

Advantages and Disadvantages of Implementing a Regional Autonomy System on the Independence of a Region

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Abstract.

The implementation of the regional autonomy system in Indonesia is a decentralization policy that aims to grant authority to regional governments to regulate and manage government affairs in accordance with the potential and needs of local communities. This policy is expected to improve the effectiveness of government administration, accelerate regional development, and realize regional independence in various aspects, including economic, social, and government administration. This study aims to analyze the advantages and disadvantages of the implementation of the regional autonomy system on the independence of a region by emphasizing the concepts of regional autonomy and regional independence, the benefits of implementing regional autonomy, and the challenges faced in its implementation. The research method used is normative legal research with a statutory and conceptual approach. Research data were obtained through literature studies covering primary legal materials, secondary legal materials, and tertiary legal materials, then analyzed qualitatively to gain a comprehensive understanding of the implementation of regional autonomy in Indonesia. The results of the study indicate that the implementation of the regional autonomy system provides various benefits for increasing regional independence. The authority held by regional governments allows for the formulation of policies that are more responsive to community needs, the development of local potential, improving the quality of public services, and optimizing the management of regional resources and revenues. In addition, regional autonomy encourages government innovation and strengthens community participation in the development process, thereby increasing regional competitiveness. However, the implementation of regional autonomy also faces a number of weaknesses and challenges, including capacity disparities between regions, limited human resources, fiscal dependence on the central government, overlapping regulations, and the potential for abuse of authority that can hinder the optimal realization of regional independence. This study concludes that the success of the regional autonomy system in realizing regional independence is greatly influenced by the quality of governance, institutional capacity, accountable financial management, and synergy between the central and regional governments. Therefore, strengthening regulations, improving the competence of apparatus, effective oversight, and community empowerment are needed so that the benefits of regional autonomy can be felt evenly and sustainably in supporting national development.

Keywords: *Autonomy; Decentralization; Independence; Regional.*

A. Introduction

Regional autonomy is a strategic policy within the Indonesian government system that aims to create more effective, democratic, and responsive governance to the needs of local communities. Through the application of the principle of decentralization, the central government grants regional governments the authority to regulate and manage various government affairs according to the characteristics, potential, and needs of their respective regions. This policy was born as an effort to accelerate development, improve the quality of public services, and expand public participation in the decision-making process. In this context, regional autonomy is understood not only as the delegation of administrative authority, but also as an instrument to encourage regional independence in managing resources, developing economic potential, and improving community welfare in a sustainable manner. Regional independence is an important indicator of the success of regional autonomy because it demonstrates the ability of regional governments to carry out government and development functions without excessive dependence on the central government.¹

The concepts of regional autonomy and regional independence are closely linked in realizing efficient governance that adapts to local dynamics. Regional autonomy provides local governments with the freedom to formulate policies tailored to the geographic, social, cultural, and economic conditions of their communities, enabling more targeted development. Furthermore, regional independence is measured not only by fiscal capacity or the amount of local revenue, but also by institutional capacity, the quality of human resources, the ability to innovate, and the effectiveness of public service delivery. With broader authority, regional governments are expected to optimize local potential, increase regional competitiveness, and create a development climate that supports economic growth and equitable distribution of prosperity. Therefore, the implementation of a regional autonomy system is a crucial foundation in strengthening the role of regions as drivers of national development.²

Besides providing various opportunities, the implementation of a regional autonomy system also has several advantages that contribute to increased regional independence. Regional governments have greater flexibility in setting development priorities, developing innovative public services, and designing policies tailored to community needs. Decentralization of authority allows decision-making to be carried out closer to the community, allowing public aspirations to be more easily accommodated and translated into concrete development programs. Furthermore, regional autonomy encourages optimal utilization of local resources, strengthens regional investment, and enhances the ability of regional governments to generate and manage local revenues. These conditions can accelerate local economic growth, create jobs, and strengthen regional resilience in facing various development challenges.³

However, the implementation of regional autonomy also faces various shortcomings and challenges that can affect the level of independence of a region. Differences in institutional capacity, quality of apparatus, fiscal capacity, and economic potential mean that the results of regional autonomy implementation are not always uniform across

¹ Haryanto. 2020. "The Relationship between the Central Government and Local Government in the Framework of Regional Autonomy in Indonesia." *Journal of Constitutional* 17 (4): 723-741.

² Kurniawan, Roby. 2021. "Implementation of Regional Autonomy Policy in Improving Community Welfare." *Journal of Government Science* 6 (1): 45-58.

³ Moonti, Roy Marthen. 2017. "The Essence of Regional Autonomy in the Constitutional System in Indonesia." *Al-Ishlah: Scientific Journal of Law* 20 (2): 26-37.

regions. Some regional governments still face a high dependence on transfers from the central government, limited human resources, and obstacles to the formulation and implementation of effective policies. Furthermore, the potential for overlapping regulations, weak inter-agency coordination, and the risk of abuse of authority are challenges that require serious attention. Therefore, a study of the advantages and disadvantages of implementing a regional autonomy system on regional independence is crucial for understanding the extent to which decentralization policies have achieved their objectives and for formulating strengthening measures that can increase the effectiveness of regional governance and support equitable and sustainable national development.⁴

B. Research Method

The research method used is normative legal research with a statutory and conceptual approach. The research data was obtained through a literature review covering primary, secondary, and tertiary legal materials, then analyzed qualitatively to gain a comprehensive understanding of the implementation of regional autonomy in Indonesia.⁵

C. Results and Discussion

a. The Concept of Regional Autonomy and Regional Independence

The concept of regional autonomy is an important foundation in the Indonesian government system, aiming to grant regional governments the authority to regulate and manage community interests according to the conditions, characteristics, and potential of their respective regions. The implementation of this concept is based on the understanding that each region has different needs, challenges, and opportunities, thus requiring policies that are not always the same as those of other regions. By providing space for regional governments to make independent decisions in various governmental matters, it is hoped that the development process can be more effective, efficient, and able to directly address community needs. Regional autonomy also serves as a means to bring public services closer to the community so that governance is not only centered on the national government, but also involves the active role of regional governments in realizing prosperity.⁶

In the context of Indonesian constitutional law, regional autonomy is an implementation of the principle of decentralization, which places regional governments in charge of certain government affairs based on a division of authority established by law. Decentralization provides regions with the opportunity to develop policies tailored to local conditions without separating themselves from the framework of the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia. Thus, regional autonomy is not intended to create political independence separate from the central government, but rather to increase the effectiveness of government administration through a proportional and accountable distribution of authority.

Regional independence is an important goal to be achieved through the implementation of regional autonomy. This independence reflects the ability of local governments to manage their resources, formulate development policies, improve public

⁴Nugroho, Heru. 2021. "Regional Autonomy Problems and Sustainable Development Challenges." *Journal of Sociohumanities* 23 (3): 411–424.

⁵Fajar, Mukti, and Yulianto Achmad. 2017. *Dualism of Normative and Empirical Law Research*. Yogyakarta: Student Library.

⁶Prasetyo, Agus. 2019. "Evaluation of the Implementation of Regional Autonomy in the Perspective of Governance." *Journal of Performance Discourse* 22 (1): 77–92.

services, and utilize economic and social potential to support community well-being. An independent region not only has the ability to generate adequate regional revenue but also the ability to design sustainable development strategies, strengthen institutional capacity, and create transparent and accountable governance. Therefore, independence is not solely measured in fiscal terms, but also in the quality of institutions and the ability to manage change.

The relationship between regional autonomy and regional independence is mutually reinforcing. Regional autonomy provides space for local governments to innovate and make decisions tailored to local needs, while regional independence serves as an indicator of success in effectively utilizing that authority. When regional governments are able to identify superior potential, develop strategic economic sectors, and involve communities in the development process, regional independence tends to increase. Conversely, if the authority held is not supported by adequate institutional capacity and human resources, the goals of regional autonomy will be difficult to achieve.⁷

The success of regional autonomy is also influenced by the ability of local governments to provide quality public services. The public expects services that are fast, accessible, and tailored to their needs, requiring local governments to continuously improve the quality of their bureaucracy and administrative effectiveness. Good service can increase public trust in the government and encourage public participation in development. In the long term, this will strengthen the legitimacy of local governments and support better governance.

The economic aspect plays a crucial role in establishing regional independence. Local governments need to optimally manage natural resources, human resources, and investment potential to create inclusive economic growth. Developing micro, small, and medium enterprises, improving infrastructure, and strengthening the agricultural, industrial, service, and tourism sectors can be strategies for increasing regional competitiveness. The revenue generated from these economic activities can then be used to finance development programs and expand public access to public services.⁸

Beyond economic aspects, the quality of human resources also determines the level of regional independence. Regions with professional officials, a strong education system, and a productive population tend to be better able to capitalize on development opportunities. Investment in education, training, and skills development is a crucial step in creating a competent workforce while strengthening the capacity of regional bureaucracies. With qualified human resources, local governments can develop more innovative and adaptive policies to change.

Public participation is a crucial element in supporting the success of regional autonomy and regional independence. Citizen involvement in policy planning, implementation, and evaluation can increase the relevance of development programs to real needs on the ground. Furthermore, public participation promotes transparency and accountability, allowing for more effective monitoring of the use of public resources. Actively contributing citizens to development strengthens their sense of ownership of regional policies and increases the chances of successful implementation.

Technological advances and digitalization also open up new opportunities for local governments to increase regional independence. Utilizing electronic government

⁷Rahman, Abdul. 2020. "Fiscal Decentralization and Regional Financial Independence in Indonesia." *Journal of Borneo Administrator* 16 (3): 305–322.

⁸Sari, Dian Permata. 2022. "The Influence of Regional Autonomy on the Effectiveness of Public Services in Local Government." *Journal of Public Administration* 18 (2): 119–132.

systems, digital services, and integrated data management can improve administrative efficiency while expanding public access to public services. Digital innovation also supports data-driven decision-making, making formulated policies more targeted and easier to evaluate.⁹

Ultimately, the concepts of regional autonomy and regional independence are interconnected in the effort to create an effective, responsive, and welfare-oriented government. Regional autonomy provides a framework for local governments to develop their potential, while regional independence is the expected outcome of the responsible use of that authority. With the support of good governance, optimal resource management, improved human resource quality, and active community participation, regional autonomy can be a key driver of sustainable development and equitable prosperity throughout Indonesia.¹⁰

b. Advantages of Implementing a Regional Autonomy System for Regional Independence

The implementation of the regional autonomy system in Indonesia offers various significant benefits for efforts to achieve regional independence. By delegating some authority from the central government to regional governments, each region has the opportunity to manage government affairs according to the conditions, needs, and characteristics of the local community. This approach allows policies to be more adaptive to local challenges, thus enabling more effective and efficient governance. The authority held by regional governments also provides greater scope for optimal development of economic, social, cultural, and natural resource potential, allowing development to be directed according to regional priorities without neglecting national development goals.¹¹

One of the main advantages of implementing a regional autonomy system is the increased ability of local governments to design policies tailored to community needs. Local governments have a deeper understanding of conditions in their regions than the central government because they interact directly with the community and face various local issues on a daily basis. With this understanding, development programs can be formulated with more precision, whether in education, health, infrastructure, social services, or economic development. Policies that are responsive to local needs tend to be more easily accepted by the community and have a higher chance of success in implementation.

Regional autonomy also provides opportunities for each region to develop its economic potential based on its inherent strengths. Regions with abundant natural resources can optimize their management through policies that support sustainability and increase added value. Meanwhile, regions that rely on the service sector, creative industries, agriculture, or tourism can develop development strategies tailored to local

⁹Sulaiman, Faisal. 2023. "Regional Independence as a Decentralization Goal in the Indonesian Government System." *Journal of Right-Thinking* 12 (1): 65–82.

¹⁰Wibowo, Arif. 2022. "Analysis of the Implementation of Regional Autonomy in Local Government Management." *Indonesian Legislative Journal* 19 (2): 187–201.

¹¹Yusdianto. 2018. "The Implementation of Decentralization and Its Implications for Strengthening Regional Government." *Fiat Justisia: Journal of Law* 12 (4): 351–366.

economic characteristics. This flexibility in determining the direction of economic development helps local governments create jobs, increase community productivity, and strengthen regional competitiveness at the national and international levels.

Fiscal independence is a crucial indicator that can be strengthened through the implementation of regional autonomy. With this authority, regional governments can optimize their own revenue sources through asset management, public services, investment cooperation, and the development of leading economic sectors. The greater a region's ability to generate its own revenue, the greater its capacity to finance development and public services without excessive dependence on transfers from the central government. This provides space for regional governments to plan development more independently and sustainably.¹²

The implementation of regional autonomy also encourages innovation in governance. Each region has the opportunity to develop various creative programs to improve the quality of public services, simplify administrative procedures, utilize digital technology, and strengthen government transparency. These innovations often emerge in response to the specific needs of local communities and serve as examples of good practices that can be adapted by other regions. A culture of innovation developing at the regional level can ultimately accelerate bureaucratic reform and improve the quality of public services.

In addition to improving government effectiveness, regional autonomy also strengthens public participation in the development process. Closer relationships between local governments and citizens facilitate the expression of aspirations, the holding of deliberations, and the evaluation of implemented policies. Communities have greater opportunities to contribute to determining development priorities and overseeing the use of regional budgets. This active participation can enhance the legitimacy of public policies while strengthening the accountability of local governments in carrying out their duties and authorities.

From a regional development perspective, regional autonomy allows for accelerated provision of infrastructure and basic services tailored to community needs. Local governments can prioritize the construction of roads, health facilities, schools, clean water networks, and other public services based on actual conditions on the ground. Decision-making processes closer to the community often result in faster and more targeted program implementation than if all decisions had to be made through a highly centralized mechanism. The positive impact is an improved quality of life for the community and the creation of an environment conducive to local economic growth.

Another advantage of implementing a regional autonomy system is its ability to strengthen local identity and potential. Local governments can develop policies that support cultural preservation, empower indigenous communities, promote superior regional products, and develop creative sectors based on local resources. These efforts not only strengthen regional character but also open up new economic opportunities through the development of tourism, cultural industries, and micro, small, and medium

¹²Asshiddiqie, Jimly. 2010. *The Constitution and Constitutionalism of Indonesia*. Jakarta: Sinar Grafika.

enterprises. Thus, regional autonomy serves as a means to integrate economic development with the preservation of local values that define a community's identity.¹³

In the investment sector, greater authority at the regional level enables the creation of a more conducive business climate through streamlined licensing services, support for business actors, and the development of infrastructure to support economic activity. Regions that are able to create a favorable investment environment will find it easier to attract capital, expand employment opportunities, and boost economic activity. This increased investment directly contributes to regional revenue growth and strengthens the fiscal capacity of local governments to finance various development programs.

Regional autonomy also provides opportunities for local governments to improve the quality of human resources through policies tailored to local needs. Education, job training, skills development, and entrepreneurship development programs can be designed based on regional economic characteristics, making outcomes more relevant to local labor market needs. Investment in human resources will create more productive and innovative communities, while strengthening the foundation of long-term regional independence.

The success of the regional autonomy system is ultimately reflected in the increased ability of regions to manage government affairs independently, improve community welfare, and utilize their potential for sustainable development. Regional independence not only means the ability to meet development financing needs, but also includes the ability to build effective institutions, create quality public services, develop resilient local economies, and foster harmonious relationships between government and society. With good governance, the support of competent human resources, and optimal utilization of regional potential, the implementation of the regional autonomy system can be a significant driver for the creation of independent, competitive regions capable of making greater contributions to national progress.¹⁴

c. **Disadvantages and Challenges of the Implementation of Regional Autonomy for Regional Independence**

The implementation of regional autonomy in Indonesia has provided greater scope for local governments to manage government affairs in accordance with the characteristics and needs of local communities. However, despite the various benefits offered, the implementation of regional autonomy also presents a number of shortcomings and challenges that affect the success of regions in achieving independence. Not all regions have the same ability to utilize the authority granted, resulting in significant variation in the implementation of decentralization policies. Some regions have been able to develop rapidly through innovation and effective resource management, while others still face challenges in governance, financial management, and the development of local potential. These differences demonstrate

¹³Huda, Ni'matul. 2019. *Local Government Law*. Bandung: Nusa Media.

¹⁴Kansil, C. S. T., and Christine S. T. Kansil. 2008. *Indonesian Government System*. Jakarta: Bumi Aksara.

that granting authority alone is insufficient to create regional independence without adequate institutional capacity and human resources.¹⁵

One shortcoming that often draws attention is the disparity in fiscal capacity between regions. Regions with abundant natural resources, a strong industrial base, or growing economic activity tend to have higher regional revenue generation capabilities than regions with limited economic potential. As a result, the ability of local governments to finance development and improve the quality of public services is uneven. Some regions remain heavily dependent on transfers from the central government to meet budgetary needs, resulting in relatively low levels of fiscal independence. This dependence can limit local governments' flexibility in setting development priorities and reduce their ability to respond quickly to community needs.¹⁶

The quality of human resources is also a significant challenge in the implementation of regional autonomy. Local government officials are required to possess skills in planning, budget management, policy formulation, public service delivery, and the use of information technology. However, not all regions have the human resources with sufficient competencies to optimally carry out these tasks. Disparities in apparatus capacity can impact the quality of governance and hinder the implementation of development programs. Lack of training, limited access to competency development, and the unequal distribution of professional personnel exacerbate these challenges.¹⁷

Another challenge relates to the ability of regions to identify and develop local economic potential. Regional autonomy grants authority to manage their resources, but successful management depends heavily on careful planning, investment support, and well-targeted policies. Some regions still face difficulties in attracting investment, developing leading sectors, or creating added value from available resources. As a result, opportunities to increase regional revenue and strengthen economic independence are not being optimally utilized.

In terms of regulations, the implementation of regional autonomy also faces challenges in the form of potential overlapping policies and differing interpretations of the division of authority between the central and regional governments. This situation can create uncertainty in program implementation, slow down the decision-making process, and impact the effectiveness of public services. Regulatory harmonization and strong coordination between institutions are essential to ensure that every policy aligns with national development goals while respecting regional authority.¹⁸

Regional financial management is another aspect that requires serious attention. Regional autonomy provides local governments with the freedom to formulate budgets and implement development programs, but this freedom must be balanced with a strong oversight system and a strong culture of accountability. If financial governance is not effective, there is a risk of budget waste, inefficient use of resources, or program implementation that does not align with community needs. Such conditions can diminish the benefits of regional autonomy and delay the achievement of development goals.

In addition to internal government challenges, social and economic dynamics also influence the success of regional autonomy. Changes in economic structure,

¹⁵Manan, Bagir. 2001. *Welcoming the Dawn of Regional Autonomy*. Yogyakarta: Center for Legal Studies, Faculty of Law, Islamic University of Indonesia.

¹⁶Widjaja, HAW. 2014. *Regional Autonomy and Autonomous Regions*. Jakarta: Rajawali Press.

¹⁷Marbun, S. F. 2012. *State Administrative Law I*. Yogyakarta: FH UII Press.

¹⁸Rasyid, M. Ryaas. 2000. *The Meaning of Government: An Overview in Ethics and Leadership*. Jakarta: PT Mutiara Sumber Widya.

urbanization, technological developments, and increasing public demands for quality public services require local governments to continuously adapt. Regions that fail to adapt to these changes may struggle to maintain competitiveness and meet public expectations. Therefore, the ability to innovate and continuously evaluate policies is crucial for maintaining the effectiveness of regional autonomy.¹⁹

Suboptimal community participation is also a barrier to strengthening regional independence. Citizen involvement in development planning and oversight processes is crucial to ensuring that policies truly reflect local needs. However, in practice, some regions still lack the capacity to create inclusive and sustainable participation mechanisms. As a result, some policies lack public support or fail to fully address challenges faced on the ground.

To address these shortcomings and challenges, planned and sustainable strengthening efforts are required. Increasing the capacity of civil servants through education and training, strengthening data-driven development planning systems, and implementing transparent and accountable governance are crucial steps to improve the quality of regional governance. Regional governments also need to strengthen collaboration with the business community, universities, and the community to develop local economic potential and create development innovations.²⁰

The development of information technology can be one solution to increase the effectiveness of regional autonomy implementation. Digitizing public services, utilizing electronic government systems, and integrating data between agencies can improve administrative efficiency and facilitate public access to services. Furthermore, the use of technology can support faster, evidence-based decision-making, resulting in more targeted policies.

Ultimately, the shortcomings and challenges in implementing regional autonomy are part of the process that must be addressed in the effort to achieve regional independence. The success of decentralization is determined not only by the extent of authority granted to regions, but also by the ability of local governments to utilize that authority professionally, transparently, and responsibly. By strengthening institutional capacity, improving the quality of human resources, optimizing the management of local potential, improving intergovernmental coordination, and encouraging community participation, regional autonomy can be a more effective instrument in creating regions that are independent, competitive, and capable of making a real contribution to sustainable national development.²¹

D. Conclusion and Recommendations

The implementation of the regional autonomy system is a strategic policy in the administration of government in Indonesia, aimed at strengthening decentralization, increasing the effectiveness of public services, and accelerating development in accordance with the characteristics and needs of each region. The concept of regional autonomy grants local governments the rights, authorities, and obligations to regulate and manage government affairs based on the principles of independence, accountability, and responsibility within the framework of the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia. The independence of a region is reflected not only in the ability to manage regional resources and finances, but also in the capacity of local governments to formulate policies, provide

¹⁹Sujamto. 1990. *Aspects of Supervision in Indonesia*. Jakarta: Sinar Grafika.

²⁰Syarifin, Pipin, and Dedah Jubaedah. 2006. *Local Government in Indonesia*. Bandung: Pustaka Setia.

²¹Syaukani, H. R., Affan Gaffar, and M. Ryaas Rasyid. 2002. *Regional Autonomy in the Unitary State*. Yogyakarta: Student Library.

quality public services, develop local economic potential, and build effective and participatory governance. Thus, regional autonomy is a crucial instrument for creating a government that is closer to the community and able to respond to local needs more quickly and appropriately.

From various aspects studied, the implementation of the regional autonomy system offers several advantages that contribute to increasing regional independence. Broader authority allows local governments to optimize the potential of their resources, increase innovation in public services, develop development programs appropriate to local conditions, and strengthen community participation in the decision-making process. Furthermore, regional autonomy encourages increased regional capacity to generate local revenue, attract investment, and develop leading sectors that can support economic growth and improve public welfare. Flexibility in policy formulation also allows regional governments to adapt development strategies to existing challenges and opportunities, thereby creating greater competitiveness at the regional and national levels.

However, the implementation of regional autonomy also faces various shortcomings and challenges that affect its success in realizing regional independence. Differences in fiscal capacity, human resource quality, institutional capabilities, and development levels among regions mean that the implementation of regional autonomy does not always produce the same impact. The dependence of some regions on central government fund transfers, suboptimal management of local potential, weak inter-institutional coordination, and the potential for overlapping regulations are obstacles that require serious attention. Furthermore, the risk of abuse of authority and a lack of transparency in governance can hinder the achievement of decentralization goals if not balanced by an adequate oversight and accountability system.

Based on the above description, It can be concluded that the success of implementing a regional autonomy system in increasing the independence of a region depends heavily on the ability of local governments to utilize their authority effectively, professionally, and in accordance with the principles of good governance. Strengthening the capacity of the apparatus, improving the quality of development planning, optimizing regional financial management, harmonizing regulations, and increasing community participation are important steps to maximize the benefits of regional autonomy while addressing various existing challenges. With the support of appropriate policies and synergy between the central government, local governments, and the community, the regional autonomy system is expected to be a key driver in realizing independent, competitive, and sustainable regions in support of national development.

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