

## **Effectiveness of Implementation of Regional Autonomy in the Border Area of Belu District**

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### **Abstract**

*This research is a qualitative study. Data were obtained through field observations, literature studies, and interviews. Regional autonomy is a golden bridge for accelerating development in Indonesia, especially in peripheral areas. This development includes various aspects in accordance with the spirit of the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia. Belu Regency, as one of the border areas, has experienced positive changes in the implementation of regional autonomy, especially in the fields of tourism and cultural infrastructure.*

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## **1. INTRODUCTION**

Regional autonomy in Indonesia is a turning point in the history of the Indonesian government. Since the era of independence, the Indonesian nation has experienced several changes in the system of implementing the government of the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia. Some changes in the history of the governance of the Indonesian nation are: during the colonial era, the government system in Indonesia was centralized, at independence in 1945 the Indonesian nation implemented a centralized system, in 1974 the embryo of decentralization appeared through Law No. 5 of 1974. In 1999, entering the reform era, the Indonesian government system shifted to decentralization through Law No. 22 of 1999. In 2004 the law was amended and resulted in Law No. 32 of 2004 concerning regional government. The law was amended in 2014 to become Law No. 23 of 2014 concerning regional government.

The change in the government system from centralization to decentralization has an impact on the implementation of regional autonomy and local politics. Regional autonomy creates a more transparent and democratic government, expected to be the answer to the problems of governance and various social problems in the life of the nation and state. The purpose of regional autonomy in Law No. 23 of 2014 is to improve public services and welfare, developing democratic life, justice and equality and maintaining relations between the central and regional governments and between regions within the framework of the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia. Regional autonomy encourages transparent governance; the community becomes a government supervisor so that it can avoid absolute government. Regional autonomy encourages regional independence, the delegation of authority from the central government to regional governments for local and special matters.

As far as regional autonomy is concerned in Belu Regency, there have been several positive changes in infrastructure development and governance. Several local and distinctive changes are the development of culture in this case, ikat woven fabrics and Fulan

Fehan tourist attractions, the development of Belu Regency as a border area through several areas such as the construction of cross-border posts, the construction of red belt roads and others.

It is undeniable that there is still some homework related to local bureaucracy and politics. In the bureaucracy there are still practices of Corruption, Collusion and Nepotism (KKN) in bureaucratic governance and public services. In the field of local politics there are still frictions in the election of regional heads, politicization of positions, favors, political revenge, racial and ethnic issues and others. These frictions have an impact on the quality of social services, public trust in local government, and service satisfaction which can have a greater impact on the quality of democracy in the border areas of Belu Regency. Some of the problems above indicate that there needs to be an effort to improve the implementation of regional autonomy in order to achieve its goals, especially bringing Belu Regency out of the underdeveloped area zone.

## 2. RESEARCH METHOD

The research method in this paper is a qualitative research method. Qualitative research reveals the definition of qualitative research approach is based on the philosophy of post-positivism used by researchers to study the state of primary natural objects (not experiments). The means include targeted data sampling from data sources. The survey method uses triangulation (combination), data analysis is inductive or qualitative, and qualitative findings mean not generalization Sugiyono (2009:15). According to Saryono, qualitative studies are research designed to investigate, find and explain the quality or characteristics of social impacts that cannot be explained, measured, or explained by a quantitative approach.

The data acquisition techniques in this paper are interviews, observations and literature studies. The interview technique in this paper is the author conducting interviews with 25 people in Belu Regency who are government practitioners, lecturers in political science and government, students, employees of the Mota'ain State Border Post (PLBN) and the community using the Mota'ain PLBN. In addition to interviews, the author conducted observations in the field to test the truth of the information. The author made visits to observe locations related to the writing to test the truth of the data obtained through interviews. The author also used library literature to enrich the author's information related to effectiveness of the implementation of regional autonomy in the border areas of Belu Regency

## 3. RESEARCH RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### Research result

Regional autonomy encourages the growth of transparent and democratic governance. Regional autonomy also encourages the delegation of authority to regions for local and unique matters. Some changes as a result of the implementation of regional autonomy in the Belu Regency area are: the construction of the State Border Crossing Post (PLBN), the construction of the red belt road and the development of culture and tourism.

### Discussion

#### Development of Cross-Border Posts (PLBN)

The construction of cross-border posts aims to transforming underdeveloped areas on the border, where the outermost areas must become Indonesia's front porch, no longer a backyard that is neglected. Belu Regency has one State Border Crossing Post (PLBN), namely the Mota'ain PLBN. Several PLBNs are in the preparation stage for construction, such as Turiskain. The purpose of building the Mota'ain PLBN in accordance with Presidential Instruction (Inpres) No. 1 of 2021 is as a center for a new economic zone and

is part of the accelerated development program. The Mota'ain PLBN, which was originally just a small house, was built into an area with a modern building design equipped with very good road access from the city center of Atambua and the red belt route in the western sector which connects PLBN Mota'ain and Wini PLBN, North Central Timor Regency. This greatly supports the existence of PLBN Mota'ain as a new economic and border tourism area because it is easy to reach.

The positive impact of the Mota'ain PLBN is as a border tourism destination because it is supported by very good road access and the development of the PLBN in the form of a very attractive area. PLBN data records that the number of crossers through the Mota'ain PLBN in 2024 was 334,769 people. In addition to crossers, there are also visitors who come to walk around and see the Mota'ain PLBN area which is quite large, reaching 8.3 ha, equipped with very attractive buildings and parks. The PLBN area has a number of photo spots so that visitors can take pictures in the Mota'ain PLBN area.

PLBN Mota'ain is a new economic area because PLBN Mota'ain is equipped with a parking lot in the form of a fairly large terminal, a very modern sales stall because the building is charming and artistic and also many park areas that can support economic exchange between the two countries. Immigration data records that in 2024 the amount of income will reach Rp. 796,031,626,262.

The development of good road infrastructure and PLBN Mota'ain also supports the city of Atambua as a destination for Timor Leste citizens. Timor Leste people usually come to Atambua on Fridays to Sundays for family matters, shopping, refreshing and also health services at the Atambua hospital.

### **Red belt road construction**

The red belt road of Belu Regency consists of The East Sector Border Red Belt in Belu Regency and Malaka Regency stretches 176.19 km, including 27 bridges. and the West Sector Border Red Belt in North Central Timor Regency is 130.88 km long, including 12 bridges. The presence of the red belt road brings several positive changes in economic development, agriculture, tourism and state sovereignty. In the economic sector, the red belt road fosters small businesses along the red belt road, easy access leads to stable prices and ease in obtaining basic necessities. In the agricultural sector, the presence of the red belt road greatly helps farmers in selling and marketing their crops, transporting their crops from the garden to their homes, speeding up access from home to their gardens and so on. The red belt road is often an attraction for local residents to just take a walk while enjoying the natural scenery. In the tourism sector, the red belt road also helps facilitate access to Fulan Fehan as one of the highland tourist attractions in Belu Regency, the Mota'ain PLBN border tourism, the Wini PLBN in TTU Regency and the Motamasin PLBN in Malaka Regency. All of this fosters pride and love for the country that has developed the outskirts into an attractive and alluring front porch for the nation.

### **Cultural and tourism development**

The development of culture and tourism in Belu Regency in recent years, after the implementation of regional autonomy, is: the development of the Fulan Fehan tourist attraction, natural dyeing of ikat woven cloth, likurai dance, the construction of a spiritual pilgrimage to the statue of the Virgin Mary of Gurita Bay, the Mota'ain PLBN border tourist attraction and others. The tourist attractions above and natural dyeing of ikat woven cloth have become new icons in Belu Regency. Fulan Fehan tourist attraction Anugerah Pesona Indonesia (API) 2020, Fulan Fehan won the award as the first winner in the Highland Destination category.

The natural coloring of ikat woven cloth is a souvenir for invited guests, displayed in the Belu Regency ikat woven cloth gallery and has become a cultural icon. exhibited at House Amsterdam Friday, May 23, 2025 titled *Women and Weaves: Eastern Indonesia Textile Prelude*. The likurai dance stage is a welcoming dance, an entertainment stage that is the identity of Belu Regency. The Likurai dance was composed into a more modern dance and was staged in Germany and Belgium in October 2021. The Likurai dance was also staged at the National Palace with a total of 150 dancers to celebrate the Indonesian nation's independence in 2019.

This shows that regional autonomy also advances the culture and tourism of Belu Regency. Regional autonomy allows autonomous regions to think about culture and tourism, especially the potential and problems related to tourism development and. Autonomy has a positive impact on the development of culture and regions that also strengthen national cultural identity and national sovereignty in border areas.

**Cover**

#### 4. CONCLUSION

Regional autonomy is a golden bridge to accelerate regional development, especially in the outskirts. Since the echo of autonomy was announced, Belu Regency as one of the regencies in the border area has made progress in infrastructure, culture and tourism development. In the field of infrastructure, development that is typical in accordance with the conditions of Belu Regency as a border area is the Mota'ain PLBN and the connecting red belt route, an international hospital that will be built in 2026. In addition, there is cultural and tourism development. Cultural development in the form of performances of likurai dance and ikat woven fabrics with natural dyes to European countries. Tourism development such as the development of the Mota'ain PLBN border tourist spot, the development of Fulan Fehan highland tourism with achievements Indonesian Tourism Award (API) 2020, Fulan Fehan won the award as the first winner in the Highland Destination category and religious tourism of the Statue of the Virgin Mary in Gurita Bay. Several of these tourist attractions have become icons of Belu Regency.

#### 5. ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

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