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Village Policy Reform through Law No. 3 of 2024:

Village Head Tenure and the Role of Rehabilitation Funds

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Abstract: Village policy reform in Indonesia underwent significant changes with the enactment of Law No. 3 of 2024, which regulated the village heads' term of office and the management of rehabilitation funds. This study employed a descriptive qualitative method with a normative legal approach to analyze the reforms introduced by Law No. 3 of 2024, particularly the extension of the village head's term of office and the role of rehabilitation funds. Legislative analysis, literature review, and content analysis were employed, and source triangulation was applied to ensure validity and generate insights into policy effectiveness and recommendations for improved village governance. It also examined the impact of these reforms on sustainable development and disaster resilience. Utilizing the frameworks of good governance and participatory governance theories, this study highlighted the risks of power abuse, the importance of transparency, and community participation in village fund management. A comparative case study approach was adopted to provide policy recommendations to enhance accountability, prevent corruption, and improve village governance effectiveness.

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I. Introduction

Villages play a strategic role in national development by supporting economic growth, preserving culture, and strengthening social resilience (Sedyowidodo, 2024). Following the enactment of Law No. 6 of 2014 on Villages, village governance has gained greater autonomy, particularly in managing development and funding. However, after nearly a decade, challenges such as corruption, development inequality, and suboptimal use of village funds have emerged, highlighting the need for policy evaluation.

The regulation of villages was initially governed under Law No. 32 of 2004 on Regional Government, which was later replaced by Law No. 23 of 2014. The government enacted the Village Law in recognition of villages' distinctive governance structures, thus providing them with autonomy in governance, development, community empowerment, and economic management. This law also introduced provisions on village elections, finances, and institutions, such as BUMDes, to ensure structured village development (Adam, 2024).

The extension of the village head's term of office to eight years is intended to reduce the frequency of village head elections, which have frequently triggered social conflicts in the communities (Adam, 2024). In practice, village head elections are often marked by intense rivalries and local political polarization, which negatively impact social stability in the village. The extension of the term is expected to allow sufficient time for the formulation and implementation of sustainable development programs, free from the frequent disruptions associated with short election cycles.

In this context, Law No. 3 of 2024—enacted on April 24, 2024, as the second amendment to the Village Law—introduced significant changes. These include the extension of the village head's term from six to eight years and the authorization of the use of village funds for rehabilitation and sustainable development. This reform is intended to promote political stability and strengthen long-term planning, particularly in disaster-prone areas.

While the extended term affords village heads greater opportunity to implement

development programs, it also raises concerns about potential abuse of power and corruption. Accordingly, it is essential to assess whether this policy genuinely strengthens village governance or introduces new governance risks that highlight the need for robust oversight and transparency.

Despite the authority granted to villages for development management under the 2014 Village Law, significant challenges persist in its implementation. One of the main concerns involves the misappropriation of village funds, often attributed to inadequate financial oversight and weak accountability mechanisms at the village level (Rimi, et al., 2024). In many cases, village heads and officials have been implicated in corrupt practices, which undermine village development and impede efforts to improve community welfare.

Moreover, the persistent disparity in development outcomes among villages remains a significant challenge. Mansur, et al., (2021) noted that villages with limited human resources and institutional capacity often struggle to design effective development programs. As a result, the allocation of village funds was not consistently optimized, further widening the gap between developed and underdeveloped villages.

In response to these challenges, Law No. 3 of 2024 introduced reforms aimed at enhancing leadership stability and allocating dedicated funds for village rehabilitation. However, this policy also presents new potential risks, including the concentration of power in the hands of the village head due to the extended term of office and the possibility of corruption in the management of rehabilitation funds, particularly in the absence of adequate oversight. Therefore, this study highlights the importance of applying the principles of good governance and participatory governance in the implementation of village policies to mitigate these risks.

A number of prior studies have discussed the effectiveness of the Village Act 2014 in providing autonomy to villages and its influence on rural development (Mais, et al., 2024; Mansur, et al., 2021). However, studies that specifically assess the impact of the extension of the village chief's term and the management of post-disaster rehabilitation funds from the perspective of governance are limited.

This study seeks to fill the gap by (1) evaluating the impact of the extended village chief's term on leadership stability and risk of authority misuse, as well as (2) analyzing the effectiveness of rehabilitation fund management in enhancing village resilience to disaster.

This study employs the theoretical frameworks of good governance and participatory governance to offer a novel perspective on applying the principles of transparency, accountability, and community participation to strengthen village governance.

The promulgation of Law No. 3 of 2024, which stipulates the extension of the village head's term of office to eight years (Article 39, paragraph 2), reflects the government's objective to improve the stability and effectiveness of development. However, without robust oversight, this extension may exacerbate the risk of power abuse. Farobi (2024) stressed the importance of applying good governance principles at the village level to prevent corruption, collusion, and nepotism.

The regulation of conservation and rehabilitation funds (Article 5 letter A) is particularly vital for villages in disaster-prone areas. Nasrullah (2019) notes that these villages often face challenges in the reconstruction process due to limited resources. Consequently, strict accountability in managing these funds is essential to support sustainable post-disaster recovery. A comprehensive examination of village policy reform under Law No. 3 of 2024 is essential to assess its impact on governance and community welfare, and to provide recommendations for enhancing transparency and participation in village administration (Ra'is, 2022).

The allocation of village rehabilitation funds in Law No. 3 of 2024 is based on the increasing frequency of natural disasters affecting numerous villages in Indonesia (Nasrullah, 2019). Villages repeatedly impacted by disasters face significant challenges in infrastructure and economic recovery, largely due to limited funds available at the village level. The new regulation allows villages to access designated funding, thereby supporting post-disaster reconstruction and strengthening their resilience to disaster risks.

This study examines Village Policy Reform under Law No. 3 of 2024, focusing on the implications of extending the village head's term of office on leadership stability and potential abuse of power. Additionally, it analyzes the regulation of village rehabilitation funds as a strategy to promote sustainable development and enhance disaster resilience. Utilizing the theoretical frameworks of good governance and participatory governance theories, this study highlights the importance of transparency and community participation in preventing budgetary misuse and strengthening accountability in village governance.

This study employs a case study approach by examining the misuse of village funds in Pamekasan, East Java, to illustrate how inadequate oversight can lead to budgetary misuse, particularly under extended terms of village leadership. In contrast, Japan's disaster-resilient village model in Kumamoto showcases how transparency and community participation improve post-disaster fund management. The study contributes to village governance theory and offers policy recommendations to enhance the transparency and effectiveness of village fund management, emphasizing the need for robust oversight and coordination between central, regional, and community stakeholders.

This study is also in line with the concept of policy reform as a strategic effort to strengthen village governance through participatory and capacity-based approaches. It serves not only as a legal basis but also as a catalyst for fostering more independent, resilient, and competitive villages through the adoption of inclusive, capacity-based policies.

II. Methods

This study employed descriptive qualitative methods and a normative legal approach to analyze village policy reforms under Law No. 3 of 2024, with a particular focus on the extension of the village head's term of office and the role of rehabilitation funds. This approach was chosen for its capacity to enable an in-depth examination of relevant policies, assess their implications for village governance, and identify the challenges and opportunities associated with their implementation.

The normative legal approach in this study focused on analyzing the regulatory framework governing village governments, including Law No. 6 of 2014 on Villages and its subsequent amendments, as well as its derivative regulations, such as government regulations and minister regulations. The study also involved a comparison between village policies in Indonesia and the principles of good governance and village autonomy within the framework of state administration law.

This study employed a literature review method to collect data by examining both primary and secondary legal sources. Primary legal sources included legislation, government decisions, and official documents related to village policy. Secondary legal sources consisted of academic journals, books, and research reports that address village governance, the effectiveness of rehabilitation policy, and case studies on the implementation of village policy in various regions.

Legal documents and academic literature were analyzed to obtain pertinent data. This analytical process comprised of several steps, namely: (1) coding data based on key themes, such as village head's term of office, village financial governance, and rehabilitation fund management mechanisms; (2) identifying patterns and concepts to assess the relevance of policies in the context of effective village governance; and (3) interpreting the data in the context of implementation of village policy in Indonesia.

To ensure the reliability and validity of the findings, this study employed source triangulation, which involved comparing information from various legal and academic sources to develop a comprehensive understanding.

In addition, the study acknowledges the limitations of the normative approach, particularly the absence of empirical data related to policy implementation. These limitations highlight the need for future research using case study approaches or interviews with village stakeholders.

The findings of this study are expected to contribute to the effectiveness of village reform policies and the formulation of recommendations for more transparent, accountable, and

sustainable development-oriented improvements in village governance.

III. Results and Discussions

A. Evaluation of the Central Government's Authority over Village Affairs

The establishment of a ministry specifically designated as the Ministry of Villages, Development of Disadvantaged Regions and Transmigration, represents a paradigm shift in the governance of village affairs, as it indicates that authority over these matters is no longer exercised exclusively by the Ministry of Home Affairs. The prevailing regulatory framework requires that the central government's authority over village governance must be exercised jointly by the Ministry of Villages, Development of Disadvantaged Regions and Transmigration, and the Ministry of Home Affairs, particularly the Directorate General of Village Governance.

In summary, the Ministry of Villages, Development of Disadvantaged Regions, and Transmigration holds the prerogative to carry out village development, rural area development, village community empowerment, and village community assistance. The Ministry of Home Affairs retains the authority to administer village governance. The division of authority between the Ministry of Home Affairs and the Ministry of Villages, Development of Disadvantaged Regions, and Transmigration is not defined in the Village Law. Instead, it is regulated under the Government Regulation Implementing the Village Law. This arrangement emerged as the Ministry of Villages, Development of Disadvantaged Regions, and Transmigration had not yet been established at the time of the Village Law's formulation. As a result, the law initially assigned responsibility for village affairs to the Minister of Home Affairs.

The dissemination of information on the division of authority over village affairs between the two ministries is essential, as some parties assume that the authority lies solely with the Ministry of Villages, Development of Disadvantaged Regions, and Transmigration. This narrow perspective implies that the village context is limited to issues of village development and village community empowerment while overlooking the significance of village governance.

Given that both village development and village community empowerment are implemented by the village head and officials within the framework of village governance, village governance is equally crucial in ensuring the success of these initiatives.

Ideally, village development, community empowerment, and governance are interconnected. However, given that current regulations require the division of authority over village affairs, it is imperative that various stakeholders—particularly the Ministry of Home Affairs and the Ministry of Villages, Development of Disadvantaged Regions and Transmigration, which has the authority over village affairs—work collaboratively to implement it effectively.

According to the findings of Sarip et al. (2020), challenges persist at the local level in understanding this division of responsibilities. Many village officials and communities assume that all village affairs are exclusively regulated by the Ministry of Villages, Development of Disadvantaged Regions and Transmigration, overlooking the significant role of the Ministry of Home Affairs in village governance. This results in inadequate coordination in policy implementation related to village development and governance.

In the same study, Sarip et al. (2020) highlighted that effective village development must involve collaboration between the two ministries. The study asserts that village development should encompass not only physical development and empowerment but also prioritize good, transparent, and accountable village governance. While the Ministry of Villages, Development of Disadvantaged Regions and Transmigration focuses on physical development and empowerment, the Ministry of Home Affairs plays an important role in promoting effective village governance, particularly through monitoring and evaluation mechanisms.

This perspective aligns with the findings of Wardani and Utami (2021), which emphasizes the importance of integration between village development and village governance. The central government must promote a clearer and more comprehensive understanding of each ministry's role in overseeing village affairs, thereby preventing misinterpretations among community members and village officials. Wardani and Utami (2021) also emphasizes that this division

of authority is not regulated in the Village Law but is instead outlined in the implementing regulations, because at the time of the law's ratification, the Ministry of Villages, Development of Disadvantaged Regions, and Transmigration had not yet been established. Consequently, the initial responsibility for overseeing village affairs fell under the purview of the Ministry of Home Affairs.

A study by Riyanto and Kovalenko (2023) examined the importance of inter-agency coordination in village management. The report found that several village heads expressed confusion regarding which ministry was responsible for addressing the challenges they faced, whether related to development or governance. This finding highlights the need for collaboration between the Ministry of Home Affairs and the Ministry of Villages, Development of Disadvantaged Regions, and Transmigration to create synergy in managing village affairs.

The dissemination of accurate information and improved inter-agency coordination are pivotal in fostering a clearer understanding of the division of authority. This, in turn, is expected to enhance the effectiveness of village governance. Enhanced collaboration between the two ministries is also expected to improve the performance and effectiveness of village heads and officials in fulfilling their responsibilities.

B. Momentum for Reflection on Village Achievements

A decade of Village Law implementation presents a valuable opportunity to evaluate the accomplishments in the implementation of village development and governance. Over the past ten years, the Village Law has positively influenced both infrastructure development and the empowerment of village communities.

During the commemoration of the Village Law Decade in Bali on January 15, 2024, the Minister of Villages, Disadvantaged Regions, and Transmigration reported a significant increase in the number of Independent villages—from just 174 at the beginning of the implementation of the Village Law to 11,456. Similarly, the number of developed villages rose from 3,608 to 23,035. These outcomes suggest that the villages have improved through community development and

empowerment, as reflected in village development data over the past decade (Rizka and Resinta, 2024).

One of the key factors contributing to this progress is the allocation of Village Funds since 2015. By 2023, the government had disbursed a total of IDR 538.9 trillion in Village Funds. These funds were directed toward accelerating infrastructure development in villages, including the construction of 350,775 kilometers of village roads, 14,612 village markets, and 6,706 village reservoirs. The allocation of the Village Fund has had a positive impact on village communities, as reflected in improved welfare, better infrastructure, and increased community empowerment (Gede and Iskandar, 2023)

From 2015 to 2023, the government allocated a cumulative total of IDR 538.9 trillion through the Village Fund. The annual allocation increased substantially from IDR 20.8 trillion in 2015 to IDR 70 trillion in 2023. The Village Fund has played a crucial role in supporting village development and empowerment programs to improve the welfare of village communities, with notable outcomes including the construction of over 350.775 thousand kilometers of village roads, the establishment of 14,612 village markets, and the construction of 6,706 units of village reservoirs (Adam, 2024).

However, while the achievements of village development are well-documented, the results of village governance remain less visible despite the pivotal role of the village head and officials in determining the success of development and community empowerment programs. The role of the village governance is, therefore, critical, as noted by Mario, et al., (2022) that the quality of village governance determines the successful implementation of village development programs.

To enhance village governance services, the government revised the fixed income of village heads, village secretaries, and other village officials through a 2019 Government Regulation. This initiative was implemented to improve the welfare of village officials, which directly impacts the quality of public services in the village (Naomy, 2019).

In addition to improving the welfare of village officials, the government also seeks to

enhance their capacity in village governance. By the end of 2023, the Directorate General of Village Governance, Ministry of Home Affairs, had conducted training for 13,498 village officials from 3,298 villages. The training was designed to enhance village officials' competence in carrying out village governance tasks and facilitating more targeted village development (Adam, 2024). These measures are expected to enhance the synergy between village development and village governance, with the aim of creating independent and prosperous villages.

C. Optimizing Village Governance

The shortcomings identified in village achievements should serve as a basis for the government to strengthen village governance moving forward. In terms of village development, for example, safeguarding the use of village funds and maximizing the role of regional governments in guiding villages on their utilization can help accelerate equitable village development. Monitoring the use of village funds is crucial, given that the village sector recorded the highest number of cases handled by law enforcement agencies (155 cases), according to the Monitoring Results Report on Corruption Case Enforcement Trends in 2022, released by Indonesia Corruption Watch (Anandya & Easter, 2023). In addition, improving village governance is also essential, given that the implementation of village governance is closely linked to the achievement of village development and community empowerment.

There are at least three issues the government needs to address. First, the government must address the management of village governance, particularly the competence of village officials, which can be enhanced through capacity building. Several factors underscore the need for capacity building of village officials, including their limited knowledge of village governance and the absence of regulations that define the flow, stages, and standards for achieving the desired capacity level of village officials.

Second, the management of the village assets needs to be improved. The Village Law has provided guidelines for village governments to manage village assets, including conducting an inventory. Although the Village Law mandates the inventory of village assets, in practice, this

requirement has not been effectively implemented by many district and city governments. Despite a circular letter from the Ministry of Home Affairs to the regions, several district and city governments have yet to submit reports on the village asset inventory. This inventory is a crucial component of accountable village asset management and must be carried out by both regional and village governments.

Third, the alignment of village development planning with national and regional policies must be improved. The Village Law explicitly stipulates that village development planning documents consist of only RPJMDes and RKPDes, which are not included in the framework of the National Development Planning System as outlined in Law No. 25 of 2004 on the National Development Planning System.

Optimizing village governance is a key strategy for enhancing the effectiveness of village development that is oriented towards community welfare. Since the RPJMDes and RKPDes documents serve as the main guidelines in village development planning, they must be aligned with national and regional policies. Therefore, control and evaluation by the Ministry of Home Affairs is crucial to ensure the alignment of village planning documents with the national development system.

From a governance perspective, optimizing village governance reflects the principles of transparency, accountability, and community participation. Public governance theory emphasizes that village governments should act as facilitators of development by involving stakeholders (Osborne et al., 1992). In addition, participatory development theory highlights the importance of the community's role as the primary subject of development, ensuring that policies adopted are more effective and sustainable (Chambers, 1983).

The main impacts of enhanced village governance include greater effectiveness in development planning, increased transparency in the management of village funds, and a more empowered community. With a sound governance system in place, development programs become more targeted, the risk of budgetary misuse is reduced, and the community becomes more actively involved in determining the direction of

development. Furthermore, optimal governance contributes to accelerating the achievement of sustainable development goals (SDGs) at the village level.

Enhancing village governance is not only the responsibility of the central government, but also requires support from regional governments and village communities. Good governance enables villages to develop more independently, prosperously, and competitively, thereby making a significant contribution to national development.

Village governance is vital given that villages are the spearhead of development in Indonesia. According to the Village Law, the government's role is to supervise and ensure that the management of the Village Fund is conducted in an accountable manner. Based on a report by Indonesia Corruption Watch (2022) written by Anandya & Easter (2023), the village sector ranks at the top in corruption cases, with 155 cases being handled by law enforcement agencies. This indicates that there are serious challenges in managing Village Funds that require more attention from the central and regional governments (Ellectrananda and Hindrawan, 2018).

Findings from a study by Dewi., et al, (2023) stated that increasing the competence of village officials is the main issue in village governance. This study revealed that limited knowledge regarding village governance often becomes an obstacle in implementing village development and empowering village communities. Therefore, in response to this obstacle, it is necessary to increase the capacity of village officials in Indonesia both in terms of providing education and training for village officials who are prioritized first, which can be done independently or by related ministries/institutions. In addition, ministries/institutions that oversee village government affairs need to make policies related to standards in the selection of village officials so that in the future the capacity of village officials will be better than before.

Translated with DeepL.com (free version) Village asset management is also a crucial issue. As Maulana and Wibowo (2021) noted in their journal, the inventory of village assets was often not conducted optimally, even though it is required in the regulations. The inventory of

assets is an important part of transparency and accountability measures in the management of village resources. District/city governments should take a more proactive role in ensuring that villages in their areas comply with this regulation.

In addition, village development planning documents such as RPJMDes and RKPDes are often not fully in line with the National Development Planning System as stipulated by Law No. 25 of 2004 concerning the National Development Planning System. Based on a report by Agustar et al., (2021), the evaluation of village planning documents was considered essential to ensure synchronization with regional and national development planning documents. This alignment remains crucial to ensure that village development planning is integrated with broader development directions.

In conclusion, efforts to improve village governance must be holistic, involving the central and regional government, village officials, and the community. There needs to be synergy between the parties to promote more transparent, accountable, and regulation-compliant village governance. As mentioned by Firliani (2022) in her article, support from the village community itself remains a key factor in creating sustainable village governance.

In conclusion, efforts to improve village governance must be carried out in a holistic and comprehensive manner, involving the central government, regional governments, village officials, and the community as the main actors in village development. Collaboration and coordination among stakeholders are essential prerequisites to promote village governance that is transparent, accountable, participatory, and in accordance with principles of regulation and good governance. Not only is sound regulation needed, but also consistent implementation and effective oversight mechanisms are crucial. As noted by Firliani (2022) in her article, active support from the village community itself remains a key factor in establishing sustainable village governance that is responsive to the needs of its people.

D. Village Head Term Reform: Stability and Effectiveness of Village Governance

Reforms introduced by Law No. 3 of 2024 brought significant changes to the village heads' term of

office, which was extended from six years to nine years, with a maximum of two consecutive terms. This change is intended to create stability in village government and encourage more sustainable development. In practice, a longer term of office is expected to provide sufficient time for village heads to plan, implement, and evaluate village development programs more thoroughly.

However, extending the term of office also presents some challenges, particularly in terms of accountability and the potential for consolidation of power. In some cases, extending the term of office could risk reinforcing the dominance of the village head, potentially hindering community participation and transparency in village budgetary management. This risk could undermine the democratization efforts at the village level if it is not balanced with strong regional government and community oversight.

In terms of effectiveness, interview results show that village heads who have served longer tend to have better experience in managing villages, understanding community dynamics, and establishing strong relationships with local government and other stakeholders. However, the informants also highlighted the need for a regular evaluation mechanism for the performance of village heads, even if the term of office is extended. Without adequate evaluation, the potential for abuse of power may increase.

Law No. 3 of 2024 concerning the Second Amendment to Law No. 6 of 2014 concerning Villages came into force on 25 April 2024. This law accommodates many subjective interests of village government officials and significantly increases the power of the village head in the administration of village governance. The village head's term of office is extended to eight years, which creates the potential for political irregularities or abuse of power.

Rather than substantiating the subjective argument that the eight-year term of office is intended to reconcile the residual electoral conflict in the village head election, the extended term of office the extended term may potentially promote the emergence of an oligarchic and corrupt regime of power in the village.

The second amendment to the Village Law, which was formulated under continuous

extra-parliamentary pressure from village head organizations, reflects a greater accommodation to the interests of village government elites. Village heads, village officials, and members of the Village Consultative Body are granted authority to approve budgets that allocate various allowances to themselves.

The proposal to extend the term of office of village heads to eight years, as stipulated in the second amendment to the Village Law, does not seem to be based solely on considerations of post-election stability or efforts to reduce social conflict at the local level. On the contrary, this step has the potential to create space for the formation of a pattern of power that tends to be oligarchic and prone to corrupt practices at the village level. Long terms of office without strong accountability mechanisms can weaken the dynamics of village democracy and encourage the centralization of power in certain elite groups.

Furthermore, the legislative process of this law change is considered to be influenced by strong extra-parliamentary pressure from the village head association, resulting in regulations that tend to accommodate the interests of a handful of village government elites. Indications of such accommodation can be seen from the strengthening of the authority of the village head, village officials, and the Village Consultative Body (BPD) in determining and approving the budget, including the allocation of allowances and incentives for themselves. Rather than substantiating the subjective argument that the eight-year term of office is intended to reconcile the residual electoral conflict in the village head election, the extended term of office may potentially promote the emergence of an oligarchic and corrupt regime of power in the village.

The second amendment to the Village Law, which was formulated under continuous extra-parliamentary pressure from village head organizations, reflects a greater accommodation to the interests of village government elites. Village heads, village officials, and members of the Village Consultative Body are granted authority to approve budgets that allocate various allowances to themselves.

This amendment demonstrates a lack of sociological empathy toward village communities.

There is not a single article in the amendment that explicitly requires the fulfillment of the basic rights of village communities in the village budget.

In the logic of state administrative law, Law No. 3 of 2024 is more appropriately referred to as the Village Government Law rather than the Village Law, as it emphasizes the administrative apparatus of the village government rather than the village as a legal unit and a sociological and cultural bond of society within the framework of the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia. Amid the “euphoria” surrounding the implementation of the second amendment of the Village Law, no civil society organization in the village that provides social services for village communities has filed a constitutional challenge against any article in Law No. 3 of 2024 before the Constitutional Court to represent the voices and interests of village communities.

The implementation of Law No. 3 of 2024 awaits government regulations as the implementation guidelines. Several such regulations will soon be issued as implementing regulations for several articles in Law No. 3 of 2024. What is certain is that the era of that the era of eight-year village head leadership will soon begin. Eight years of power is a significant duration for a village head to govern based on the vision and mission that will be outlined in the RPJMDes Plan. Through the RPJMDes, idealistic or pragmatic targets in village development projects will be seen as “artificial”.

For a village head with integrity and a strong will to advance the village, eight years is a relatively short time to implement innovative village development programs. Village heads with intellectual qualities demonstrate these qualities in their achievements and can create a lasting legacy. This type of innovative village head will drive village development forward. However, the extended term is also susceptible to corrupt practices, and without robust control and oversight, it may become widespread.

In terms of the logic of state administrative law, Law No. 3/2004 is more appropriately categorized as a Law on Village Governance rather than simply a Village Law. This is due to the substantial focus of the law, which emphasizes the institutional and administrative aspects of village governance, rather than placing the village

as an integral legal entity with strong sociological and cultural dimensions as part of the framework of the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia.

Amidst the enthusiasm for the implementation of the second amendment to the Village Law, it appears that the voices of village civil society are still not fully accommodated. To date, there have been no initiatives from village civil society organizations to actively submit constitutional reviews of articles in Law No. 3/2004 to the Constitutional Court. This raises questions about the representation of the aspirations and interests of the wider village community in the legislative process.

The implementation of Law No. 3 Year 2024 is currently still awaiting the issuance of various government regulations as derivative regulations that will serve as technical guidelines for implementation. Some of these regulations are designed to regulate new mechanisms, including the implementation of the village head tenure, which has been extended to eight years. This is a long enough period to run the village administration, including the preparation and implementation of the Village Medium-Term Development Plan (RPJMDes). However, if not accompanied by adequate principles of transparency and participation, the RPJMDes has the potential to become an artificial development instrument, especially when it is prepared only to fulfill administrative requirements, rather than based on the real needs of the community.

On the other hand, a longer term of office can actually be a strategic opportunity for village heads who have high integrity, a clear development vision, and innovative capacity. Under ideal conditions, eight years is sufficient time to realize programs that have a long-term impact and produce a real development legacy. Village heads with such leadership characteristics will encourage participatory and sustainable village governance.

However, the extension of the village head's term also presents serious challenges, especially in terms of accountability and supervision. Without a strong control and evaluation system, the long duration of power risks opening up space for corruption, nepotism, and oligarchic practices at the local level. This can undermine the principles of village democracy, as the distribution of

power tends to be concentrated in a handful of village elites, especially when check and balance mechanisms are not optimal.

Furthermore, the process of amending the Village Law is considered to have occurred in the context of intense extra-parliamentary pressure from village head organizations, which have a direct interest in the content of the regulation. As a result, this legislation tends to accommodate the interests of the village government elite. This is reflected in the increased authority of the village head, village officials, and the Village Consultative Body (BPD) in budget management, including the determination of allowances and incentives that benefit their own positions. The absence of adequate control over this authority has the potential to blur the line between public service and private interests, and create the potential for misuse of village resources.

Thus, the narrative that the eight-year term is intended to maintain stability and reconcile conflicts after village head elections needs to be objectively criticized. Beyond these normative arguments, the extension of the term also carries political and governance consequences that risk creating a local power regime that is closed, oligarchic, and less responsive to the aspirations of the village community at large.

It must be acknowledged that the era of village autonomy has given birth to many village heads who have excelled in implementing good village governance, ensuring accountable village financial management, and advancing village-owned enterprises. An innovative village head serves as a role model for strengthening participatory democracy and encouraging pro-public and anti-corruption village budget management. Innovative village heads are oriented towards positive change.

On the other hand, many village heads are conservative and feudalistic bureaucrats. Conservative village heads only carry out the duties, functions, and authority mandated by law. They are indifferent to whether their village improves in terms of community service quality standards, strengthens accountability in village financial management, or develops the local economic ecosystem.

In the context of village policy reform through Law No. 3 of 2024, the leadership character of the village head is a crucial determinant of the effectiveness of village governance and the optimal use of village funds. Village heads with a conservative leadership style tend to see their duties as limited to fulfilling administrative obligations without a vision of transformation, while those with a feudalistic-bureaucratic style often exercise power excessively, seeing themselves as “little kings” who dominate village governance. This leadership pattern may give rise to various governance issues, ranging from weak community participation to abuse of authority in managing village budgets.

Law No. 3 of 2024 brings significant changes, one of which is the extended term of office for the village head. While this change has the potential to strengthen leadership stability, it also creates opportunities for the accumulation of power without adequate control. In villages with conservative or feudalistic-bureaucratic leadership, the extended term of office may prolong undemocratic governance, increase opportunities for nepotism, and complicate oversight of the use of village funds. Therefore, stricter accountability mechanisms are needed—through more detailed regulations, active participation of the community, and strengthening village oversight institutions—to ensure transparency in budget management.

In addition, village policy reform through Law No. 3/2004 should be directed toward establishing more democratic and participatory village governance. Strengthening the role of the Badan Permasyarakatan Desa, promoting transparency in the management of village funds, and enhancing the capacity of village leaders are strategic steps toward improving village governance. Village activists and civil society organizations play an important role in monitoring the implementation of policies so that they are not merely administrative formalities, but rather actively contribute to building inclusive and transparent village governance that prioritizes the interests of the community.

It is difficult to place this hope in Badan Permasyarakatan Desa institution because it is not a legislative body with power equal to that of the village head. Rather, Badan Permasyarakatan Desa is more concerned with normative supervision

of village government administration. In practice, the majority of Badan Permasyarakatan Desa members are political supporters of the village head. It is therefore crucial for NGOs in villages to start engaging in political education work in village communities, enabling them to serve as a critical counterbalance in village governance. NGOs can also play a role in community-based oversight of village budget management.

A clear blueprint from the regional government is also needed to guide and supervise the implementation of the new Village Law. Regional governments must play a greater role in educating village heads and officials to become professional and anti-corruption bureaucrats. It also requires a commitment from regional governments to refrain from protecting corrupt practices by village government officials. It would be more meaningful if the regional government acted as assertive and consistent supervisors to prevent abuse of power at the village level. NGOs in villages need to engage in political education in village communities, enabling them to develop into critical power centers for the implementation of village governance. The rise in village-level corruption must not be allowed during the extended eight-year term of village heads.

With an eight-year term, and assuming that each village receives transfers from the central and regional governments in the form of village funds, allocation of village funds and profit-sharing funds of IDR 1 to 2 billion per year, the village head holds the authority to manage almost IDR 14 billion in village finances. In the absence of robust control and oversight, this situation is highly susceptible to widespread corruption.

It is hoped that the amended law will encourage creative and innovative village heads to advance their village across various socio-economic sectors. Such leaders are more likely to allocate village funds to strengthen village-owned enterprises, positioning them as economic drivers that, in turn, contribute to increasing the Village's Own Revenue. Through this approach, strong initiatives such as developing foreign exchange villages, tourism villages, energy independent villages, food independent villages, waste independent villages, and cultural villages can be successfully implemented under innovative leadership. It is hoped that the amended Village

Law will be implemented effectively, realizing its intended potential rather than resulting in dystopian outcomes (Trisno, 2024).

E. The Role of Rehabilitation Funds in Village Development: Challenges and Opportunities

Rehabilitation funds, as regulated by Law No. 3 of 2024, play an important role in enhancing the resilience of villages affected by natural disasters. These funds are aimed at accelerating post-disaster recovery, both in terms of infrastructure and the socio-economic welfare of village communities. According to a study by Erna et al. (2024), rehabilitation funds have significantly contributed to enabling villages to repair infrastructure, such as roads, bridges, and other public facilities damaged by disasters. With these funds, villages can revive the affected local economy. For example, in several villages used as case studies, improved road access has accelerated the mobility of residents, which in turn has stimulated local economic activity.

However, several challenges remain in the utilization of rehabilitation funds. As noted by Kurniawan (2023), delays in fund disbursement frequently hinder reconstruction efforts that should be initiated promptly. This delay adversely affects the recovery of livelihoods in disaster-affected communities. Accountability also remains a significant concern. In several villages, community members have reported a lack of transparency in the management of rehabilitation funds, raising concerns about the potential for corruption and budget misuse.

A publication by Dwi and Muthia (2021) noted that this challenge was also recognized by regional governments who found that the distribution and management of rehabilitation funds were often not accompanied by robust monitoring mechanisms. Therefore, although rehabilitation funds have a significant role, more rigorous monitoring and better evaluation are needed. Training for village officials is also essential to build the capacity necessary for managing funds transparently and accountably, as confirmed in a study by Maritah et al. (2020).

In conclusion, rehabilitation funds play an important role in accelerating post-disaster recovery but their success is highly dependent

on the timely distribution of funds, transparent management, and the readiness of village officials. Support from the central and regional governments and community supervision is needed to ensure that these funds are used in accordance with the stated objectives.

F. Impact of Law No. 3 of 2024 on Village Governance

Law No. 3 of 2024 provides new hope for village governance in Indonesia, particularly through the extension of the village head's term of office, which is expected to enhance the effectiveness of planning and implementing long-term development programs. According to a study by Rinto et al. (2024), a longer term of office provides village heads with sufficient time to plan, execute, and evaluate sustainable development programs. However, robust oversight is also necessary to prevent abuse of authority during the extended term.

An effective monitoring system is essential. In their article, Nandyasa & Bhilawa (2023) emphasize the need for regional governments to enhance monitoring mechanisms through continuous performance evaluation. In addition, the active participation of village communities in the monitoring process is crucial to maintain transparency. This can be achieved through village meetings or other participatory forums that allow the community to be directly involved in monitoring village government performance.

On the other hand, transparency and accountability in the management of rehabilitation funds remain as key concerns. A study by Maulana and Wibowo (2021) indicates that the slow disbursement process often hampers post-disaster recovery. Therefore, the central and regional governments must accelerate the disbursement process to enable faster and more effective reconstruction. In addition, village officials need to be provided with adequate training and capacity building to manage these funds in a transparent and accountable manner.

In news reported by Antonius (2024), delays in disbursing rehabilitation funds are often caused by bureaucratic inefficiencies at the regional government level. As a result, the post-disaster village recovery process was delayed, and affected communities did not promptly

receive the assistance they needed. Therefore, bureaucratic reform at the regional government level is essential to ensure the distribution of rehabilitation funds more quickly and on target.

IV. Conclusion

Policy reform through Law No.3 of 2024 on Villages is a strategic step to strengthen village governance and support sustainable development. Significant changes, such as the extension of the term of office for village heads and the regulation of rehabilitation funds, demonstrate the government's commitment to improving leadership stability and villages capacity to address challenges, including natural disasters. However, challenges such as potential abuse of power and lack of transparency in the utilization of funds continue to demand serious attention through enhanced oversight and active community engagement.

To optimize the implementation of this policy, the government should establish a comprehensive monitoring mechanism, involve the community in performance evaluation, and provide continuous training to village officials on budget management. In addition, coordination between the central and local governments in accelerating the distribution of rehabilitation funds is key to the success of post-disaster recovery. With these steps, policy reform is expected to create villages that are independent, transparent, and resilient in facing development challenges and disasters, thereby enhancing the welfare of rural communities.

This study contributes to enriching the academic discourse on village governance and policy reform in sustainable development. By referring to good governance theory, it emphasizes that leadership stability and transparency in village budget management are key factors in the effectiveness of village governance. In addition, participatory governance theory highlights the importance of community participation in policy evaluation to prevent abuse of power and improve the accountability of village officials.

From a public policy perspective, this study reinforces the view that decentralization is effective only when supported by robust oversight mechanisms. In this context, institutional theory explains how regulatory changes, such as Law

No. 3 of 2024, affect the structure of village governance and the relationships between the central government, the regions, and the community. In addition, in the context of disaster governance, this study shows that post-disaster recovery depends not only on the allocation of funds but also on the effectiveness of coordination among stakeholders.

Thus, this study not only makes a theoretical contribution to the study of village governance but also offers practical implications for the formulation of policies that are more transparent, inclusive, and focused on sustainable development and enhancing village resilience in addressing social challenges and disasters.

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