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# Implementation of Regional Decentralization To The Implementation of Autonomic Village

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## ABSTRACT

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Village autonomy refers to the authority granted to a village to independently administer and manage its affairs without interference from higher levels of government, such as the sub-district, district, or central government. In practice, the significance of village autonomy lies in determining the village's location, autonomy level, and integration into the regional government structure. However, conflicts between the central government and regional authorities often highlight the ongoing struggle for defining the extent of village autonomy. In reality, village autonomy is often more of a symbolic or theoretical concept, as it is frequently affected by the interventions of higher-level governments. The authorities vested in villages are partially controlled by supra-village governing bodies. Additionally, there is ongoing debate surrounding whether the concept of village autonomy aligns with that of regional autonomy, leading to uncertainty about its precise form and implementation. While cities receive full development support through state budget allocations, rural areas are developed through a combination of government funds and local community efforts. Consequently, village autonomy is not genuinely independent in the sense of being a fully self-governing community or solely reliant on community self-help mobilization. Instead, it should be understood as a form of local self-government, where villages possess a degree of authority and status as autonomous regions within the framework of the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia (NKRI).

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## INTRODUCTION

### a. Village Autonomy and Regional Autonomy

An autonomous village goes beyond being just a governmental unit within a district or city; it is, in fact, a mini-regional entity acknowledged and recognized as an integral part of the state. Achieving the status of local self-government for an autonomous village requires decentralization by the state, involving the distribution of authority, resources, and responsibilities to the village level. The fundamental principle of decentralization in the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia divides the nation into provinces, districts/cities, and villages, each possessing rights, authorities, resources, and responsibilities in government management (Sutoro Eko, et al, 2005: 120).

This policy represents a significant opportunity for rural communities, as it allows them to demonstrate their presence and play an active role in managing various issues within their village. This approach enables them to address the specific challenges and needs of their community in alignment with the objective conditions and aspirations of the villagers. In essence, the village residents have the autonomy to manage their problems and prioritize the essential requirements for their community's well-being (Nadir, S: 2013: 121).

Regarding the recognition of village autonomy in legal politics, there are two distinct concepts of rights with different origins, which do not align with each other. Firstly, there are rights that are granted as gifts or privileges (rights of gift). Secondly, there are rights that are inherent to the historical origin of the autonomous unit (innate rights). These differentiators play a significant role in the ongoing discussions about regional autonomy, encompassing rights and authorities (Kaho, 2003: 82).

The concept of obligation is always associated with gifted rights and must be accounted for accordingly. Additionally, the notion of regional household affairs has been replaced by the concept of community interests, signifying that regional autonomy represents the authority of regional governments to manage the interests of the local communities within their regions (Zakaria, 2004: 42).

When examining village decentralization and autonomy, Sutoro identifies three essential aspects. Firstly, political decentralization (devolution) involves the transfer of power and authority from the state to the villages. Secondly, there is decentralization of development, which empowers villages as local entities to formulate their own plans (local self-planning, not solely relying on bottom-up planning). Lastly, financial decentralization refers to the transfer of funds from the state (not from the district/city) to village heads to finance village administration and development (Sutoro Eko, et al, 2005: 204).

From the several understandings of village autonomy above, the authors conclude that village autonomy is basically the authority possessed by the village to administer and manage the village without any interference from the district, district/city or central government.

### b. Implementation of decentralization at the village level

In the implementation of regional government, local authorities and communities face significant challenges in determining the position, autonomy, and structure of regional governance in alignment with national objectives, as observed by Widdo. Several key issues emerge from this struggle: Firstly, the historical debates and conflicts surrounding the village's position and authority have been ongoing since the colonial era, making village autonomy a pivotal point in adapting villages to the larger state framework. Secondly, there is a tug-of-war between the diversity of local customs (adat) and the national governance model. Thirdly, the choice between using the village as an autonomous region (district/city) or another autonomous community organization (public autonomy) significantly impacts the meaning and form of village autonomy. Notably, village autonomy is not explicitly mentioned in the law, but it is known through official discourse, academic lectures, and local voices, becoming an emblem of village renewal. Fourthly, village autonomy is closely tied to the village's position and authority, extending beyond managing state and government administration, and involves the challenge of modernizing traditional governance, as implied in Law Number 6 of 2014 concerning Villages. Additionally, villages generally have limited local resources, such as small land area, population, and limited village potential. Lastly, revitalization efforts to return to the original form of government face diverse



obstacles across different regions due to Indonesia's inclusive and multidimensional territory, inhabited by various ethnic groups with distinct cultures and clear references limited to local governance (Widodo, Triputro et al, 2005: 246-248).

## METHOD

The current study can be classified as Descriptive Analysis research, wherein the primary objective is to provide a comprehensive description and thorough analysis of the subjects under scrutiny (Cholid Narbuko, Abu Ahmad, 2007). The researchers take a methodical approach to examine the research subjects, meticulously analyzing various aspects and factors involved in the implementation of regional decentralization with a specific focus on village autonomy. By scrutinizing the data and information collected, the researchers aim to derive well-founded conclusions and gain valuable insights into how regional decentralization impacts the autonomy of villages. Through this descriptive analysis, the study seeks to shed light on the intricate dynamics and complexities surrounding the subject matter, offering a deeper understanding of the implications and outcomes of decentralization policies on local governance and decision-making processes at the village level. The findings of this research are anticipated to contribute to the existing body of knowledge on regional governance and decentralization, providing valuable input for policymakers and stakeholders seeking to enhance the effectiveness and efficiency of local administration and empower villages with more autonomy in the context of larger regional structures.

## RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The concept of village autonomy becomes ambiguous due to the lack of clear regulations governing the position of villages, resulting in the continuous takeover of authorities by higher-level governments. Consequently, villages are unable to achieve true autonomy. At the village level, decentralization encompasses three main aspects: political decentralization, development decentralization, and financial decentralization. These components are implemented as follows:

### a. Political Decentralization

Recognition and delineation of authority from the State, not just from the district/city, are essential for confirming the position of villages (Kansil, 2008: 59). To establish genuine autonomy, at least four types of authority must be allocated to villages. The first type is the generic authority or original authority, representing the inherent rights attached to the village as a legal community unit. These rights empower the community to regulate and manage their household affairs, including forming and managing a self-governing system, overseeing local resources such as village treasury land, bengkok land, communal land, and customary forests, preserving local indigo and cultural values, and administering the community justice system to resolve local conflicts (Yando Zakaria, 2000).

The second type is devolutive authority, which is an essential component of the village's role as a local government and self-governing entity (Sutoro Eko, et al, 2005: 206-207). This authority is exercised collectively by the village head, village officials, and the Village Consultative Body (BPD) to administer the village government, promote development initiatives, and manage social affairs. The village head assumes the crucial responsibility of overseeing government affairs, development projects, and social welfare within the village. By delineating and empowering these different forms of authority, villages can effectively exercise autonomy and foster sustainable development in their local communities.

According to Law Number 6 of 2014 Article 26 states that the Village Head carries out village development, village community development, and village community empowerment, the village head has the authority:

- 1) Leading the administration of village governance;
- 2) Establish village regulations;
- 3) Holding village financial management powers;



- 4) Establish village regulations;
- 5) Determine Village APB;
- 6) Fostering village community life;
- 7) Foster peace and order in the village community;
- 8) Fostering and improving the Village economy;
- 9) Develop village income sources;
- 10) Developing the socio-cultural life of the village community;
- 11) Utilizing appropriate technology;
- 12) Coordinate village development in a participatory manner;
- 13) Representing his village inside and outside the court and can appoint a legal representative to represent him in accordance with the laws and regulations; And
- 14) Carry out other authorities in accordance with statutory regulations.

The authority vested in the village head to manage government affairs holds the potential for positively impacting the village's autonomy, striving to create a prosperous, just, and thriving community. However, there are instances where certain powers of the village head remain underutilized, particularly in aspects concerning fostering the village economy, where actions might be lacking or insufficient. Nevertheless, efforts have been initiated, and training initiatives have been implemented in various areas to address these shortcomings. The current presence of an exclusively elected village head allows residents to experience democratization at the village level (Pratikno, 2000: 102). Residents' active participation in planning processes, formulation of village regulations, and other endeavors significantly contribute to opening up spaces for democratization within the village. By ensuring that village regulations are formulated in a more participatory manner, in line with the objectives of the Village Consultative Body (BPD), the village gains independence in governance matters, thereby fostering an environment conducive to self-governance and autonomy (Wasitiono, 2008: 71).

The management of local resources, such as bengkok land, ulayat land, or customary land, varies across different regions in Indonesia, with notable examples observed in West Java. In this region, villages possess the authority to manage bengkok land and Titisara land, which are essential assets supporting village development. However, this authority differs in other areas, like Sulawesi, Sumatra, and Kalimantan, where bengkok land or dripara land is not under village ownership. Regarding customary land in regions like Papua and Kalimantan, government intervention, particularly from the sub-district and district levels, remains present, restricting village autonomy in managing such lands. As a result, the authority over customary or communal land remains with the sub-districts and districts.

The third type of authority is distribution authority, wherein the government assigns specific government tasks to villages. However, this distribution of authority has faced criticism as it is often seen as unclear or residual authority since many responsibilities are taken over by ambiguous districts/cities. Ideally, power should be equitably distributed between the center, states, districts, and villages, except for defense, religion, unity, and justice matters. Sectoral or governmental operations can be proportionally divided between these levels of governance. The fourth type pertains to the authority in carrying out co-administration tasks. This involves certain tasks assigned to villages along with financial, infrastructural, and human resource support, with the obligation to report on their implementation and be accountable to the assigning authorities (Sutoro Eko, et al, 2005: 207).

#### **b. Development Decentralization**

Decentralized development has empowered regional planning at the village level, granting villages the autonomy to design their own development programs within the delegated authority. The Village Fund Allocation Scheme (ADD) and financial decentralization have further supported this initiative. Financing for village development, derived from sources like the village's initial income (PAD), village funds, and special government funds, is managed through the Annual Village Budget (APBDES). This budget aligns with participatory village strategic plans that are tailor-made to meet the community's needs (Sutoro Eko, 2005). However, in practice, there have been instances where the state exploits village resources under the guise of



development. Village autonomy, in some cases, is not fully respected, and the authority to drive development lies with the district head or central government instead. Villages, as a result, may serve merely as projects aimed at garnering support from the central government through local administration (Nurcholis, 2005: 43).

### c. Financial Decentralization

Up to now, three financial distribution systems have impacted villages, but they do not fully represent genuine financial decentralization. The Impres Village Assistance program, initiated in 1969, provided government financial support to villages. However, its implementation has been controversial, as the support, which started with Rp. 100,000 per village, increased to Rp. 10 million in 1999. Although known as the Village Instruction, this program has not been empowering and fair. Instead, it has led to a culture of dependency and reliance on self-help initiatives without fostering true autonomy.

The second system involves government projects that do not directly provide money to villages but rather bring programs that flow into villages. This approach has turned villages into mere recipients of development projects, contributing to a sense of marginalization and dependency on external initiatives.

The third system, the Village Fund Allocation (ADD), has been implemented by many districts during the era of community autonomy. However, its execution has been inconsistent due to different interpretations by districts/cities. Some districts utilize the concept of support by sending part of their funds to villages through the Village Development Fund, aimed at supporting village management and development. Nevertheless, many districts have been hesitant to establish clear guidelines for resource allocation concerning financial balance or the distribution of village resources (ADD).

Despite encountering numerous challenges and distortions, the ADD system has yielded valuable lessons that can contribute to enhancing future village independence and autonomy (Sutoro Eko, et al, 2005: 213). The village's authority over the preparation of APBD budget allocations has been lacking community involvement, resulting in some parts of the budget being allocated for profit rather than the genuine welfare of the village. District policies concerning villages have often neglected the input of village communities. Moreover, the allocation of village funds tends to prioritize the district's interests, whereas if the village funds were fully granted, villages could thrive and take charge of their development.

To strengthen village autonomy, it is crucial to grant villages broader and clearer authority. Simultaneously, districts must reduce their institutional role in managing village affairs, which should rightfully belong to the villages themselves (Mashuri, 1992: 70). The village's essential authorities should encompass several aspects. First, they must be involved in shaping district government policies related to villages. Second, villages need to be empowered to handle their internal affairs independently, enabling them to address their specific needs. This empowerment could include establishing democratic village systems, implementing village government accountability measures, managing village regional administration, undertaking village development initiatives, and determining the model of village leadership choices. Lastly, approval should be granted for the management of compensation funds received from the distribution of the General Allocation Fund (Moehariono, 2012: 21). By providing villages with these authorities, they can better foster their autonomy and sustainable development, ultimately contributing to the overall progress of the region.

Of course, this provision must be followed provided there is a commitment or guarantee from the district to provide villages with a significant percentage of the DAU received from the district. No matter how well the functions and powers are owned by the village without the support of agencies to fulfill their functions and powers, and the realization of village autonomy is not realized. This is due to the lack of independence in local government. Fourth, empower villages to manage their economic resources. This means that the village is free to manage independently and cooperate with outsiders to work on the natural resources in the village. There is a source of income for the area managed by the district at the village level, ideally the district gives a proportional share to the village (Agus, 2008: 54). Of course, with the division that must be discussed between the district and village governments. If the district believes that the village can be managed independently, the district should push for the transfer of management to the village. Fifth, having the power to refuse government support that is inconsistent with the feasibility of the village community and the will of the local community





without sufficient funds. However, once again, the district must ensure that the refusal is not an act of disobedience. This ensures that the district is not judged negatively by the village government.

With clear authority and without intervention from districts and small districts, the desired village autonomy can be achieved. What the village needs now is the revival of village autonomy as a whole, including the rights of Urayat as a legal entity. The perception of the village as an empowered authority to govern the state is only one of many needs that must be met with full autonomy. Only then can the tension between the state and the village be eased. Likewise you can resolve/eliminate the dualism that has occurred in the village so far, which is detrimental to the villagers. Granting full autonomy creates a healthy and vibrant society that is needed for the future survival of this country. (Gunawan et al., 2005: 345). The restoration of village autonomy is of course supported by the capacity of village human resources. Because the success of managing village autonomy is very dependent on human resources. This allows good and maximum management of all rights owned by the village in the framework of realizing an independent village.

## CONCLUSION

Based on the above description, the following conclusions can be drawn regarding the perception and reality of village-level autonomy:

1. Village autonomy represents the authority that villages possess to administer and manage their affairs independently, free from interference by the district, district, or central government.
2. In practice, the significance of village autonomy lies in determining the village's location, level of autonomy, and its integration into the regional government structure. This is evident from the ongoing power struggles between the central government and the regional authorities (districts), leading to conflicts and challenges in achieving village development objectives. Village autonomy is often viewed merely as a symbolic term or a theoretical concept, as it is apparent that the village's authority is partially undermined by the higher-level regional government. Additionally, discussions continue regarding the alignment of village autonomy with the autonomy granted to larger regions, and a clear consensus on the specific form of village autonomy is yet to be reached.

In light of the above description, the ideal scenario would involve clearly defining the village's position within the framework of village autonomy and providing villages with comprehensive and unambiguous authority. This can be achieved by bolstering the quality of human resources within the village, thereby fostering an autonomous village life and empowering communities to manage their own affairs effectively. Such measures would enable villages to operate independently and nurture a sense of self-sufficiency in governing their households and pursuing their development aspirations.

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