

(Research) Article

Empowering Village Government in Realized Village Autonomy According to Law Number 6 of 2014 Concerning Villages

(Case Study of the Natumingka Village Government, Borbor

District, Toba Regency)

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Abstract: *This study examines the empowerment of village governments in realizing village autonomy as regulated in Law Number 6 of 2014 concerning Villages, with a case study focus on the Natumingka Village Government, Borbor District, Toba Regency. The law affirms villages as government entities that have the authority to regulate and manage community interests based on ancestral rights and local autonomy, which aims to strengthen democratic, participatory, and independent village governance. This study also examines changes and improvements to regulations that occurred with the enactment of Law Number 3 of 2024 Jo, which emphasizes the strategic role of villages in national development and optimizes the authority and support for the empowerment of village government officials and their communities.*

Keywords: *Village Government Empowerment; Village Autonomy; Local Governance; Village Development; Legal Framework*

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1. Introduction

A village is a legal community unit that possesses the authority to regulate and manage its own affairs. The existence of villages is recognized within Indonesia's constitutional system as an integral part of governance. (Bagir Manan. (2001)). Law No. 3 of 2024, which is the Second Amendment to Law No. 6 of 2014 concerning Villages, provides a strong legal foundation for the implementation of village autonomy with the aim of strengthening democratic, participatory, and sustainable village governance. This law regulates the authority of villages in managing government, development, and community affairs in accordance with local potentials and needs, including the management of village finances and public services. (Sari, R. A., & Prabowo, H. (2020)). The principle of village independence enshrined in the law emphasizes that villages are not merely objects of development, but subjects with full authority to administer governmental affairs, development, community guidance, and community empowerment. (Hidayat, R. (2020)).

Village community empowerment in this Law is defined as an effort to develop community independence and welfare through the enhancement of knowledge, attitudes, skills, awareness, and the utilization of village resources. Villages are obliged to promote community empowerment through policies, programs, and assistance that are in line with the problems and priorities of village communities. With such authority, villages are expected to develop local potential, increase community participation, and create governance that is transparent, accountable, and oriented toward the welfare of village communities. (Suharto, S. (2017)).

The definition of village empowerment according to Law Number 6 of 2014 concerning Villages is an effort to develop the independence and welfare of village communities by enhancing knowledge, attitudes, skills, behavior, capacity, and awareness, as well as by utilizing resources through the establishment of policies, programs, activities, and assistance that are in line with the essence of problems and the priority needs of village communities. Village community empowerment is understood as a process aimed at advancing the capacity of village communities so that they can manage their affairs independently. This also emphasizes the active participation of the community in deliberation and decision-making, thereby ensuring that democracy and public oversight can function effectively in village development. (Sumpeno, W. (2011)).

Village government empowerment can be understood as an effort to enhance the capacity of village officials, strengthen institutions, and encourage community participation in governance. In its implementation, village empowerment includes the application of appropriate science and technology, the improvement of government and community quality through education, training, and counseling, as well as the recognition and utilization of existing traditional village institutions. According to the Village Law, village empowerment is an organized process that fosters the independence and welfare of village communities through an inclusive approach based on local needs and potentials. (Sutoro Eko. (2014)). The implementation of village empowerment under Law Number 6 of 2014 concerning Villages encompasses several key aspects. Village empowerment is directed at increasing the independence and welfare of village communities through various processes and policies. The Village Law grants villages the authority to regulate and manage village development in a participatory manner by actively involving the community. (Sutrisno, E. (2019)).

Nevertheless, the reality in the field shows that various obstacles still exist in the implementation of village government empowerment. The low quality of human resources among village officials, the lack of adequate facilities and infrastructure, as well as weak village financial management, often become barriers that reduce the effectiveness of implementing village autonomy. (Kuncoro, M. (2010)).

Natumingka Village, located in Borbor Sub-district, Toba Regency, is a village with a majority of Toba ethnic residents who rely on agriculture such as coffee, palm sugar, and other local crops for their livelihood. The social and economic conditions of this village are highly relevant to empowerment efforts aimed at improving community welfare through the development of local potential and the active participation of the community in village development. Community empowerment in this Law is defined as an effort to develop the independence and welfare of the community through the enhancement of knowledge, attitudes, skills, awareness, as well as the utilization of village resources. Villages are obliged

to foster community empowerment through policies, programs, and assistance that correspond to the problems and priorities of village communities.

Empowerment in Natumingka Village can be focused on enhancing community capacity in managing natural resources and the village economy, providing training in productive economic enterprises, as well as strengthening village institutions so that they can effectively and accountably carry out governmental and developmental functions in accordance with the mandate of the Village Law. Village government empowerment in Indonesia, particularly in Natumingka Village, Borbor Sub-district, Toba Regency, cannot be separated from the spirit of village autonomy as stipulated in Law Number 6 of 2014 concerning Villages. (Halim, A., & Sari, D. (2019)). This law provides a strong legal foundation for villages to independently organize and manage governmental and developmental affairs, with the goal of improving the welfare of village communities. The administration of government and the implementation of development in villages are directed at improving the standard of living and welfare of the people through the establishment of policies, programs, and activities that align with the essence of the problems and the priority needs of village communities. (Republic of Indonesia. (2004)).

The main objective of village autonomy is to improve community welfare through better management of resources. In this regard, village governments are expected to formulate policies that are responsive to local conditions and facilitate active community participation in the planning and implementation of development. However, challenges such as limited human resources, the community's lack of understanding of their rights and obligations, and issues in village financial management often hinder this process. (Sari, A. (2020)).

One of the key points in the law is the recognition of the village as a legal entity with the right to manage natural resources and the potential within its territory. This encourages villages to be more proactive in planning and implementing development programs that are in line with the needs and aspirations of the community. In the context of Natumingka Village, village government empowerment is expected to create synergy between the village government and the community, thereby fostering effective collaboration in decision-making. This empowerment also includes enhancing the capacity of village officials through training and education so that they can properly carry out their duties and functions. Nevertheless, challenges in the implementation of village autonomy remain, such as limited human resources, lack of public understanding of their rights and obligations, and issues in managing village finances. (Ministry of Villages, 2015).

Therefore, this case study in Natumingka Village is important to analyze how village government empowerment can be optimized in order to realize effective and sustainable village autonomy. The case study aims to explore how village government empowerment can be optimized to achieve effective autonomy. This research will analyze various initiatives undertaken by the village government and their impact on community welfare and local resource management. Thus, it is expected that concrete strategies and steps can be identified to enhance empowerment and village autonomy, enabling Natumingka Village to serve as a good example of village governance in Indonesia.

Given this background, the research problem is formulated as follows: What are the factors hindering village governance empowerment in Natumingka Village, Borbor Subdistrict, Toba Regency, How does the community play a role in supporting village

governance empowerment in Natumingka Village, based on Law No. 6 of 2014 (as amended by Law No. 3 of 2024 on Villages). Therefore, the researcher proposes a study titled: “Village Governance Empowerment in Realizing Village Autonomy According to Law No. 6 of 2014 on Villages (Case Study of Natumingka Village Government in Borbor Subdistrict, Toba Regency)”.

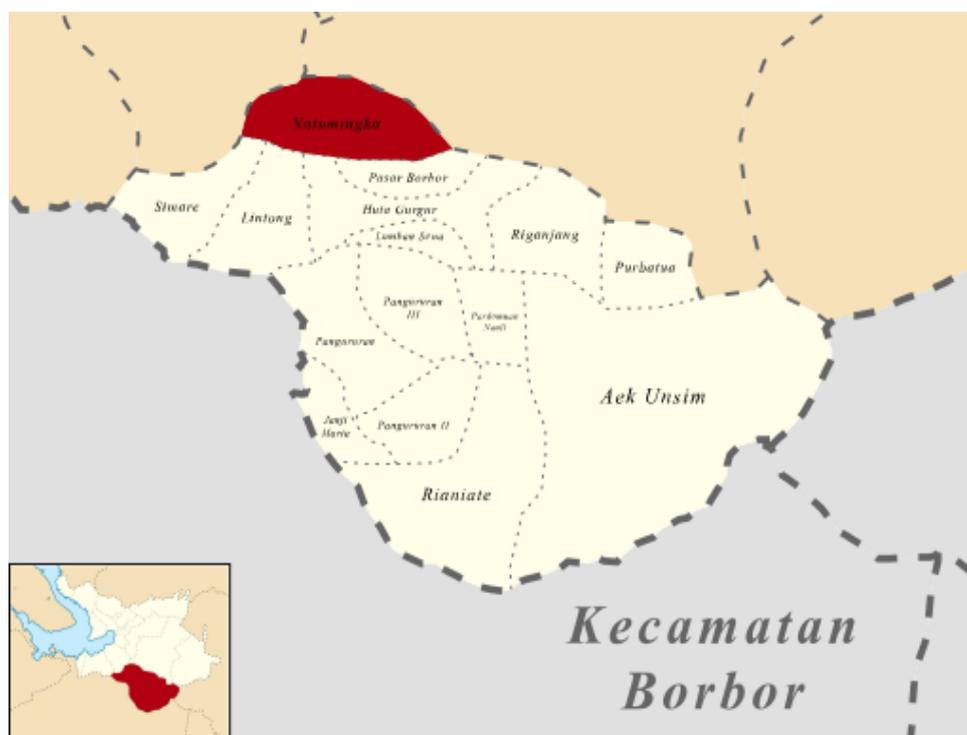
2. Research Method

The method used in this study is an empirical juridical research method combined with a normative juridical approach. This method is used when researchers not only seek to understand legal norms theoretically but also aim to examine their implementation in real life. (Peter Mahmud Marzuki, 2011). The object of the study is the government of Natumingka Village, which will be analyzed in relation to the implementation of Law Number 6 of 2014 concerning Villages. This research will focus on community empowerment efforts undertaken by the village government, including programs aimed at increasing public participation in decision-making and the execution of village development. In addition, the study will also identify factors that hinder the empowerment of village governance, such as limitations in human resources, budgeting, and community participation. The impact of empowerment efforts on the welfare of the people of Natumingka Village including changes in access to public services and improvements in the local economy will also be analyzed. Finally, the research will examine the extent to which the village government complies with the provisions established in the said law and how this compliance affects the processes of empowerment and village autonomy. (Suharto, S. (2017)).

3. Result and Discussion

3.1 Overview of Natumingka Village, Borbor Subdistrict, Toba Regency

1. Map of Natumingka Village



Page 1. Area and Ratio by Village in Borbor Subdistrict, 2020–2025.

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Table 1.

village	Area (Km ²)	Percentage of Subdistrict Area
1	2	3
Pangururan	8,03	4,54
Pardomuan Nauli	8,51	4,81
Lintong	12,00	6,79
Natumingka	41,02	23,22
Rianiate	18,26	15,99
Aek Unsim	18,40	10,41
Purbatua	9,14	5,17
Pangururan II	15,02	2,84
Pangururan III	4,10	2,32
Janji Maria	7,08	4,00
Pasar Borbor	2,09	1,18
Riganjang	7,00	3,96
Lumban Sewa	9,00	5,09
Huta Gurgur	3,00	1,69
Simare	14,00	7,92
Total	176,65	100,00

2. Geographical Overview

Natumingka Village is one of the 15 villages in Borbor Subdistrict. It serves as both residential and agricultural land, covering approximately 2,000 hectares in total. Of this, only about 902 hectares are actively managed or occupied by the community, while the remainder is considered fallow land.

The village comprises four hamlets, and is geographically bounded as follows:

- North: Bordered by Tornagodang Village in Habinsaran Subdistrict
- South: Adjacent to Huta Gurgur Village in Borbor Subdistrict
- East: Next to Lumban Rau Village in Nassau Subdistrict
- West: Neighbored by Simare Village in Borbor Subdistrict

A detailed breakdown of Natumingka's spatial extent appears in the following table:

Table 2. Area of Natumingka Village, Borbor Subdistrict, Toba Regency.

No	Hamlets	Area (Ha)
1	Hamlets I	252 Ha
2	Hamlets II	240 Ha
3	Hamlets III	235 Ha
4	Hamlets IV	175 Ha
5	Idle land (Unmanaged)	± 1400 Ha

Data Source: Office of the Village Head of Natumingka Village, Borbor Subdistrict, Toba Regency.

From the data above, it can be seen that Hamlet I has the largest area, measuring 252 hectares, while the smallest is Hamlet IV, with an area of 175 hectares.

3. Demographic Situation

The residents residing in Natumingka Village, Borbor Subdistrict, Toba Regency, are distributed across four hamlets: Hamlet I, Hamlet II, Hamlet III, and Hamlet IV. For more details, please refer to the following table:

Table 3. Population of Natumingka Village, Borbor Subdistrict, Toba Regency.

No	Hamlets	Male	Female	Total (M+F)
1	I	55	60	115
2	II	65	70	135
3	III	85	74	159
4	IV	45	54	99
	Total	250	258	508

Data Source: Office of the Village Head of Natumingka Village, Borbor Subdistrict, Toba Regency.

Based on the data above, the total population of Natumingka Village, Borbor Subdistrict, Toba Regency, is 508 people comprising 250 males and 258 females. Thus, males slightly outnumber females. The data also reveals that Hamlet III has the highest population at 159 people, while Hamlet IV has the lowest, with 99 people.

Working provides individuals with income to fulfill their life needs. In Natumingka Village, Borbor Subdistrict, Toba Regency, the residents engage in a variety of occupations as their livelihood. For a clearer picture of the types of jobs or sources of income for the residents, please refer to the table below:

Table 4. Livelihoods of Residents of Natumingka Village, Borbor Subdistrict, Toba Regency.

No	Employment Types	Total	Presentation
1	Laborers	10	4,29 %
2	Civil Servants	9	3,86 %
3	Honorary Employees	1	0,43 %
4	Traders	9	3,86 %
5	Farmers	204	87,55%
	Total	233	100%

Based on the data presented, it is evident that the majority of the population in Natumingka Village, Borbor Subdistrict, Toba Regency, are farmers, accounting for approximately 87.55%, while the smallest occupational group comprises honorary employees, at only 0.43%, reflecting the village's predominantly agricultural character.

Moreover, the success of education and the improvement of the quality of Natumingka Village residents are closely linked to the availability of educational facilities and infrastructure.

For a clearer picture of the educational facilities and infrastructure available in Natumingka Village, Borbor Subdistrict, Toba Regency, please refer to the following table:

Table 5. Educational Facilities in Natumingka, Borbor Subdistrict, Toba Regency.

No	Type of School	Total
1	Kindergarten	1
2	Public Elementary School	1
3	Junior High School	-
4	pecial Education / Madrasah	-

Data Source: Office of the Village Head of Natumingka Village, Borbor Subdistrict, Toba Regency.

Based on the data above, the educational facilities in Natumingka Village, Borbor Subdistrict, Toba Regency, can be considered inadequate and incomplete. However, because the schools are close and easily accessible either by vehicle or on foot parents generally choose to enroll their children in local elementary schools. Conversely, for secondary school, parents are more likely to allow their children to attend schools outside the village.

In addition to educational facilities that support the quality and competence of the human resources in Natumingka Village, Borbor Subdistrict, Toba Regency, there are also sports facilities that serve as important infrastructure for community health.

For a clearer overview of the sports facilities available in Natumingka Village, Borbor Subdistrict, Toba Regency, please refer to the following table:

Table 6. Sports Facilities in Natumingka Village, Borbor Subdistrict, Toba Regency.

No	Sports Facilities	Total
1	Football Field	1
2	Volleyball Court	-
3	Badminton Court	-

Data Source: Office of the Village Head of Natumingka Village, Borbor Subdistrict, Toba Regency.

4. Culture and Religion

The people of Natumingka Village, Borbor Subdistrict, Toba Regency, are comprised of various ethnic groups, including the **Toba Batak** and **Nias** peoples. Despite this diversity, communal harmony remains strong, with no ethnic conflicts disrupting the bonds of kinship.

For a more detailed breakdown, please refer to the following table:

Table 7. Ethnic Composition in Natumingka Village, Borbor Subdistrict, Toba Regency.

No	Ethnicity	total	Presentation
1	Batak Toba	508	98,45%
2	Nias	8	1,55%

Data Source: Office of the Village Head of Natumingka Village, Borbor Subdistrict, Toba Regency.

From the table above, it's clear that the majority of Natumingka Village's population in Borbor Subdistrict, Toba Regency, belongs to the Toba Batak ethnicity, comprising approximately 508 people (98.45%), while the Nias ethnic group accounts for around 8 people (1.55%). These two ethnic groups dominate in the village. Despite their differences, there are no major conflicts, and the ethnic diversity actually fosters mutual respect, especially during traditional cultural ceremonies.

In terms of religion, the population of Natumingka Village is almost entirely Christian. For more precise figures on the number of adherents by religion, please refer to the following table:

Table 8. Religions Practiced by Residents of Natumingka Village, Borbor Subdistrict, Toba Regency

No	Religion	total	Presentation
1	Protestant Christianity	1	100%

Data Source: Office of the Village Head of Natumingka Village, Borbor Subdistrict, Toba Regency.

Based on the data, it can be concluded that all residents of Natumingka Village, Borbor Subdistrict, Toba Regency, are Protestant Christians, totaling 508 people (100%). Naturally, each religion typically has its own places of worship to conduct religious activities.

For a clearer understanding of the number of worship facilities in Natumingka Village, please refer to the following table:

Table 9. Number of Places of Worship in Natumingka Village, Borbor Subdistrict, Toba Regency.

No	Place of Worship	total
1	Church	1

Data Source: Office of the Village Head of Natumingka Village, Borbor Subdistrict, Toba Regency.

3.2 Factors Hindering the Empowerment of Village Governance in Natumingka Village, Borbor Subdistrict, Toba Regency

Aspects contained in Law No. 23 of 2014 on Regional Governance that serve as factors hindering the empowerment of village governance include:

1. Burden and authority not matched by resources: The law mandates that financial allocations to regions must align with the governance responsibilities transferred to them (province, district/city, village). Disparities between granted authority and available resources financial, human, infrastructure hinder empowerment.
2. Complex delegation and assistance tasks: The law regulates tasks assigned from provincial to district/city and village levels through delegated aid or direct assignment. This complexity in coordination and dependency can impaired execution at the village level.
3. Slow verification and regulatory implementation: While the law provides space for administrative oversight and verification, delays or inefficiencies in these processes impede village empowerment.
4. Uneven capacity among village apparatus: Although the law emphasizes building the capacity of village officials and institutions, disparities in human resource competence across villages can obstruct optimal empowerment.
5. Ambiguity in shared governmental duties: Concurrent responsibilities among provinces, districts/cities, and villages can be unclear or overlapping, leading to confusion and hampered service delivery or empowerment.
6. Overlap of authority between central and regional government: This may create uncertainty in roles, responsibilities, and policy effectiveness.
7. Resource limitations: Constraints in human, financial, and infrastructure capacity especially in underdeveloped regions pose obstacles for implementing empowerment programs and development
8. Lack of active community participation: When public engagement in decision-making and program implementation is weak, empowerment efforts might be misaligned or ineffective.
9. Inefficient coordination across government levels and agencies: Poor intergovernmental communication can obstruct information flow, program synchronization, and policy execution.

In addition, several other factors hinder the empowerment of village governance in Natumingka Village, Borbor Subdistrict, Toba Regency:

1. Inadequate facilities and infrastructure. Many rural village offices lack adequate physical space, basic office equipment, or even assets owned by the village, which hinders administrative function and service delivery. This limitation significantly impacts the effectiveness of governance and community programs
2. Low wages for village officials, leading to decreased work motivation. Vague or uncertain employment status for village staff results in minimal wages and limited benefits. Consequently, motivation and commitment to professional development critical for effective community governance are often low
3. Poor accessibility of services. The large geographical area of the village and dispersed population make it difficult for residents to meet with village officials, who are often

out in the field. This reduces the frequency and effectiveness of public services and local administration

These factors must be carefully considered in efforts to refine Law No. 23 of 2014 and in implementing regional autonomy, so that the empowerment of local governments can proceed effectively and deliver optimal benefits to the community

4. Conclusions

From the description above, it can be concluded that villages in Indonesia have existed long before Indonesia's independence, even before the colonial era. The existence of these villages represents a way of life that reflects a sense of unity and kinship in nationhood, which became the foundation for the formation of the Indonesian state. Within the framework of village autonomy, there are naturally various issues at the village level in the effort to implement autonomy, which is considered a new concept for the components of village governance.

However, as the village autonomy program is increasingly socialized among the community, gradually the issues related to village autonomy can be resolved effectively. In Natumingka Village, Borbor Subdistrict, Toba Regency, the empowerment of the village government is carried out through improving the quality of partnership between the village deliberation council and the village government in administering village governance. This partnership is considered very important because both institutions serve as the main pillars in implementing village development programs within the framework of village autonomy.

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