

# Implementation of Customary Law in Merauke

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**Abstract**-customary law is a never-ending problem for the closure because formal law with formal law cannot happen in Indonesia or in some countries that still strongly uphold customary law in addition to national law. Therefore, this research can be done to solve the resolution problem in Merauke. This research uses a judicial empirical method. Data from observation, literature, data completion and in-depth interviews. After that, the data collected is summarized, explained, and analyzed qualitatively. The result of the research shows that there are still many unresolved cases and must be improved and there needs to be local regulation to accommodate customary court to be more selected in the community.

**Keywords:** Customary, implementation, dispute, resolution.

## I. INTRODUCTION

The question of the role of statutory law in social environments permeated by custom and traditional norms is particularly important when the state law aims to correct social inequalities embedded in the . The conventional view is that modern law often fails to take root in custom-driven poor societies, especially when the formal law conflicts with the custom. (Jean-etal:2014)

Hukum Adat adalah hukum yang berlaku dan berkembang dalam lingkungan masyarakat di suatu daerah yang dilakukan secara berulang-ulang seperti yang ada di Negara India Custom is recognized as a major source of law under the Indian legal system. Article 13(1) of India's Constitution provides that when the Constitution entered into force, all previous laws that were inconsistent with the Constitution were considered void. The Constitution defines "law" to include "custom or usage having in the territory of India the force of law." The Courts of India have recognized custom as law only if the custom is (1) "ancient or immemorial" in origin, (2) "reasonable in nature and continuous in use," and (3) "certain." The Courts have interpreted "ancient or immemorial" to mean that for a custom to be binding it "must derive its force from the fact that by long usage it has obtained the force of law." A custom also "derives its validity from being reasonable at inception and present exercise." Lastly, a "certain" custom is one that is "certain in its extent and mode of operation" and invariable (B.J. Krishnan:2000) India's Constitution also provides protection of tribal indigenous

communities and their customs through Articles 244, 244-A, 371-A, and the Fifth and Sixth Schedules. The Fifth and Sixth Schedules provide for a system of "Scheduled Areas" or tribal regions, which are designed to protect the interests of listed indigenous communities or "Scheduled Tribes."

Legal pluralism is a key feature of African legal systems. The form of pluralism that permeates these systems derives from what is known as the principle of "legal centrism," which holds that all law emanates from the state and that rites developed and practiced by non-state actors, including religious and customary institutions, are law only to the extent they are recognized by the state. This may occur through "normative recognition" in which state institutions recognize substantive customary and/or religious laws as law, and/or through "institutional recognition" in which the actions of customary institutions are considered enforceable.

Customary law in some countries is still visible. The same evolution has been detected in Niger where women, in recognition of their ownership rights, may receive part of the crop harvested on the family land by their brothers under an arrangement known as *saro* (Cooper, 1997). It is also interesting to note that women who have completed their primary schooling and those who have a non-agricultural occupation (even after excluding the marketing of agricultural products) have a tendency to express negative opinions about customary practices such as arranged marriages, bride price payments, and the levirate system where by a widow is remarried to a brother of her deceased husband (Gaspart and Platteau, 2010). Such a change of attitudes and beliefs reflects an increasing readiness of these progressive women to challenge the custom.

Formal laws play a marginal role in governing the lives of many African citizens, particularly those residing in rural areas (Chirayath et al., 2006). Instead, customary legal systems provide prompt, accessible, and culturally coherent justice services (Wojkowska, 2006). Customary courts oversee and enforce customs and informal rules

of behavior, typically taking into account local legalitarian and redistributive norms (Platteau, 2000). On the other hand, if those disadvantaged by the customary system face strong social disincentives to appeal to formal legal institutions, they may continue to use them even when the law is available and individually preferred. In this case increased competition of the formal law may provide no clear benefit. In non-corner scenarios customary judges may fear defections and appeals to alternative forums, fostering changes in customary outcomes, even if in equilibrium nobody uses the formal law. Aldashev et al. (2012a, 2012b) provide clear

In Ethiopia (Cecchi, and Melesse: 2016), Mongolia (Caroline: 2009) is consistent with the study that only a small proportion of those directly utilize formal law. Our results show that local institutional dispute resolution may have a role in altering existing customs previous to the desired result. In areas where formal institutions have limited reach.

In Sabah and Sarawak, a number of local customary laws have been passed. In a number of bulletins, Wooley outlines certain features of customary law in hamlets, murut and Kwijani in Sabah. In Sarawak, several customary laws have been enacted and incorporated into the Original Indigenous Laws Act of 1955. The original Indigenous Legal Code approved by Rajah (Raja) Brooke crystallizes in the form of a rigid, unwritten law. Customs adopted by certain other tribes are also carried out. For example, in relation to inheritance law, Chinese customary law has long been recognized by the Sarawak courts and the Sarawak courts want to enforce this law even though Chinese are not native Sarawak residents. It should be noted, however, that in Sarawak, Chinese customary law is enforced as long as the law is recognized by legislation (Astim Riyanto: 2007)

Numerous examples attest that modern laws intended to modify or supersede customary rules have had no impact on such rules. These laws thus remain dead letter. For instance, laws enacted in Sub-Saharan Africa aimed at preventing excessive fragmentation of rural land-holdings—through inheritance or land sale transactions—have never been enforced. The main cause is not the citizens' ignorance of the law but their widespread belief that, given that these laws run counter to deeply entrenched customary principles (e.g. the rights of all male children to receive an apportion of the family land), it is unlikely to be followed by others or backed by appropriate sanctions (André and Platteau, 1998). In countries where the law forbids marriage payments (e.g., bride price in the Ivory Coast, Gabon, Central

African Republic, and dowry in India) or sets a minimum marriage age for girls, people continue to follow the custom and to ignore the law (Ntampaka, 2004). In Gabon and Senegal, the states allow (optionally) to explicitly mention polygamy in marriage contracts. Moreover, the law provides that violation of the commitment to either monogamy or polygamy is a legitimate cause for divorce; in Senegal, the violation of monogamy can be invoked to declare the marriage void. However, the legal prescription is frequently ignored by men who renege on their commitment to monogamy (Coulibaly, 2005; Nambo, 2005; Sacco, 2008)

In reality, the indigenous peoples in Papua still implement, maintain and obey their own customary courts, especially in resolving customary cases among members of customary law community. This is evident and supported by the Special Regional Regulation (Perdasus) of Papua No. 20 of 2008 on Customary Court in Papua. Legislatively, indigenous resolution is explicit, but the implementation of the regulation is difficult and suboptimal. According to Mahfud MD, recognition of customary law community units as referred to in Article 18B clause (2) of Constitution 1945 also means recognition of structures and governance developed by local indigenous constitutional norms. The obstacles of implementing Special Autonomy Law in Papua include different understandings and perceptions on Special Autonomy in Papua. This review is even more relevant because dispute resolution is a sociological fact that customary courts are alive and practiced in the thousands customary law community units in the territory of the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia. It's very important to study the political dynamics of judicial power from time to time in responding to the social reality (Hedar: 2003). The customary law of some countries is still recognized and in this occasion the authority tries to elaborate on the customary law that applies in Merauke Papua Indonesia and this study is very relevant because so far no one has written in detail about customary law in Merauke.

## II. MATERIALS AND METHODS

This research uses a judicial empirical method. Data were collected from observation, literature, data collection and in-depth interviews. After that, the collected data is collected, described, and analyzed qualitatively

## III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The settlement of the conflict that occurred in several countries must be different from each other. One of the examples is Thai Government's

Effort in Conflict Resolution in Southern Thailand In 2004-2009 (Aprila Fitri, 2016).

Disin Singapore to accommodate conflict settlements that occur then the Singapore government has established the Singapore Mediation Center. Each country has its own way of handling the customary conflict, such as in Malaysia which is solved by the so-called *Penghulu* (head of Malay village). *Panchayat* (Indian community council) in Asian and African countries even see the conflict from customary law perspective as long as it can be accepted by the community.

The most resolved cases are land disputes. Land disputes are customary problems which are so difficult to resolve because in Merauke the land was mainly dominated by *Ulayat* landowners that consist of 7 (seven) clans. Furthermore, in solving the existing land problems in Merauke district there is already an institution which specifically handles land-law cases that is called as Customary Community Institution (*Lembaga Masyarakat Adat-LMA Imbuti*). Although land problems in Merauke are difficult to resolve, it never leads to inter-ethnic fights, apart from the problem of uninterrupted soil problems of mild persecution, domestic violence, sexual assault cases and murder cases which became customary issues (settled in customary meetings). The actual settlement of disputes will not result in conflict of norms as long as the authority of the custom courts is regulated in detail.

If the settlement through the court of justice aims to obtain justice and legal certainty, then what is prioritized in the out-of-court settlement is precisely the peace in handling disputes between the involved parties, rather than seeking the right or wrong parties. If you have to find out who is right and wrong, it will not result in a decision that benefits the parties to the dispute.

The number of custom-resolved cases table 1.

Table 1. Number of Villages/Cases

No	Villages	Cases	Details
1	Wayau	1	1 resumed, still investigated
2	Senegi	9	1 resumed, already given the verdict
3	Sota	4	Completed
4	Urumb	1	Completed
5	Domande	12	Completed
6.	Toray	6	Completed

The table analyzes that many cases are resolved customarily and of the most prevalent cases

are land disputes, sexual harassment cases, domestic violence, as well as two murder cases. In order to find out how many cases are resolved customarily. Cases that occurred in Senegi had also been resolved customarily by giving a fine, by giving a daughter and *wati*.

Table 1 explains that cases occurring in Senegi and Wayau appear to have sanctioned sanctions in which cases have been resolved customarily but are also processed by formal law without undoing the customary sanctions that have been granted. The customary institution's decision here is considered away to remove the gaps between the two parties involved in the dispute so as not to inflict a grudge on the part of the victim.

In accordance with the research field seen that the most cases are cases of violence in the household and followed by land cases this can be seen in table 2.

Table 2: Types of cases resolved customarily in some villages in Merauke

No	Villages	Cases	Number of cases
1	Wayau	murder	1
2	Senegi	murder domestic violence Case of land	1 5 3
3	Sota	domestic violence	4
4	Urumb	Case of land	1
5	Domande	domestic violence Case of land Persecution Rape Case of land	4 2 2 2 2
6.	Toray	domestic violence	6

Table 2 explains that cases processed in adat court are dominated more by domestic violence and these cases are all resolved by customary law and are well accepted by the litigants only in cases of murder that occurred in the wayau and the perpendicular jurisdiction formal. From the results of interviews with heads of villages in each village can be concluded that cases of violence in the household are more under the customary court because the community considers that the settlement does not take a long time and sanctions from it is considered not heavy. The case of domestic violence occurring in Merauke is due to the very low level of education. This can be seen in table 3 of the level of community education whose case is handled in the judiciary or customary law.

Table 3. Educational level of the offender

No	Villages	Number of cases	Level of education	
			primary school	junior high school
1	Wayau	1	1	
2	Senegi	9	5	4
3	Sota	4	4	
4	Urumb	1	1	
5	Domande	12	8	4
6.	Toray	6	6	

From table 3 it can be seen that cases occurring in dimerauke are due to very low level of education. This was also revealed by the Sota village chief that "the number of cases of domestic

violence that occur in the city is due to the very low level of education and also because of the lack of public understanding about the laws so that there is still often a persecution in the household.

The level of education and lack of understanding of human resources about the law is also one of the problems faced in the field so that in solving legal problems are still not effective so that the government needs to take action to provide training related to legal understanding to the elders in Merauke as a way to decide and providing more optimal sanctions

The low level of education owned by human resources in some villages by 2017 can be seen in table 4.

Table 4: Level of education of human resources

No	Villages	Volume	level of education				
			Not Education		Junior high	Senior high	college
1	Wayau	4	3	1			
2	Senegi	4	2	2			
3	Sota	5		2		1	2
4	Urumb	5	2	1		2	
5	Domande	5		2		3	
6.	Toray	6	4	1	1	1	
		29	11	9		7	2

In table 4 it can be seen that most human resources have education that does not complete primary school education so that in decision making is still not optimal so that some cases handled must proceed to formal path because society feel dissatisfied with decision or sanction which decided.

In order for the implementation of adat law and national law to work side by side it is necessary to make improvements and addition everywhere including to make a regional regulation which is derived from the Special Autonomy Law and the existing legislation so that the judiciary is legally recognized and the community can choose whether to settle his case to the customary court or to the formal justice

IV. CONCLUSION

Recognition of customary justice institutions is very important not only the recognition of legislation but how the real recognition in the implementation so as not to happen. In this means that cases that have been resolved customarily no longer in the proceeding to the National Court as long as the community has received the results of the decision. In solving adat conflicts no one wins or loses, but strives for disturbed balance recovered, and the parties to the dispute can relate harmoniously so as to create harmony with regard

to the facts and feelings that live in society, which has been embedded into tradition from generation to generation.

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