

THE VORTEX OF CORRUPTION IN THE MIDST OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND ITS PREVENTION: THE DESTRUCTION OF INTEGRITY VALUES

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Abstract

Corruption in recent years has been fussed with many being involved in corruption cases. This corruption then results in losses suffered by the public, such as poverty and social inequality etc. From 2004 to February 2021, a total of 126 regional heads have been designated by the KPK as corruption suspects. . Corruption cases that occur in the government, especially local governments, cannot be separated from the weak prevention function from within. As for based on data from the KPK, the highest number of corruption crimes from 2004 to 2019 was in local government agencies (provincial and regency / city) as many as 500 cases out of a total of 1032 cases. Efforts to fight or eradicate corruption are not enough to arrest and throw corruptors in jail, because opportunities for corruption are wide in front of would-be corruptors. That is why it is necessary to instill good values of Integrity and make efforts to make efforts to cultivate.

Keywords : *Corruption, Local Government, Integrity Values, Prevention*

I. INTRODUCTION

As we know, in the past few months, there have been several cases of corruption committed by state officials, and these acts of corruption have even worsened the conditions for the community during the ongoing pandemic. Therefore, for the majority of the Indonesian population, corruption is considered one of the main enemies. However, the hope of eradicating it seems to be a challenging task.

The involvement of local government institutions, in particular, should play a stronger role in the prevention aspect through internal mechanisms or agencies. Corruption cases in local governments are often attributed to the weakness of internal prevention functions. According to the Corruption Eradication Commission (KPK), since its establishment in 2002, 119 regional heads have been designated as suspects in corruption cases (Ramadhan, 2019). Based on KPK data from 2004 to 2019, the majority of corruption cases, totaling 500 out of 1032 cases, occurred in local government institutions (provinces and regencies/cities) (Corruption Eradication Commission, 2020: 70-71). The high number of corruption cases in local governments needs special attention from all stakeholders, especially from the local government itself.

Researchers then analyze the causes of the widespread corruption within local government environments and provide solutions for prevention. The proliferation of corruption in local government environments raises serious concerns due to its negative impact on development and the well-being of society. Several factors contribute to the prevalence of corruption in local governments, and researchers conduct a thorough analysis to identify the root causes.

One major cause is the weakness of the internal surveillance and control system within local government institutions. This system should serve as the front line in preventing and detecting potential acts of corruption. However, the lack of transparency, accountability, and independence in internal surveillance mechanisms can create opportunities for corrupt practices.

Moreover, the deeply ingrained culture of corruption in some local government environments is also a crucial factor. If this culture is allowed to persist, eradicating corruption becomes challenging. Researchers may emphasize the need for organizational culture change through education, training, and the establishment of strong integrity values among local government officials.

Another issue that needs attention is the low welfare and inadequate incentives for local government employees. Insufficient salaries or inappropriate reward systems can drive corrupt practices as a means to meet basic living needs. Research may explore solutions to improve employee welfare and restructure incentive systems to be more equitable, thus preventing the temptation of corruption.

Proposed solutions for preventing corruption in local governments include enhancing transparency, accountability, and independence in internal surveillance systems. Policy reforms that promote organizational culture change and improve employee welfare should also be considered. Additionally, strengthening the role of anti-corruption institutions, such as the Corruption Eradication Commission (KPK), can be a key step in eradicating corruption at the regional level.

Active participation of the community is crucial in addressing this issue. Increasing public awareness of the importance of integrity and anti-corruption efforts can be a significant force in driving change within local governments. Involving the community in surveillance processes and reporting corrupt activities can be a concrete step towards creating a cleaner and more accountable environment.

Overall, addressing the prevalence of corruption in local governments requires a holistic approach involving improvements to internal systems, organizational culture change, enhanced employee welfare, and active community participation. Only through comprehensive measures like these can the Indonesian population hope to see positive changes and a reduction in corruption cases at the regional level.

II. PROBLEM FORMULATION

The following is the formulation of the problem to be raised:

1. What is the vortex of corruption that has occurred in the government environment to date?
2. Does the breakdown of Integrity values have an attachment to perpetrators of corruption?
3. What are the prevention efforts that can be done so that corrupt behavior does not occur within the Local Government?

III. RESEARCH METHODS

The research method used in research is using qualitative research approach methods. The qualitative approach in question is an approach that emphasizes capturing social events related to

research. The results of the capture or portrait of the phenomenon or event are then analyzed and described in the form of arguments from various sources such as books, journals etc. This means that this research will capture the occurrence of criminal acts of corruption that occur within the local government. Then the researcher describes the findings of several cases that have existed in the form of a narrative. Then researchers provide solutions related to prevention in corruption crimes that are effective and efficient for local governments.

IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

1. The Whirlpool of Corruption in the Middle of Local Government

The reform has resulted in decentralization and regional autonomy, transforming Indonesia into a more democratic nation that can elect leaders through direct elections. However, some argue that democracy has failed to produce good leaders for the country and its people. This is because some Indonesian leaders and political elites are more oriented towards pursuing power, rent, and narrow interests characteristic of oligarchy. In general, the reform process has not succeeded in improving the lives of the people. Ideally, the reform process should be optimized to produce good, integrity-driven leaders capable of improving the welfare of the people.

Post-reform, the improvement in state management is considered suboptimal, whether in the management of natural resources, governance systems and bureaucracy, or the national economic system. As a result, the well-being of the people is difficult to achieve, leading to an increase in poverty and widening wealth inequality. At the same time, citizens witness that some national leaders do not practice the values of Pancasila. They have abandoned good teachings and values, getting involved in various corrupt practices such as corruption, collusion, and nepotism (KKN). For example, recent cases of corruption within local governments have become increasingly rampant.

The impact of Covid-19 not only affects health and economic crises globally but also exacerbates corruption. Day by day, corruption in Indonesia has become widespread, and it is no longer unfamiliar to the public. With the passage of time, corrupt individuals seem unaffected by the punishments imposed. It is important to note that corruption has significant consequences for society. With corruption prevalent, people feel oppressed due to the lack of quality in education, the economy, and various other factors. Corruption seems to have become a cultural legacy deliberately preserved by irresponsible individuals. If corruption becomes widespread in a society and is ingrained in its daily life, the consequences will lead to a chaotic community where no social system can function effectively.

From 2004 to February 2021, a total of 126 regional heads have been designated as corruption suspects by the Corruption Eradication Commission (KPK). Corruption cases within the government, particularly at the regional level, are often attributed to the weakness of internal prevention functions. According to KPK data, the majority of corruption cases from 2004 to 2019 occurred in local government institutions (provinces and regencies/cities), totaling 500 cases out of 1032 (Corruption Eradication Commission, 2020: 70-71). In 2021 alone, as of the tenth month, seven regional heads have already become suspects in alleged corruption cases. Among these seven, five are regents, while the remaining two include a governor and a mayor. Corruption offenses at the regional level often involve bribery in licensing, as it is a favored sector for corrupt practices (Walelang, 2017: 18) (Tresya, Mayasari, & Suhendra, 2019: 16).

For instance, the case of the arrest of the Regent of Purbalingga in 2018 serves as evidence of the anti-corruption system in the public service sector at the local government level. Tasdi, the Regent of Purbalingga in 2018, was arrested by the KPK for suspected corruption in the construction project of the Islamic Center. The Islamic Center construction project was intended for public service facilities (Diniyanto, 2018). Tasdi was ultimately found guilty of committing corruption collectively and subsequently engaging in gratification, as stated in the Corruption Court Decision at the Semarang District Court Number: 77/Pid.Sus-TPK/2018/PN.Smg. Interestingly, Tasdi engaged in corrupt practices collectively with his subordinate, who at that time held the position of Head of the Procurement Unit of Purbalingga Regency.

The latest case involves the Regent of Kolaka Timur, Southeast Sulawesi, Andi Merya, who was caught in a KPK operation on Tuesday, September 21, 2021. During the arrest, KPK also detained five others and seized money amounting to Rp225 million. Andi, along with the Head of the Regional Disaster Management Agency (BPBD) of Kolaka Timur, Anzarullah, and four others have been declared suspects in a case of alleged bribery related to infrastructure funds from the National Disaster Management Agency (BNPB).

The autonomy granted to regions, in reality, has not guaranteed freedom from corruption in the regions (Arifin & Irsan, 2019: 888-891). It is regrettable that what was supposed to be the Reform Movement, coupled with the implementation of regional autonomy policies, should have provided opportunities to develop the regions for the well-being of their residents.

Various detrimental impacts arising from the factors caused by corruption committed by local governments include:

- a) Deterioration of the state's financial system

Corruption will worsen the state's finances. In addition to existing debts with other countries, corruption will only increase these financial burdens.

- b) Decrease in public trust in the government

Through mass media, we receive information about our own country and even the world. With cases of corruption within the country, various media outlets highlight the flaws in Indonesia's legal system regarding corruption cases. The law does not truly protect the public, and corruptors appear calm when facing legal action, as if there is no significant difference between being prosecuted and not.

- c) Reduction in state revenue

Corruption diverts public resources into the hands of perpetrators, reducing government spending. The unequal distribution of income occurs between corrupt elites and the general population due to the diversion of public resources.

- d) Unjust law enforcement

Each case creates injustice for parts of society because law enforcement is uneven.

- e) Damage to democracy

Corruption erodes public trust in democracy. Public officials, legislators, and government leaders are no longer trusted due to the prevalence of corruption among them. Public trust in any candidate during elections may diminish due to these corrupt practices. This situation needs to be addressed with clean, honest, and fair leadership.

- f) Violation of human rights

Basic human rights become difficult for the public to obtain and are not fulfilled by the government.

g) Facilitation of the development of other crimes

Public trust is lost due to corruption. Government statements are ignored, and people no longer care about government policies. This leads individuals to protect themselves and their close associates, resorting to negative means for survival. Violence and conflicts may arise in such situations.

h) Decreased investor confidence for investment

Corruption in a country diminishes foreign investors' trust in the legal certainty regarding corruption, making it difficult for economic development.

i) Budget intended for welfare and public services is misused

Corruption hampers a country's growth as state funds are diverted for personal enrichment. The quality of goods and services becomes low and unsuitable for the public.

j) Poor quality of public services

Bureaucracy aims to provide services to the public. However, if the services are difficult and convoluted, citizens will face challenges in handling their documents. Moreover, if payment is required to expedite public services, this is referred to as extortion. Government bureaucracy should be free for the public and not create difficulties.

k) Increased social inequality

Corruption contributes to the impoverishment of society. Besides causing direct effects, corruption also indirectly leads to a decrease in economic growth, ultimately resulting in an increase in poverty rates.

2. Erosion of Integrity Values in Corruption Perpetrators

In the realm of healthcare, corruption is likened to a disease. As a disease, it is not unreasonable for some to claim that corrupt practices provide benefits to those involved. Sudjana (2008: 37) concludes that corruption is a social malady that must be eradicated, regardless of how many people are affected by it. In connection with this, there is a notable story from China about the dangers of corruption. The story is titled "Rat in the Temple" (Tang 2005: 222). Therefore, corruption is an amoral act committed by anyone, anytime, and anywhere, involving the misuse of authority or power, deviating from established rules for personal, others', or group interests. Many argue that poverty is the root cause of corrupt behavior, but this notion is contradicted by the fact that corruption occurs in prosperous societies as well. Moreover, in some cases, the corruption is executed in a more organized and systematic manner, creating an illusion that it is not a corrupt act, especially if the benefits are distributed among various parties.

As we are aware, in the past few months, there have been several cases of corruption committed by state officials, and this corruption has even worsened the conditions for society during the ongoing pandemic. This is indeed regrettable, and it raises questions about how it could have happened. There are three concepts of anti-corruption values: core values, work ethos, and attitude values. The core values of anti-corruption are honesty, responsibility, and discipline. These values are obligatory for public servants in carrying out their assigned duties. By possessing these values, individuals align with the ethos of independence, hard work, and simplicity.

Furthermore, core values and work ethos can be reflected through attitude values that include courage, empathy, and fairness.

According to the Integrity Module for the public by the Corruption Eradication Commission (KPK), integrity involves acting consistently with what is stated. Anti-corruption values are equivalent to integrity values. Integrity can play a crucial role in efforts to improve the character and moral values of the nation, supporting an anti-corruption stance. Corruption can occur when we fail to instill anti-corruption values within ourselves. Therefore, by cultivating strong integrity values within ourselves, corruption can be eradicated.

Regarding integrity, it can be said that integrity is a virtue that drives those who possess it to make the best participatory efforts to create a good life together by managing the functioning of all individual characteristics or influencing its implementation. What is meant can be in the form of individuals or institutions/organizations that are functionally controlled or influenced by a group of people within them. For society, honesty is considered a good character, while in an institution/organization, honesty is considered a good organizational culture. Both in an individual and in an institution/organization, integrity generates a drive to direct the functioning of particularities for the common good, which can be felt by as many people as possible (the common good).

For example, concerning individuals, integrity is usually associated with virtues or good character (Audi & Murphy 2006). Its development is usually linked to efforts to prevent corruption, so one indicator of a person's integrity is honesty. However, how to explain honesty in terms of cohesion/integrity? Indeed, someone who is not honest cannot have integrity, but for someone who is always honest, it is not impossible to have a low level of integrity (Carter 1996, 52). Blind honesty without considering contextual appropriateness can indicate narcissistic tendencies and indifference to the negative consequences that will befall others (Martin 1996, 121).

Corruption occurs due to the opportunities held by those in primary authority, particularly in this case, regional leaders, but it is not grounded in good integrity. However, integrity is a crucial key that controls human attitudes and behaviors. In this position, integrity becomes a crucial point that every regional leader must possess to avoid the trap of corruption that always lurks in every opportunity.

In general, if each regional leader has good integrity values, it means they have an honest personality and a strong character. They will also be consistent in their attitudes, actions, and words, reflecting unity between mindset, feelings, speech, and behavior that aligns with conscience and norms. A person with integrity will remain steadfast in the face of temptation and challenges, even when no one is watching, and will endure patiently when facing problems from all directions.

Conversely, if each regional leader lacks good integrity values, corrupt and reprehensible actions will find it easier to infiltrate every step. Therefore, it is important to understand and genuinely train integrity values in every aspect of daily life. It is not as easy as turning the palm of the hand; there needs to be a gradual and continuous habituation for these integrity values to become ingrained.

3. Prevention of Corruption within Local Government

Corruption is currently a problem not only for Indonesia but also for the international community. On the international stage, the fight against corruption is evident in the provisions of

the OECD, particularly the Convention on Combating Bribery of Foreign Public Officials in International Business Transactions, aimed at preventing and eradicating bribery of foreign public officials in connection with international business. Similarly, the Political and Economic Risk Consultancy (PERC) annually releases survey results ranking countries worldwide based on corruption levels, and Indonesia is known to be one of the countries included in the ranking of high corruption levels.

The lengthy history of combating corruption in Indonesia indicates that addressing corrupt practices requires a rigorous approach and significant political will from the ruling government. The politics of combating corruption are reflected in the legislative regulations enacted during specific government periods. However, the enactment of laws specifically addressing the eradication of corruption is not sufficient to demonstrate the seriousness or commitment of the government.

For the Indonesian people, especially during the reform era and the COVID-19 pandemic, corruption is a prominent and critical issue. This is reflected in the decreasing quality of public services, inadequate infrastructure built by the government, an increasing burden, and, notably, a rise in poverty leading to a decline in overall well-being. Despite the apprehension of several regional government heads involved in corruption, it has not completely addressed the concerns of the Indonesian public. Consequently, while corruption is considered a major adversary by the majority of Indonesians, the hope of eradicating it is not an easy task.

Skepticism often arises regarding the prevention and eradication of corruption, as seen in statements like "Indonesia is classified as a country with high corruption, yet no corruptors are prosecuted" or the perception of a "legal drama stage" and the phrase "advancing without fear to defend those who pay" when corruption cases are prosecuted.

Recently, the fight against corruption seems to face a dilemma. Following the revision of the Anti-Corruption Commission Law in 2019, the Commission (KPK) has shifted its focus towards prevention efforts. However, this approach may not be sufficient to curb the enthusiasm for corrupt practices. Therefore, the government and KPK collaboration for the prevention of corruption in local governments is crucial. Instruments like Presidential Regulation No. 54 of 2018 on the National Corruption Prevention Strategy and a Joint Decision of the Leaders of the Corruption Eradication Commission, the Ministry of National Development Planning/Head of the National Development Planning Agency, the Ministry of Home Affairs, the Ministry of State Apparatus Empowerment and Bureaucratic Reform, and the Head of the Presidential Staff Office No. 1 of 2018, No. 01 SKB/M.PPN/10/2018, No. 119/87774/SJ, No. 15 of 2018, and No. NK-03/KSK/10/2018 on the Corruption Prevention Action Plan for 2019-2020 regulate corruption prevention across various sectors, ministries/agencies, and local governments. However, these legal instruments are often too normative and general.

The theory of criminal law politics provides an alternative to this division of tasks. Barda Nawawi Arief stated that criminal law politics theory is related to crime prevention. There are two concepts in the theory of criminal law politics: crime prevention based on penal and non-penal approaches. The penal concept emphasizes the repressive aspect or retaliation with the aim of creating a deterrent effect for criminals. On the other hand, the non-penal concept focuses on prevention, where the primary purpose of criminal law is to prevent crime, thereby creating welfare for society. The penal concept is suitable for the KPK's enforcement of anti-corruption laws, while the non-penal concept, aimed at prevention, is more relevant for local governments. Therefore, local governments should optimize the role of internal oversight for the prevention of

corruption. The Inspectorate plays a vital role in preventing corruption, ensuring the accountability and transparency of local government operations. The role of the Inspectorate in preventing corruption involves internal control, risk management, and good governance.

To enhance the effectiveness of corruption prevention, it is essential to foster a culture of anti-corruption values within the local government environment. This requires instilling integrity values among government officials through education and training programs. Additionally, there must be mechanisms for checks and balances. While the Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI) for Denmark is favorable, cases of corruption still occur. For instance, there have been instances of mayors using city halls for personal events and companies offering gratuities to secure procurement contracts. Therefore, governments should not be complacent, and effective check and balance mechanisms are necessary.

Preventing corruption in the local government setting involves both internal efforts and active participation from the community. The government needs to take substantial steps in preventing corruption, including optimizing internal oversight mechanisms and fostering a culture of integrity. Simultaneously, the community plays a crucial role in reporting corruption and promoting anti-corruption values. Only through a comprehensive and collaborative approach can Indonesia hope to see a significant reduction in corruption at the regional level.

V. CONCLUSION

Corruption in recent years has gained attention, especially with numerous regional leaders being implicated in corruption cases. This corruption has resulted in public losses, as it deprives the public of the opportunity to be led by clean and qualified leaders, contributing to the increasing prevalence of bribery and corruption in the public sector. Efforts to combat or eradicate corruption are not sufficient by merely apprehending and imprisoning corrupt individuals because the potential for corruption remains widespread among potential offenders. Moreover, there are ample opportunities for new corrupt individuals to indulge their corrupt desires. This is why instilling good integrity values is crucial.

Fighting corruption requires more than just arresting and imprisoning corrupt individuals, as the chances for corruption are vast, especially with various opportunities available for new corruptors to indulge in corrupt practices. This is why instilling good integrity values is crucial. If each local leader possesses strong integrity values, it means they have an honest and robust character. They will be consistent in their attitudes, actions, and words, reflecting a unity between their thoughts, feelings, expressions, and behaviors that align with conscience and norms. Individuals with integrity will remain steadfast in the face of temptation, even when no one is watching.

The government must continually enhance efforts to prevent corruption. Learning from Denmark's experience, robust check-and-balance mechanisms are essential, even in well-established prevention mechanisms. Both internal and external roles play a significant part in supporting anti-corruption prevention strategies. The involvement of all local governments is necessary to reject emerging corruption and enhance the community's role in detecting and reporting corrupt practices to prevent corruption from becoming a cultural norm.

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