



Implementation of Policies for the Conservation of Protected Forests in Tenggulun Village, Tenggulun District, Aceh Tamiang Regency

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ABSTRACT

The encroachment of protected forests that occurred in Tenggulun Village, Tenggulun District, Aceh Tamiang Regency has resulted in the destruction of forest areas due to land clearing for illegal oil palm plantations. These conditions have an impact on the decline of the ecological function of forests and increase the risk of environmental disasters, so the implementation of effective forest conservation policies is needed. This research aims to find out and analyze the implementation of policies for the conservation of protected forests in Tenggulun Village, identify obstacles and efforts made in its implementation. This research uses George Edward III's policy implementation theory which includes communication, resources, disposition, bureaucratic structure, is supported by the concept of public policy according to Carl Friedrich, with descriptive qualitative research methods and informants selected using purposive sampling techniques. Results of the study show that the implementation of forest conservation policies has been running quite well through a social forestry scheme involving the Environment, Forestry Service, UPTD KPH Region VII Langsa, Forestry Police, Leuser Conservation Forum (FKL), village governments, and communities. Policy implementation has met the four indicators of George Edward III, namely communication, resources, disposition, bureaucratic structure. However, its implementation still faces obstacles in the form of budget limitations, large restoration areas, low community participation, and difficult access to forest locations. Efforts to overcome these obstacles include increasing socialization, education to the community, strengthening partnerships with FKL, implementing social forestry programs through the agroforestry system, strengthening forest area supervision through cooperatives, routine patrols.

INTRODUCTION

Indonesia is the third largest tropical country in the world that has a diversity of flora and fauna. Forests are a unit of ecosystems that contain biological natural resources with their environment and function to provide oxygen for living things, so forests are referred to as the lungs of the world (Putu, 2020). If forests are destroyed through encroachment and illegal logging, it can lead to uncontrolled land clearing, resulting in reduced forest cover and reduced forests' ability to produce oxygen.

Aceh Tamiang Regency has 12 sub-districts, one of which is Tenggulun District which has an area of 51.25% of the district area (BPS Aceh Tamiang Regency, 2024). Before the 1970s, the area in the upstream of Aceh Tamiang Regency was a natural forest. The Tenggulun area is then synonymous with oil palm plantations because it is the main source of income for villagers, with oil palm production continuing to increase in 2011-2012 (BPS Aceh Tamiang Regency, 2013). Ironically, forest encroachment in the Tenggulun block has reached more than 300 hectares and has entered the Gunung Leuser National Park (TNGL) area planted with illegal oil palm plantations; the government then took over the land to be reforested through joint operations and the formation of nursery farmer groups (Coal, 2025).

Based on initial observations, forest encroachment in Tenggulun Village began with the entry of companies from outside the village who cleared land through the community with the lure of forest land as community land, so that encroachment expanded from about 300 hectares to 716 hectares in the forest area of Tenggulun Village which started from the Pucuk Tenggulun-Sikundur area. In fact, Sikundur land is a buffer land in Tenggulun Village as a protected forest in Tenggulun District which is threatened by land clearing into illegal oil palm plantations until it enters the Gunung Leuser National Park area. To protect the threatened forests, the Environment and Forestry Service (DLHK) assigns the task to the UPTD KPH Region VII Aceh-Langsa to secure encroachment that occurs, as stipulated in Law Number 41 of 1999 concerning Forestry which regulates sustainable management, division of areas (protected forests, conservation, production), and protection from destruction.

Restoration of forests that have been converted into illegal oil palm plantations is carried out by comprehensive and gradual illegal oil palm logging, supported by the Aceh Qanun Number 7 of 2016 concerning Aceh Forestry which regulates the authority of the Aceh Government in forest management, forest product collection permits, and customary/administrative sanctions. However, new problems arise because the implementation of restoration policies is slow, while the impact of forest encroachment has contributed to land clearing that results in flooding disasters in Tenggulun Village, as will happen in 2025. Based on this description, this article aims to find out and analyze the implementation of policies on protected forest conservation in Tenggulun Village, as well as identify obstacles and efforts made in its implementation, focusing on the extent to which UPTD KPH Region VII Aceh-Langsa secures and evaluates the implementation of forest conservation policies in the area. Theoretically, this study is expected to be a reference for the study of policy implementation in

forest conservation, and practically it is expected to provide an explanation of the implementation of forest conservation policies in Tenggulun Village for related institutions.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Public Policy

Policies according to Marwiyah (2022) are activities in the form of activities or making a program plan decision by the government. David Easton (in Joko, 2020) explained that public policy is the result of government activities, while Nugroho (2009) interprets it as a decision made by the state as a strategy to realize the country's goals. Friedrich (in Marwiyah, 2022) defines policy as a series of actions proposed by a person, group, or government in a given environment, where there are obstacles and opportunities for the proposed policy to achieve a certain goal, while Thomas R. Dye states that public policy is whatever the government chooses to do or not do. From these various definitions, public policy can be understood as a government activity to formulate a regulation that will be followed by the community so that the policy runs according to the set goals.

Policy Implementation

Implementation in general, according to the Great Dictionary of the Indonesian Language, means the implementation or application related to the achievement of a goal, in the form of providing the means to do something that has an impact on laws, government regulations, judicial decisions, and policies made by government institutions. According to George Edward III (in Patu & Pramudiana, 2023), the success of policy implementation is determined through four stages, namely good communication, adequate resources, the attitude or disposition of the implementer, and bureaucratic organization. The implementation model according to Charles O. Jones (in Marwiyah, 2022) analyzes the problem of policy implementation schematically based on the concept of functional activities, which includes three main activities: organization, namely the arrangement and formation of resources with the units of methods created; interpretation, namely interpretation so that the program is implemented as planned; and implementation, as a routine need in implementation such as funds, facilities, and infrastructure.

The Role of Communities in Forest Conservation

Social forestry is a program that is formed for forest development and security by involving the community in its management (Wiyanto, 2022). The role of the community is very important, especially in terms of security and development for forest conservation. Law No. 41 of 1999 on Forestry is the main basis for forest conservation which regulates sustainable management, area division, and protection from destruction. The strategy of building forest conservation through community participation has stages, namely disseminating information through socialization to the community about forest conservation and responding to this information through the formation of farmer groups or

village forest guard groups (Tambaip et al., 2023). Efforts to preserve forests can be carried out through the formation of farmer groups to cultivate crops needed by the forest, guarding by village communities, and installing information boards about forests as a form of education so that illegal logging and forest encroachment do not occur again.

METHODOLOGY

This research uses a qualitative approach that is naturalistic and flexible, carried out in natural and interactive conditions to explore in-depth information on phenomena, with a design that develops inductively in line with the research process in the field (Sugiyono, 2024). Researchers are the main instrument for collecting data through observations, interviews, and documents. The research was carried out at the UPTD KPH Region VII Langsa which is under the Environment and Forestry Service, with the study location in the Sikundur protected forest area, Tenggulun Village, Tenggulun District.

The primary data sources were obtained through interviews and observations of informants selected using purposive sampling techniques, namely the Acting Head of the Technical Planning and Forest Utilization Section, the Head of the Tenggulun Resort, the Head of Tenggulun Village, the Forestry Police (Polhut), the Head of the Tenggulun Maju Lestari Cooperative, three residents/farmers, and a restoration supervisor. Secondary data sources are obtained from literature reviews, articles, documentation, and laws and regulations, namely Law Number 41 of 1999 concerning Forestry and Qanun Aceh Number 7 of 2016 concerning Aceh Forestry. Data collection techniques are carried out through observation, interviews, and documentation (Sugiyono, 2024). Data analysis uses the model of Miles and Huberman (1984, in Sugiyono, 2024) which includes data reduction, data presentation, and verification or drawing of conclusions.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Policy Implementation on Protected Forest Conservation

The policy of conservation of protected forests in Tenggulun Village is taken through Qanun Number 7 of 2016 concerning Aceh Forestry which regulates the authority of the Government of Aceh in forest management, forest product collection permits, and customary/administrative sanctions, with settlement regulated through the UPTD KPH Region VII in protected forest areas, conservation, and production.

"The occurrence of forest encroachment is caused by the environmental and historical conditions of the area in the area. Initially, there were HPA companies that obtained permits to manage forest products, but over time there was a conflict so that the permit was revoked by the government. After the revocation of the permit, the community uses the land by planting oil palm until encroachment occurs that enters the protected forest." (Agus Rinaldi, Acting Head of the Technical Planning and Forest Utilization Section, interview)

The implementation of forest conservation policies is carried out through restoration. Initially, FMUs in Region VII acted alone without involving the community, but this step caused a conflict over the land taken over by the state,

so the strategy was changed by providing a social forestry scheme where the community itself became the forest manager. Policy implementation is analyzed through four George Edward III indicators. In the communication aspect, the activity began with socialization and education to the community assisted by the village government and partners of the Leuser Conservation Forum (FKL).

"One of the main obstacles in the implementation of the policy is the mindset of people who still depend on land that has previously been cleared as a main source of livelihood, in addition to low public awareness of the importance of forest conservation." (Heri Sutarto, Head of Tenggulun Village, interview)

The socialization carried out repeatedly yielded results in the form of land handover without resistance from the community in the protected forest area to the state for restoration. In terms of resources, socialization activities succeeded in building community participation to participate in planting in an area of 716 hectares, with the initial process in the form of illegal palm oil logging by FMUs Region VII assisted by the community and FKL partners.

"The Leuser Conservation Forum (FKL) assists FMUs in allocating action in the field, executing illegal palm oil, this activity realizes the implementation of policies that have been taken by local governments to restore forests while prospering the community." (Armiadi, Head of Tenggulun Resort, interview)

In terms of the disposition / attitude of implementers, the order of work in the field is led by KPH Region VII as the person in charge of security, assisted by FKL partners, the Forestry Police, and communities who are given permits as forest managers through cooperatives in the Community Forest (social forestry) scheme, which is strengthened by the issuance of SK.7413/MENLHK-PSKL/PKPS/PSL.0/7/2023 regarding the determination of Community Forests to the Tenggulun Maju Lestari Cooperative, which has covered about 300 hectares of land. In terms of bureaucratic organization, the formation of the Tenggulun Maju Lestari Cooperative which oversees farmer groups makes the implementation process more organized, with the agreed plant composition of 40% forest plants (teak, resin, meranti, sengon, kruing, and other types) and 60% of production crops (durian, matoa, cempedak, jackfruit, bananas, oranges) as the community's economic source.

Obstacles and Policy Implementation Efforts

The results of the study identified the main obstacle in the form of limited budget constraints for FMUs in Region VII due to the large encroachment area, so that the implementation of restoration was delayed.

"There are obstacles in the implementation of the policy, namely the budget of the Region VII FMUs is limited due to the very wide allocation of encroachment, so the implementation of restoration is delayed." (Agus Rinaldi, Acting Head of the Technical Planning and Forest Utilization Section, interview)

To overcome budget constraints, the government is seeking assistance from various institutions, including cooperation and MoUs with partners engaged in forestry management such as the Leuser Conservation Forum (FKL), which provides facilities in the form of posts, nurseries, education, and assistance for social forestry programs. Another obstacle is the lack of community

participation given the size of the restoration area (716 hectares) and the distance to the forest location from the settlements, although there are currently 338 farmers who have joined the program.

"In forest restoration, there is a Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) for the implementation of restoration through a cooperative mechanism... Now there are 338 farmers who have joined. There are 3 people who are in charge of patrolling the restoration land, as well as 3 people from FKL... If there is a violation in the community, the task of the companion is to compile a report and submit it to the forestry service for follow-up." (Rasmayanto, Forestry Police, interview)

Efforts made to overcome these obstacles include: increasing socialization and repeated education to the community assisted by the village government; strengthening partnerships with FKL in the provision of facilities, nurseries, and technical assistance; the implementation of the social forestry program through the agroforestry system, which is land management that combines forestry crops and agricultural crops in one area on the condition that the land cannot be sold but the results can be used by farmers; the establishment of SOPs through cooperatives, namely each farmer obtains management rights of 2 hectares which will be revoked if not planted for 6 consecutive months; and strengthening the supervision of forest areas through routine patrols by the community and FKL to prevent the recurrence of forest encroachment.

Referring to the theory of policy implementation by George Edward III, the successful implementation of protected forest conservation policies in Tenggulun Village can be analyzed through four stages. First, communication indicators show that licensing from the local government to the village is accompanied by prior socialization to the village government, which is tasked with being a liaison between FMUs and the community in the process of implementing restoration policies. The results of the study prove that the success of this communication can be seen from the number of 338 farmers who participated in the program and around 300 hectares of land that have been planted with tree seedlings.

Second, resource indicators show that the process of illegal palm oil execution and planting has reached around 300 hectares, although there are still about 300-400 hectares that have not been reached for restoration due to resource limitations, so that illegal palm oil in the area is temporarily allowed to undergo natural decay while the focus is directed to planting through agroforestry systems on cleared land. Third, the indicators of the disposition/attitude of implementers show that the community itself is responsible for maintaining forests through cooperatives that have the authority to regulate land management, with continuous monitoring from FMUs Region VII and assistance from FKL partners who also carry out routine patrols.

Fourth, bureaucratic organization indicators show that the local government provides land security through the Tenggulun Maju Lestari Cooperative which aims to maintain protected forest areas, assisted by the Forestry Police as enforcers and mediators in case of problems in the field, such as encroachment or land disputes between farmers, which are then reported to the FMU for follow-up. Based on these four indicators, the implementation of the protected forest conservation policy in Tenggulun Village has met the George

Edward III framework even though its implementation is relatively slow due to the size of the area and limited resources.

Obstacles to implementation in the form of budget limitations and low community participation are in line with Friedrich's view (in Marwiyah, 2022) that every policy is proposed in the midst of obstacles and opportunities that must be overcome in order for policy goals to be achieved. Funding constraints are addressed through cooperation with partners and forest management MoU's, while barriers to community participation and distance are overcome through social forestry programs with agroforestry systems, which align the interests of forest conservation with the economic well-being of the community. Thus, the four variables of Edward III are interrelated: intensive communication strengthens community participation in the aspect of disposition, while partner support in the aspect of resources strengthens the effectiveness of the bureaucratic organizational structure that has been established through cooperative schemes.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This study concludes that the implementation of policies for the conservation of protected forests in Tenggulun Village, Tenggulun District, Aceh Tamiang Regency, is carried out through Qanun Number 7 of 2016 concerning Aceh Forestry by way of restoration, namely executing illegal oil palm and then replanting it with trees, through cooperation between the Environment and Forestry Service (DLHK), UPTD KPH Region VII Langsa, Forestry Police, The Leuser Conservation Forum (FKL), the village government, and the local community. Based on George Edward III's policy implementation theory, policy implementation has gone through four main stages, namely communication, resources, implementer attitude/disposition, and bureaucratic organization. Barriers to implementation are mainly related to funding constraints and distance to restoration areas, which are addressed through social forestry programs as an effective solution – funding assisted by partners and forest conservation MoUs, while distance is addressed through the involvement of local communities in agroforestry systems that align forest conservation interests with community well-being.

Based on these findings, this study recommends that the local government and UPTD KPH Region VII Langsa increase socialization and education to the community, both in Tenggulun Village and neighboring villages, including special education for the younger generation to understand the importance of forest conservation and the boundaries of the area that can be used. It is also necessary to increase budget support for restoration activities, including improving road access to restoration areas so that forest monitoring and maintenance activities are more effective, as well as strengthening organizational management and discipline of members of the Tenggulun Maju Lestari Cooperative through evaluation of farmer activity and providing gardening motivation. The implications of this study show that forest conservation is more effective if the government involves the community directly through social forestry schemes, because this program can reduce conflicts, increase community

compliance, and provide economic benefits that encourage communities to maintain forests sustainably, so that forest conservation policies are not enough to rely only on law enforcement, but also require funding support, technical assistance, and continuous supervision.

FURTHER STUDY

This research has limitations related to the complexity of how local governments solve problems in forest areas through law enforcement without causing riots in the community, while providing justice to communities and residents in forest areas, so that the policy implementation process takes a long time to be thoroughly evaluated. Therefore, further research is recommended to examine in more depth the long-term impact of social forestry programs on the ecological recovery of protected forest areas and the level of economic welfare of farming communities, including evaluation of the effectiveness of agroforestry systems and the institutional sustainability of cooperatives in maintaining a restoration area of 716 hectares in Tenggulun Village.

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