

(Original Article)

## The Role of Population Administration Implementation at Pulau Laut Kepulauan Sub-District Office, Kotabaru Regency

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**Abstract:** This study aims to analyse the role of the Government Section at Pulau Laut Kepulauan Sub-district Office, Kotabaru Regency, in the implementation of population administration and to identify the challenges encountered in its execution. A qualitative approach with a descriptive research design was employed in this study. Data were collected through in-depth interviews, observation, and documentation. The findings reveal that the Government Section plays four strategic roles in population administration implementation: facilitator, mediator, motivator, and dynamist. As a facilitator, it provides information and assistance to the community. As a mediator, it coordinates with village governments and relevant agencies. As a motivator, it conducts socialisation to raise public awareness. As a dynamist, it drives service improvements through periodic data updates. However, several challenges were identified, including limited human resources, inadequate infrastructure, geographical constraints due to the archipelagic nature of the area, and low public awareness. These challenges often result in suboptimal service coverage and difficulties in accessing services for residents in remote islands. This study contributes to the public administration literature by providing empirical evidence regarding the role of sub-district governments in population administration implementation in archipelagic regions.

**Keywords:** population administration, public services, sub-district office, archipelagic region, Kotabaru

### 1. Introduction

As one of the governmental functions, population administration holds a strategic role in creating orderly state administration and ensuring legal certainty regarding the status and identity of every citizen. Accurate population data not only supports public services but also serves as a foundation for formulating development plans, designing policies, and implementing various government programmes. Consequently, its implementation is required to proceed effectively and sustainably so as to reach all segments of society without exception, as mandated by Law Number 24 of 2013 concerning Amendments to Law Number 23 of 2006

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concerning Population Administration, which affirms the necessity of recording every population event and vital event experienced by citizens.

Within the structure of regional government, the sub-district occupies a strategic position as the apparatus that coordinates the conduct of governance, services to citizens, and the development of village government, as regulated in Government Regulation Number 17 of 2018 concerning Sub-districts. Its position as a bridge between the regency government and communities at the village level makes the sub-district instrumental in determining the success of population administration implementation. Ndraha (2018) asserts that the government essentially bears the service function which must be carried out effectively and oriented towards fulfilling public needs. On this basis, the sub-district is not merely an executor of administrative tasks but also serves as a driver for improving the quality of services to the community.

The implementation of population administration cannot operate optimally without the involvement of multiple parties, ranging from regional governments, sub-districts, and villages, to the community as service users. From the perspective of public administration, the extent to which a government organisation succeeds in carrying out its duties is largely determined by its ability to perform its roles in accordance with its functions and responsibilities. As cited by Syani (2023), Levinson stated that every individual or organisation has certain roles that must be performed in accordance with their position and responsibilities within the social system. This understanding aligns with Soekanto (2014), who emphasises that social roles essentially constitute the exercise of rights and obligations inherent in a position within society. Referring to this, the sub-district government in the implementation of population administration is required to perform four functions simultaneously: facilitator, mediator, motivator, and dynamist, so that the services provided can operate optimally.

Various policies have actually been designed to improve the quality of population administration; however, their implementation on the ground still encounters a number of obstacles. Limited resources, uneven public awareness, suboptimal inter-institutional coordination, and certain geographical conditions often become causes of the less effective population administration services. Haluana'a et al. (2021) state that the success of public services at the sub-district level largely depends on the government's ability to build coordination and reach all communities equitably. Consequently, each region faces its own challenges in accordance with its respective social and geographical characteristics.

One area with such geographical characteristics is Pulau Laut Kepulauan Sub-district, Kotabaru Regency, where villages are scattered and separated by waters. This geographical condition presents its own challenges in the implementation of population administration, as community access to public services heavily depends on the availability of transportation, weather conditions, and supporting infrastructure. A similar pattern was found by Lestari (2013) in the implementation of public services in various disadvantaged, border, and other archipelagic regions in Indonesia. In addition, some residents' awareness of the importance of having population documents has not been fully formed, which ultimately affects their level of participation in managing population administration documents.

Several previous studies have actually highlighted the role of sub-district governments in various aspects of development and public services. Afdhalu et al. (2019), for instance, found that the role of the sub-district government is quite significant in supporting the implementation of development at the local level, while Yana (2020) added that the success of governance is largely determined by the government's ability to empower and involve its citizens. However, research that specifically examines the role of sub-district governments in the implementation of

population administration in archipelagic regions remains relatively rare, even though the complexity of archipelagic regions is clearly different from mainland areas, particularly concerning the accessibility of public services.

This research gap underlies this study, which is focused on analysing the role of the Government Section at Pulau Laut Kepulauan Sub-district Office, Kotabaru Regency, in the implementation of population administration while simultaneously identifying the challenges accompanying its execution. The results of this study are expected to enrich public administration studies, particularly those related to the implementation of population administration in archipelagic regions, and can serve as a reference for regional governments in their efforts to improve the quality of population administration services for their communities.

## **2. Methods**

### **Research Design**

This study was designed using a qualitative approach with a descriptive nature. This choice was made considering that the research objective is to explore in depth how the Government Section performs its role in the implementation of population administration, as well as what challenges arise in its execution at Pulau Laut Kepulauan Sub-district, Kotabaru Regency. Moleong (2017) explains that qualitative research essentially seeks to understand the phenomena experienced by research subjects holistically, which is expressed through descriptions in the form of words and language within the natural context of the subject.

### **Research Location**

The research was conducted at Pulau Laut Kepulauan Sub-district Office, Kotabaru Regency, with the consideration that this area consists of several islands whose geographical conditions present unique challenges for the implementation of population administration. The focus of the study is

directed towards the role of the Government Section as facilitator, mediator, motivator, and dynamist, as well as the factors that hinder the execution of these roles.

### **Data Sources**

The data used in this study are divided into primary data and secondary data. Primary data were collected through in-depth interviews with informants considered to understand and be directly involved in the implementation of population administration. Secondary data were obtained from documents, archives, laws and regulations, and related literature.

### **Data Collection Techniques**

Data were collected by combining observation, interviews, and documentation, with the expectation that these three techniques can complement each other so that the collected data are more comprehensive and the research results are more credible.

### **Data Analysis Technique**

The collected data were analysed following the interactive model of Miles and Huberman (1984), which consists of three stages: data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing. In the reduction stage, information relevant to the research objectives is selected and focused; subsequently, the data are organised systematically to facilitate interpretation; and in the final stage, conclusions are drawn gradually throughout the research process.

### **Data Validity**

To maintain data validity, this study also applied source triangulation and method triangulation, in accordance with Sugiyono's (2018) recommendations.

## **3. Results and Discussion**

### **The Role of the Government Section in Population Administration Implementation**

### **Role as Facilitator**

The field findings indicate that the Government Section of Pulau Laut Kepulauan Sub-district has performed its facilitator role, among others, by providing information, assisting the community in the administrative process, and coordinating with village governments to enable residents to obtain population documents. The concrete manifestation of this role is evident in the dissemination of information regarding the requirements and procedures for processing population documents to the community. This facilitator role is crucial given that some residents still face difficulties in accessing information about population administration services.

Nevertheless, this facilitation function has not yet been optimally executed. The archipelagic geographical condition makes it difficult for some community members to reach population administration services, compounded by the limited supporting facilities that further erode service effectiveness. This indicates that the success of the facilitator role is not merely a matter of apparatus capacity but also depends on the availability of resources and the ease of regional access. A similar conclusion was also put forward by Erinaldi (2021) in their study on public service performance at sub-district offices.

### **Role as Mediator**

In its capacity as a mediator, the Government Section serves as a bridge for communication between the community, village governments, and relevant agencies in the management of population administration. This is evident from the coordination carried out in the collection of population data, the dissemination of policy information, and the resolution of various issues arising in population administration services.

This mediator role is significant as it strengthens working relationships among the parties involved in the implementation of population administration. Good coordination enables various administrative obstacles to be resolved more quickly, thereby making

services to the community more effective. This finding aligns with the view of Syani (2023), who stated that an organisation's role will be effective if the organisation is able to foster good relationships and coordination with relevant parties.

### **Role as Motivator**

The role as motivator is reflected in the sub-district's various efforts to raise community awareness of the importance of having population documents. Regular socialisation is conducted, both through village governments and through community activities that directly involve residents. In addition, mobile service programmes (jemput bola) are also implemented as a strategy to bring services closer to communities living in hard-to-reach areas. This pattern aligns with the findings of Ainurachma (2022), which showed that citizen participation in population administration awareness programmes is largely determined by the intensity of socialisation conducted by government officials.

The implementation of this motivator role demonstrates the sub-district government's commitment to encouraging community participation. These efforts are important to undertake, as there are still residents who consider population documents necessary only at certain times, such as when applying for social assistance or other administrative needs. Therefore, efforts to increase community awareness must be carried out continuously and sustainably in order to achieve orderly population administration.

### **Role as Dynamist**

As a dynamist, the Government Section strives to improve the quality of population administration services through data updates and strengthening coordination with village governments. Population data updates are conducted periodically to ensure that the data held by the government remains accurate and reflects the actual condition of the community.

The dynamist role is also evident from the sub-district's efforts to encourage service innovations that are more appropriate to the conditions of the archipelagic region. This step is important considering that the accuracy of population data is one of the primary requirements in the implementation of public services and development programmes. In other words, the sub-district not only functions to carry out administrative tasks but also acts as a driver for improving the quality of governance.

### **Challenges in Population Administration Implementation**

This study also identified several factors that hinder the optimisation of population administration implementation in Pulau Laut Kepulauan Sub-district. First, the primary challenge stems from budget constraints, which have an impact on the limited implementation of socialisation activities, field services, and the provision of supporting facilities, resulting in service coverage to the community not yet being fully maximised.

Second, challenges arise from the geographical conditions of the archipelagic region, which make service access far more difficult compared to mainland areas. The considerable distance between areas and the dependence on sea transportation often become obstacles, compounded by weather factors that also affect the mobility of both the community and service officers.

Third, the challenge lies in the low awareness of some community members regarding the importance of population administration. Some residents only process population documents when they are truly needed, so that data updates have not yet run optimally.

These conditions affirm that improving service quality must be accompanied by more intensive and sustained education and socialisation efforts directed towards the community.

### **Efforts to Overcome Challenges**

Despite the identified challenges, the Government Section of Pulau Laut Kepulauan Sub-district has made several efforts to improve population

administration services. These include service simplification to reduce processing times and minimise community confusion. The sub-district office has also implemented mobile services (jemput bola), where staff periodically visit remote islands to provide population administration services directly to the community. Digitalisation is gradually being adopted for population data management, although this effort still faces infrastructure limitations. Coordination with village governments is maintained to facilitate the collection of population data and community outreach, while socialisation and public education activities are conducted to improve public awareness regarding the importance of population documents and the procedures for obtaining them.

### **Theoretical Implications**

The findings of this study contribute to the public administration literature in several ways. First, the study reinforces the applicability of social role theory (Soekanto, 2014) within the context of sub-district government administration, demonstrating that the facilitator, mediator, motivator, and dynamist roles are essential for effective population administration implementation. Second, the findings highlight the importance of understanding geographical characteristics in designing public service delivery mechanisms, as emphasised by Dwiyanto (2018) and Lestari (2013). Third, the study provides empirical evidence that archipelagic regions require differentiated service approaches, which demand more flexible and adaptive service models. Fourth, this research addresses the research gap identified in previous studies by providing specific insights into population administration implementation in archipelagic contexts, which have been relatively underexplored in the existing literature.

### **Practical Implications**

From a practical perspective, the findings offer insights for policymakers and local governments in improving population administration services in archipelagic areas. First, investment in infrastructure and information

technology is essential to support efficient service delivery. Second, human resource capacity building through training and recruitment should be prioritised to enhance service quality. Third, alternative service delivery mechanisms, such as mobile services and online applications, should be developed and expanded to reach remote communities. Fourth, public awareness campaigns should be conducted to improve community understanding of population administration procedures and requirements. Fifth, inter-institutional coordination mechanisms should be strengthened to ensure seamless service delivery across government levels. Sixth, budget allocation for population administration services in archipelagic regions should be increased to address the unique challenges posed by geographical conditions.

#### **Limitations and Future Research Directions**

This study has several limitations that should be acknowledged. First, the study was conducted in a single sub-district, which may restrict the generalisability of the findings to other archipelagic regions with different characteristics. Second, the study relied primarily on qualitative data, which may not capture quantitative aspects of service quality and community satisfaction. Third, the study focused on the Government Section's perspective, and future research could incorporate the perspectives of community members more extensively. Future research should consider comparative studies across multiple sub-districts and archipelagic regions, as well as quantitative studies measuring community satisfaction with population administration services. Additionally, future studies could examine the effectiveness of mobile service programmes and digitalisation efforts in improving population administration services in remote areas.

#### **4. Conclusion**

This study concludes that the Government Section of Pulau Laut Kepulauan Sub-district has performed four roles in the implementation of population

administration, namely as facilitator, mediator, motivator, and dynamist. These four roles are manifested through the provision of information and assistance to the community, the strengthening of coordination with village governments and relevant agencies, the implementation of socialisation activities, and the periodic updating of population data. This reflects the sub-district government's genuine efforts to continuously improve the quality of population administration services for the community in the archipelagic region.

On the other hand, the implementation of population administration in this region still faces a number of challenges, such as budget constraints, the archipelagic geographical conditions, and the lack of full awareness among some community members regarding the importance of population documents. These challenges often result in suboptimal service coverage, difficulties in accessing services for residents in remote islands, and delays in data updates.

To address these challenges, more adequate resource support, stronger inter-institutional coordination, and more intensive and sustained socialisation efforts are required, including through the development of electronic services for online submission of population documents. This would enable population administration services in Pulau Laut Kepulauan Sub-district, Kotabaru Regency, to be implemented more effectively, equitably, and reach all members of the community.

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