

## Research Article

# Study of Indigenous Peoples Institutions in the Implementation of Education Policy in Border Areas in Merauke Regency, South Papua Province

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## Abstract.

This study aims to find out the main duties, functions, and authorities of indigenous institutions in the implementation of border area education policies in Merauke District, South Papua Province. This research was conducted using a qualitative approach. The data sources used are primary and secondary data. The results show that education in the border area of Merauke Regency, especially for people living in local villages, is very far behind due to forestry/foraging habits and the lack of active role of indigenous institutions which have the function of “improving the quality of human resources.” This means that the functions of indigenous institutions related to education have not been fully implemented by the customary institutions. The results also found that the function of the indigenous peoples institution in Merauke district is more concerned with political issues and land buying and selling rather than dealing with educational issues, which are an important factor in the progress of a region, especially in the border area of Merauke Regency. Thus, here the role or function of indigenous peoples institutions in terms of carrying out their functions to encourage the education policy process in the border area of Merauke Regency can run according to expectations.

**Keywords:** indigenous institutions, public policy, education policy

## 1. Introduction

In responding to environmental changes and providing solutions to complex and multidimensional societal problems, the emphasis on citizen or community involvement is important and closely related to the capacity of individuals to influence the political system, which implies active involvement in political life, known as “democratic citizenship” [1]. The implementation of education in Merauke Regency since the enactment of the Special Autonomy Law for Papua Province through Law Number 21 of 2001 [2] and extended again by Law Number 2 of 2021 (Republic of Indonesia, 2021), is still lagging behind in terms of access and quality of education. One of the dimensions of the Human Development Index related to education, namely the knowledge dimension, is

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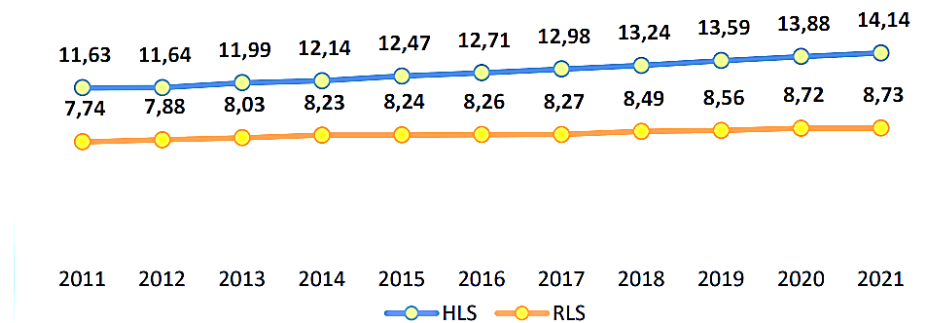
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measured using two indicators, namely Length of School Expectancy (HLS) and Average School Length (RLS). The HLS and RLS of Merauke Regency can be seen in the following image:



**Figure 1:** <sup>3Source</sup>: (Central Statistics Agency of Merauke Regency, South Papua Province, 2021).

Graph related to School Length of Expectation (HLS) and Average School Length (RLS) of Merauke Regency, South Papua Province:

From the explanation of the graph data above, it can be seen that this has increased from year to year, during the period from 2011 to 2021. The Expectation of School Length in Merauke Regency, South Papua Province increased by 2.51%/year, while the Average School Length increased by 0.99%/year. Although there has been an increase from year to year, if you look at it in more detail, the increase that occurred is mostly dominated by school-age children who are not native children or Papuan children (Orang Asli Papua), who live in urban areas rather than in border areas or local villages in Merauke Regency, South Papua Province. The Human Development Index in Merauke Regency has increased every year from 2022 to 2023, which is 0.94 points with a growth percentage of 1.29%, this data is taken from (Central Statistics Agency of Merauke Regency, South Papua Province, 2024). However, if the data is looked at in more detail, it can be concluded that the Human Development Index of Merauke Regency is dominated by immigrants/non-local people who can easily access all available educational facilities, while the local community, namely the Indigenous Papuan Community, is very backward because they drop out of school or have never received a proper education. This condition is inversely proportional to the funds that have been provided by the central government for education, which is IDR 115.60 trillion in 2024 (Ministry of Finance of the Republic of Indonesia, 2024). This condition is very ironic and raises the question of what is wrong with human development, especially

the Papuan people in Merauke Regency, South Papua Province, where the Special Autonomy Law actually focuses and provides special provisions for the development of the Papuan people in the field of education, which is 20%. Preliminary study data shows that in the implementation of Regional Regulation Number 3 of 2018 concerning the Management and Implementation of Education in Merauke Regency, especially in border areas, it is still far from expectations, it must be supported by every existing stakeholders, starting from beautification, the private sector and the community as well as indigenous community institutions.

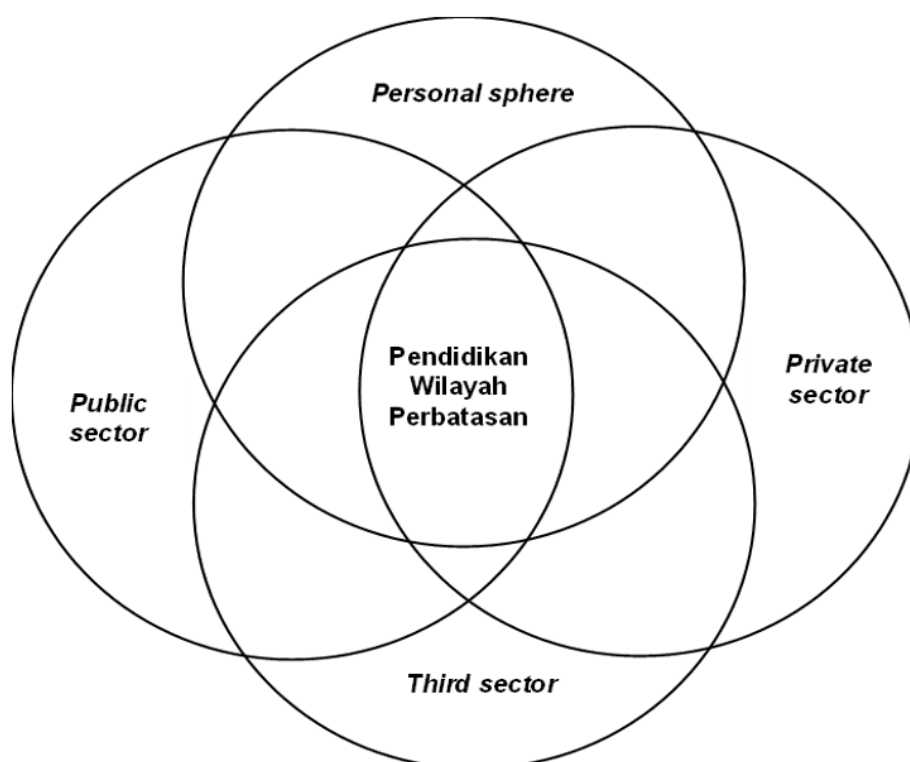
The involvement of indigenous community institutions in the implementation of education policies in border areas in Merauke Regency has not been fully implemented optimally in supporting government programs and policies, especially in the aspect of education for local communities in border areas, this should be an important focus for the central and regional governments and the role of Indigenous Institutions to be able to collaborate in managing and improving the quality of education especially in the border area of Merauke regency, South Papua Province. Superior human resources through education must be fully supported not only by the role of the government, but by all parties, both the Private Sector, the Community, Non-Governmental Organizations, Indigenous Peoples' Institutions, Academics, Foundations engaged in the field of education and the Mass Media as providers of public information services. The right for every citizen to get a proper education is also regulated in the 4th Constitution of the Unitary State of Indonesia in 1945 in Article 31 paragraph 1 which reads that every citizen has the right to education, continued in Paragraph 2, namely that every citizen is obliged to attend basic education and the government finances it (1945 Constitution, Amendment) [3].

Policies issued by the Government related to education must be adjusted to the geographical situation and character of the people in the region, especially in the people in the border areas, so that at the implementation stage it will run well to create superior Indonesian people, especially for people living in border areas and remote areas such as those in Merauke district, South Papua Province. The central government's policies given through special autonomy for the Papuan people have not been able to answer the basic needs of the indigenous Papuans, especially in the aspect of education. Policies in terms of equitable management and education services have not been felt by the indigenous Papuans, especially in border areas. The reality in the field is very different from what is stated in [4] Government Regulation Number 32 of 2013 concerning National Education Standards in article 1 point 9 which reads; Facilities and

Infrastructure Standards are criteria regarding learning rooms, sports venues, places of worship, libraries, laboratories, workshops, playgrounds, creative and recreational places and other learning resources, which are needed to support the learning process, including the use of information and communication technology, the above has not been fully seen in schools in border areas, especially local villages (Indigenous Peoples).

Some of the literature used by the author, which was said by Agustino [5], public policy actors are categorized into two major poles with the terms State Actors and Non-State Actors, namely: actors who are directly involved in the policy formulation process and actors who are not involved in the policy formulation process. Resource integration between actors across sectors as stated by Eriksson and Hellstrom [6] in the scientific article Multi-actor Resource Integration: A Service Approach in Public Management:

- a) Border Society (Personal sphere);
- b) Government (Public sector);
- c) Non-profit sector (Third sector);
- d) Private sector;
- e) Self (Border area education).



**Figure 2:** Integration of resources between actors across sectors.

The implementation of the Merauke Regency Border Area Education Policy involves several interested policy actors, The types of actors proposed by Erickson & Andreas Hellstrom [6] are: actors from the citizen sphere, public sector actors, namely the Merauke Regency government, actors from the third sector) namely: Non-governmental and non-profit institutions, and private actors (private sector), namely: Non-governmental institutions that seek profit or profit. The explanation above is that the community is not a community in general, but an indigenous people who have customary rights in certain areas, such as the indigenous community in Papua, while the non-profit institution here is a Non-Governmental Organization and or it can also be an independent Indigenous Institution so that its existence can be on the side of the interests of its own indigenous peoples and not influenced by the intervention of any party for the welfare of the people in the region Customs.

Merauke Regency is a border area between the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia which is directly adjacent to the neighboring country Papua New Guinea (PNG) and also Australia. This must be a special concern for the central and regional governments to focus more on education aspects than other aspects, so that human resources in border areas can be as advanced as other regions in Indonesia. The geographical condition of the border area in Merauke Regency has always been an obstacle for teachers who serve in schools in border areas, so that the education process is often abandoned, especially coupled with binding rules for teachers to always leave school in order to meet the demands of the rules made by the central government in terms of teacher certification and so on. The need for a targeted policy implementation so that the quality of education in the border area of Merauke Regency can run as it should so that the existing human resources can be on par with other regions in Indonesia in general.

## 2. Methods

Moleong [7]. Qualitative research is research that is intended to understand the phenomena of what the research subject experiences, such as behavior, perception, motivation, action, etc. holistically (whole) and by way of description in the form of words and language in a special natural context and by utilizing various natural methods. In conducting research, researchers are not only explicitly expressed but also the meaning that exists in the expression. Likewise, what is in the respondents' thoughts or views. Thus, the researcher will be able to obtain a deep and comprehensive explanation or

understanding in order to provide a more holistic description of the aspects studied in this study. Qualitative research is a method for exploring and understanding the meaning that a number of individuals or groups of people consider to be derived from social or humanitarian issues [8]. The data collection techniques used are: observation, in-depth interviews, and documentation. Observations are carried out mainly on tangible objects, such as activities related to the process of implementing education policies. In-depth interviews are conducted with informants, while documentation techniques are documents related to this research. The determination of informants in this study was carried out by purposive sampling, namely by selecting informants who are in accordance with the interests or objectives of this study to provide information. The informants are:

1. Regent of Merauke Regency
2. Merauke Regency DPRD
3. Head of the Education Office
4. Chairperson and members of Indigenous Peoples Institutions
5. Indigenous Peoples
6. Community Leader (Education Observer)

The explanation of the theory above can be proven by the results of observations and in-depth observations and interviews at the research location starting from the local government, people in Naukenjerai District, Sota District and Elikobel District which are located on the border line of Merauke Regency as the locus of this research, it can be seen that education in the border area is still very far from expectations or in other words very lagging behind.

## 3. Results and Discussion

### 3.1. Result

The education process in the border area of Merauke regency is very far from expectations, through observation in the field it can be seen that education is not running as it should, there are several factors that cause the inhibition of the education process in Naukenjerai District, Sota District, and Elikobel District, such as: lack of participation and function of Indigenous Peoples Institutions, natural factors, geographical conditions. The results of the study show that education in the border area of Merauke Regency,

especially the people living in local villages, is very far behind due to forested habits (foraging) and the lack of active role of Indigenous Peoples Institutions (LMA) in providing emphasis related to the importance of education for the young generation of Papua.

[9]Regulation of the Minister of Home Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia Number 18 of 2018 concerning Village Community Institutions and Village Customary Institutions/Indigenous Institutions, in Article 5 Village Customary Institutions / Indigenous Peoples' Institutions have a function: what is stated in paragraph 6 is "improving the quality of human resources", meaning that one of the functions of the Indigenous Institutions themselves related to education has not been fully implemented by the Indigenous Institutions. The fact found in the field that the function of the Indigenous Peoples Institution in Merauke district is more concerned with political issues and land buying and selling rather than dealing with educational issues which are an important factor in the progress of a region, especially in the border area of Merauke regency.

Local communities (Indigenous Peoples) are very dependent on nature, so for their daily needs all depend on nature, such as; food and board and consider nature as the mother who gives life to them, when the foraging season begins to arrive, school-age children will follow their parents to forage in the forest, it can last for days, even weeks in the forest. This problem that causes the educational process, especially for children in local villages, does not run as it should.

### 3.2. Discussion

Looking at the phenomenon that occurs in the field related to the functions of Indigenous Peoples Institutions, it is highly hoped that good cooperation by local governments in encouraging, embracing and providing space for Indigenous Institutions to carry out their functions so that the educational process in the peer boundary areas can run effectively. The conditions of the local community and the natural conditions that affect the education process are often obstructed and run ineffectively, requiring policies that adjust the conditions of each region, including the border areas in Maerauke Regency, South Papua. The role of Indigenous Institutions is very important, especially for local communities, because the community is very attached to the applicable customs and very obedient to customary provisions, this is an entrance for Indigenous Institutions in informing local communities about the importance of education for the younger generation in border areas. The cooperation of actors as previously described, in addition to the government sector, there are also the private sector, the non-profit

sector and the community in collaborating for the implementation of quality education policies for the people of border areas. Public Policy is an action that has a specific purpose, which is carried out by government agencies and their staff and the community to solve a certain problem. R. Adisasmita [10] Education requires collaboration from every existing sector, the blind thing said by Haning, M.T, [11] to achieve an appropriate collaboration strategy can be carried out with various stages and efforts, such as joint efforts in setting goals, mutual connections that grow on the basis of intense interaction between target groups and change agents, voluntary reciprocal relationships between target groups and reformers, and the distribution of power.

## 4. Conclusion

The education process in the border area of Merauke Regency, South Papua Province is very far from expectations or in other words still far behind, it can be seen that education is not running as it should, there are several factors that cause the inhibition of the education process, such as: lack of role of Indigenous Institutions, natural factors, geographical conditions. Thus, here the role of Indigenous Peoples Institutions is highly demanded in terms of main duties, functions and authorities so that they can cooperate with the local government in encouraging the education process in the border area of Merauke regency to run in accordance with the expectations and mandates of the Law related to education policy.

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