

Implementation of East Sumba Regent Regulation Number 33 of 2023 on Educational Services for Belief in God Almighty in Educational Units

Umbu Damu Makatehu¹, Fadillah Putra²

e-mail: ¹umbudamumakatehu@gmail.com

^{1,2}Master of Public Administration, Universitas Brawijaya, Malang, Indonesia

Article Info

Received: 2025-04-30

Revised: 2025-05-20

Accepted: 2025-06-30

Keywords:

Policy Implementation,
Indigenous Belief
Education, Marapu,
Public Administration,
East Sumba

Abstract

Educational services for adherents of indigenous beliefs are a manifestation of the constitutional mandate to guarantee the rights of every citizen. This research aims to conduct an in-depth analysis of the implementation of the East Sumba Regent Regulation Number 33 of 2023 concerning Educational Services for Belief in God Almighty in Educational Units, with a case study on Marapu believers. Using a descriptive qualitative approach, data were collected through in-depth interviews with key stakeholders such as the Regent of East Sumba, the Head of the Education Office, foundation leaders, and educators, as well as through observation and documentation. Data analysis was carried out using the five-factor policy implementation framework from Khan and Khandeker (2016), which includes rational, management, organizational, bureaucratic, and political factors. The results show that in the rational factor, the policy objectives are clearly defined, but socialization to the grassroots community is still limited. In the management factor, a budget has been allocated, but implementation is constrained by the limited number and qualifications of educators and the inadequacy of Marapu-specific teaching modules. The organizational factor indicates strong leadership from the regional head and high motivation from various parties, but teamwork in the field needs to be optimized. The bureaucratic factor shows that an implementation structure is in place, but the competence and capacity of implementers at the school level still need improvement. Finally, in the political factor, there is strong political will and minimal inhibiting political pressure after initial dialogues, but harmony among all implementing actors must be continuously maintained. This study concludes that the policy implementation is proceeding with a strong legal and political foundation but faces significant challenges in managerial and technical aspects on the ground.

I. Introduction

Indonesia is built on a philosophical foundation of multiculturalism that recognizes ethnic, racial, cultural and religious diversity as national wealth united by the motto *Bhinneka Tunggal Ika* (Formichi, 2021; Hefner, 2018). There are various local ancestral belief systems that have historical precedence long before world religions were introduced and became an integral part of the social fabric of society (Norenzayan et al., 2016; Purzycki et al., 2018; Richerson et al., 2016). These cannot be reduced to mere cultural heritage, but rather living spiritual and philosophical systems that serve as normative guidelines for adherents (Balslev, 2015; Candra et al., 2020; Kiernan, 2015). A representation of this phenomenon can be seen in the Marapu belief in East Sumba Regency, which worships the spirits of ancestors and has been a fundamental element in shaping the social structure and cultural identity of the Sumbanese people for centuries (De Rooij, 2023; Febriani & Nurberlian, 2024; Formichi, 2021). Normatively, the state has provided constitutional guarantees through Article 28E and Article 29 of the 1945 Constitution which guarantees freedom of belief, strengthened by the SISDIKNAS Law No. 20 of 2003 which implies the right to education according to belief. However, at the practical level, there is an implementation gap where believers such as Marapu experience structural discrimination, especially in education services (Junaidi et al., 2023). Students from this community are systematically forced to follow the subjects of the majority religion. This not only violates constitutional rights but also has the potential to erode the spiritual and cultural identity of the younger generation, creating an existential dilemma for the preservation of their ancestral heritage (Nieto, 2015).

The Constitutional Court (MK) Decision Number 97/PUU-XIV/2016 is a monumental juridical turning point for indigenous faiths in Indonesia, as it effectively ends longstanding administrative discrimination. The ruling provides strong legal recognition and affirms their right to equality in various public services, with education as one of the main focuses. As a direct response to the mandate, the Ministry of Education and Culture issued Ministerial Regulation (Permendikbud) No. 27/2016 (Bo'a, 2018; Nashrullah, 2024). This regulation serves as a national framework that guides the implementation of faith education services in schools, including aspects of the curriculum and the provision of competent teaching staff. This national mandate is then operationalized at the grassroots level by the East Sumba Regency Government through Regent Regulation (Perbup) Number 33 of 2023. This regulation is specifically designed to address the needs and sociocultural context of the Marapu community, ensuring that policies can be effectively implemented in the field. This series of affirmative policies has a fundamental dual purpose. *First*, to accelerate the fulfillment of equal educational rights, so that Marapu students can learn their faith respectfully without coercion. *Second*, transforming formal education into a strategic instrument for cultural preservation and revitalization. Thus, Marapu's noble traditions and wisdom can be passed on systematically, while strengthening the foundation of the young generation's cultural identity (Buka et al., 2022; Maarif, 2021).

Various previous studies consistently show that the implementation of education service policies for indigenous faiths in Indonesia faces serious obstacles. Studies by Syamsiyah & Anya (2024), Armayanto et al. (2023) and Bariq (2019) found that Permendikbud No. 27/2016 could not be implemented optimally due to communication problems, resources, and lack of socialization. In addition, limited competent human resources, as expressed by Perdhana (2023), as well as the lack of adequate facilities and curriculum as in the findings of Putri & Pringgowijoyo (2020) and Saada (2022) are the main obstacles in the field. Furthermore, issues of discrimination and structural violence are also the focus of the problem as the findings show that the educational environment is not yet fully inclusive and safe for penghayat students (Bitan et al., 2024; Elmuna et al., 2024). While there is implementation underway as found, it still relies on local initiatives for (Zakiyah, 2018).

From this explanation, there is a research gap, namely the absence of studies that specifically and in-depth examine the implementation of derivative regulations at the local level such as East Sumba Regent Regulation Number 33 of 2023. Therefore, researchers tried to raise the theme of policy implementation of East Sumba Regent Regulation Number 33 of 2023 as a novelty from previous studies. The urgency of this research theme lies in the importance of ensuring that every individual, including believers who are often marginalized, have equal access to inclusive education services. While the district head regulation is a crucial step to redressing inequalities, it often faces implementation challenges such as infrastructure and educator readiness. To unpack these complexities, this study uses Mackiewicz(2018) 's five-factor policy implementation framework, which was chosen for its ability to unravel the phenomenon holistically through rational, management, organizational, bureaucratic and political dimensions. Thus, this study aims to describe and analyze the implementation of the Trust Education Service Policy in Education Units based on East Sumba Regent Regulation No 33 of 2023.

2. Research Methods

This research uses an exploratory qualitative approach that aims to find out and describe how the success factors of policy implementation (rational factors, management factors, organizational factors, bureaucratic factors and political factors) are relevant in accelerating the improvement of trust education services in East Sumba Regent Regulation No 33 of 2023 in education units (Mackiewicz, 2018).

The data collection technique used was an in-depth interview technique with key informants selected by purposive sampling including the Regent of East Sumba, the Head of the Education Office, the Secretary of the Education Office, the Chairperson of the Sumba Integrated Development Foundation, the Deputy Chairperson of the Marapu Belief Organization, and belief educators from three elementary schools. In addition, researchers used observation and documentation techniques. In Sugiyono, data collection techniques are the most important step in research, because the main purpose of research is to obtain data using interview, observation and documentation methods.

While data analysis techniques researchers use the *Policy Path-Analysis* method. According to McLaughlin (1987), there are at least five stages in building a logic model, namely: collecting relevant information, defining the problem and its context, defining performance elements in the table, describing the model, verifying program logic with stakeholders.

3. Results and Discussion

Results

The implementation of the East Sumba Regent Regulation Policy Number 33 of 2023 on Education Services for Beliefs in God Almighty is a follow-up to the Constitutional Court Decision Number 97/PUU-XIV/2016 and the Minister of Education and Culture Regulation Number 27 of 2016, which affirms the human rights of citizens to obtain education services in accordance with their beliefs. The implementation of this policy includes the following fundamental factors:

Rational Factors: Clear and Measurable Policy Foundations

The rational factor in the implementation of this policy shows a strong foundation, especially in terms of clarity of purpose. The main objective of Perbup No. 33 of 2023 is to provide assurance and acceleration of education services for students of Marapu believers, as a form of correction for historical discrimination. This background is explained in depth by KP, who was directly involved in the judicial review process at the Constitutional Court. He stated:

"If we link it with various activities and public services that should get the same service but they do not get the same service. Departing from that frame of mind or understanding, I saw discrimination so that when one of our brothers held a judicial review at the Constitutional Court, I was there as an expert witness. Departing from that decision, I issued Perbup 33 of 2023 to accelerate education services to indigenous faith communities."

This clarity of purpose was also confirmed by EP who stated:

"The purpose of trust education services in East Sumba district is an effort to bring justice to those who have been discriminated against in school education services because trust is a constitutional right of every citizen that must be protected and must also be fulfilled so that they get the same education services as other students and there should be no discrimination in any case."

This policy is an effort to bring justice that explicitly applies to all levels of education under the authority of the district government, although the initial implementation only reached eight primary schools due to capacity constraints. The policy planning process also shows high rationality. The local government proactively involved various stakeholders through advocacy and *forum group discussions* (FGDs). The involvement of Marapu organizations, NGOs, religious leaders, and prosecutors ensured that planning was participatory and comprehensive. Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) are specifically and technically regulated in Perbup 33 Year 2023, which serves as a clear guide for implementers in the field, in contrast to Permendikbud No. 27 Year 2016 which is still considered general.

The supervision system is designed in layers. The education office conducts

vertical supervision through supervisors, although there is a shortage of supervisors. Horizontally, supervision is carried out by non-government partners such as NGOs and Marapu organizations. The strength of this collaborative supervision system is emphasized by a unique strategic step, namely the establishment of a *Memorandum of Understanding* (MOU) with the East Sumba District Attorney's Office. The involvement of this law enforcement institution not only functions as a supervisor, but also as a mechanism for handling and preventing potential discrimination in schools. As stated by AJ, explaining in detail the function of this collaboration:

"We also cooperate in supervision with the prosecutor's office by making a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU), namely cooperation to help carry out supervision related to marapu belief education services. When a believer teacher or student is refused to teach at school, he will deal directly with the prosecutor's office to resolve the problem."

As such, the oversight system is a hybrid model that combines bureaucratic-formal oversight from the government with participatory oversight from civil society and institutional support from law enforcement agencies, collectively designed to ensure policy compliance and protect the rights of target groups.

Management Factors: Gap Between Allocation and Real Capacity

While the rational factor shows strength, the management factor shows a significant gap between the resources allocated and the real capacity on the ground. In terms of budget, the local government has shown commitment by allocating IDR160 million from the 2024 APBD for educators' honorariums. However, this allocation faces major challenges in terms of human resource retention. EP revealed:

"We prepared from a dozen people who were recruited, only eight of them survived, which is what we budgeted for. It's a new thing, then we also have to understand their resources, both economics and so on, which is an obstacle in providing services."

Limited human resources are the most crucial obstacle. The number of qualified teachers with a deep understanding of Marapu teachings is very limited, which directly hampers efforts to expand education services to other schools. Although regular training continues to be held by involving various parties, meeting the needs of teachers remains the biggest homework.

The sharpest gap is found in the communication aspect. At the elite level, the government has succeeded in establishing a good dialog. However, this communication flow proved to fail to reach the lower levels. AJ stated:

"After the draft was completed, there was no special session to conduct socialization. In order for a regulation to be known and understood by the community, it should be socialized and this was not done."

This statement indicates that the teachers admitted that they had never received socialization about the Perbup, which is the basis for their duties. Instead, they learned about their teaching duties from the NGO that recruited them. In terms of facilities and infrastructure, a general guidebook from Majelis Luhur Kepercayaan Indonesia (MLKI) is available as an initial reference. However, the most fundamental shortcoming is the absence of specific and contextualized textbooks on

Marapu belief education. This was acknowledged by the Education Office who stated that the book is still in the process of being compiled. The absence of this textbook is the main complaint of the teachers, as expressed by AT, stating:

"For the teaching materials we use, we still use guidebooks from the ministry. In the learning process we should use a book that specifically discusses marapu belief education but until today there is no guidebook available that specifically discusses it."

This gap is openly acknowledged by the leadership of the education office.

The EP explicitly states:

"What we lack is a guidebook that is specific to marapu belief education, which is currently under development by the education office".

This statement emphasizes the urgency of developing local teaching materials in accordance with the freedom given by the central government to develop a culturally relevant curriculum. Thus, a crucial learning instrument vacuum is created. In response, the East Sumba District Education Office is currently in the active process of compiling a more contextualized curriculum and textbooks, with the hope that it can be finalized in the near future to fill the void and improve the quality of Marapu faith education services in the region.

Organizational Factors: Strong Leadership and Synergistic Collaboration

Organizational factors were identified as the main driving force in the implementation of this policy, manifested through effective leadership, high collective motivation, authentic community involvement, and solid teamwork. Effective leadership and high motivation are consistently demonstrated by the East Sumba Regent. His personal commitment, rooted in a long struggle to defend the rights of the Marapu people, is a source of inspiration and legitimacy for the entire bureaucracy and working partners. This is not just formal leadership, but a personal attention that is felt by his subordinates. EP stated that,

"The implementation of Perbup Policy 33 Year 2023 will not be implemented without good leadership from superiors".

The instructions and enthusiasm from the Bupati became the driving energy for the relevant Regional Apparatus Organizations (OPDs) to work in a professional and coordinated manner. The same motivation is also shared by civil society actors. Community involvement in the implementation of this policy is not just a formality, but a process that is structured and proactively facilitated by the government. This involvement is manifested formally through penghayat organizations and NGOs that are consistently invited in every planning and implementation process. Moreover, the government even acts as an active facilitator in strengthening the capacity of Marapu organizations. As stated by KP,

"We have to admit that initially we advocated and facilitated them so that they could form into a forum and take care of the organization so that a registered certificate was issued and took care of the administration to the Ministry of local government facilitating all".

This mentoring process was confirmed by the Vice Chairperson of the Marapu Organization, who stated that they were always involved in dialogue forums and assisted in fulfilling administrative needs. This in-depth involvement succeeded in creating a strong sense of ownership from the target community towards the

policy. At the operational level, teamwork between various government parties, prosecutors, NGOs, and community organizations was built solidly and synergistically. This work team is multi-sectoral, where the East Sumba Regent explicitly mentions the involvement of relevant agencies, all sub-district heads, NGOs, prosecutors, and all religious organizations in building communication and coordination. This collaboration is based on agreements built in discussion forums, where each actor is committed to carrying out tasks according to their functions professionally for the sake of common goals. As stated by AJ,

"We have an agreement to work to carry out tasks in accordance with the duties and functions of each party in a professional manner".

This form of cooperation is very concrete, for example, the Education Office provides administrative support for programs run by NGO partners, while Marapu organizations together with other parties conduct supervision to ensure that education services are fair and equitable. Thus, each actor understands their respective roles but works towards a common goal of accelerating trust education services in a fair, equitable and non-discriminatory manner.

Bureaucratic Factors: Ready Structure with Capacity to Improve

The bureaucratic factor shows an established structural foundation, but on the other hand, the capacity and understanding of implementing actors still varies. The main implementing bureaucracy, the East Sumba District Education Office, has a clear and professional organizational order. There is a hierarchy of authority and a specific division of tasks between fields that allows for specialization of functions in supporting policies, such as delivered by KP:

"The education office has an organizational structure starting from the head of the office to the fields within it that have work specializations"

This statement confirms that the implementation assignment was consciously given to institutions whose structures were already in place. Although the Education Office is the main responsible party, the assignment of tasks in this implementation is not monolithic, but runs collaboratively by involving various non-governmental actors. This model shows a complementary division of roles, with the Marapu Belief Organization in charge of providing input and understanding related to the content of the teachings to maintain their authenticity, while the Sumba Integrated Development (SID) Foundation takes a role in strengthening capacity in the field, such as school assistance, training, advocacy, and helping to provide educators. However, it is also recognized that because this policy is still new, the understanding of the implementing actors at the lower level is not yet uniform and still requires continuous assistance from the local government to the ministerial level.

The most significant finding in the bureaucratic factor is the very strong commitment of implementers at all levels. This commitment starts at the highest level, where the Regent of East Sumba stated that this struggle is a form of his concern for discriminated community groups. This commitment is also alive at the level of *frontline implementors*, namely educators. Despite facing various limitations, they show high dedication to providing equal education services. As expressed by AT,

"As teachers, we always want all children of indigenous faiths to receive faith education services in accordance with their beliefs. We are always committed to supporting them by teaching them as referred to in the textbooks".

Similar sentiments were voiced by other educators, suggesting that commitment at the frontline implementer level is not just individual but has become a collective ethos. Teachers emphasized their future-oriented commitment with the hope that this policy can continue to expand its reach. This commitment is also based on a sense of professional responsibility and a desire to realize equality, as expressed by AL, a teacher at SDN Nari.

"As educators, we carry out our duties and responsibilities to provide teaching to students of penghayat kepercayaan, we want penghayat students to get the same education services as other students in schools".

The dedication of teachers in the field has strong support from the managerial level of the bureaucracy, as stated by EP,

"Our commitment is that the trust education service policy is an important part of fulfilling the rights of every citizen, so we provide support with good and professional work so that this policy continues to be developed".

This demonstrates the alignment of commitment vertically, from leaders to implementers in schools. Furthermore, this commitment extends to the non-government partners who are an integral part of the implementation. From the side of the target community, the Deputy Chairperson of the Marapu Indigenous Faith Organization also voiced a commitment born from historical experiences of injustice, where this policy is seen as a government alignment that must be fully supported so that it can reach all indigenous faith children in East Sumba. Thus, it can be concluded that the commitment to the success of this policy is multi-actor and comes from a variety of professional, institutional, human rights, and historical motivations that strengthen each other.

Political Factors: Conducive Environment Resulting from Dialogue

Political factors show that the implementation of this policy is supported by a very conducive environment, which is born from the local government's ability to manage potential conflicts dialogically and the authentic political motivation of the prime movers. This supportive political environment does not happen automatically, but is the result of proactive political management. In the early stages of planning, the implementation of this policy faced significant potential political pressure, stemming from church resistance. This difference of view arose because of the clash between the state's principle of guaranteeing the constitutional rights of all citizens and the institutional mission of the church. EP explains,

"There is resistance from the church as to why the Marapu people are being fought for there is a difference of view because the mission of the church wants the Marapu people to become part of the church and leave their beliefs as penghayat".

In the face of these potential frictions, local governments should not take a defensive stance, but rather proactively manage potential conflicts through an inclusive dialog approach. Joint forums are essential to reach consensus and avoid one-sided interests. This resolution process has proven successful in creating acceptance and consensus. As stated by UR,

"The church is legowo to accept well the policy objectives carried out by the

government".

The success in managing these political dynamics has resulted in a harmonious and pressure-free environment, with all informants, including teachers in the field, confirming that no one is currently trying to obstruct the trust education program in schools. On the other hand, the main driving force behind this policy is the active and authentic political motivation, especially from the Regent of East Sumba. This motivation is not born from momentary political interests or imagery, but from direct experience of seeing and fighting systemic discrimination over the years. The consistency of this commitment can be seen from his long track record. As KP states,

"My motivation is still the same as when I was the head of the population service in terms of fighting for the rights of the marapu community to the Constitutional Court and to this day when I was given the mandate to become Regent, that motivation has not diminished in the slightest."

This strong motivation to bring justice is then embraced and operationalized by the bureaucratic ranks below, and synergizes with the aspirations that have been championed by civil society partners. This effectively creates a solid political alliance between the local government, penghayat organizations, and NGOs, all of which move in one frequency to oversee the successful implementation of this affirmative policy.

Discussion

Analysis of the research findings shows a complex policy implementation dynamic, where success in one aspect is balanced by challenges in other aspects. This discussion will break down these dynamics into several thematic sub-chapters.

Political Power and Clarity of Purpose as Foundations of Implementation

The research results consistently show that the main foundation of this policy implementation is a strong *top-down* push, driven by transformational leadership. This implementation model is consciously driven by the authentic *political will* of the East Sumba Regent, which is a key variable in mobilizing the entire bureaucratic machinery and non-governmental networks. This leadership is transformational because it does not only aim to manage the existing system, but fundamentally seeks to change the status quo and correct the historical injustices experienced by the Marapu faith community. This drive is an absolute prerequisite for an affirmative policy like this, which without a strong initiation from the top, would be difficult to initiate let alone sustain.

The political will demonstrated by the Bupati is not merely a ceremonial commitment or short-term political maneuver, but rather a dedication rooted in experience and a long and consistent struggle. This is evident from his personal involvement in fighting for the rights of the Marapu people since he was still the Head of the Population Office, until his peak when he acted as an expert witness in the judicial review process at the Constitutional Court which gave birth to MK Decision Number 97/PUU-XIV/2016. His political motivation from a background of fighting systemic discrimination makes him a true "policy entrepreneur". He actively identified the problem, framed it as a constitutional rights issue, and utilized

the "*policy window*" that opened after the Constitutional Court Decision to encourage the birth of derivative regulations at the local level. This phenomenon is a clear example of Grindle's (1980) argument, which emphasizes that commitment and support from the ruling elite are vital prerequisites, especially for redistributive or affirmative policies for minority groups, where without a strong push from above, implementation will easily be stalled by resistance at the lower levels.

However, this political power will not be effective without being supported by clarity of purpose and a solid legal foundation. The Regent Regulation No. 33 Year 2023 does not stand alone, but is in a strong hierarchy of legitimacy, stemming from the Constitutional Court Decision as a constitutional umbrella and Permendikbud No. 27 Year 2016 as a national frame of reference. This series of regulations creates a very clear and consistent "*policy signal*" from the central level down to the regions. This clarity significantly reduces ambiguity and potential misinterpretation among implementers, a crucial variable according to Edward III's (1980) implementation theory. The clarity of purpose to "accelerate education services" and "deliver justice" provides unambiguous direction and a strong mandate for implementation actors, while giving them legal protection in carrying out their duties.

Thus, it can be concluded that at the strategic level, there is an ideal convergence between political power and policy rationality. The combination of a leader's authentic political will and a clear legal foundation has fulfilled the prerequisites for success emphasized in various theoretical models. The Rational and Political Factors in Khan & Khandeker's (2016) framework were largely met optimally at this early stage. The synergy between the two factors succeeded in creating a solid foundation and a very strong initial momentum, which became an essential capital to encourage the course of a much more complex policy implementation stage on the ground.

Implementation Gaps at the Lower Level: Management and Bureaucratic Capacity Challenges

While the strategic foundations of this policy are very strong, its implementation on the ground faces what can be referred to as "implementation frictions" at the lower levels. This sharp contrast between the success at the elite level and the constraints at the operational level indicates a significant *implementation gap*. The most fundamental challenge lies in the management factor, where the resources allocated have proven unable to respond to the complexity of needs in the field. This confirms that the success of a policy is not only determined by the quality of its design and political power, but also by the managerial capacity to translate strategy into effective action amidst various limitations.

An analysis of the human resources and budget reveals deeper problems than just financial incentives. The budget allocation of Rp160 million demonstrates the government's commitment, but the fact that only eight of the dozen teachers recruited stayed indicates a serious retention problem. This suggests that being a teacher of the newly institutionalized Marapu faith has challenges that go beyond financial compensation, perhaps related to professional status, ongoing support, or even isolation in the work environment. Successful implementation depends not

only on recruitment, but on the system's ability to build and maintain the capacity of qualified human resources, an aspect that remains a weak point in this policy.

This puts teachers in the position of *street-level bureaucrats* as described by Durose (2011). They are the face of the state to the public, working under resource-strapped conditions but required to provide services. The findings regarding the absence of specific and contextualized textbooks on Marapu, as well as the lack of vital supporting facilities such as laptops, are clear examples of such resource-scarce conditions. As a result, these teachers are forced to use discretion and improvise extensively - for example, by adapting generic national teaching materials for a very culturally specific subject. While this shows dedication, in practice it can come at the expense of standardization and quality of education, where the services students receive become heavily dependent on the improvisational abilities of individual teachers rather than a structured and quality-assured curriculum.

This condition is exacerbated by the failure of communication and socialization of policies to the lower levels, a classic problem in implementation studies. The finding that the implementing teachers themselves were unaware of Regent Regulation No. 33 of 2023, the legal basis for their work, is a fundamental communication deficit. When frontline implementers do not fully understand the mandate, objectives and legal basis of their tasks, implementation risks proceeding ad-hoc and without clear strategic direction. This gap in understanding between the policy makers at the district level and the implementers in schools creates a serious disjuncture, where the spirit and legitimacy of the policy that has been painstakingly built at the top level fails to be fully disseminated to the spearhead of implementation (Surur et al., 2024).

The Critical Role of Collaborative Networks in Bridging the Gap

In the midst of various managerial challenges that could potentially lead to implementation failure, one of the most interesting findings of this research is the emergence of the crucial role of the network of non-governmental actors. These networks, which consist of civil society institutions such as the SID Foundation and community organizations such as the Marapu faith organization, do not merely act as passive watchdogs, but rather become active and dynamic pillars of support. They proactively fill capacity gaps that the government is obviously unable to fulfill in the early stages of implementation. In a context where the formal bureaucracy faces limitations in terms of communication, human resources and facilities, this collaborative network serves as a "social infrastructure" that ensures policies do not stop on paper, but can continue to run and adapt on the ground.

The contributions of these collaborative networks are very concrete and operational, directly addressing the weak points identified in the management factors. The SID Foundation, for example, takes on a multifaceted role that goes beyond the usual advocacy functions. They are directly involved in "mentoring in schools", organizing "training" and, most vital, "helping to provide trusted educators". These actions are direct interventions to address the problem of human resource shortage and retention faced by the Education Office. On the other hand, the Marapu Belief Organization makes an invaluable contribution to maintaining the

authenticity and relevance of educational content by providing "input and understanding related to beliefs" to educators. This serves as a very important temporary solution to the absence of contextualized textbooks. In fact, in terms of socialization, it is this network that is often the main source of information for communities in the field, taking over the communication function that should be carried out by government officials at the lower levels.

This phenomenon is a perfect reflection of Noviana's (2023) *network governance* model and Ansell & Gash's (2008) *collaborative governance*, where the success of public policy is no longer the sole domain of the state, but rather the result of synergy between the state and civil society. Implementation in East Sumba shows a shift from a hierarchical governance model towards a more horizontal and participatory model. There are clear interdependencies: the government has legal and budgetary authority, but lacks in-depth access and flexible capacity on the ground; while civil society has access, community trust and agility, but needs legitimacy and resource support from the government. Dialogue processes through government-facilitated *Forum Group Discussions* (FGDs) serve as arenas for building trust and common goals, which are essential prerequisites for successful, sustainable collaborative governance.

Ultimately, this collaborative network serves as a vital balancing mechanism and bridge in the policy implementation ecosystem. It effectively bridges the gap between strategically designed *top-down* policies at the district level and the real needs and dynamics at the *bottom-up* level. The network works as a two-way channel: downwards, it helps translate the formal language of the Peraturan Bupati into practical actions and culturally relevant guidance for teachers; upwards, it channels aspirations, feedback and reports of constraints from the field back to policymakers. Without this "safety net" of civil society collaboration, it is highly likely that various frictions in management factors will cause the implementation of this policy to stall or significantly fail to achieve its goals.

Managing the Political Environment: From Conflict to Consensus

The local government's ability to proactively manage the policy environment (*context of implementation*) is one of the most significant political factors supporting the implementation of Regent Regulation No. 33 Year 2023. In-depth analysis shows that the political environment conducive to this policy does not come naturally, but is the result of a deliberate and well-executed process of conflict management and consensus building. This confirms that policy implementation, especially those that touch on issues of identity and faith, is not just a sterile technical-administrative process. Instead, it is a dynamic political arena, where success depends heavily on the intelligence and skills of government actors in negotiating, mediating, and building coalitions to overcome resistance and ensure program sustainability.

In the early stages of planning, this policy was faced with the potential for substantial political pressure, which stemmed from the resistance of church institutions that have a strong influence in East Sumba. This resistance was not born from a rejection of education per se, but from a fundamental difference in perspective between the logic of the state and the logic of religious institutions. The

research findings reveal that this difference in perspective arises because of the clash between the state's constitutional obligation to protect the rights of all faiths and the church's specific theological and missionary mission regarding the Marapu community. This fundamental difference in agenda creates a very real potential for friction and can hinder or even derail the policy formulation process early on.

In the face of these political challenges, local governments have not adopted a coercive or confrontational approach to power. Instead, it pursued a strategy of participatory dialogue and inclusive deliberation. The government actively created a "dialogue space" where all stakeholders, including religious leaders from various denominations and representatives from Marapu faith organizations, were brought together in one forum to discuss the purpose, rationality and urgency of the policy. This deliberative approach has proven to be very effective in clearing up misunderstandings, building mutual trust, and finding common ground that is acceptable to all parties.

This structured dialogue process eventually succeeded in transforming potential opposition into a solid consensus. The result of this negotiation process was strongly described by the representative of the Marapu Faith Organization, who stated that after going through the dialogue process, the church finally became *legowo* to accept the policy objectives of the government. The use of the term *legowo*, which means sincere or willing, indicates the achievement of a sincere and deep consensus, not just compliance due to pressure or coercion. This shows the success of the deliberative strategy in changing perspectives and creating authentic acceptance.

The success in managing the political dynamics at the elite level has borne a very important fruit for the sustainability of the program, namely the creation of a harmonious and stable implementation environment at the field level. With consensus among community leaders, frontline implementers, especially teachers and principals, can carry out their duties with greater peace of mind, free from the shadow of external pressures or interventions that could disrupt the learning process. This political stability serves as an intangible resource that allows technical and administrative processes to run more smoothly. As such, this case serves as a clear example that political consensus-building skills are not a fringe activity, but rather a core competency that is key to overcoming resistance and ensuring successful implementation of socially and culturally sensitive policies.

4. Conclusion

Based on the analysis of the implementation of East Sumba Regent Regulation No 33 of 2023, it can be concluded that the implementation of the Marapu belief education service policy is supported by a very solid strategic foundation. Success at this level is manifested through four main forces. *First*, there is an authentic and consistent *political will* from the regional leadership. *Second*, a clear legal basis for policy that has a strong hierarchy of legitimacy from the constitutional to the operational level. *Third*, the creation of a conducive political environment resulting from dialogic and proactive conflict management. *Fourth*, the formation of a synergistic collaboration network between the government and civil

society actors, which serves as a supporting pillar for implementation. The combination of these elements creates a positive initial momentum and ideal conditions for policy formulation and introduction.

However, despite these strengths at the strategic level, this research reveals significant *implementation gaps* at the operational level. There are three fundamental challenges that hinder the effectiveness and sustainability of the policy in the field. *First*, the failure to disseminate information and socialize the policy evenly, which causes frontline implementers and target communities to not fully understand the policy mandate. *Secondly*, the human resources crisis characterized by the limited number, qualifications and retention of credentialed teachers. *Thirdly*, there is a vacuum of essential learning instruments, namely the unavailability of curriculum and textbooks that are specific and contextualized with Marapu teachings. Thus, a common thread can be drawn that this policy has been successfully designed but is still struggling in the execution stage, where future success depends heavily on the ability to bridge the gap between the strategic vision and operational capacity in the field.

Reference

- Ansell, C., & Gash, A. (2008). Collaborative Governance in Theory and Practice. *Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory*, 18(4), 543–571. <https://doi.org/10.1093/jopart/mum032>
- Armayanto, H., Ulfa, M., Suntoro, A. F., & Indra, I. (2023). The Distribution of Service Rights Using Civic Pluralism Approach: A Case of Penghayat Kepercayaan in Ponorogo Regency. *Progresiva : Jurnal Pemikiran Dan Pendidikan Islam*, 12(02), 247–260. <https://doi.org/10.22219/progresiva.v12i02.29970>
- Balslev, A. N. (2015). "Science–Religion Samvada" and The Indian Cultural Heritage. *Zygon: Journal of Religion and Science*, 50(4), 877–892. <https://doi.org/10.1111/zygo.12229>
- Bariq, M. (2019). Pemenuhan Hak Warga Negara oleh Negara (Studi Akses Pendidikan Kepercayaan bagi Peserta Didik Sekolah Menengah Atas Penghayat Kerohanian Sapta Darma Cabang Surabaya). *Kajian Moral Dan Kewarganegaraan*, 7(1), 196–210. <https://doi.org/10.26740/KMKN.V7N1.P>
- Bitan, Y. V. B., Botu, F., & Permiro, B. G. (2024). Problem Diskriminasi Peserta Didik Penganut Kepercayaan di Kota Malang. *Equilibrium: Jurnal Pendidikan*, 12(2), 127–137. <https://doi.org/10.26618/equilibrium.v12i2.13993>
- Bo'a, F. Y. (2018). Pancasila sebagai Sumber Hukum dalam Sistem Hukum Nasional. *Jurnal Konstitusi*, 15(1), 28–49. <https://doi.org/10.31078/jk1512>
- Buka, V., Santika, I. G. N., Kartika, I. M., & Sujana, I. G. (2022). Implementasi Nilai-Nilai Pancasila dalam Budaya Mana'o di Desa Manu Kuku Kabupaten Sumba Barat. *Jurnal Ilmiah Ilmu Sosial*, 8(1), 109–117. <https://doi.org/10.23887/jiis.v8i1.40757>
- Candra, E. R., Dyrud, L. F., & Canda, H. J. (2020). *Spiritual Diversity in Social Work Practice: The Heart of Helping*. Oxford University Press.
- De Rooij, L. (2023). *Muslims, Minorities, and The Media: Discourses on Islam in The West*. Routledge.
- Durose, C. (2011). Revisiting Lipsky: Front-Line Work in UK Local Governance. *Political Studies*, 59(4), 978–995. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-9248.2011.00886.x>
- Elmuna, N., Zahra, F., Sabila, Y. M., Riyadi, D. M., & Surya, F. A. (2024). Perlindungan Konstitusional terhadap Hak Atas Pendidikan Masyarakat Penghayat Kepercayaan di

- Jepara. *Amsir Law Journal*, 5(2), 84–92. <https://doi.org/10.36746/alj.v5i2.332>
- Febriani, R., & Nurberlian, N. (2024). Legacy of Colonialism and Indigenous Religious Resilience: A Study of Marapu Belief in East Nusa Tenggara. *Digital Press Social Sciences and Humanities*, 11, 12. <https://doi.org/10.29037/digitalpress.411464>
- Formichi, C. (2021). *Religious Pluralism in Indonesia: Threats and Opportunities for Democracy*. Cornell University Press.
- Hefner, R. W. (2018). *Routledge Handbook of Contemporary Indonesia* (R. W. Hefner, Ed.). Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315628837>
- Junaidi, J., Abqa, M. A. R., Abas, M., Suhariyanto, D., Nugraha, A. B., Yudhanegara, F., & Rohman, M. (2023). *Buku Kolaborasi Hukum & Hak Asasi Manusia*. PT. Sonpedia Publishing Indonesia.
- Kiernan, K. (2015). Landforms as Sacred Places: Implications for Geodiversity and Geoheritage. *Geoheritage*, 7(2), 177–193. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12371-014-0128-6>
- Maarif, S. (2021). Re-Establishing Human-Nature Relations: Responses of Indigenous People of Indonesia to Covid-19. *Interdisciplinary Journal for Religion and Transformation in Contemporary Society*, 7(2), 447–472. <https://doi.org/10.30965/23642807-bja10023>
- Mackiewicz, J. (2018). A Mixed-Method Approach. In *Writing Center Talk over Time* (pp. 37–60). Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780429469237-3>
- McLaughlin, M. W. (1987). Learning from Experience: Lessons from Policy Implementation. *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis*, 9(2), 171–178. <https://doi.org/10.3102/01623737009002171>
- Nashrullah, A. C. (2024). *Pendirian Gereja di Kota Cilegon Perspektif Hak Asasi Manusia dan Tinjauan Hukum Islam*.
- Nieto, S. (2015). *The Light in Their Eyes: Creating Multicultural Learning Communities*. Teachers College Press.
- Norenzayan, A., Shariff, A. F., Gervais, W. M., Willard, A. K., McNamara, R. A., Slingerland, E., & Henrich, J. (2016). The Cultural Evolution of Prosocial Religions. *Behavioral and Brain Sciences*, 39, e1. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0140525X14001356>
- Noviana, T. (2023). Pemenuhan Layanan Pendidikan bagi Peserta Didik Penghayat Kepercayaan (Indigenous Religion) di DIY (Studi Kasus Kabupaten Gunungkidul Pada Tahun 2022). *JURNAL EKONOMI DAN BISNIS DIGITAL (EKOBIL)*, 2(1), 29–42. <https://doi.org/10.58765/ekobil.v2i1.110>
- Perdhana, A. N. (2023). Penerapan Kebijakan Pendidikan Kepercayaan terhadap Tuhan yang Maha Esa dalam Pendidikan Formal di SDN 3 Kalimantan Temanggung. *NALAR: Jurnal Pendidikan Dan Kebudayaan*, 2(1), 36–42. <https://doi.org/10.56444/nalar.v2i1.776>
- Purzycki, B. G., Ross, C. T., Apicella, C., Atkinson, Q. D., Cohen, E., McNamara, R. A., Willard, A. K., Xygalatas, D., Norenzayan, A., & Henrich, J. (2018). Material Security, Life History, and Moralistic Religions: A Cross-Cultural Examination. *PLOS ONE*, 13(3), e0193856. <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0193856>
- Putri, U., & Pringgowijoyo, Y. (2020). Pemenuhan Layanan Pembelajaran Bagi Siswa Penghayat Kepercayaan di Wilayah Dinas Pendidikan Kabupaten Bantul. *Jurnal Kewarganegaraan*, 4(1), 45–53. <https://doi.org/10.31316/jk.v4i1.883>
- Richerson, P., Baldini, R., Bell, A. V., Demps, K., Frost, K., Hillis, V., Mathew, S., Newton, E. K., Naar, N., Newson, L., Ross, C., Smaldino, P. E., Waring, T. M., & Zefferman, M. (2016). Cultural Group Selection Plays an Essential Role in Explaining Human Cooperation: A Sketch of The Evidence. *Behavioral and Brain Sciences*, 39, e30.

- <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0140525X1400106X>
Saada, N. (2022). Balancing The Communitarian, Civic, and Liberal Aims of Religious Education: Islamic Reflections. *Religions*, 13(12), 1198.
<https://doi.org/10.3390/rel13121198>
Surur, N., Nasikhah, A. D., & Setyawan, E. (2024). Analisis Permendkbudristek No. 46 Tahun 2023 terhadap Kekerasan Struktural Yang Terjadi Pada Aliran Kepercayaan Sapto Darmo di Kabupaten Kendal. *Ganaya : Jurnal Ilmu Sosial Dan Humaniora*, 7(4), 79–90.
<https://doi.org/10.37329/ganaya.v7i4.3488>
Syamsiyah, ST. F., & Anya, N. K. (2024). Implementasi Layanan Pendidikan Agama bagi Peserta Didik Penghayat Kepercayaan Sapta Dharma. *Aurelia: Jurnal Penelitian Dan Pengabdian Masyarakat Indonesia*, 3(1), 413–418.
Zakiyah, Z. (2018). Pendidikan Kepercayaan terhadap Tuhan yang Maha Esa: Pemenuhan Hak Siswa Penghayat di Sekolah. *Penamas*, 31(2), 397–418.
<https://doi.org/10.31330/penamas.v31i2.232>