

Local Crisis Governance in Rural Indonesia: Lessons from the COVID-19 Response in Mahakam Ulu Regency

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Abstract : Community participation takes part in implementing policies to handle COVID-19. This study aims to describe and analyze the dimensions of community participation and the role of the local government in controlling the spread of COVID-19 based on Cohen and Uphoff's Perspective of community participation. The research has taken place in Mahakam Ulu Regency, East Kalimantan Province, Indonesia. The data was collected based on the performance of the regional COVID-19 response policies and how the community engages in supporting policy implementation through various forms of participation in decision making, implementation, benefits, and evaluation. Data Collection was obtained qualitatively by observing, interviewing, and investigating sources. The primary data was obtained from 7 informants who represent this research. The result showed that community participation is directive where the local government has powering up in implementing the COVID-19 policies. Besides the traditional commitments of indigenous people, local governments have full support and trust because the government placed the community as the center of the project and actively engaged in overcoming the outbreak.

Keywords : Local Crisis Governance; Local Government; COVID-19 Response; Rural Governance; Indonesia.

Abstrak : Partisipasi masyarakat berperan penting dalam pelaksanaan kebijakan penanganan COVID-19. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mendeskripsikan dan menganalisis dimensi partisipasi masyarakat serta peran pemerintah daerah dalam mengendalikan penyebaran COVID-19 berdasarkan perspektif partisipasi masyarakat Cohen dan Uphoff. Penelitian ini dilakukan di Kabupaten Mahakam Ulu, Provinsi Kalimantan Timur, Indonesia. Data penelitian dikumpulkan berdasarkan pelaksanaan kebijakan respons COVID-19 daerah serta keterlibatan masyarakat dalam mendukung implementasi kebijakan melalui berbagai bentuk partisipasi, yaitu partisipasi dalam pengambilan keputusan, pelaksanaan, penerimaan manfaat, dan evaluasi. Pengumpulan data dilakukan secara kualitatif melalui observasi, wawancara, dan penelusuran sumber informasi. Data primer diperoleh dari tujuh informan yang mewakili kebutuhan penelitian. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa partisipasi masyarakat bersifat direktif, di mana pemerintah daerah memiliki peran dominan dalam mengarahkan pelaksanaan kebijakan COVID-19. Selain itu, adanya komitmen masyarakat adat serta dukungan dan kepercayaan masyarakat terhadap pemerintah menjadi

faktor penting dalam keberhasilan pelaksanaan kebijakan. Pemerintah daerah menempatkan masyarakat sebagai pusat program serta melibatkan mereka secara aktif dalam upaya pengendalian penyebaran COVID-19.

Kata Kunci: Tata Kelola Krisis Lokal; Pemerintah Daerah; Respons COVID-19; Tata Kelola Pedesaan; Indonesia.

INTRODUCTION

COVID-19 is a phenomenon that is troubling the global community. WHO (World Health Organization) has designated COVID-19 as a Public Health Emergency of International Concern (PHEIC) due to a significant increase in cases in various countries. On March 11, 2020, WHO declared Covid-19 a pandemic (Ministry of Health, 2020). Many countries are rushing to carry out strategies and preparedness to activate handling acceleration of the outbreak. It aims to accelerate the availability of tests, vaccines, and effective treatments to save the world community and prevent crises on a larger scale (WHO, 2020). The Government of the Republic of Indonesia announced the first COVID-19 case on March 2, 2020. Since then, Indonesia has been struggling with the outbreak. The Ministry of Health has developed several policies as Guidelines for the Prevention and Control of the Spread of Covid-19. The handling of the COVID outbreak faces various challenges, one of which is the unpreparedness of health facilities in Indonesia to deal with this global disaster. The trend of Covid-19 cases continues to increase significantly (Wijaya, 2020). When this research took place in 2020, data showed that Indonesia was ranked in the top 20 in the world's total cases (5/12/2020) and became the country with the most cases in Southeast Asia (tribunstyle.com, 5/12/2020).

Table I. World's COVID-19 Cases Ranking per December 5th, 2020

No	Country	Confirmed cases	Deaths	Recovered
1	USA	14.722.535	285.550	8.658.882
2	India	9.608.418	139.736	9.058.003
3	Brasil	6.534.951	175.981	5.744.369
4	Russia	2.402.949	42.176	1.888.752
5	France	2.268.552	54.767	168.352
6	Spain	1.699.145	46.252	-
7	England	1.690.432	60.617	-
8	Italy	1.688.939	58.852	872.385
9	Argentina	1.454.631	39.512	1.281.955
10	Columbia	1.352.607	37.467	1.240.990
11	Mexico	1.156.770	108.863	852.719
12	Germany	1.152.283	18.691	820.600
13	Poland	1.041.846	19.359	666.413
14	Iran	1.016.835	49.695	708.106
15	Peru	970.860	36.195	903.958
16	South Africa	805.804	21.963	740.450
17	Ukraine	787.981	13.195	397.80s
18	Turkey	765.997	14.509	423.142
19	Belgium	584.857	17.033	38.577
20	Indonesia	563.680	17.479	466.178

Source: tribunnews.com, 2020

Indonesia has received a lot of criticism from the international community regarding the strategy for handling the spread of Covid-19. It is considered slow in planning and implementing the policy. As the country with the fourth-largest population in the world, the situation is potentially increasing the Covid-19 cases in Indonesia and making it the epicenter of the world after Wuhan (Agustino, 2020). Kompas news reported that since September 2020, several provinces in Indonesia have consistently been in the top 10 of total cases and deaths due to the

outbreak. East Kalimantan is one of the provinces with the highest case rate in Indonesia, ranked 5th and 6th according to the total cases in September-December 2020 (Salihah, 2021). The rate of Covid-19 cases in the area is 139.2%, which means that almost 140 people per 100 thousand inhabitants in East Kalimantan are positive for Covid-19 (Lebang, 2020). The spread of Covid-19 cases in this province increased exponentially due to the activities of company workers, people traveling outside the city or abroad, and massive local transmission (kaltimprov.go.id). Based on data of Covid-19 cases in the East Kalimantan region as of December 1, 2020, the area with the most confirmed cases was Samarinda City with 5,824 cases, while the least of total cases were in the youngest district in this province, namely Mahakam Ulu, amounting to 22 cases (Instagram @dinkesprovkaltim).

Table 2. Covid-19 cases in the Regency/City in East Kalimantan

No	Regency/City	Total cases	Deaths	Recovered
1	Samarinda	5.824	191	5.190
2	Balikpapan	4.482	227	3.953
3	Kutai Kertanegara	3.600	66	2.824
4	Kutai Timur	2.569	39	2.233
6	Bontang	1.365	27	1.176
7	Paser	872	23	762
8	Berau	499	6	439
9	Kutai Barat	318	4	259
10	Panajam Paser Utara	196	9	148
11	Mahakam Ulu	22	1	20

Source: Instagram @dinkesprovkaltim

Mahakam Ulu Regency has built a defense mechanism to prevent the spread of the Covid-19 since March 2020; it is when the Governor of East Kalimantan announced the first case in East Kalimantan province. The Regency maintains its position as a green zone or zeroes Covid-19 cases for 7 consecutive months (Gunawan, 2020). The strategy to prevent the spread of the plague was carried out by forming a Covid-19 handling team (Task Force for the Acceleration of Covid-19 Handling) led directly by the Regent of Mahakam Ulu (GM, 2020) and also involving the entire community or what is known as village volunteers. The most extreme policy carried out by the Mahakam Ulu Regional Government is the imposition of an opening and closing regulation for access to the Mahakam Ulu Regency area to prevent the distribution of the virus (especially from the orange zone and the red zone) (Gunawan, 2020). This study aims to examine the local community's discipline and active participation to support breaking the chain of the spread of the virus. The Covid-19 crisis has changed many social patterns and relationships that need to be participatory in dealing with the pandemic. The Effort on supporting the implementation of social restrictions regulations (as government policy) conduct through various forms of participation, such as community and volunteering support (Marston et al. In Sururi and Pasciana, 2020)

As initial steps for the prevention of the spread of Covid 19, there are several approaches applied globally, such as maintaining physical distancing, staying at home, clean and healthy living habits, washing hands routinely or using hand sanitizers, avoiding crowds, wearing masks, ethics of coughs and sneezes (Usman and Alizar, 2020). Many countries implemented various policies to embody this approach. Anyhow, the fundamental difference is about the level of the Government's assertiveness and the public response toward the rule. According to Usman and Alizar (2020), Indonesia is one of the countries with low public participation. The government hinders the implementation of the health protocol implementation policy. In addition, public literacy regarding COVID-19 is also relatively low, so it is not easy to educate the public, especially with the emergence of various new and complex cases.

The spike in Covid-19 cases that continues to increase requires a thought that the main focus of overcoming this problem is active community participation in implementing health protocol policies in a disciplined manner (Priya Tiwari, Sayan Das, Ujjayinee Aich, 2020). Public awareness to comply with the application of the health protocol will be comprehended if there is a common

belief system between the community and the government (Harirah, 2020). Community participation has an important role in building a spirit of togetherness in the face of the Covid-19 pandemic. The effectiveness of Social & Physical Distancing is highly dependent on the level of community awareness and involvement. (Sururi & Pasciana, 2020)

According to Ach Wazir et al. (Moita et al., 2020) participation is an awareness to be involved in social interactions in certain situations. Participation can occur when an individual is perceived as part of the group and included in the process of sharing with others in terms of values, customs, traditions, feelings, loyalty, obedience, and mutual responsibility. Isbandi (2007) said that community participation is community involvement in a series of problem identification processes and analyzes needs assessment about various alternative solutions in solving the problem, implementing and evaluating the changing nature in society (Moita et al. 2020). Community participation is the essential key to identifying the best solution for civil society. The community gets information, knowledge, insights into stigma and structural barriers and provides collective responses to work together to overcome existing problems (Adenipekun, 2020). According to Rifkin (2014), community involvement and participation are the basic principles in dealing with crises and disasters.

The collaboration between the government and the community is a prerequisite for the successful handling of Covid-19. In disaster conditions that require fast handling, the government uses the command of power to control all approaches in handling Covid-19. However, in some cases that occurred in rural communities in several regions in Indonesia (including Mahakam Ulu Regency), the initiative to limit social interaction, close access to enter the territory, and limit the movement of foreigners in and out of the area emerged from the community itself. This research focuses on the community's active role as an agent of social change and a determiner of the response's success to Covid-19. Community participation is one of the prerequisites for implementing good governance by emphasizing sustainable community development. This study aims to discuss forms of participation and response toward the Covid-19 outbreak of the community in the Mahakam Ulu. Then, the objective is to explain the community's engagement and the role of the Mahakam Ulu Regency local government in dealing with the pandemic.

METHODS

This study utilized a qualitative approach to explain, understand and analyze the forms of community participation and the role of local government in overcoming the crisis of COVID-19 in Mahakam Ulu Regency, East Kalimantan, Indonesia. The research was conducted during the Covid-19 pandemic from July to December 2020. The data was collected based on the regional COVID-19 response policies implementation and how the community engages to support policy implementation through various forms of participation in decision making, execution, benefits, and evaluation. The data collection process was carried out by in-depth interviews and conducting searches from news sources and literature relevant to the theme of this research. We conducted in-depth interviews with several informants who were residents of Mahakam Ulu and were involved in implementing the COVID-19 policy in the area, such as heads of the village, customary leaders, the Village Deliberation Agency, and village volunteers. We used secondary data by searching news about the COVID-19 response in the area to analyze the implementation of local government policies in dealing with the outbreak. The data were analyzed based on statements from key informants using an inductive approach. The researcher framed the results of the data findings by following the research concept to achieve the expected research objectives regarding the Covid-19 crisis phenomenon and community participation in overcoming the outbreak. We divide the discussion into three parts: the first part was to discuss collaboration between the government and the community in dealing with the pandemic; the second part was to discuss community participation in handling COVID-19; the third part was a discussion about the power of social capital in increasing community participation.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Coronavirus: The Collaboration of Government and Community during the Pandemic

Covid-19 cases in Indonesia have been increasing exponentially since the first case in March 2020. When this research was ongoing, Covid-19 cases showed a significant increasing trend. Until early December 2020, Indonesia was ranked in the top 20 in the world in terms of COVID-19 cases (Abdulhakim, 2020). The outbreak triggered off the stigma in society. Information overload over Covid-19 has raised public concerns and anxiety, one of which happened in rural East Kalimantan, Mahakam Ulu Regency. Anxiety among people in the regency has manifested in various ways, where the most extreme one is by hiding in the forest. Since then, the outbreak has made all government and society elements work together in facing this global crisis (Alfian, 2020).

The Mahakam Ulu Regency Government has declared the Covid-19 alert through various policies implemented in the area since the beginning of the Covid-19 case in Indonesia. The policy tackled by tightening access in and out to limit transmission of the virus based on the Regent's Instruction No. 2 of 2020 concerning Regulation of Access to the Mahakam Ulu Regency Area in the Context of Controlling the Spread of the 2019 Coronavirus Disease (Covid-19) Outbreak. This policy regulates several aspects related to access control and movement restrictions in Mahakam Ulu Regency. The implementation involves the opening and closing of land and river access routes to Mahakam Ulu on a rotational basis, with an opening period of one week followed by a closure period of two weeks. Everyone is permitted to enter the Mahakam Ulu area during the designated opening period by obtaining an official permit issued by the local government. During the closure period, access to Mahakam Ulu Regency is restricted, and no one is allowed to enter the area except individuals carrying out essential and strategic activities who have obtained special permission from the Regent as the Chairperson of the Task Force for the Acceleration of COVID-19 Handling.

The temporary access opening and closure schedule was determined as follows: the first opening period was from 18 to 24 May 2020, followed by the first closure period from 25 May to 7 June 2020. The second opening period took place from 8 to 14 June 2020, followed by the closure period from 15 to 28 June 2020. The third opening period was implemented from 29 June to 5 July 2020, followed by the closure period from 6 to 19 July 2020. The fourth opening period was conducted from 20 to 26 July 2020. Subsequent opening and closure periods followed the same pattern until further decisions were issued. The implementation and supervision of this policy were carried out in stages by local government officials of Mahakam Ulu Regency, village governments, and law enforcement authorities. This coordinated supervision aimed to ensure compliance with the temporary access regulation and support the acceleration of COVID-19 control measures within the region. This regulating access policy to the Mahakam Ulu Regency area aims to prevent the transmission of Covid-19 cases from travelers from outside the region. It is the basic reason for the Regional Government to tighten security, especially for travelers from areas with a large number of Covid-19 cases (especially the orange zone and red zone areas).

The local government established guard posts in several locations, namely Mamahak Teboq, Long Pahangai, Long Lunuk and Tiong Ohang Long Apari Village. The existence of this guard post is to tighten access in and out of the Mahakam Ulu area. To enter the Mahakam Ulu area, travelers must make a permit application and carry out the RDT test twice in seven days before entering the Mahakam Ulu area. Then, after the traveler gets permission to enter the Mahakam Ulu area, they must first self-isolate at a predetermined location, namely the Tana Meekam Jaya Campground.

Figure 1. Regional Entry Permit Process at one of the Guard Post



Source: *kompas.com*

The prevention of the spread of Covid-19 needs support from various parties. In a democratic state, public participation is fundamental in the relationship between the government and its citizens. In this context, citizens are essential stakeholders who are playing an active role either directly or indirectly through elected representatives in the formation, Partnership adoption process, and implementation of laws and policies that can affect their lives (Quick and Bryson, 2016). The local government of Mahakam Ulu realizes the importance of the active involvement of all elements of society to work together during the outbreaks. It formed a Task Force for the Acceleration of Handling Covid 19 in which regent as commander and a Rapid Action Team led by the head of the Health Service. Based on the Regent's Decree Number 188.45/K.104/2020, the COVID-19 Acceleration Handling Task Force of Mahakam Ulu Regency was assigned several responsibilities to support the prevention and control of COVID-19 transmission. The tasks included coordinating with various sectors and stakeholders, procuring equipment, supplies, and facilities required for implementing health protocols, and providing accurate information related to COVID-19 developments. The Task Force was also responsible for monitoring and managing individuals classified as People Under Monitoring (ODP), Patients Under Supervision (PDP), and People Without Symptoms (OTG). In addition, the Task Force carried out disinfectant spraying activities in various public facilities and implemented education, campaigns, information dissemination, and public awareness programmes regarding COVID-19 prevention measures. The Task Force also served as the coordinator for monitoring access points and controlling the entry of people into the Mahakam Ulu Regency area.

The team also has to manage volunteers at the community level to help the government. The emergence of active volunteers from local communities is essential in handling Covid-19 collectively. Meaningful relationships between society and government have to be improved to ensure inclusive and sustainable participation (Rukhsana, 2020). In handling the crisis, mutual trust between the government and community towards government policy implementation is essential. This trust is maintained by making the community the center in the decision-making process and implementing these policies (Ritu Priya, professor of public health at the Center of Social Medicine and Community Health, Jawaharlal Nehru University, in Tiwari et al. 2020). Public trust can be one of the best solutions to reduce anxiety in every stage of handling the global health crisis.

Against Covid-19 Through Community Participation

Local communities must be central in the recovery process during the Covid-19 crisis. The government agencies and civil society must support the local communities (Beti and Maina, 2020). Community involvement and community-centered approaches are essential components in health emergency preparedness and response to prevent the spread of outbreaks (Adenipekun, 2020). When the community is actively and enthusiastically involved in handling various situations in their area, it will create a sense of independence. Also, they will refuse to wait and see for the Government's command. The experience of participating will increase the belief that changes for the better for the future are in the hands of the local community (Hubley, 1990). Based on the formulation of community participation dimensions according to Cohen and Uphoff (in Mulyadi (2019), the form of responses of community participation in Mahakam Ulu, East Kalimantan described as follows:

Participation in Decision Making

The form of participation in decision-making is carried out by identifying common problems, collecting and analyzing various alternative solutions, and deciding on Covid-19 prevention policies. At this level, participation involves various parties such as local government officials, village governments, traditional institutions, community organizations, youth organizations, and companies. The results of various meetings and coordination in dealing with Covid-19 are contained in the policy of restricting access to the Mahakam Ulu area, the formation of a task force to accelerate the response to Covid-19 at the district level down to the community level, namely the formation of volunteer teams in each village. Village volunteers are tasked with assisting local governments in implementing health protocols in the community. Community participation is influenced by the role of traditional leaders and village officials as opinion leaders in conveying

messages to all elements of the Mahakam Ulu community. Traditional leaders and village officials are actively involved in various discussions and formal meetings organized by the local government. The involvement of these figures aims to mobilize village volunteers and educate the entire community regarding the implementation of the COVID-19 health protocol in the area.

Participation in Implementation

The form of community participation at the implementation level is community contributions in terms of energy, money, and materials. Community participation has not resulted from coercion. Instead, it was triggered by anxiety due to the massive spread of the outbreak and the news in the mass media about COVID-19. The situation raises a conscious commitment of the community to support government programs in breaking the chain of epidemic spread. The form of community participation at the implementation level is community contributions, such as energy (action of handling the crisis), money, and material. The community contributed to the workforce by forming volunteer teams and establishing guard posts in each village. The community controls each post guard in a shift system of 1 x 24 hours every day.

Figure 2. Guard Post for Entrance and Exit to/from Mahakam Ulu Regency



Source: Results of Research Data Processing, 2020

The community also implements PHBS elements in the surrounding environment, such as providing handwashing stations in every home and various other strategic locations, spraying disinfectants regularly in every village environment. Another form of participation is a mask usage campaign and free masks distribution initiated by the Mahakam Ulu Family Welfare Empowerment Team (TP. PKK) group. Also, the community participates in money and materials to support labor, such as collecting money for social services, providing medical equipment, basic needs, and various other necessities.

Figure 3. PHBS Movement in the Village Environment



Source: Results of Research Data Processing, 2020

Figure 4. Mask Production Process and Using Mask Campaign

Sumber: Results of Research Data Processing, 2020

At the beginning of the pandemic, masks were rare and expensive. It inspired the community to self-produce non-medical masks. They have also undergone a public campaign. The campaign aims to educate people about the importance of using masks. It is one of the health protocols to prevent the spread of Covid-19.

Participation in Benefit

Cohen and Uphoff (1980) argued that the results of participation in benefit are in the form of material, social & personal that are obtained by society at large. In the Covid-19 handling process in Mahakam Ulu, the material benefits were money and food to help the local community. The social benefits are reflected in the procurement of various facilities and services to the community in overcoming the Covid-19 outbreak. There are 20 isolation rooms in hospitals, five isolation rooms at the public health center (Puskesmas) in each sub-district, and one additional isolation room. Meanwhile, the Mahakam Ulu local government has also increased self-esteem, political power, and self-efficiency because it has received full support from the community to reflect personal benefits.

Mulyadi (2019) adds that participation in benefits is also related to community participation in religious ritual activities, environmental maintenance, and regional security. The results of this study indicate that the local community is fully committed to cooperation in maintaining the safety and cleanliness of their environment as a prerequisite for implementing health protocols. Besides, this crisis has led the local community to strengthen their religious side through religious activities and various traditional Dayak rituals (rituals of the private population in Mahakam Ulu).

Participation in Evaluation

Participation in evaluation is community involvement in providing suggestions, input, or constructive criticism to control and improve program activities. According to Cohen and Uphoff (1980), participation in evaluation occurs either directly or indirectly and through formal and informal processes. Meanwhile, Mulyadi (2019) states that the government does not yet have a mechanism to accommodate, follow up and resolve various related government performance. In this study, participation happens formally, such as through monthly coordination meetings held by government officials, task force teams, village governments, and customary councils. The community as a whole can provide criticism and suggestions informally through the adat council. In this case, the customary council plays as representative of the community who accommodates aspirations, criticisms, and suggestions for the local government's inputs.

The Power of Social Capital in Improving Community Participation

The current community development paradigm seeks the optimal implementation of social participation to make each individual actively involved in diverse processes of regional development activities to create a prosperous future (Ife & Tesoriero, 2016), as the foundation and hope for improving the welfare of society. Many factors impact the success and failure of the Covid-19 handling process. The key element that can restrain the spread of the outbreak is human behavior itself (Van Bavel et al (2020), Baldwin (2020), Weder di Mauro (2020), Bartscher, et al (2020)). One of the which is by implementing health protocols guidelines such as social distancing, wearing a mask, avoiding crowds, maintaining good air circulation in the room, cleaning hands, and coughing and sneezing etiquette (WHO, 2019). Alizar and Usman (2020) review that people

in Indonesia tend to have low participation in preventing the spread of Covid-19, especially related to social distancing and staying at-home approaches. This is due to several factors such as indiscipline, high community cohesiveness, as well as a culture of the community such as *guyub* and very strong social relations.

However, local people in Mahakam Ulu tend to have high participation in the response to Covid-19. Public awareness to break the chain of spreading the virus was triggered by feelings of concern about the dangers of the Covid-19 outbreak. Therefore, people are willing to work together with local governments in dealing with this health crisis. The researcher argued that community participation that occurred in Mahakam Ulu Regency was directive, in the sense that the local government acted as a leader to guide the achievement of the expected goals in handling the COVID-19 outbreak. In this case, local government practices can have both positive and negative impacts. This will determine the support and participation of the community both at the planning process level to the implementation and evaluation levels. Improving the performance of local governments will have a positive effect and pave the way for the formation of positive groups; positive social relationships; promote compliance and mutual commitment; and reduce anxiety and worry about the ability of residents to solve problems that occur in the area (Sabet & Khaksar, 2020).

In addition, friendly culture and high community cohesiveness are essential points for the community to break the chain of virus spread. It has been shown by maintaining access to the Mahakam Ulu area alternately, forming village volunteers, producing mass masks, conducting campaigns about the importance of wearing masks, giving mutual assistance to each other, and environmental hygiene and safety maintenance activities. People's willingness to act through collective power to achieve these socially valuable goals is referred to as social capital (Putnam, 1993, 2000) in Bartscher (2020). The community consensus influence stated in the commitment to "United to Build Mahakam Ulu To Realize customary sovereignty" which is carried out by caring for ancestral heritage, preserving the universe, and seizing a future for sustainable life" (Book of Dayak Mahakam Ulu Customary Law 2019).

Szreter and Warloock (in Pitas and Ehmer, 2020) noted three vital aspects in strengthening social capital: social bonding, social bridging, and social linking. This study examines that the strength of values, culture, and customs reflect social bonding. Mahakam Ulu has traditional and communal characteristics. This community maintains local wisdom and is committed to building and protecting the area together. The social ties that arise as a reaction to various events in society reflect social bridging. As can be seen from the social forces among the community to respond to the Covid-19 outbreak. Meanwhile, social linking is related to aspects of social networks which synergize in harmony to become a great force. Social capital is the power to build a sturdy civil society and to influence regional development. This study shows the existence of community trust toward the local government. Also, the customary norms and values that firmly upheld by all elements of society. Moreover, a connected network among government officials, village government, traditional councils, community leaders, and the wider community. Mentioned details are the fundamental references of Mahakam Ulu in handling the covid-19 crisis.

CONCLUSION

The Government of Mahakam Ulu Regency has demonstrated a strong commitment to addressing the COVID-19 pandemic by implementing various policies that actively involve both local government institutions and the community. Community participation has been encouraged through public awareness and strong support for government policies, reflecting a high level of public trust. This trust emerged because the local government positioned the community as the central actor in managing the health disaster, enabling collaborative efforts to prevent and control the spread of COVID-19. Community participation in Mahakam Ulu was strengthened by three forms of social capital. Bonding social capital refers to the strong relationships among individuals with close social ties, such as family members, close friends, and neighbors, which foster mutual support during the pandemic. Bridging social capital represents broader social connections, including relationships with distant friends and coworkers, facilitating the exchange of information

and cooperation across different social groups. Meanwhile, linking social capital reflects the community's ability to access institutional resources and collaborate with government authorities, enabling effective utilization of available resources while maintaining group cohesion and supporting the implementation of local government policies.

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