

Environmental dilemma under implementation of Indonesian regional autonomy

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Environmental dilemma under implementation of Indonesian regional autonomy

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Abstract. This paper aims to examine development as part of decentralization agenda, which challenges with environmental issues. Decentralization seeks to improve society as a top priority and at the same time, it tends to produce a degraded environment as a negative impact of exploration of natural resources to pursue community improvement. The rise of environmental problems that arise at this time demands attention from the public and the government, but as long local governments still prioritize economic interests, the implementation of decentralization will always be in a dilemma of environmental conditions. This paper employs qualitative research with cases study in two areas, namely Maros and Pangkajene Regencies in South Sulawesi, Indonesia.

1. Introduction

Since the 1960s environmental problems have become one of the concerns of the world community. The world community began to seriously discuss the issue of environmental deterioration through a commission formed by the United Nations to believe the Bruntland commission through an official forum in Stockholm in 1972. These concerns were based on increasingly massive damage both in quality and quantity of the environment that had a significant negative impact on human life. This fact is shown by the increasing number of regions in the world that have experienced various disasters due to deteriorating environmental conditions [1].

In the 1970s, Indonesia began to emerge various environmental care groups or nature lovers in various schools and communities. The government itself takes a step further by forming an institution in the form of an environmental ministry which is entrusted with the task of integrating various existing agreements on the environment into various strategies for implementing development policies in Indonesia. In order to do this the government made a series of policies to show its commitment to protect the environment [2].

Further, at least there have been several laws specifically aimed at protecting the existence of the environment. Among them are Law number 4 of 1982 concerning Basic Provisions for Environmental Management to date, Law number 32 of 2009 concerning Environmental Protection and Management. Thus, on the constitutional side, there has been a commitment through the government's earnest efforts to improve environmental conditions, as well as a sign of Indonesia's concern for ecological problems. However, this seems to meet Constraints mainly related to the government's massive development policy by maximizing the use of natural resources that are directly related to environmental exploitation.

The development process is understood as the movement of upward of the entire social system. This system is related to economic and non-economic aspects. It includes every effort to meet human needs and consumption related to his life needs. Human needs are not only related to food but also other things



that can only be fulfilled through the process of natural resource exploitation [3]. In fact, the environmental conditions in Indonesia still show something that is not encouraging. In an effort to carry out development activities to meet people's needs, Indonesia seems to be faced with two dichotomous sides between development for economic growth and maintaining environmental quality as an important factor supporting the continuation of human life.

Indonesia's economic growth in the last decade has shown relatively good achievement compared to other countries. The Central Statistics Agency (BPS) noted that the Indonesian economy grew by 5.78% in 2013 [4]. However, the environmental quality index (IKLH), during the last three years, actually showed a decline. The data shows that the IKLH in 2011 was 65.50 and increased 64.21 in 2012 and lastly dumped to 63.1 in 2013. This condition is seen as one of the causes of the many natural disasters that occur due to damage to nature.

Basically, the destruction of nature and indeed consists of two causes. The *first* is natural damage that does not experience human interference. *Second*, damage arising from human behavior that does not consider natural and environmental conditions properly. One aspect that is considered as the cause of natural damage due to human intervention is development, especially in utilizing the land for the benefit of meeting human needs. Development that is intended ideally for utilizing various natural resources turns out to tend to cause natural resource damage problems which are considered excessive. Various activities in the use of natural resources are carried out in order to obtain economic benefits and fulfill the needs of humans. But on the other hand, these activities always go hand in hand with the damage that occurs to natural conditions. This condition is also considered always to overshadow the implementation of the decentralization principle implemented through the regional autonomy policy in Indonesia. As a policy that is very focused on the desire to improve the welfare of the people in the regions, the policy of regional autonomy tends to be seen as a justification for the people in the regions to carry out various development activities. One of the important things that need to be understood in the context of development in Indonesia is that the connection is always close to the use of natural resources.

The large value of natural resources owned by many local governments makes these resources as important in supporting regional autonomy within the framework of regional autonomy. Thus, it is expected that each region will get benefits that can be economically measurable through increasing the own-source revenue or community welfare index. However, this condition then creates a dilemma because every effort to improve the quality of life of the people in the area through the use of natural resources will always coincide with the potential damage to nature and the environment in the region. The community in the area seems to be faced with a difficult choice between wanting to meet needs on the one hand and having to maintain environmental conditions on the other.

2. Methodology

This paper employs qualitative research with cases study in two areas, namely Maros and Pangkajene Regencies in South Sulawesi, Indonesia. The research was focused on the dilemma of the regional governments, which has autonomy rights to manage their area based on their objective interest. This paper indicates that the rights and the obligation to keep the environmental has puts regional government in to dilemma situation, maximize development process under the economical purpose that potentially harm environment condition or to keep the environmental condition that usually seen as the bottle neck of the regional development. The study uses document study with local policies related to environmental issues.

3. Results and discussion

3.1. Decentralization and importance of regional development

Decentralization is a concept that has long been used in the Indonesian nation's history, even before Indonesia's independence. The decentralization concept was known and sought to be implemented. However, in its development, decentralization only reached its peak when entering the reform era in 1998. This was marked by the establishment of legislation to become a legal umbrella for the implementation of

decentralization, the government's seriousness in implementing decentralization contained in Law No. 22 of 1999 concerning Regional Government, along times, the government revised the regulation and issued a new regulation on Regional Government through Law Number 23 of 2014. Law Number 23 2014 defines decentralization as the surrender of government affairs by the Central Government to autonomous regions based on the principle of autonomy. Thus, decentralization is expected to be able to realize community welfare because through decentralization, the regional government is given greater authority to regulate its own household affairs.

Before came to the reformation era, Indonesia was under the centralized new order era showed that there were large social, economic and development gaps between the rich and poor regions as well as the areas on Java and outside Java. When the new order was stepped down and replaced by the reform order, most people expected that shortages can be minimized. Decentralization is aimed at creating community welfare through development process.

The development seen as a consequence that must exist in the era of decentralization in a holistic manner can be interpreted as an effort to create better people's lives in various aspects of life. Through decentralization of development ideas aimed at realizing a better standard of living for the community as a whole can be achieved. This can be realized because the policies related to development efforts are taken by the regional government where the local government that is close to the community is certainly the party that knows better and understands the interests of the community in the area compared to the central government.

The efforts of the central government to bring the policy-making process closer to the public are guaranteed by the state by giving great authority to local governments to manage their own regions with assistance tasks that have been regulated in legislation. In this context then the meaning of development by the regional government is important to be explored. The term development itself is used to describe and give meaning to the existence of positive change and a more advanced life compared to the previous conditions. Efforts to realize better living conditions can be realized through policies issued by political actors who recognize the needs and potential of the people in the area. But in its development it is often found a partial meaning of development.

Some parties in the regional government interpret development only in the economic aspect so that what happens then is the policy issued only targets the aspects of development and overrides other aspects of development [5]. So that in its implementation, the development carried out is oriented to improving the level of the economy of the community but on the other hand sacrifices other aspects of development such as the natural environment which is then degraded due to efforts to pursue economic growth and can be assessed as an advanced region. Own-source revenue obtained annually by the region concerned.

3.2. *The economical vs environmental purpose of local government*

In the context of decentralization, the objective of decentralization purpose seen only could be realized through development, which at the ideal level must be carried out thoroughly. Development that is interpreted as an effort to improve the economy will strive to be realized by regional governments. As like as many countries in the world, the economic purpose on the framework of decentralization, by utilizing the potential possessed by the region became a prominent focus of the regional government [6].

In Indonesia, almost every region has the potential of natural resources that can be managed to create a better level of economic community. Thus, efforts to improve the economy are carried out through exploration activities of natural resources owned by the region. Exploration of natural resources carried out to pursue economic growth on the other side has the potential to have a negative impact on the environment. Economic growth and protecting the environment are two things that will be very difficult to be realized together. Exploration of natural resources carried out will cause environmental impacts that threaten the survival of humans themselves. However, this activity certainly has a positive impact on existing economic growth in a region.

This condition forces the government in the region to determine its priority scale. So far, activities that provide real economic benefits will be supported by regional governments, although often the consequences are environmental damage. The environment becomes a sacrificed entity in an effort to

improve the level of economic welfare of the community. So that it becomes natural when there are currently various environmental problems that must be faced by the community.

Environmental problems that are increasingly prominent today include the destruction of the ozone layer, endangered species, and tidal floods that threaten urban areas that have been touched by coastal reclamation. Exploration of natural resources carried out to pursue economic growth only looks at aspects of human interests which in environmental ethics are known as anthropocentric, this ethics places humans in a superior position compared to other creatures on earth, through this view, the environmental problems that occur are seen as problems that will be resolved by humans through the development of their knowledge and technology. An anthropocentric view will always be faced with an ecocentric ethic (deep ecology) that places humans in a position that is equivalent to other creatures (biotic and abiotic) on earth[7]. Ecosentrist believes that the earth has limits which if humans are ignorant of it will have an impact on human life itself, so that the ecocentric view requires humans to place themselves equally with other entities and consider the continuity of other entities when utilizing existing natural resources. Until now, supporters of each of these views still continue to argue.

However, out of the long debate between the two ethics, within the framework of decentralization standards have been established to assess the success of regional governments in decentralization. The implementation of regional autonomy in the framework of decentralization can be explored in the aspects of output and outcomes, where each aspect has its own indicators to assess its success. Policy output can be seen in 3 aspects, first, increasing community economic growth, second improving the quality of public services, and thirdly the flexibility of development programs. From here, we can see that the policies issued by the regional government in a decentralized framework place the economic growth of the community in the first position.

Increasing the level of the people's economy as the most important indicator in the assessment of the success of policies issued in the framework of decentralization shows that environmental conservation efforts do not get a large space in the context of the current decentralization. This assessment standard is certainly lame because the environmental carrying capacity should also be an important factor because it will have an impact on people's lives in the area. The interest to protect the environment will be difficult if faced with economic interests.

Regional autonomy implemented through decentralization is basically a good idea in the context of efforts to improve the welfare of the community in economic aspects. But on the other hand, it creates a dilemma position on environmental aspects because the environment will always be sacrificed when regional governments make efforts to economic growth. Development that aims to improve community welfare is assumed as economic growth will always be in line with efforts to preserve the environment. In the Indonesian context, the welfare and success of the regional government will be assessed on the economic aspects, how much own-source revenue the region has.

Basically, regional autonomy in Indonesia encountered some obstacles. Great enthusiasm for the concept of decentralization that is prosperous turns out in practice to deal with difficult choices that have the potential to be negative on the lives of people who want to be prospered. This condition shows that decentralization ignores the condition of "community failures" [8], which is very likely to occur because of the inaccuracy of the context with the ideas contained in the implementation of decentralization.

4. Conclusion

Decentralization is a concept that surfaced at the beginning of the reformation era provided a partial transfer of authority from the central government to the regional government to take care of household affairs in the area. Through decentralization, people hoped that community welfare can be guaranteed. Regional governments are required to carry out development as much as possible to create community welfare.

Development that should have been carried out thoroughly, by the regional government, was only emphasized on the economic aspect as an important measure of the success of decentralization implemented. The consequence of this economic-oriented development is that the environment will be sacrificed. This is because efforts to pursue economic growth through the exploration of natural resources

will clash with the interests of the environment to continue to be maintained. This is what until now continues to be a debate over two environmental ethics, namely anthropocentric and ecocentric in looking at local government policies in an effort to create public welfare. Community welfare achieved through the development path is aimed at meeting the indicators of the success of decentralization that makes economic prosperity a key indicator. Thus decentralization aimed at creating community welfare has had a negative impact on the environment. In this case economic interests and environmental interests are placed in binary opposition where the environment becomes an entity that must be sacrificed when economic interests try to be pursued.

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