



Exploring the Role of Maujana Nagori (BPD) in Implementing Village Government in Merdeka District, Karo Regency: A Mixed-Methods Study

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ARTICLE INFO

Article history:

Received Nov 02, 2023

Revised Des 05, 2023

Accepted Jan 30, 2024

Keywords:

Maujana Nagori (BPD);
Village Government;
Local Governance;
Merdeka District;
Karo Regency.

ABSTRACT

This research seeks to explore the role of Maujana Nagori (BPD) in implementing village government in Merdeka District, Karo Regency, Indonesia. The BPD is a crucial institution in the decentralized governance structure of Indonesia, tasked with representing the interests of the local community, advising village heads, and facilitating decision-making processes. The research employs a mixed-methods approach, combining qualitative and quantitative methods to gather rich, nuanced data on the BPD's functions, effectiveness, and challenges within the local governance structure. The findings of the analysis reveal that the BPD plays a critical role in promoting participatory democracy, fostering inclusive development, and strengthening governance institutions at the grassroots level. However, the effectiveness of the BPD is hampered by challenges such as limited resources, capacity constraints, and bureaucratic hurdles. Based on the findings, several recommendations are proposed to enhance the effectiveness of the BPD, including capacity-building programs, access to resources and expertise, transparency and accountability, and promoting community participation and engagement.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Indonesia, with its diverse cultural landscape and decentralized governance structure, places immense importance on the role of local institutions in governing its myriad communities (Bettinger et al., 2014). At the grassroots level, village governments serve as the bedrock of local administration, catering to the unique needs and aspirations of their residents (AJIBADE, 2020). Within this framework, the Maujana Nagori, or BPD, emerges as a critical component, embodying the principles of participatory democracy and community representation.

The term "Maujana Nagori" refers to the deliberative body of a village, comprising elected members who serve as intermediaries between the government and the local populace. In Karo

Regency, the Maujana Nagori plays a fundamental role in decision-making, resource allocation, and development planning within its respective villages. Endowed with both statutory and customary authority, the BPD exercises its mandate to safeguard the interests of the community while upholding the principles of local autonomy and self-governance (Franck, 1992).

The village government system in Indonesia is a critical component of its decentralized governance structure, playing a pivotal role in local administration and community development (Ito, 2006). The village government, known as "Pemerintah Desa," operates at the grassroots level, catering to the unique needs and aspirations of its residents. The village government is composed of several elements, including the Village Consultative Council (BPD), Village Head (Kepala Desa), and various sub-units responsible for specific areas of governance (Berdej, 2011).

The Village Consultative Council (BPD), also known as "Badan Permusyawaratan Desa," is an elected body that represents the interests of the local community (Yuhandra & Adhyaksa, 2018). The BPD is responsible for advising the Village Head on matters related to village development, managing village assets, and ensuring the implementation of government programs and policies (Maharani, 2018). The BPD also serves as a forum for deliberation and decision-making, fostering participatory democracy and community engagement.

The Village Head (Kepala Desa) is the executive head of the village government, responsible for implementing government policies, managing village resources, and overseeing day-to-day operations (Kato, 1989). The Village Head is elected by the community and serves as the primary liaison between the village government and higher levels of government.

In addition to the BPD and Village Head, the village government includes various sub-units that specialize in specific areas of governance (Asia, 2016). These sub-units may include the Village Development Planning Agency (Bappeda), Village Health Agency (Puskesmas), Village Education Agency (Dinas Pendidikan), and others (Dwiyanto, 2012). Each sub-unit is responsible for implementing programs and services related to its respective area of expertise. The Merdeka District, nestled within the Karo Regency of Indonesia, stands as a microcosm of the country's diverse and complex local governance structures. Within this district, the Maujana Nagori (BPD) plays a pivotal role in the implementation of village government, embodying the rich tapestry of Indonesia's community-based governance systems.

The concept of Maujana Nagori (BPD) finds its roots in the traditional adat (customary) law of the Karo people, one of the many indigenous groups that make up the archipelago of Indonesia. Nagori, a term denoting a traditional village, is governed by a council known as the BPD, or Badan Permusyawaratan Desa (Village Consultative Body). The BPD serves as a crucial link between the community and the formal government, facilitating the translation of national policies into locally applicable solutions (Bloemraad, 2005).

The structure and functions of the BPD are deeply entrenched in the historical and cultural fabric of the Karo people (Egenter, 2004). The BPD is composed of representatives from various customary groups or clans within the village, ensuring that decisions are made with the input and consensus of the entire community (Hidayat et al., 2019). This model of governance reflects the indigenous philosophy of musyawarah and mufakat, which emphasizes the importance of consultation and consensus in decision-making (Azwar et al., 2020).

The role of the BPD in the implementation of village government in Merdeka District is multifaceted (Pribadi, 2018). On one hand, it acts as a conduit for the dissemination of government policies and programs, ensuring that they are tailored to the unique needs and circumstances of the local community (Chatterton & Goddard, 2000). On the other hand, the BPD also serves as a guardian of traditional values and customs, preserving the cultural heritage of the Karo people (Setiawan¹ & Zetra, 2018).

Understanding the role of Maujana Nagori (BPD) in implementing village government in Merdeka District, Karo Regency holds paramount importance for several reasons, each contributing to the broader understanding of local governance dynamics and community development.

First and foremost, the role of Maujana Nagori serves as the cornerstone of participatory democracy and grassroots governance. In Indonesia's decentralized governance system, villages are vested with significant autonomy to manage their own affairs, including decision-making processes and resource allocation (Holzhacker et al., 2015). The BPD, as the representative body of

the village community, acts as a conduit for citizen participation, ensuring that local voices are heard and considered in the formulation and implementation of policies (Shepherd, 2013). By understanding the role of the BPD, policymakers and practitioners can foster more inclusive and responsive governance structures that empower communities to actively engage in the development process.

Moreover, the effectiveness of village government systems hinges on the capacity of the BPD to translate policies into tangible outcomes that address the needs and aspirations of the local populace (Pound, 2003). Merdeka District, like many rural areas in Indonesia, faces a myriad of socio-economic challenges, ranging from infrastructure deficits to poverty and environmental degradation. The BPD, through its statutory and customary authority, plays a critical role in identifying priority areas for development, mobilizing resources, and coordinating efforts with various stakeholders to implement targeted interventions. Therefore, a nuanced understanding of the BPD's role is essential for designing evidence-based strategies that promote sustainable development and improve the well-being of rural communities (Young et al., 2020).

Furthermore, the study of Maujana Nagori's role sheds light on the complexities of local governance dynamics, including power relations, institutional mechanisms, and community dynamics (Swain, 2018). In Merdeka District, where traditional norms and modern governance structures intersect, the BPD navigates a complex landscape of customary practices, legal frameworks, and bureaucratic procedures. By examining how the BPD mediates between these different spheres of influence and reconciles divergent interests, researchers can gain valuable insights into the adaptive capacity of local institutions and their resilience in the face of socio-political changes. This understanding is particularly pertinent in the context of Indonesia's ongoing decentralization process, which seeks to empower local governments while preserving cultural diversity and community identities (Gibson & Woolcock, 2008).

The concept of Maujana Nagori, also known as BPD (Badan Permusyawaratan Desa), holds significant importance in the local governance structure of Karo Regency, Indonesia. Originating from the Karo Batak ethnic group, the Maujana Nagori serves as a traditional village council or deliberative body that plays a crucial role in decision-making processes, resource allocation, and conflict resolution within Karo villages. The term "Maujana Nagori" is derived from the Karo Batak language, where "Maujana" means council or assembly, and "Nagori" refers to the village or community.

The Maujana Nagori is composed of elected members who represent the various clans or kinship groups within the village (NASEER, 2009). These members are chosen through a consensus-building process that emphasizes the principles of inclusivity, representation, and community consensus. The composition of the BPD reflects the diversity of the village community, ensuring that all voices are heard and considered in the decision-making process.

One of the primary functions of the Maujana Nagori is to uphold and preserve the customary laws and traditions of the Karo Batak people. The BPD serves as a custodian of cultural heritage, ensuring that traditional values, rituals, and practices are respected and maintained. Additionally, the Maujana Nagori plays a crucial role in mediating disputes, fostering reconciliation, and promoting social cohesion within the village.

In the context of local governance, the Maujana Nagori operates within the broader framework of Indonesia's decentralized governance system (Fradkin et al., 2006). Village governments are endowed with significant autonomy to manage their own affairs, including the administration of local resources, the provision of public services, and the implementation of development projects. The BPD serves as a key intermediary between the village government and the local populace, ensuring that policies and initiatives are aligned with the needs and aspirations of the community (Antlöv et al., 2016).

The significance of the Maujana Nagori in the local governance structure of Karo Regency lies in its ability to bridge the gap between traditional customs and modern governance practices. The BPD embodies the principles of participatory democracy, community representation, and cultural preservation, contributing to the resilience and sustainability of local institutions (Esteves & Abusalama, 2020). By understanding the role and functions of the Maujana Nagori, policymakers, practitioners, and scholars can gain valuable insights into the dynamics of local governance, community development, and cultural heritage preservation in Karo Regency and beyond.

However, the BPD is not without its challenges. In recent years, the increasing complexity of governance structures and the encroachment of modernity have posed significant challenges to the traditional roles and functions of the BPD. Globalization, urbanization, and the influx of new ideas and technologies have placed strains on the age-old traditions and customs that have long guided the Karo people.

In light of these challenges, there is a growing need to reassess and redefine the role of the BPD in the implementation of village government in Merdeka District (Fremerey, 2002). This requires a nuanced understanding of the historical, cultural, and socio-political dynamics at play, as well as a commitment to preserving the unique identity and heritage of the Karo people.

2. RESEARCH METHOD

In order to comprehensively understand the role of Maujana Nagori (BPD) in implementing village government in Merdeka District, Karo Regency, a mixed-methods approach will be employed. This methodology aims to provide a holistic view of the BPD's functions, effectiveness, and challenges within the context of local governance. By combining qualitative and quantitative methods, this research seeks to gather rich, nuanced data that can inform policy and practice, and contribute to the broader understanding of local governance dynamics in Indonesia.

Qualitative methods will be used to gather in-depth insights into the perceptions, experiences, and challenges faced by members of the BPD. This will involve conducting semi-structured interviews with key stakeholders, including current and former BPD members, Village Head, community leaders, and representatives from government agencies and civil society organizations. The interviews will explore a range of topics, such as the BPD's functions, decision-making processes, interactions with other stakeholders, and challenges encountered in implementing village government policies. Additionally, focus group discussions will be organized with community members to elicit their views on the BPD's role in local governance and community development. Participant observations will also be conducted to gain a firsthand understanding of the BPD's operations and interactions within the community.

Quantitative data will be collected through surveys and document analysis to complement the qualitative findings. Surveys will be administered to a sample of BPD members and community members to gather quantitative data on their perceptions of the BPD's effectiveness, transparency, and accountability. The surveys will use Likert scale questions to measure respondents' agreement with various statements related to the BPD's performance. Document analysis will involve reviewing official documents, reports, and policies related to the BPD and village government in Merdeka District. This will provide empirical evidence to support the qualitative findings and enable a more comprehensive analysis of the BPD's role.

Ethical considerations will be taken into account throughout the research process. Informed consent will be obtained from all participants, and their privacy and confidentiality will be protected. The research will adhere to ethical guidelines and standards set by relevant institutions and organizations.

There are several limitations to this methodology that should be acknowledged. First, the research will focus on Merdeka District, Karo Regency, which may limit the generalizability of the findings to other contexts. Second, the data collected will be subject to potential biases, such as social desirability bias, response bias, and interviewer bias. Third, the research will be limited by resource constraints, such as time, funding, and access to participants.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

a. Findings of the Analysis on the Role of Maujana Nagori (BPD) in Merdeka District, Karo Regency

The role of Maujana Nagori (BPD) in implementing village government in Merdeka District, Karo Regency, is a multifaceted one, encompassing various functions and responsibilities. Through a mixed-methods approach, this research has sought to provide a comprehensive understanding of the BPD's role, effectiveness, and challenges within the local governance structure. The findings of the analysis are presented below, drawing on qualitative and quantitative data gathered from interviews, surveys, focus group discussions, participant observations, and document analysis.

The analysis revealed that the BPD performs several key functions within the village government system. These include advising the Village Head on matters related to village development, managing village assets, overseeing the implementation of government policies and programs, and promoting community participation and engagement. The BPD acts as a bridge between the government and the local community, ensuring that the latter's interests and needs are considered in decision-making processes.

The analysis also assessed the effectiveness of the BPD in fulfilling its functions. Overall, the BPD was perceived as a valuable institution that plays a crucial role in promoting community development and social cohesion. However, several challenges were identified that hinder its effectiveness, including limited resources, bureaucratic hurdles, and political interference. Despite these challenges, the BPD remains a vital institution in Indonesia's decentralized governance structure, contributing to the overall development and well-being of rural communities.

The analysis identified several challenges faced by the BPD in implementing village government. These include limited resources, bureaucratic hurdles, political interference, and inadequate capacity. The BPD often lacks the resources and expertise needed to effectively manage village assets and oversee the implementation of government policies and programs. Additionally, political interference and bureaucratic hurdles can hinder the BPD's ability to make informed decisions and take action on behalf of the community.

b. Findings and Implications for Research Objectives and Existing Literature

The findings of the analysis highlight the functionality of the BPD in providing a platform for citizen participation and engagement, fostering inclusivity in governance processes (Hidayat & Pratomo, 2019). By representing the diverse interests and perspectives of the community, the BPD enhances the legitimacy and accountability of the village government system. However, challenges such as limited resources and capacity constraints can impede the effectiveness of the BPD in providing timely and informed advice (Suryadi & Prasetyo, 2020).

The BPD plays a crucial advisory role in guiding village heads on matters related to village development, resource allocation, and policy formulation. Through deliberative processes and consensus-building, the BPD provides valuable insights and recommendations to village heads, ensuring that decisions are informed by local needs and aspirations. However, challenges such as limited resources and capacity constraints can impede the effectiveness of the BPD in providing timely and informed advice (Suryadi & Prasetyo, 2020).

The findings also shed light on the effectiveness of the BPD in overseeing the implementation of government policies and programs at the grassroots level. Despite its critical role, the effectiveness of the BPD in implementation can be hampered by bureaucratic hurdles, political interference, and resource constraints (Wijayanto & Suryani, 2018). Without adequate support and capacity-building initiatives, the BPD may struggle to fulfill its responsibilities effectively.

The findings of the analysis provide valuable insights into the role of Maujana Nagori (BPD) in implementing village government in Merdeka District, Karo Regency. The BPD serves as a vital institution for promoting community participation and inclusive development. However, challenges such as limited resources, capacity constraints, and bureaucratic hurdles can impede its effectiveness. By addressing these challenges and investing in capacity-building initiatives, policymakers and stakeholders can enhance the role of the BPD in fostering participatory democracy and grassroots governance in Indonesia.

c. Implications of Findings for Local Governance, Policy, and Practice

The findings of the research on the role of Maujana Nagori (BPD) in implementing village government in Merdeka District, Karo Regency, provide valuable insights into the dynamics of local governance and community development in Indonesia.

The findings underscore the critical role of the BPD in promoting participatory democracy and grassroots governance. By providing a platform for citizen participation and engagement, the BPD fosters inclusivity in decision-making processes and enhances the legitimacy and accountability of the village government system. Policymakers and practitioners can leverage these findings to strengthen mechanisms for citizen participation, such as enhancing the capacity of the BPD to facilitate meaningful dialogue and deliberation within the community.

The findings highlight the importance of effective advisory mechanisms and decision-making processes within the village government system. By providing timely and informed advice to village heads, the BPD enhances the quality of policy formulation and implementation at the grassroots level. However, challenges such as limited resources and bureaucratic hurdles can impede the effectiveness of the BPD in this regard. Policymakers can address these challenges by investing in capacity-building initiatives and streamlining bureaucratic processes to facilitate smoother policy implementation.

The findings have significant implications for promoting inclusive development and addressing the needs of marginalized communities. The BPD plays a crucial role in representing the interests and perspectives of the local community, ensuring that development initiatives are tailored to local needs and aspirations. Policymakers and practitioners can leverage these findings to design and implement targeted interventions that address the specific challenges faced by marginalized groups, such as access to basic services, infrastructure, and livelihood opportunities.

The findings underscore the importance of strengthening governance institutions at the grassroots level to promote transparency, accountability, and effectiveness. By addressing challenges such as resource constraints, capacity limitations, and political interference, policymakers can enhance the role of the BPD in fostering good governance practices and sustainable development. This may involve investing in capacity-building programs, providing technical assistance, and promoting greater collaboration between government agencies, civil society organizations, and the private sector.

d. Recommendations for Enhancing the Effectiveness of Maujana Nagori (BPD) in Implementing Village Government

The effectiveness of Maujana Nagori (BPD) in implementing village government in Merdeka District, Karo Regency, is contingent upon various factors, including functionality, representation, advisory capacity, and implementation prowess. Building on the findings of the research, presents a set of recommendations aimed at enhancing the effectiveness of the BPD in fulfilling its responsibilities within the village government system.

One of the primary recommendations is to invest in capacity-building programs for BPD members. By providing training and technical assistance on governance, administration, and policy analysis, policymakers can enhance the skills and expertise of BPD members, enabling them to fulfill their responsibilities more effectively. Capacity-building programs can also help BPD members navigate bureaucratic processes, promote inclusivity in decision-making, and foster collaboration with other stakeholders.

Another recommendation is to improve access to resources and expertise for the BPD. This may involve providing financial support, access to information, and technical assistance to help the BPD manage village assets and oversee the implementation of government policies and programs. By enhancing the BPD's capacity to mobilize resources and leverage external expertise, policymakers can enhance its effectiveness in promoting inclusive development and addressing local needs.

Transparency and accountability are essential for promoting good governance practices and building trust and confidence in the BPD. To enhance transparency, policymakers can promote greater disclosure of information, such as financial reports, meeting minutes, and decision-making processes. Accountability can be enhanced by establishing mechanisms for monitoring and evaluation, such as performance indicators, feedback mechanisms, and community scorecards. By promoting transparency and accountability, policymakers can strengthen the BPD's legitimacy and effectiveness.

Community participation and engagement are crucial for promoting inclusive development and empowering communities. To enhance community participation, policymakers can promote greater awareness and understanding of the BPD's role and functions through education and outreach campaigns. Engagement can be enhanced by fostering dialogue and collaboration between the BPD and community members through regular meetings, consultations, and participatory planning processes. By promoting community participation and engagement, policymakers can ensure that development initiatives are tailored to local needs and aspirations.

4. CONCLUSION

This research has sought to explore the role of Maujana Nagori (BPD) in implementing village government in Merdeka District, Karo Regency. Through a mixed-methods approach, the study has analyzed the functions, effectiveness, and challenges faced by the BPD within the local governance structure. The role of Maujana Nagori (BPD) in implementing village government in Merdeka District, Karo Regency, is a multifaceted one, encompassing various functions and responsibilities. Through a mixed-methods approach, this research has sought to provide a comprehensive understanding of the BPD's role, effectiveness, and challenges within the local governance structure. The findings of the analysis are presented below, drawing on qualitative and quantitative data gathered from interviews, surveys, focus group discussions, participant observations, and document analysis. Based on the findings of the analysis, several recommendations can be made to enhance the effectiveness of Maujana Nagori (BPD) in implementing village government. Provide capacity-building programs for BPD members to enhance their skills and expertise in areas such as governance, decision-making, and community engagement. This will empower BPD members to fulfill their responsibilities more effectively and contribute to the overall development of the village. Improve access to resources and expertise for BPD members, such as training, technical assistance, and financial support. This will enable BPD members to make informed decisions and take action on behalf of the community, enhancing the effectiveness of the BPD in implementing village government. Enhance transparency and accountability within the BPD by promoting greater transparency in decision-making processes, ensuring that BPD members are accountable to the community, and strengthening mechanisms for oversight and accountability. Promote greater community participation and engagement in the BPD by facilitating meaningful dialogue and deliberation within the community, ensuring that the BPD represents the diverse interests and perspectives of the community, and promoting greater collaboration between the BPD and community members.

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