

The Application of E-Government in the Development of Village Government Democracy in Gowa Regency Indonesia

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ABSTRACT

The use of e-government in Gowa Regency's villages to improve democracy is the subject of this study. The primary issue facing village governance in the digital age is how information technology may be used to increase citizen participation, transparency, and accountability. This study is unique in that it examines how e-government interacts with the still-unexplored village governance context. The main inquiries this study aims to address are: What ways may the Gowa Regency's village governments be made more democratic through the use of e-government? In three villages in Gowa Regency, case studies were used in the research method, which was qualitative. Observation, interviews, documentation, and literature review were used to gather data. According to the findings, using e-government improved community engagement, boosted budget management transparency, and promoted village government accountability. The major finding is that e-government has a lot of promise to improve village governance through democracy. The necessity for digital literacy and a strong technological foundation, as well as the importance of village governments in promoting public engagement and ensuring openness and accountability in the use of information technology, are all important implications. This study adds significantly to the local and international literature on e-government and local democracy by providing a new understanding of how e-government is used to strengthen democracy in the context of village governance.

Keywords: E-government, Democracy Principles, Participation, Transparency, Accountability

1. INTRODUCTION

Since the emergence of the Village Law as a form of granting full authority to regulate and manage their own government affairs and the interests of rural communities. The Village is an autonomous government order (Village Autonomy) based on the norms and rules of its community law. The Village position as the smallest area in the region has the aim of bringing public services

closer to the community (Al Arif & Karsa, 2022).

Villages are the solid foundation of a country as expressed by the Indonesian president Mr. Joko Widodo as outlined in 'Nawacita' as an embodiment of building Indonesia from the periphery intended to pay attention to regional, village and island development to the borders (Nurfajri, 2018). Entering the era of the Industrial Revolution 4.0, various

activities, whether social, economic, educational, political, and others, are always associated with the use of technology integrated with internet networks (Xu et al., 2018). The development of this situation cannot be avoided, forcing all levels of society, both companies, government institutions to be able to adapt and utilize technology (Osterholm, 2020; Polanyi, 2018). Likewise, the current public service paradigm has shifted from manual or traditional services to information technology-based services or what is known as E-government (Vel & Bedner, 2015).

The application of E-government is a new representation for the community to synergize with the combination of local wisdom characteristics and technological information systems (Androustoupoulou et al., 2017; Santa et al., 2019; Tang et al., 2021). The concept will be very relevant to changes in the social behavior of rural communities in interacting in community activities and others (Flora, 2018; Pant & Odame, 2017). The concept of social change itself will be formed over time due to the disruption of the current digital technology era. a form of technological intervention in a village can be carried out as a support relationship between the government (Herdiana, 2019).

Information technology intervention is a synergy between the functions of the village government and the values, culture, social structure, and natural environment in the village to realize a rural development policy program that leads to the development of information technology (Vathanophas et

al., 2008). Another form of synergy is rural communities with the rural environment, the relationship illustrates that information technology interventions for rural and rural communities are based on the utilization of customs, socio-cultural and environmental values as an effort to create a sustainable environment so that this potential can be utilized by rural communities (Bachrein, 2010).

Villages have the ability and usefulness in information technology intended to improve the welfare and quality of life of the community through the use of technology in aspects of village development and a framework for building accountability, roles, and decision-making power for digital-based organizations through web media, mobile devices, and social media connected to the internet network (Rijswijk et al., 2021). Villages have their own challenges to achieve a more productive village. Even though with the existence of the law, village autonomy towards village independence is very open. Village information systems can be managed as information centers are already a priority need for village communities (Antlöv et al., 2016).

Gowa Regency is one of the example regions of 5 districts / cities in South Sulawesi province that was selected in the application of village government technology, where villages in the gowa area have implemented digital-based E-government as an improvement in public services for village communities (Grinfeld et al., 2011). The number of villages that have used the information technology system is 21 villages out of a total of 121 villages in Gowa Regency by

collaborating with developers within the framework of the Digital Village platform.

The tendency that drives the development of the E-government concept results in major challenges that must be faced in running E-government (Maumbe et al., 2008). It can be seen from the public participation of transparency and accountability of public services as a driving factor in achieving a democratic development of the village. However, it is undeniable that the lack of knowledge and understanding of the village community so that the lack of public participation in village digitization services that make these conditions affect democratic life in the village.

2. METHODS

This research uses a qualitative approach and the type of approach is a case study in three villages that are the study locations, namely Pakatto Village, Bontomarannu Subdistrict, Jenetallasa Village, Pallangga Subdistrict and Bontolempangan Village, Bontolempangan Subdistrict related to the application of village E-government in the development of village democracy in Gowa Regency. The data collection techniques used are observation, interview, documentation, and literature study. Furthermore, the data obtained in the field will be analyzed using qualitative techniques. Determination of informants using purposive sampling technique, namely subjective sampling technique with a specific purpose or purpose with the assumption that the informant has the information needed for the informants at the study site in this

study are the Village Head, Village Consultative Body, Community Leaders, and the community at the study site. The data analysis used is qualitative where the analysis is based on the data obtained based on the principles of village democratization listed in Permendesa Number 2 of 2015, namely participation, transparency and accountability of public services.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Implementation of Village E-government in the development of Democracy in Gowa Regency

The discussion of this study is to analyze the application of E-government implemented by the village government which refers to the concept of democratization principles of village government Permendesa number 2 of 2015 referring to three aspects to see the embodiment of village government democracy in E-government public services. The three aspects are Participation, Transparency, and Accountability as a form of E-government implementation.

The implementation of E-government in the context of village governance is an important step in promoting public participation, transparency, and accountability in village governance (Harefa & Fatolosa Hulu, 2020). E-government can be a concrete manifestation of achieving democracy in village governance. To realize village government democracy can be seen in the following aspects.

PARTICIPATION

The participation of community members is also ensured in the next phrase, namely with the consent of the Village community. The implementation and development of democratic life must be oriented towards the collective progress of the local community, namely the Village community, not for the sake of democracy itself. In this case, adherence to democratic norms must go hand in hand with attachment or loyalty to the community. In this sense, adherence to democratic norms must go hand in hand with an attachment or loyalty to the community. Village democracy is not a set of universal values that are coercive, or mechanisms and procedures that are detached from the experience of the Village community, but is tied to the lives of the people who practice democracy. More specifically, the principles of village democracy are set out in Permendesa No. 2/2015.

Public participation in decision-making processes and governance is a key principle in democracy (Cheyne, 2015). Public participation enables citizens to contribute, vote, provide feedback, and engage in political and governance activities. Public participation in E-government plays an important role in strengthening democracy (LeRoux et al., 2020). It allows the government to better respond to the needs of the people (Cordella & Paletti, 2019). Participation in the implementation of E-government implementation as a public service that aims to improve accessibility, efficiency, and villagers' satisfaction with the performance of the village government (Malodia et al., 2021). This can be seen

from the participation of citizens to participate in the planning and development of the E-government system in Pakatto Village. In accordance with the statement of the head of Pakatto Village, "before the implementation of E-government related to Digidis in Pakatto Village, we have appealed and invited community leaders, youth groups to participate in the socialization of the application of village digitalization and this is a form of promoting to residents the features of the digidis application".

E-government can support youth activities by providing platforms and services that facilitate active participation and involvement of youth in government and community processes (Xu et al., 2018). This was also confirmed by Fandi, one of the Youth Organization of Pakatto Village "We are very supportive of the new breakthroughs from the government regarding digital villages because we understand the current conditions. the community needs easy and fast services. we also helped the government in using the digidis application in the community. we also feel that it tends to be more modern services with the presence of digidis according to the needs of today's era."

Community participation in the implementation of E-government can be seen from the participation of villagers in the socialization process in order to support government activities in improving public services. This is also supported by the enthusiasm of youth karang taruna. Youth have great potential in adopting and utilizing information and communication technology (ICT), so they can contribute significantly in

encouraging the development and implementation of E-government (Mensah, 2020). Likewise, in Jenetallasa village, the same thing was done by the village government to encourage community participation by involving village youth in assisting the use of E-government. Through the statement of the Jenetallasa Village Secretary, he said "Since the implementation of E-government (digides), the community no longer needs to come to the office, just via cellphone (online), we immediately process the file in the system. and Alhamdulillah, the residents here already understand its use because we also involve the youth here to help us in providing understanding in the form of digides socialization activities to Jenetallasa villagers."

It can be seen that the application of E-government facilitates participation because of the new understanding gained by the community towards the use and utilization of technology (Farida et al., 2020). The community is encouraged to use E-government services as a form of support to the government in improving public services. but these conditions do not necessarily run well in accordance with their utilization. therefore, there also needs to be network connectivity that can support a public service activity to run well and have benefits for the community. it happens in Bontolempangan village which has difficulties in accessing E-government services. This makes the people of Bontolempangan village experience obstacles. as expressed by the Head of Bontolempangan Village "The facilities in our village are good, there are

computers, platform machines for public service activities. but we still experience problems related to network connectivity. Usually, residents in the village have difficulty getting a signal so that the internet network is limited, it needs a spot or a certain place to get a good signal. there are several hamlets that have not yet reached the network in place. that may be the cause of the obstacles for the community to use online services. In the office, the network is still rather stable, so the residents here participate when they take care of the files, coming to the village office.

The application of E-government always facilitates the affairs of the community in fulfilling a need. However, in the conditions found obstacles - obstacles to increasing community participation through E-government services (Digides) still have difficulty accessing information. This happens because the signal connectivity in the area in the village is not stable so that residents still come to the village office to take care of the administrative needs of the village community.

Stable networks play a key role in connecting related parties in this case the Village Government. Stable networks ensure the accessibility of E-government services without interruptions that should Citizens can access the Digides application quickly and easily without any technical obstacles or slow internet access. this is important for village governments to provide fast and efficient services to the community.

TRANSPARENCY

Public services are based on the principles and practices of government in providing open, honest and accessible information to the public regarding the services provided (Androniceanu, 2021). Transparency is one of the essential elements of good governance and is the basis for effective public services. Transparency is a form of government activity in carrying out governance, especially in the village. Transparency is very necessary so that the village government has openness to the community, especially information disclosure.

The principle of transparency means a matter of government openness from the Village community, namely the ease of accessing information, providing correct information, both in terms of informing development and empowerment programs (Sofyani et al., 2023). Village communities, also have the right to know the management of Village finances, from budgeting, allocating, and using Village finances. So it can be said that transparency is open so that it can be accessed by everyone who needs it.

This can be seen from the Electronic Government services that have been provided by the Village Government as a form of transparency to the community towards the implementation of village government programs. as done by the Pakatto Village Government which has published information in the form of a website that can be easily accessed by Pakatto villagers. Transparency in E-government refers to the government's efforts to provide open and easily accessible public

information and data that can be understood by the public through websites and information technology. Indeed, this has been done by the Pakatto Village Government as a form of public information disclosure regarding village finances as reflected in the Village Budget (APBDes) for Fiscal Years 2022 and 2023 on the pages <http://profil.digitaldesa.id/pakatto-gowakab> and <https://pakattodesaku.com/>.

A form of openness to the community regarding village finances. Likewise, it helps in the prevention of corrupt practices or misuse of public funds, with monitoring from the community and access to financial information disclosure. Thus, transparent information about village finances allows citizens to participate in a sustainable development planning process in accordance with the needs of the community. The expression of one of the pakatto village community leaders "As pakatto villagers, we are very proud and appreciative of the Pakatto Village Government which has worked well to meet the needs of the pakatto village community. and all of that is realized in the performance produced by the pakatto village government is considered very good. especially information and implementation of activities compiled jointly with village stakeholders as well as transparency over the management of APBDes and village activity funds."

This explanation shows that transparent governance prioritizes and applies the principles of transparency. The explanation shows that transparent governance prioritizes and applies the principles of transparency in the

administration of government in an open, honest manner, and disclosure of information to the public about the use of public funds, service procedures and village regulations (Ford et al., 2019). it has been proven from the performance of the pakatto village government which utilizes E-government technology optimally. Therefore, it has a positive impact on the relationship between the government and the community, as well as by building trust and openness of government.

Creating a community that plays an active role in sustainable development in the village. In contrast to the villages of Bontolempangan and Jenetallasa, they have public information that can be accessed by the community, but information on the budget management of village fund activities and the realization of the APBDes has not been included in the media of the jenetallasa Village Government E-government website stated by the Village Secretary of jenetallasa that "For that we have problems with the publication of information. we have not included budget management as a form of transparency in our digital media. but we still socialize to the residents of jenetallasa about information on activities and management of public funds that run in accordance with the planning in the APBDes.

In line with the statement of the Head of Bontolempangan Village, he said that "We have not fully optimized the information on the management of APBDes funds in Bontolempangan Village, but we are still actively publishing village activities through print

media and socializing to residents about management and APBDes.". Basically, good public services must be accompanied by transparency. Transparency is the key to creating effective and efficient public services. This can be realized if the government is responsive in the use of information technology which aims to build public trust in a government institution. When the government implements government openly and honestly about policies and decisions taken, the public will feel more trust and have confidence that the services provided are fair and of high quality. The practice of transparency in the villages of jenetallasa and bontolempangan has not shown a good application of E-government in the governance of public service transparency for the community.

ACCOUNTABILITY

The government is an organizational unit that has the authority to manage and budget for policies or programs, of course, this is an accountability in every activity carried out. Accountability is an effort to provide accountability carried out by the village government (Fox, 2015). Accountability is a principle that aims to ensure that the government is responsible for the actions and decisions taken in providing services to the community. In this context, accountability refers to the government's obligation to account for their actions and decisions to the community.

Public service is the responsibility of the government in providing services needed by the community (Heriyanto, 2022). Public service accountability

involves monitoring and assessing the government's performance in providing services. Governments have a responsibility to ensure that the public services they provide are effective, efficient and beneficial to society. To achieve this, governments must have a transparent and open system, which allows the public to monitor and evaluate their performance.

The importance of public service accountability has several important benefits, namely helping to improve the quality of public services provided by the government (Sellang et al., 2022). By being accountable for their actions and decisions, the government will be more careful in choosing policies and implementing programs that can meet the needs and expectations of the community. It can be seen that through supervision carried out by the Pakatto Village Consultative Body (BPD) has an important role in overseeing and implementing accountability in the delivery of public services at the village level. This was revealed by a member of the Pakatto Village BPD who stated that "We as partners of the village head and his staff certainly always supervise every activity that has been carried out in accordance with the planning prepared in the draft APBDes. it is our authority to evaluate the accountability of the village head regarding the management of village funds as well as the implementation of government programs and policies at the village level. for example, this digital village is one of the village government's decisions in order to improve quality public services for the village community and it will be

accounted for by the village head in his report. In line with what was expressed by Mr. Basir SE, the Head of Pakatto Village said that "It is our obligation to be accountable in every annual activity report compiled in the APBDes Planning. We also publish the APBDes Report through the digides website which can be accessed by the people of Pakatto Village, so that the entire community can find out about all forms of activities that have been carried out at the village level."

Based on the explanation above, it can be understood that accountability in Pakatto Village has been running optimally. It is evident that every action and decision taken by the Village Head can be properly accounted for to the community. With the active role of the BPD in monitoring and implementing accountability, public services at the village level can become more transparent, accountable, and responsive to community needs (Akbar, 2018). Publication is very important regarding the annual APBDes Accountability Report, which can be accessed by the community through the village government's official website or E-government portal.

In order for the community as a whole to monitor information by providing opportunities for the community to understand village development priorities and budget allocations. Of course, it can also improve the quality of village financial management by encouraging the village government to improve village financial management better. The accountability of the village head is a foundation in

building a good and effective village government for the community (Antlöv et al., 2016). When the village head carries out accountability obligations well, the community will feel cared for, trusted, and listened to by the village government. In addition, village head accountability also helps improve the quality of public services.

Different conditions in Jenetallasa Village and Bontolempangan Village relate to accountability practices that are still not optimally implemented at the village level. It can be seen from the pattern of accountability. Reports on APBDes activities are still formally reported through village deliberation forums and stakeholders. not yet thoroughly known to villagers when an interview was conducted with Mr. Nur Alam Sultan, Secretary of Jenetallasa Village, stated "Reporting on APBDes accountability is still carried out in the form of village deliberation forums and forums held by the BPD. not yet had time to fully publish through the official village government website."

This statement is supported by a statement submitted by Mr. Murhadi S.Pd, Head of Bontolempangan Village in a separate interview session stating that "The accountability of the APBDes Annual Report is carried out in an open manner attended by BPD and the community as a form of our accountability, but we realize that some people still know about it.

In order to ensure effective accountability in the digital era, the village government realizes that accountability information is very important to be published (Akbar, 2018),

considering that in this case the community has the right to know the accountability information for village budget management that has been provided by the village government itself. The digital era has developed, so the government should be responsible for providing services to the community through the publication of accountability report information that can be accessed on the available E-government website media.

Village government reports play an important role in ensuring that the community, BPD members, and other relevant parties can monitor village government performance and oversee the effective use of public funds and resources (Akbar, 2018). Similarly, the community can know directly about the achievements of programs that have been implemented by the village government. This allows the community to assess whether the set objectives have been achieved. Village governments should have a regular schedule for preparing and presenting annual reports to the community and relevant parties. This ensures that the accountability process is consistent.

Government accountability is not just about legal obligations (Busuioc & Lodge, 2016). It is about building trust and a good relationship between the village government and the community. Village government accountability in the digital era refers to the responsibility and openness of village governments in managing and presenting information and conducting government actions amid the development of digital technology. The digital era has changed the way village

governments operate and interact with communities, so the concept of accountability needs to be adapted to an increasingly connected environment automatically.

4. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This study examines in depth how E-government is used in Gowa Regency to promote village government democracy through the use of a catalyst for innovation. The study makes an effort to offer a fresh viewpoint on how, in a larger context, the use of information technology and community interaction might lead to the emergence of a new paradigm in village governance.

Community involvement is the cornerstone of a technology-based democracy. The effectiveness of e-government depends heavily on community engagement, which is discussed in this paper along with how crucial it is to village democracy. According to the paper, e-government provides a platform for active community involvement in the decision-making process and monitoring of village government actions. Youth groups and community-based organizations, like Karang Taruna, have promoted technical know-how in places like Pakatto and Jenetallasa, for instance, sparking a dynamic movement towards effective engagement. But in Bontolempangan, limitations brought on by network problems made the best involvement impossible.

Transparency as a Foundation for Trust: Transparency is developing as a

pillar in the deployment of E-government . The village government's relationship with its residents is benefited by open communication and transparent governance procedures, as demonstrated by the case of Pakatto. Where budget management openness is still in its early stages, such as in Jenetallasa and Bontolempangan, challenges could be noticeable.

Digital Accountability Dimension: A crucial finding is how the implementation of e-government pushes local governments to be accountable for their decisions and actions. Pakatto has demonstrated how community confidence and transparency may be improved by posting annual budget reports online. In villages like Jenetallasa and Bontolempangan, meanwhile, it can be challenging to develop equivalent accountability measures.

This study demonstrates how the use of e-government goes beyond mere administrative efficiency and develops into a revolutionary tool for advancing transparent, democratic, and accountable village governance. In a time when technology is transforming the landscape of governance and social interaction, this research helps us better understand how strategic information technology adoption may transform democracy at the grassroots level. Villages have plenty of room to expand and become inclusive, dynamic communities that respond to their residents, despite the challenges.

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