

The Utilization of E-Government Public Service for Improving Public Capability and Accessibility During the Covid-19 Pandemic

Rofi Wahanisa¹, Eko Mukminto², Ratih Damayanti³, Dani Muhtada⁴
^{1,2,3,4}Faculty of Law, Universitas Negeri Semarang
rofiwahanisa@mail.unnes.ac.id

Abstract— One of the measures taken to combat the spread and infection of Covid-19 is the issuance of Government Regulation No. 1/2020, in which the Indonesian Government imposed large-scale social restriction (PSBB). The implementation involves closing public schools and workplaces, restricting religious activities, and restricting activities in public places and facilities. The Government urges society to learn, work, and have prayers at home. The logical consequence of this large-scale social restriction affects public services. Therefore, a solution is required in this situation. Electronic Government (e-Gov) or the regional Government's digital governance, is an alternative for public services. This platform provides public information and services, business affairs, services related to governance, etc., through information and technology devices. However, the problem in this digital public service lies not only in applying its information system but also in public knowledge and information accessibility. A significant gap in terms of digital understanding is often found in rural society, which has limited knowledge and is reluctant to use new technology. This paper analyses and describes villagers' and officials' lack of understanding about online-based public services known as e-government. This paper also sheds light on what village officials do to adjust villagers' digital knowledge to these online-based services.

Keywords—E-Government, Public Service, Social Distancing.

I. INTRODUCTION

The spread of SARS_Cov2, known as coronavirus, has claimed many lives in Wuhan, Hubei Province, China. In early January 2020, this virus has spread to various countries across the world. By March 11, 2020, the World Health Organization (WHO) declared Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19) as a global pandemic. The President of Indonesia responded to the initial indication of the spread of coronavirus by issuing Presidential Decree No. 7/2020 concerning COVID-19 Response Acceleration Task Force on March 13, 2020[1] Besides the presidential decree, the Government also has issued other products of

law such as legislation and policies to deal with the pandemic. There are at least eight products of law that have been adopted, including Presidential Regulation No. 52/2020 on the establishment of an observation and containment facility in the handling of COVID-19 and other emerging infectious cases in Galang Island in the city of Batam, Riau Islands Province, issued on March 31, 2020. In addition, the Government has issued Presidential Instruction No. 4/2020 on refocusing activities, budget reallocation, and procurement of goods and services for accelerating the handling of COVID-19, which orders the ministries and institutions to allocate budget to deal with the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. Another product of law was Government Regulation No. 21/2020 on Large-Scale Social Restrictions (PSBB) for accelerating the handling of COVID-19, issued on March 31, 2020, due to growing pressure from the regional Government asking the President to issue a lockdown policy to deal with the massive spread of COVID-19.

Then, the Government issued Presidential Decree No. 11/2020 concerning the national public health emergency declaration on March 31, 2020. Afterward, Government Regulation instead of Law No. 1 of 2020 on state fiscal policy and financial system stability in handling COVID-19. Finally, Public Activity Restrictions (PPKM) policy is still implemented, involving an emergency, micro, and multi-tiered restrictions. The spread and handling level is continuously evaluated to be reviewed within a specified period continually.

The handling and measures taken by both central and regional governments to prevent the spread of coronavirus lead to logical consequences, which inevitably affect the public service sector. An alternative of public service already exists in Electronic Government (e-Gov) or digital Government, which regional governments have widely implemented. Electronic Government refers to providing information and public services, business affairs, government services, and information technology devices [3][4]. The utilization of e-government services can be

regarded as a support for improving good governance if it refers to Presidential Instruction No. 3/2003 on the strategy for the development of e-government to encourage good governance in terms of public transparency and accountability.

The standard of system-based public services may refer to Article 23 paragraph (1) of Law No. 25/2009 on public services, which states that is to provide information to support the implementation of public services, it is necessary to create a nation-based information system. Moreover, it is stated in paragraph (4) that the authority is responsible for managing the system, which includes electronic and non-electronic systems by at least providing the institution profile, administrator profile, service standard, service notification, customer service, and performance assessment. The use of e-government is considered an ideal solution during the pandemic in which public services remain available within the public restriction following the health protocol. Despite avoiding crowds, society can still access the services provided by the Government.

The e-government services aim to facilitate the provision of public services, but it poses some problems. This paper will discuss the objectives of utilizing e-government, including its benefits and its basic principles and stages. This paper will also shed light on the problems arising in utilizing e-government.

II. RESEARCH METHOD

This study used an empirical juridical approach by conducting an audience with village officials. This approach was considered suitable for this study as the audience involved interviews, which enabled the researchers to understand their reluctance to use technological devices in accessing the services. A descriptive qualitative method was used to analyze the data. This method allowed the researchers to get a detailed description and comprehensive understanding of the problem by focusing on the process. The data were analyzed using an interactive model suggested by Miles, Huberman, and Saldana [4].

III. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

1) Objectives of the e-government utilization in providing public services

Public services are one of the communities needs that the government officials must provide at central and regional levels. The existence of regional autonomy is expected to provide better and more transparent public services because one of the objectives of regional autonomy is to improve the quality of public services by maximizing the regional Government's performance. At present, there has been a shift in public service reform from manual services that require face-to-face transactions to

online-based services that enable society to access numerous public services, including data, information, and service transactions through the internet [5].

Electronic Government is a new interaction mechanism between the Government and the society or other interested parties through information technology (particularly the internet) to improve the quality of services [6]. E-government involves fewer government officials, but they must be reliable and work effectively and efficiently, leading to professionalism. This problem becomes one of the current and future challenges faced by the Government. According to Fang [7], electronic Government is defined as "a way for governments to use the most innovative information and communication technologies, particularly web-based internet applications, to provide citizens and businesses with more convenient access to government, information, and services to improve the quality of the services and provide greater opportunities to participate in democratic institutions and processes". In addition, Moreover, who was the United Nations Division for Public Economics and Public Administration in 2001, argues that e-government employs the internet and the world wide web to provide information and government services for society, businesses, and other government institutions [8]. Deloitte Research gives another definition in 2000 that e-government refers to the utilization of information and communication technology, especially the internet, to provide government services for society, businesses, and employees [9].

The model of e-government, as portrayed in figure 1, shows an interaction model between stakeholders and the Government through electronic devices or information technology. There are eight interactions [10], in the model explained as follows.

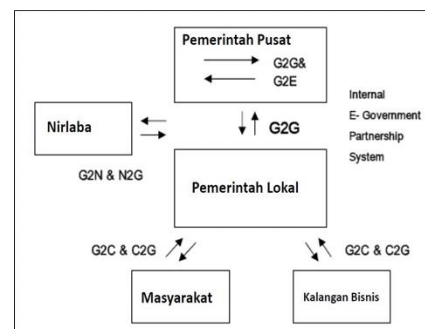


Figure.1 The model of e-government

This electronic Government's implementation aims to facilitate society using public services and enable the Government to provide the services. According to Rianto and Lestari [11], the objectives of electronic government application are to achieve: 1) availability of internet-based network system connecting government institutions, governments to private sectors and global society which allows two-way communication in order to improve

coordination, empowerment, and public participation in governance; 2) an integrated information system or data processing to support the dissemination of information based on the principles of transparency and public accountability; 3) the implementation of automatic office works and public service applications which can provide easy access for those needing the services. Furthermore, Indrajit, as cited in Rianto and Lestari (2010: 40 lists the types of electronic government relations: Government to Citizens (G-to-C), Government to Business (G-to-B), Government to Government (G-to-G), dan Government to Employees (G-to-E). These relations are interactions connecting Government to society, Government to private sectors, one Government to another, and Government to the employees.

Electronic Government is defined as the Government's means of providing the most innovative information and communication technology, especially internet-based applications, to provide the society and businesses with easier access to government information and services to improve the service quality and give plenty of opportunities to participate in the process of democratic institutions. Besides, Fang [12] suggests that electronic Government provides better quality with more efficient cost, better government services, and better relationships between society and Government. There are three types of electronic Government in public services: publish, interact, and transact.

According to Indrajit, as cited by Rianto and Lestari [13], 'publish' refers to one-way communication, in which the Government publishes various data and information that interested society parties can directly and freely accessible through the internet. Then, 'interact' refers to two-way communication in which the interested parties can have a dialogue, ask questions, or discuss with the Government virtually. Besides, 'transact' refers to two-way communication between the Government and the society using the services to carry out online service transactions.

2) *Basic principles and stages of e-government*

E-government brings numerous benefits, including (1) reducing administrative costs; (2) improving the ability to respond to various requests and questions concerning public services in terms of effectiveness and accuracy; (3) providing service access to all levels of the department; (4) providing assistance to the local and national economy; (5) as a means of obtaining feedback freely. In addition, e-government has several basic principles. (1) It is a means. (2) It poses a risk to the integration of the existing data. (3) It cannot replace public management and the Government's internal control. (4) It still provokes a debate regarding its role in eliminating corruption. (5) It is still not proven to reduce poverty, and (6) it requires cooperation between ICT professionals and the Government.

In e-government, it has six stages are: (1) setting up an email system and internal network; (2) enabling inter-organizational and public access to information; (3) allowing 2-way communication; (4) allowing the exchange of value; (5) digital democracy; and (6) joined-up government. [14]

3) *Covid 19 Pandemics and The Problems in utilizing e-government in providing public service*

The use of e-government in Indonesia according Lumbanbraja (2020) in his article entitled "*Urgensi Transformasi Pelayanan Publik melalui E-Government Pada New Normal dan Reformasi Regulasi Birokrasi*" showed that Indonesia is below Singapore. [15] It happens because Indonesia's e-government is not supported by adequate infrastructure and government officials who do not comprehend the meaning of e-government utilization in the public sector. Nevertheless, some regional governments show significant progress in utilizing e-government.

The Government of Surabaya has been using e-government to procure goods and services (e-procurement). The other governments also show fine achievement in implementing e-government such as Jakarta Provincial Government, Yogyakarta Provincial Government, East Java Provincial Government, North Sulawesi Provincial Government, Yogyakarta City Government, Bogor City Government, Tarakan City Government, Kebumen Regency Government, East Kutai Regency Government, Kutai Kartanegara Regency Government, Bantul Regency Government, and Malang Regency Government [15]. In addition, in terms of its regulations and policy, the Government has issued Presidential Instruction No. 3/2003 on the strategy for developing e-government followed by numerous guidelines of e-government such as guidelines for developing infrastructure of government portal, guidelines for Government's electronic document system management, and guidelines for implementing regional government websites, et cetera.

During the Covid 19 pandemic, the Government of Indonesia set a policy of Large-Scale Social Restrictions (PSBB) or PPKM in various regions instead of lockdown [16]. This policy occurs primarily in areas that are declared to be spreading Covid-19. Thus, e-government-based public services can be a breakthrough in providing services to the community. Nevertheless, considering the lack of utilization of e-government, the Government needs to evaluate and optimize e-government in public services.

Based on various guidelines have been developed by the Department of Communication and Information technology in 2004 which essentially underpin the implementation of e-government at the central and regional levels. However, several regulations which are expected to be issued immediately have not been realized, including in the information and electronic transaction, which the

House of Representatives has not discussed. Regarding its policy, the Government does not seem entirely successful in formulating a concrete strategy generating different components (across sectors) to collaboratively develop and operate applications that must be integrated [14]. In addition, the Government also should consider the policy based on Presidential Regulation on E-Government No. 95/2018 concerning the national e-government coordination team and expand its responsibilities to prioritize the list of public services, improve processes, and develop platforms for sharing information agencies. And then, cultural change and feedback from the community is the key to improving national public services. Satisfaction surveys should be conducted regularly to listen to citizens' opinions about their primary public services during the pandemic. [17]

IV. CONCLUSION

Regarding the implementation of e-government in Indonesia and the results achieved, the concept and implementation strategy of e-government requires improvement in numerous aspects. Delaying the implementation of e-government will only keep this nation away from the reform goal to improve the quality of public services and public welfare through bureaucratic efficiency. The implementation of e-government revitalization must consider the Government's and public's preparedness based on the basic principles of e-government. The supporting factor in e-government management is adequate facilities and infrastructure. On the contrary, the factor hindering the implementation of e-government is the lack of motivation from leaders, officials, and operating officers to utilize this facility. There are also concerns regarding data leakage, unfamiliar devices for village officials, and errors of data input which eventually lead to problems in implementing e-government in village government.

There are several measures which can be taken soon. First, it is necessary to evaluate the e-government programs implemented at all levels, including village-level public services. Second, it is essential to understand the potential of e-government from the society, private economy sector, and government officials to achieve the national development target in the telematics sector. Moreover, it is also necessary to accomplish various main programs of e-government that have not been implemented successfully and to sort out priorities of e-government that can provide employment and achieve better governance practices in various public services. Finally, it is essential to build up access and telematics infrastructure for all parties to utilize e-government in every social and economic aspect.

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