other, having a discussion to find out who would have not agreed and we would consider those who had the most votes and we would agree with them. If those who had the most votes were the ones who disagreed, they would reconsider. They had never shown any favoritism. (Interview Saturday, August 17 2015)

The Village Fund Allocation Policy (ADD) is a manifestation of the fulfillment of the village right to organize Village Autonomy to grow and develop following the growth of the village itself based on diversity, participation,

indigenous autonomy, democratization and community empowerment.

Furthermore, in Government Regulation number 76 of 2001 on General Guidelines on Arrangement on Villages, it is mentioned that the village is a legal community unit which has the authority to regulate and manage the interests of the local community built upon local origins and customs that are recognized in the national government system and located in the regency. To carry out this authority, the village government has sources of revenue used to finance the activities undertaken. The important thing to note in supporting the implementation process of development in each village is the certainty for its financing. The financing of village development can come from various sources such as from the government, private sector and society. It cannot be denied, however, that in practice, these local government policies, especially the mechanisms and procedures of Village Fund Allocation (ADD) have not been well understood by the community resulting from the inadequate socialization process reaching all levels of society.

c. Technical Changes in Village Expenditure Budgeting, Local Government Operations Report (LPPD), and Accountability Information Report (LKPJ), reporting and accountability for the use of village fund allocation (ADD)

One form of discretion by village officials in the implementation of ADD is the technical changes in the preparation of Village Expenditure Budgeting (Village APB), Local Government Operations Report (LPPD), and Accountability Information Report (LKPJ), reporting and accountability for the use of village fund allocation (ADD). Looking from proper regulation, the preparation of Village APB, LPPD, and LKPJ, reporting and accountability of the use of village fund allocation (ADD) should be done by village officials as the most responsible party in village development planning. In reality, however, the writer's observations found that officials often requested assistance from the leadership in carrying out tasks such as the preparation of Village APB, LPPD, and LKPJ, reporting and accountability for the use of village fund allocation (ADD). Based on interview result, it is known that the low level of independence of village officials in the preparation of village APB, LPPD, and LKPJ, reporting and accountability for the use of village fund allocation (ADD) was caused by the low quality of the apparatus. The following is the result of the interview between the writer and the core informant as well as other informants asking about the obstacles faced by the village government in allocating the village funds.

From the interview, the Village Treasurer suggested that:

We had difficulties in compiling letters of accountability for further disbursements, as most of our apparatus were largely uninformed in operating the computer so it gets slower completing the letter of accountability. In addition, some of the data is sometimes not stored (interview, August 17, 2015).

The quality of human resources that exists as internal factors is generally low. The reason behind the background of the education of the existing village government apparatus is still lacking, but in fact this problem can be overcome by providing guidance and opportunities for training. The lack of capability possessed by the village apparatus led to the emergence of a problem and even discussing a problem of the village administration experiences difficulties. This also results in the operation of the computer.

The level of competence of human resources of the local government apparatus in West Seram District can be seen from the percentage of employees who have bachelor degree/diploma upwards against the total employees, the percentage of employees who have attended the education and functional technical training and the number of employees in class III upwards. While the number of apparatus adequate in providing services can be marked by ungeligent duty for public service by the apparatus. To know the response on the quality and quantity of human resources of apparatus in the implementation process of Village Fund Allocation (ADD) policy in the West Seram District can be seen in the interview quote with Mr. ATP (41thn) as follows:

Looking from the ability of our staff in our village, well, our public servant secretary is a teacher; the head of affairs is a former teacher; but they speak in common way, but we tried to give to society whatever we can do. From the intellectual ability, I think we can count on that. But concerning the policy in the village, their ability is also in accordance with the condition of the village. (interview, Thursday, August 15 2015)

B. Discussion

Conceptually, discretion is a step taken by the administrator to solve a particular case that is not regulated in a standard regulation. Discretion can mean a form of service leniency given to the service user. The consideration is the reality that a policy/regulation is unlikely to respond to many aspects and interests of all parties, as a result of the limited predictions of the actors, in relation to employee discretion behavior on Street Level Bureaucracy in the implementation of Village Fund Allocation policy in West Seram District, Western Seram Regency, especially related to the basic application of service procedure.

Indicators for discretionary view in bureaucracy include a series of actions performed by the apparatus based on initiative, creativity, and independence against rigid rules or guidelines. Such indicators include the following matters: (a) actions taken to overcome difficulties when the leadership is not in place; (b) Actions or steps taken when encountering difficulties in performing the task; (c) Whether or not to apply service procedures which are different from the operational guidelines.

Based on the results of the research, it is known that there are 3 (three) forms of discretionary practice conducted by the apparatus in relation to the implementation of ADD in Piru

and Eti Village, which are: (1) restricting access to services, (2) technical changes in the allocation of microeconomic assistance and (3) technical changes in the preparation of reports. This discretionary practice is carried out by village officials who are bureaucratic at "street level", as Dwiyanto argued that bureaucracy at street level should respond to bureaucracy accountability factor; a measure that indicates the level of conformity of the service provider with the size of the external values/norms in the community/stakeholders. Indicators of performance include: (1) reference of services used by bureaucracy in the process of public service implementation; (2) actions taken by the bureaucracy apparatus in the provision of services; (3) priority of service user interest by bureaucracy apparatus.[6]

Discretionary practices carried out by the village officials of Piru and Eti Village were carried out to resolve issues related to the implementation of ADD. This is in line with the opinion expressed by Mustamu that the use of *freies ermessens* by the Board/Officials of State Administration is intended to solve important, urgent, sudden and cumulative issues.[7] It is possible that an important issue but not urgently resolved in immediate time arise, or an urgent issue but not too important to solve could likely come up. A new problem can be qualified as an important issue if the matter is of public interest, while the criteria of public interest must be established by a legislation.[8]

Based on the foregoing, it can be concluded that the use of discretion authority by the Board/Officials of governmental administration can only be done in certain, regulations governing the subject matter are unclear and it is done in an emergency/urgent for public interest established in a legislation. To find out who is responsible for the administration of government duties and services to the community, it should first be mentioned about the governmental position which is connected with the function and authority of the government.

Administration of ADD is a patent program from Western Seram Regency, meaning that ADD is a fund that must be issued by West Seram Regency to the village every year. Therefore, the local government seeks to ensure that ADDs are properly implemented and beneficial to the village community. Starting from the planning, the use, until the supervision is done directly by the community together with the village government. Thus, ADD becomes an angle in financing the activities in the village with 70% of provision to finance community empowerment and the other 30% to finance village operations.

This is in line with the results of research conducted by Thomas who found that the implementation of activities encountered especially the ones using the budget from Village Fund Allocation (ADD) in Sebang Village Sesayap District Tana Tidung Regency experienced various obstacles that: (1) The quality of Human Resources is an internal factor faced by Sebang village government from the implementation of all activities undertaken by village officials in the form of letters of accountability; the low resources of the village apparatus is the spearhead of implementing the Village Fund Allocation

becoming one of the obstacles in the management of the Village Fund Allocation in Sebang Village, (2) Improper coordination of the Sebang village implementation team with related agencies, (3) The executor of ADD has not fully understood the mechanism of making the Letter of Accountability (SPJ) in the management of the Village Fund Allocation in Sebang Village.[9]

As stated by Wasistiono and Tahir, that elements of weakness generally owned by the village government are: (1) Low quality of village apparatus resources. (2) Impeccable regulatory policies concerning village government organizations. This is proven since the issuance of government regulation No. 72 of 2005 about the village, which still needs some implementing rules either as guidance or as operational. (3) The low level of planning capacity at village level, resulting in a lack of synchronization between the output of policy implementation and the needs of the community. (4) Limited facilities and infrastructure supporting the operational administration of government. This limitation can certainly disrupt the efficiency and effectiveness of the implementation of the work which can potentially reduce the motivation of the implementing officers and ultimately inhibit the achievement of goals, tasks and jobs.[10]

The services provided by the bureaucracy to the service users (the public at large) which are not maximal are caused by various things, such as, the low improvisation, initiative and also willingness to solve the problem as soon as possible. Diverting duties and responsibilities also frequently occurs. Such condition is due to ignorance of bureaucracy regarding the field of tasks and placement of tasks that are not in accordance with their own ability and expertise. To understand more about the quality of 'street level bureaucracy' in Indonesia, the portrait of Indonesian bureaucracy can be seen as follows: (a) Weberism targeting the efficiency, rationalization, orientation of public service delivery, bureaucratic professionalism; (b) Parkinsonization targeting the proliferation of bureaucratic structures and personnel; (c) Orwelization with bureaucratic targets as a political instrument of the state and a tool of political control; (d) Jacksonization targeting the accumulation of power through bureaucracy, public alienation of the decision-making process.[11]

Bureaucracy at 'street level' should respond to bureaucracy accountability factors; a measure that indicates the level of conformity of the service provider with the size of the external values/norms in the community/stakeholders. Indicators of performance include: (1) reference of services used by bureaucracy in the process of public service implementation; (2) actions taken by the bureaucracy apparatus in the provision of services; (3) priority of service user interest by bureaucracy apparatus.[12]

IV. CONCLUSIONS

Based on the analysis and discussion, it was concluded that there are three discretionary practices in the implementation of Village Fund Allocation policy in West Seram District of West Seram Regency namely:

1. Restricting access to services against the proposals submitted by the public due to the limited funding of ADD and the limited facilities and infrastructure.
2. Technical changes in the allocation of microeconomic assistance that should be devoted to the development of individual community enterprises into group assistance so that the implementation procedure of ADD is understood by the whole community and can run without causing conflict in the community.
3. Technical changes in the preparation of reports by relying on leadership ability caused by limited quality and quantity of Human Resources.

Based on the findings of the research, the writer suggested that leaders should provide understanding to the bureaucracy (especially at street level) that the community is a citizen having the rights to get maximum service. Equally important is, the courage of the bureaucracy at the street level to do discretion (wisdom) in the work, surely, based on the vision and mission of the organization and by not being too rigid with the existing administrative rules.

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