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PROCESS ACCOUNTABILITY OF REGIONAL GENERAL ELECTIONS COMMISSION IN THE 2015 LOCAL LEADERS ELECTION IN SABU RAIJUA MUNICIPALITY

Atu Serafianus Thomas*, Djaha Ajis Salim Adang, Libing Zet Sony

Master's Program in Administration Science, Post Graduate Program,
Nusa Cendana Kupang University, East Nusa Tenggara, Indonesia

*E-mail: atucoll@yahoo.co.id

ABSTRACT

Objectives of this study are (1) to explain process accountability of Regional General Elections Commission in the 2015 Local Leaders Election in Sabu Raijua Municipality and (2) to describe factors that inhibit process accountability of Regional General Elections Commission in the 2015 Local Leaders Election in Sabu Raijua Municipality. This descriptive study used qualitative approach. The focus of this study is process accountability during the 2015 Local Leaders Election in Sabu Raijua Municipality, while the sub-focus is (1) preparation stage and (2) implementation stage. The finding showed that the election committees were able to apply process accountability during the 2015 Local Leaders Election in Sabu Raijua Municipality. In carrying out their duties, the Regional General Election Commission of Sabu Raijua has met all of the requirements. There were several issues taking place during the election but the Regional General Elections Commission of Sabu Raijua Municipality is able to overcome them. It can be seen based on all stages the elections commission took during the 2015 Local Leader Election.

KEY WORDS

Accountability, good governance, general election, public service.

The 2014 Decree number 23 on Local Government discusses Local Leader Election. Direct General Election shows development of local democracy within political liberalism framework. Direct General Election has obviously brought along certain optimism and pessimism. Local Leaders Election is perceived as manifestation of the basic rights of local community by giving them full authority to elect their local leaders developing local democracy. Successful direct Local Leaders Election creates democratic local leadership that meets demand and interest as well as criticism and rationale of the local community.

In terms of constitution, Local Leaders Election committees wished for not only a national institutional design, but also a permanent and independent one. At the same time, General Election Commission (KPU) and Regional General Election Commission (KPUD) should hold their accountability in Local Leaders Election. Accountability is a pivotal principle for Local Leaders Election to guarantee free and fair election, protect the constitutional rights of local community and eliminate violations of the constitutional rights. Therefore, every stage of Local Leader Election should represent the principle of accountability. From the legal perspective, indicators of accountability are to which extent local community, public and private institutions can monitor implementation and accountability of Local Leaders Election.

In supporting the creation of organizers who are able to work independently and professionally, besides being supported by adequate human resources, the Election Commission of Sabu Raijua Regency must also be equipped with a good accountability system so that a series of problems do not give a separate record of the independence and professionalism of the KPU Sabu Raijua.

Two requirements for independent and professional Local Leaders Election committees are competent human resources and accountable system. To become an independent and professional election committees, members of Regional General Election Commission of Sabu Raijua should develop their competence and skills as well as accountable election system that can prevent some issues which may take place during general election.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The term "governance" was once used to describe broader attention. However, the terminology cannot describe broader attention accurately and therefore, different public institutions have different definition of the terminology. The word good governance was used for the first time in political context by the Department for International Development to discuss good government. It consists of several main components, namely legitimacy implying that government approval is requirement to carry out government system and therefore, government has specific instrument indicating their approval or disapproval. Furthermore, in British policy documents, pluralists and multi-party democracy are the ones who guaranteed legitimacy.

In good governance, public accountability is the most important element and at the same time, has become the main challenge for government and government apparatus. Accountability belongs to the social science and is discussed in various discipline of social science, such as economics, administration, politics, behavior, and culture. In addition, accountability is also related to individual attitude and responsibility. Based on philosophy, accountability is derived from authority or mandate bestowed to an individual or institution that enables the individual or institution to carry out their duties and use available resources to achieve certain goal.

Furthermore, United Nations Development Programme (UNDP, 1997) stated that requirements to create Good Governance are an efficient government, successful business and effective public organization. Good Governance consists of the following principles, namely Participation, Law Supremacy, Transparency, Timely Response, Building Consensus, Justice, Effectiveness and Efficiency, Responsibility, Strategic Vision and Networking.

Public accountability is acknowledged in countries that accept democratic concepts in which citizens become integral. The principle of accountability stated that government should hold accountability of every activity and outcome of government programs before its citizens as the highest sovereignty in a country. Dubnick (2002) postulated that the concept of accountability is derived from King William I in the decade after 1066.

Romzek and Ingraham (as cited in Djaha, 2012) explained that framework is the basis to understand various perspectives on accountability. They stated that there are four main types of accountability based on whether it is internal or external and based on the level individual autonomy. The first is hierarchical accountability or "accountability based on closed supervision of individuals who have low job autonomy." The second is legal accountability which involves "detailed external supervision of performance for compliance to specified mandate such as legislative and constitutional structures." This may include fiscal audits and supervision hearings. The third is professional accountability which is based on "arrangement that seeks a high degree of autonomy for individuals who base their decision-making on norms of institutionalized practice." The last is political accountability which requires response of "key external stakeholders, such as elected officials, customers groups or the public." Furthermore Romzek and Dubnick (1987) classified accountability based on accountability mechanism that is driven by two dimensions, namely source of supervision (internal and external) and level of supervision (high or low) on public institution.

In the context of governance, the public or other institution cannot identify government accountability unless the government provide both the public and these institutions information about public resources, sources of public fund and allocation of the public fund. Accountability can be seen from various perspectives. Based on accounting perspective, the American Accounting Association stated that entity of government accountability is (1) financial resources, (2) compliance to the laws and administrative policies, (3) efficiency and economic value of an activity, (4) results of government programs and activities or how beneficial and effective those programs are.

On the other hand, based on functional perspective, accountability refers to a process that consists of five stages and these stages begin with objective assessment (legal compliance) to more subjective assessment. These five stages are (1) probity and legality

accountability, (2) process accountability, (3) performance accountability, (4) program accountability, and (5) policy accountability. Furthermore, Turner and Hulme (1997) mentioned two types of accountability in public accountability, vertical accountability and horizontal accountability.

Hopwood and Tomkins (1984 as cited in Mahmudi, 2010) public institutions should meet the following dimensions of accountability, namely (1) Legal Accountability and Justice, (2) Process Accountability, (3) Program Accountability, (4) Policy Accountability and (5) Financial Accountability. Out of these five dimensions, the authors focused on the second dimension, process accountability. This study focuses on implementation and programs Regional General Election Commission of Sabu Raijua conducted during the 2015 Local Leaders Election.

METHODS OF RESEARCH

This descriptive study used qualitative approach. It was conducted in Sabu Raijua, a municipality in East Nusa Tenggara. This study focused on process accountability in 2015 Local Leaders Election in Sabu Raijua Municipality and the sub-focus is (1) preparation stage and (2) implementation stage. The informants were selected based on purposive sampling method and snowballing technique. The data collection methods were interview, documentation and library study. The data analysis technique was Miles and Huberman (1994)'s analysis. Triangulation was the method used in validity testing.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This study focused on Hopwood and Tomkins's (1984 in Mahmudi, 2010) process accountability during the 2015 Local Leaders Election in Sabu Raijua Municipality. It investigated (1) election committees' compliance towards the procedures of the 2015 Local Leaders Election in Sabu Raijua Municipality, (2) types of public service that provides information and report on the 2015 Local Leaders Election to both the stakeholders and the public and (3) types of public service responsible for data or document updates for both the stakeholders and the public during the 2015 Local Leaders Election in Sabu Raijua Municipality.

During the 2015 Local Leaders Election in Sabu Raijua Municipality, the election committees are facing some issues related to compliance to procedure, for example updating voter's data. There were some errors in voter data management since Sidalih, the application the election committee used malfunctioned. As the result, the list of voters the Regional General Election Commission of Sabu Raijua established in their plenary meeting was not accurate. Another issue the election committee had to encounter is some violation taking place during the political campaign. The public reported the violence to the election committee. The following is documents the researchers obtained during the data collection process that showed some issues the Regional General Election Comission of Sabu Taijua encountered during the 2015 Local Leaders Election.

The finding of this study showed that the 2015 Local Leaders Election in Sabu Raijua Municipality ran smoothly in general. However, there are some issues related to compliance to the election procedures. The Head of the Regional General Election Comission of Sabu Raijua said that he received some reports from both the public and Panwascam. He and his team were able to finish these technical issues following recommendation from Local Leaders Election Committee of Sabu Raijua Municipality. There were also some budgeting issues and as the consequence, the Regional General Election Comission of Sabu Raijua was unable to carry out some of the election procedures optimumly.

Responsibility refers to compliance to the laws and regulations from the stakeholders. Responsibility towards stakeholders prevents any action that may cost the stakeholders. This principle is carried out with an awareness that responsibility is a logic consequence from an authority. A responsible individual or institution is one that avoids violation of authority, is professional and pursues ethics vigorously.

Some aspects of responsibility cannot be fulfilled during the 2015 Local Leaders Election in Sabu Raijua Municipality. Regional General Election Comission of Sabu Raijua Municipality was unable to meet some aspects of responsibility due to several conditions. It can be seen based on the service the election comission provided during the 2015 Local Leaders Election.

Based on the data collection method, the Regional General Election Comission of Sabu Raijua Municipality was able to provide responses towards PPK and PPS, stakeholders and the public in timely manner. However, the informants reported that the election comission was not able to overcome several issues. They did not provide any guidance for certain stages of the election. Furthermore, there were some delay in updating the voter's data because the application the election committee used for updating the voter's data malfunctioned. Geographical location of Sabu Raijua Municipality is another factor that prevents the Regional General Election Comission of Sabu Raijua Municipality from coming to all sub-regions in the Municipality.

Not only did accurate public service help Regional General Election Comission of Sabu Raijua Municipality overcome some technical issues (issues on voter's data update and compliance), but it also improved quality of the Local Leaders Election. Performance of Regional General Election Comission of Sabu Raijua Municipality directly influence PPK and PPS in every stage of the 2015 Local Leaders Election in Sabu Raijua Municipality.

The election committee of Sabu Raijua Municipality worked hard so that the 2015 Local Leaders Election ran smoothly. The institution requires their staffs to work effectively and efficiently. Accuracy is a characteristic all staffs and commissioner of Regional General Election Comission of Sabu Raijua Municipality should have.

Accuracy plays pivotal role in General Election and in this context, Local Leaders Election. Voter's data update, candidate verification and campaign requires accurate piece of information and careful election committes. Based on the interview, it can be concluded that Regional General Election Comission of Sabu Raijua Municipality has not been able to provide accurate oublic service to PPK, PPS, stakeholders and the public yet. Even though PPK and PPS had made some adjustment, the election comission was not able to publish the most recent data of the voters. It happened because there was some malfunction in Sidalih, the application the election committee used for data input processing.

Collective collegial is one of the internal control mechanisms the election committee implemented. Plenary meeting is the ultimate decision-making in Regional General Election Comission of Sabu Raijua Municipality. Based on the collective collegial system, performance of Regional General Election Comission of Sabu Raijua Municipality is supervised by collegial control mechanism between their commissioners and towards their secretariate. This control mechanism is in accordance to the regulations and principles of General Election.

Based on the finding of the study, both the commissioners and secretariate of Regional General Election Comission of Sabu Raijua Municipality have conducted internal control mechanism in every stage of the 2015. Unfortunately due to the rapid work intensity, the control mechanism did not work well. The commissioners implemented internal control mechanism by giving recommendation to the secretariate to encourage some staffs who have poor job performance. As an addition, the control mechanism was applied to keep the election process on-track. In other words, role of internal control mechanism is to make sure that the Local Leaders Election meets the laws and regulation.

Objectives of external control in the Local Leaders Election in Sabu Raijua Municipality were to avoid some violation in administration process and violation of procedures. External control helped the Local Leaders Election running effectively and efficiently. In addition, this type of control allows direct monitoring and evaluation. External control also identifies implementation of the Local Leaders Election di Sabu Raijua Municipality and some violations taking place during the election.

The Regional House of Representatives and supervision committees were responsible for the external controm mechanism in the 2015 Local Leaders Election in Sabu Raijua Municipality. These two institutions worked together while carrying their own tasks and

function. The Regional House of Representatives and supervision committees found out that Regional General Election Comission of Sabu Raijua Municipality did not make any hard-copied or soft-copied reports on the Local Leaders Election. Based on the 2015 Decree number 8 on Local Leaders Election, Regional General Election Comission should provide hard-copied and sof-copied report describing all stages of Local Leaders Election. The Regional General Election Comission of Sabu Raijua reported only provided oral report on the implementantion of the 2015 Local Leaders Election during plenary meeting or other informal meeting.

Some factors that inhibit process accountability during the 2015 Local Leaders Election in Sabu Raijua Municipality are (1) inadequate salary and (2) human resources.

CONCLUSION

The finding showed that in carrying out their duties, the Regional General Election Commission of Sabu Raijua has met all of the requirements. In other words, this institution acted in transparent and accountable manner during the election. The election committees were able to apply process accountability during the 2015 Local Leaders Election in Sabu Raijua Municipality. There were several issues taking place during the election but the Regional General Elections Commission of Sabu Raijua Municipality is able to overcome them. It can be seen based on all stages the elections commission took during the 2015 Local Leader Election. The election commission followed all procedures carefully. Besides that, the Regional General Elections Commission of Sabu responded to voter data updates in a timely manner. The election committees also provided relevant information and guidance to both PPK and PPS. In other words, the Regional General Elections Commission of Sabu Raijua Municipality was able to carry out their responsibilities towards the stakeholder and the public during the 2015 Local Leaders Election in Sabu Raijua.

SUGGESTIONS

Based on the conclusion, some recommendations the researchers would give are: General Election Commission should establish decree discussing requirements and procedures of Local Leaders Election. This decree is subjected to each Regional General Election Commission. Furthermore, Regional General Elections Commission of Sabu Raijua Municipality should provide technical guidance about Local Leaders Election and compliance to Local Leaders Election procedures to election committees, PPK dan PPS. In addition, the Regional General Elections Commission of Sabu Raijua Municipality should acknowledge any request or report from both stakeholder and the public because these responses represent their direct participation in Local Leaders Election. To the Regional General Election Commission can assign staffs of which sole responsibility is to respond to request or report about Local Leaders Election from both stakeholders and the public.

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