

Curriculum That is Not Yet Independent

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ABSTRACT

The focus of this article is, first, to describe the potential of education starting from schools, students, teacher competencies, and the allocation of education budgets. Second, to describe the results of the implementation of the "Merdeka Curriculum" and the national assessment in all elementary schools in the Mentawai Islands Regency. The method used is a literature review, with secondary data sourced from journals, books, regional education reports, and the county's educational reports. The results found are as follows: 40 elementary school students have dropped out, out of 1,322 elementary school educators, only 19.1% are certified, and 80.9% are not certified. Teachers with qualifications appropriate for their roles make up 89.4%, while those not meeting the qualifications account for 10.6%. In 2022, the county government allocated a budget of Rp 716.6 billion from the APBD for the education sector. The readiness level for the implementation of the "Merdeka Curriculum" includes 97 schools that are "mandiri belajar," 16 schools that have "mandiri berubah," and no schools currently "mandiri berbagi." The student literacy achievement is the lowest in the entire Sumatera Barat region, ranking 17th out of 19 cities/counties in Sumatera Barat for numeracy achievement, while student character development achievement is still at an early stage. These conditions indicate that education and the curriculum in the Mentawai Islands Regency are not fully independent.

Key word: independent curriculum, national assessment, educational potential

ABSTRAK

Fokus dari pada tulisan ini, pertama mendeskripsikan potensi pendidikan mulai dari sekolah, siswa, kompetensi guru dan penerapan anggaran untuk pendidikan. Kedua, mendeskripsikan hasil implementasi penerapan kurikulum merdeka dan hasil asesmen nasional di seluruh sekolah dasar di Kabupaten Kepulauan Mentawai. Metode yang digunakan adalah literatur review, dengan data sekunder yang berasal dari jurnal, buku, neraca pendidikan daerah, dan rapor pendidikan kabupaten. Hasil yang ditemukan ada 40 siswa jenjang sekolah dasar yang putus sekolah, dari 1.322 pendidik di sekolah dasar hanya 19,1% tersertifikasi dan 80,9% belum tersertifikasi, guru yang sesuai dengan kualifikasi 89,4%, tidak sesuai kualifikasi sebesar 10,6%. Tahun 2022 pemerintah kabupaten mengeluarkan dana sebesar Rp 716,6 M yang sumbernya dari APBD yang disalurkan ke sektor pendidikan. Tingkat kesiapan penerapan kurikulum merdeka antara lain level mandiri belajar sebanyak 97 sekolah, mandiri berubah 16 sekolah, mandiri berbagi belum ada. Capaian nilai literasi siswa menjadi terendah se-kabupaten di Sumatera Barat, capaian numerasi peringkat ke 17 dari 19 kota/kabupaten di Sumatera Barat, sedangkan untuk capaian karakter siswa masih pada tahap berkembang. Kondisi ini menunjukkan pendidikan dan kurikulum di Kabupaten Kepulauan Mentawai belum sepenuhnya merdeka.

Kata kunci: kurikulum merdeka, asesmen nasional, dan potensi pendidikan



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1. Introduction

Current education policy still focuses on inputs, not yet focused on outcomes (performance), let alone about improving capabilities. Change Minister, change policy, change curriculum (Latif, 2021). Currently, as is known, there is an implementation of the Merdeka Belajar policy. One of the packages in it is the Merdeka

Curriculum. This is a stage for educational change, achieving advanced human resources and having a Pancasila Student profile. There have been 26 episodes of Merdeka Belajar that have been launched, ranging from the main policy, independent campus, BOS fund management, organization and teacher mobilization, and so on. At the elementary school level, the programs implemented by the Merdeka Belajar policy include the independent curriculum, driving schools, national assessments, BOS fund rules and Special Allocation Funds, and so on (Directorate of Elementary Schools, 2023).

After the Covid pandemic, in 2021-2022 the government issued two policies for the curriculum in Indonesia, namely the emergency curriculum and the independent curriculum. The emergency curriculum is a response to a pandemic situation where learning activities are carried out by Distance Learning (PJJ). The independent curriculum is made for the extracurricular education process with a variety of content, so that students have maximum opportunities to learn learning topics and strengthen abilities. Not only from students, this curriculum is also designed so that teachers have flexibility in choosing teaching materials, so that learning is expected to be the same as students' learning needs, interests, and talents (Directorate of Elementary Schools, 2023).

The purpose of this independent curriculum is twofold, first to provide autonomy to schools and be responsible for developing the curriculum according to the needs and background of the school. Second, policies with curriculum choices, hopefully can occur smoothly. The government then gives each school the opportunity to determine the curriculum to be implemented, decided and carried out by the principal and teachers. There are 3 levels of implementation of this curriculum, called the Implementation of the Independent Curriculum (IKM), including: independent path IKM, independent path IKM changing, sharing independent path IKM. This policy does not stipulate the selection of each school to choose which curriculum implementation to implement, but rather by filling out registration and data collection forms.

Apart from the independent curriculum, one of the policies carried out is the implementation of the National Assessment (AN). This program is an assessment process for each virgin school and an equivalency process at the primary and secondary levels. This includes student learning outcomes, learning processes, quality of service, quality of management in schools, and quality of human resources. The results of this AN are published in the national education report card. Then this report card becomes an evaluation of the education system which includes student learning outcomes, learning processes, quality of service, quality of school management, and quality of human resources (Rapor Pendidikan, 2023). This policy on assessment has been criticized, because it borrows from policies already made by other countries. This is done because of global and regional pressure for Indonesia to improve its education system (Puad & Ahston, 2022)

One of the districts that implements this independent learning policy is the Mentawai Islands Regency. This regency is an administrative region of West Sumatra Province, consisting of 4 large islands, namely Siberut Island, Sipora, South Pagai, and North Pagai. Based on Presidential Regulation No. 6 of 2020, there are 26 regions in Indonesia that are still underdeveloped, one of which is Mentawai Islands Regency. Several indicators are used to see the level of progress of this region ranging from economic aspects, human resources, facilities and infrastructure, regional income capabilities, accessibility, and regional conditions. One indicator that the author later found about human resources is the Human Development Index. In 2021, the HDI of this

district was at 61.35 and 62.19 in 2022, an increase of 0.84 from the previous year (BPS, 2023). This figure is the lowest of the other 18 cities/regencies in West Sumatra.

As a disadvantaged region, the implementation of an independent curriculum is a challenge. The "one-stop" policy from the center to the regions is still a challenge for every region. The reality of gaps such as teacher competency development, infrastructure, technology, and awareness of education is still evident in various regions of Indonesia. I am interested in discussing this topic because first, the author is interested in examining the reality and challenges of implementing education policies implemented in disadvantaged areas. The author focuses on examining 2 parts of the Merdeka Belajar program that has been implemented in elementary schools in Mentawai Islands Regency, namely the implementation of the independent curriculum and national assessment. Second, the author wants to explore the implementation of the education budget in 2022, as well as a description of school statistics, students, and the competence of elementary school teachers in the district.

Indonesia's Education Policy Approach

Education policy in Indonesia is guaranteed by the 1945 Constitution in article 31, namely everyone has the right to education, every citizen is obliged to attend basic education, and the government is obliged to finance and the government organizes an education system. Then in the Education System Law No. 20 of 2023. Article 5 reads "Every citizen has the same right to quality education."

The long journey of building education in Indonesia has been carried out since the reform period, since 1998 there is a name for the Social Safety Net (JPS) program. It consists of 4 initiatives, one of which is the provision of scholarships for poor children and direct cash assistance for schools (PDM-DKE). In 2001 with the BKM (Special Student Assistance) program and in 2005 BOS (School Operational Assistance) in 2005 (Murphy, 2019). The program still continues to this day such as compulsory 9-year elementary school and free of charge, providing support for families through PKH, scholarships, and other policy programs.

Article 31 of the Constitution is education as a reflection of ideals towards equality (Latif, 2021). Equality of access to education as a basic right of every citizen. From Indonesian law and the education system, the approach to education political economy policy in Indonesia admits to institutional or institutional social policies. Where this institutional policy is a social policy to improve people's welfare is the responsibility of the government (Midgley & Livermore, 2000).

2. Method

The method used is literature review, with secondary data coming from journals, books, regional education balances, and district education report cards. The literature review method aims to explain the topic, investigate the findings, provide recommendations (Neuman, 2013). The author then describes the findings in depth. Study on the implementation of primary school education policy in Mentawai Islands District.

3. Result and Discussion

The author would like to start this discussion by looking at the statistics of education in Mentawai Islands District. Based on 2022 data (Neraca Pendidikan Daerah, 2023) The number of students was 23,989 people, the number of students who dropped out of school was 40 people. From school participation, the Gross Participation Rate is 99.02% and the Pure Participation Rate is 79.82%. However, please note that the number

of students who dropped out of school was 40 people. From the data below, it shows that the dropout rate in this district is still quite high.

From the same source, the number of primary school teachers in this district is 1,322 people. Teachers who match the qualifications (graduates of D4 / SD at the elementary level 89.4%, not according to qualifications (graduates below D4 / S1) of 10.6%. Aside from the qualification level, certified teachers in the district are still low. Elementary school teachers who are certified at 19.1%, have not been certified 80.9%. The need for qualified and certified teachers is still quite high. This is a condition where the expected teacher competence is not in accordance with the required standards. Of course, this is a challenge for teachers in implementing the curriculum that has been set.

From the absorption of the 2022 budget, the Mentawai Islands Regency government released funds of Rp. 716.6 billion sourced from the regional budget for education. The fund is then managed for various sectors ranging from non-education affairs programs of 480.3 M (67.0%), education affairs program budgets of 163.2 M (22.8%), and regional transfers of 73.1 M (10.2%). Details of regional transfer funds for education are realized into several fields. PHYSICAL DAK 16.1 M, teacher professional allowance 15.9 M, additional income 1.7 M, special teacher allowance 10.5 M, BOS 21.4 M, BOP PAUD 0.6 M, and for BOP equality 0.7 M.

In implementing the Independent Curriculum policy, according to the decision (Education Curriculum Standards and Assessment Agency, 2022) the level of readiness for the implementation of the Independent Curriculum in each province, district, and even between schools is different. This policy gives freedom to schools to implement the Independent Curriculum Implementation (IKM). Based on the 2022 Ministry of Education and Culture Circular Letter regarding the Community of Teachers and Education Personnel for the determination of SMIs, there are three categories determined, namely: first, independent path SMIs, where school principals, and teachers apply the principles of the independent curriculum with the 2013 curriculum or emergency curriculum. Second, the independent path of IKM changed, school principals and teachers implemented the Independent Curriculum by adjusting learning to the tools provided at the PAUD, grade 1, 4, 7 and grade 10 levels. Third, IKM independent path sharing, namely principals and teachers implement an independent curriculum with their own development at the level of early childhood education, grades 1, 4, 7, and 10.

Elementary schools in Mentawai Islands Regency are divided into several categories, Mandiri Belajar as many as 97 schools, Mandiri changed 16 schools, independent sharing does not yet exist. From this statistic, the ability of schools in the district is still the majority at the level of implementing the independent pathway curriculum, where schools are still implementing the 2013 curriculum or emergency curriculum. A total of 15 schools are still at the independent level, which means that only a small number of schools implement an independent curriculum in schools. At the level of implementation of the shared curriculum, no school has implemented it. This shows that elementary schools in this district, no one has been ready to implement the independent curriculum in full.

In 2021, the results of the national assessment of the Kepulauan Mentawai Regency government showed that the literacy and numeracy levels were still low. The 2021 elementary school education report card, the achievement of student literacy scores is the lowest in districts in West Sumatra, the achievement of numeracy

ranks 17th out of 19 cities/regencies in West Sumatra, while for student character achievement is still at a developing stage (Mentawai Islands District Education Office in 2021). The problem is that even at the West Sumatra provincial level, the quality of elementary school education in Mentawai Islands Regency is still relatively low. In the results of this assessment, not only literacy, numeracy, and character skills are assessed. This includes a climate of security and a climate of culture. Each achievement indicator is accompanied by the desired ideal achievement. Of the 5 indicators in table 1, only character indicators are above ideal competence, other than at the middle to lower level.

Table 1. Results of the 2021 national assessment of Elementary Schools in Mentawai Islands

| No | Indicators | Achievements | Value | Ideal Achievement |
|----|-----------------------|--------------------------|-------|--------------------------------------|
| 1. | Literacy skills | Below minimum competence | 1,66 | Above minimum competence (2.10-3.20) |
| 2. | Numeracy ability | Below minimum competence | 1,54 | Above minimum competence (2.10-3.20) |
| 3. | Character | Flower | 2,09 | Cultured (2.26-3.0) |
| 4. | School safety climate | Alert | 2,08 | Safe (2.26-3.0) |
| 5. | Climate of diversity | Pioneering | 2,02 | Cultured (2,26-3,0) |

Sources: *Dinas Pendidikan Kabupaten Kepulauan Mentawai, 2022*

4. Conclusion

There are five essentials to improving school quality and improving student achievement: a coherent instructional teaching system, professional capacity, strong parent-community school bonds, a student-centered learning climate, and leadership that drives change (Ballantine & Spade, 2015).

The educational potentials that can still be developed in the Mentawai Islands Regency are expected to be maximally involved in improving the quality of education. Increasing educational progress begins with the integration of three (three) education centers, namely schools, communities, and families. This role is very central, so that the progress of education in the regions can be achieved. However, in the independent curriculum, community and family involvement has not been published in detail. Institutional approaches have not succeeded in solving the challenges of basic education in underdeveloped areas. Data on the implementation of curriculum implementation and school assessment results show that learning initiated by the government cannot be fully referred to as "Merdeka Belajar." Independence or not is important to run first.

It takes a welfare pluralism approach in solving education problems in underdeveloped areas, namely strengthening the education community. Areas that are still difficult to reach by government-built education systems can work with non-state actors (NGOs), and have proven successful in the United States. (Latif, 2021). The structure of welfare pluralism can be in 4 sectors, namely government, voluntary (nonprofit), informal, and commercial (Gilbert, 2000). The author then provides several points that can be done by voluntary (non-profit) institutions such as non-governmental organizations, mobilizing communities, and parental involvement.

As for recommendations that can be done: First, the involvement of caregivers (parents) who have children 0-9 years (elementary grade). The involvement of caregivers is very important in preparing children for elementary school. This independent curriculum approach is still concentrated on schools, principals, teachers, and students. So the need for caregiver involvement can start from home. Non-governmental organizations can be involved in increasing the capacity of caregivers in providing assistance to children in

preparation for school or primary school. Second, stakeholders (education offices, village heads, empowerment groups, youth, and related parties) can form study groups in the community. So that children have space to learn and be facilitated by the community. Third, provide training for teachers, especially low-grade teachers. Limited competence, infrastructure, technology in Mentawai Islands Regency is a significant problem in capacity development. Although the availability of Platform Merdeka Belajar to make it easier for teachers to find references and inspiration, capacity building is not so easy to do. Given the limitations of technology and networks in this district. Fourth, conduct seminars on educational topics in collaboration between parties. This is important, so that there is space for schools, parents, government, and related parties to meet to discuss together about the importance of education, not only the school but also all parties.

Some of the recommendations above can be done if all parties are aware of the importance of education at the primary level for children. The above recommendations are not absolute, there are still recommendations that can be done to improve the quality of education. So that the approach given by the government can be supported by the community and parents. Finally, the author would like to close with what Amartya Sen, Nobel laureate in economics in 1998, called "education is one of relatively few of the number of central vehicles for human beings in the process of "becoming" and acting that is essential for well-being."

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