



TRANSFORMATION OF RESTORATIVE JUSTICE IN THE INDONESIAN CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEM TOWARDS A JUST AND REHABILITATIVE LEGAL APPROACH

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Article Info	Abstract
Article History Received : 2024-12-03 Revised: 2024-12-10 Published: 2025-01-01 Keywords: <i>Restorative Justice, Legal Reform, Legal Certainty.</i>	<p>Restorative Justice (RJ) offers a new paradigm in the Indonesian criminal justice system that focuses on restoration, reconciliation, and rehabilitation rather than just punishment. Although various regulations such as Attorney General Regulation Number 15 of 2020, Circular Letter of the Chief of Police Number SE/8/VII/2018, and PERMA Number 2 of 2012 have supported the implementation of RJ, this approach still faces various challenges. Inconsistent regulations and minimal capacity of law enforcement officers are the main obstacles in the effective implementation of RJ principles. This lack of integration of regulations creates legal uncertainty, while the lack of training and technical guidance hinders officers from managing conflicts fairly and inclusively.</p> <p>This study analyzes the importance of RJ transformation through the establishment of an independent Restorative Justice Law. This law is expected to unify various sectoral regulations, expand the scope of RJ implementation, increase accountability, and equip officers with adequate capabilities to implement RJ consistently. With a clear legal basis, the Indonesian criminal justice system can move towards a more just and rehabilitative approach, in accordance with the values of Pancasila.</p> <p>The research results recommend the establishment of an integrated legal framework, intensive training for law enforcement officers, and public education to improve public understanding of RJ. Thus, RJ can be an effective transformation tool in realizing a humanistic and sustainable criminal law system.</p>

I. INTRODUCTION

The criminal justice system in Indonesia faces major challenges in creating substantial justice. So far, the dominant approach has been retributive, emphasizing punishment as a form of retribution for violations of the law. This can be seen from data related to the overcapacity of correctional institutions (prisons) in Indonesia, which reflects that the imprisonment approach has not been effective in preventing recidivism or providing constructive solutions for victims and perpetrators of criminal acts.(Purba and Tanjung 2022)

In response to this situation, the concept of Restorative Justice (RJ) began to be applied to offer an alternative solution. This approach emphasizes the restoration of damage caused by the crime, reconciliation between the perpetrator and the victim, and the social reintegration of the perpetrator into society. This approach also refers to the basic philosophy of Indonesian customary law, which has long emphasized conflict resolution through deliberation and the restoration of social balance. In the context of regulations, Attorney General Regulation Number

15 of 2020 concerning Termination of Prosecution Based on Restorative Justice is an important foundation in the implementation of RJ by the Prosecutor's Office. This regulation gives prosecutors the authority to stop prosecution of certain cases, especially minor cases, through a mediation mechanism involving the perpetrator, victim, and other related parties. The main goal is to create peace, victim recovery, and perpetrator rehabilitation.(Chaidar and Budiarsih 2022)

Similarly, at the police level, the Circular Letter of the Chief of Police Number SE/8/VII/2018 concerning the Implementation of Restorative Justice in the Settlement of Criminal Cases confirms that the RJ approach can be applied in minor criminal cases to reduce the backlog of cases in court. This circular encourages police officers to resolve cases by emphasizing dialogue between the perpetrator and the victim, recovery of the victim's losses, and reconciliation.

In addition, in the realm of justice, Supreme Court Regulation (PERMA) Number 2 of 2012 concerning Adjustment of the Limits of Minor Criminal Offenses and the Amount of Fines in the Criminal Code also supports the implementation

of RJ. This PERMA regulates that minor criminal offenses, such as theft with minimal losses, can be resolved through mechanisms that do not involve the formal judicial process. This is one of the progressive steps in encouraging a more humanistic approach to justice.

Although regulations supporting the implementation of RJ are available, its implementation in the field still faces various obstacles. One of the main challenges is the lack of understanding of the basic principles of RJ among law enforcement officers. Most officers do not yet have the capacity and specific training to implement RJ consistently. In addition, the lack of integration of regulations between institutions often causes confusion in the implementation of this approach. (Hutagalung and Zarzani 2022)

On the other hand, Indonesian society still tends to view imprisonment as the most ideal form of justice. This creates resistance to alternative approaches such as RJ. Therefore, intensive educational efforts are needed to change public perception and increase acceptance of RJ as part of the criminal justice system.

The implementation of RJ also has a strong philosophical relevance to the values of Pancasila. As the state ideology, Pancasila emphasizes the importance of social justice, deliberation, and kinship. These principles are in line with the philosophy of RJ, which focuses on peace and reconciliation as a means to achieve justice. Therefore, the integration of RJ into the Indonesian criminal law system is a strategic step to realize a more just and humane legal system. (Sartika et al. 2021)

Key Research Problems

1. Inconsistency of Restorative Justice Regulation and Implementation Although there are regulations such as Attorney General Regulation Number 15 of 2020, Circular Letter of the Chief of Police Number SE/8/VII/2018, and PERMA Number 2 of 2012, the implementation of RJ in Indonesia is still sectoral and has not been integrated into the criminal law system as a whole. Differences in interpretation between law enforcement agencies often cause confusion, thus hampering the effectiveness of the implementation of RJ principles in the field.
2. Lack of Understanding and Capacity of Law Enforcement Officials Most law enforcement officials do not fully understand the principles of RJ. This is

exacerbated by the lack of adequate specialized training. As a result, the implementation of RJ is often inconsistent, even deviating from its main objective of restoring relationships and creating balanced justice.

II. RESEARCH METHODS

This study uses a juridical-normative approach with a descriptive-qualitative analysis method. This approach is carried out by examining laws and regulations, legal documents, and internal regulations of related institutions, such as Attorney General Regulation Number 15 of 2020, Circular Letter of the Chief of Police Number SE/8/VII/2018, and PERMA Number 2 of 2012. This study also examines legal doctrine, theory of justice, and the philosophy of Pancasila that are relevant to support the implementation of Restorative Justice (RJ). Secondary data used in this study comes from legal literature, scientific journals, and previous research results, which are collected through library studies. (Indra Utama Tanjung 2024)

In addition, to provide a practical overview, this study will also analyze the implementation of RJ in several law enforcement institutions such as the Prosecutor's Office, Police, and Courts. The analysis will focus on the suitability between existing regulations and practices in the field, as well as the obstacles faced in the implementation of RJ. This approach aims to provide concrete recommendations that can be used to improve regulations and increase the effectiveness of RJ implementation in Indonesia.

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

A. Inconsistency of Restorative Justice Regulation and Implementation in Indonesia

One of the biggest challenges in implementing Restorative Justice (RJ) in Indonesia is the inconsistent regulations governing this approach. Although several regulations have been issued to support RJ, the implementation of its principles is still limited to a sectoral framework that has not been holistically integrated into the Indonesian criminal law system. This results in the implementation of RJ often being inconsistent, both at the police, prosecutors, and court levels, which ultimately affects the effectiveness of this approach. (Mukidi 2020)

At the regulatory level, Attorney General Regulation Number 15 of 2020 concerning Termination of Prosecution Based on Restorative Justice is one of the main milestones in the implementation of RJ in Indonesia. This regulation gives prosecutors the authority to stop prosecuting certain cases based on the principles of RJ, with the main aim of restoring the relationship between the victim and the perpetrator and providing an opportunity for the perpetrator to rehabilitate themselves. However, this regulation has a limited scope, only applying to minor crimes, such as cases of petty theft or assault that do not cause serious injury. In fact, the RJ approach can be applied to various types of cases, including more complex cases such as economic crimes or environmental violations, as has been implemented in several other countries.

In addition, at the police level, the Circular Letter of the Chief of Police Number SE/8/VII/2018 also introduced RJ as an alternative approach in resolving criminal cases. This circular letter provides guidelines for police officers to use the RJ mechanism in minor criminal cases with the aim of reducing the burden on the formal justice system. However, the absence of more detailed technical guidelines often makes the implementation of RJ at the police level dependent on individual interpretations of officers. This creates legal uncertainty and the potential for abuse of authority in the case handling process.

On the other hand, Supreme Court Regulation (PERMA) Number 2 of 2012 attempts to adjust the limits of minor crimes and the amount of fines in the Criminal Code to support the RJ approach. This regulation provides a legal basis for judges to resolve minor criminal cases without going through a formal litigation process. However, just like other regulations, this PERMA has not been fully integrated with the RJ policy at the prosecutor's office and police level, so this approach is limited to certain very specific cases.

This inconsistency is also seen in the overlapping regulations between law enforcement institutions. For example, differences in criteria regarding criminal acts that can be resolved through RJ at the police and prosecutors' levels often cause confusion. On the one hand, the prosecutors' office focuses on minor crimes, while the police have greater freedom in determining the types of crimes that can be resolved through RJ. These differences in interpretation not only create inconsistencies in

the implementation of RJ but also reduce public trust in the criminal law system.(Flora 2018)

In addition to regulatory issues, the lack of integration of RJ into the national criminal law system also creates obstacles in its implementation. The criminal law system in Indonesia is still heavily influenced by the retributive paradigm inherited from the colonial era. This system places punishment as the main tool to provide a deterrent effect, while ignoring aspects of rehabilitation and victim recovery. This paradigm is contrary to the principles of RJ, which place the restoration of relationships as the main priority. Therefore, the implementation of RJ requires deeper reform in the Indonesian criminal law system, including a revision of the Criminal Code to accommodate this approach more broadly.(Rado and Badillah 2019)

In addition, cultural factors also play an important role in creating inconsistencies in the application of RJ. As a country with cultural diversity, Indonesia has various traditional conflict resolution systems that are in line with the principles of RJ. However, these systems are often ignored in the formal criminal law system. For example, customary law in several regions such as Aceh, Bali, and Papua has a conflict resolution mechanism based on deliberation and peace. If this system can be integrated into the national legal framework, the application of RJ in Indonesia can be more effective and relevant to the local context.

Not only that, the lack of special education and training for law enforcement officers is also a major obstacle in ensuring the consistency of the implementation of RJ. Most law enforcement officers do not fully understand the basic principles of RJ, so this approach is often applied inconsistently or even misguidedly. For example, some police officers consider RJ as a way to "solve" cases without formal legal processes, without understanding that this approach also requires a fair and inclusive process for all parties involved.(Fatmawati et al. 2023)

Lack of supervision and accountability in the implementation of RJ is also a serious problem. In some cases, the mediation process carried out by law enforcement officers actually causes injustice to victims. This often occurs due to the lack of clear technical guidance and monitoring mechanisms. In addition, the lack of community participation in the RJ process also reduces the effectiveness of this approach in creating sustainable justice.

The experiences of other countries show that the success of RJ depends heavily on consistent regulations, adequate training for law enforcement officers, and community support. For example, New Zealand has successfully integrated RJ into its criminal justice system through specific legislation that provides clear technical guidance and oversight mechanisms. Similarly, in Canada, RJ has been widely applied in various types of criminal cases, including serious cases such as domestic violence and human rights violations. The success of these countries shows that the implementation of RJ in Indonesia requires a more systematic and planned approach.

In this context, efforts are needed to integrate all regulations related to RJ into a comprehensive legal framework. This can be done through the formation of a special law on RJ that regulates the basic principles, implementation mechanisms, and the roles and responsibilities of each law enforcement institution. In addition, revisions to the Criminal Code (at the time of this writing, Law Number 1 of 2023 concerning the Criminal Code has been passed but has not yet been enforced) and other sectoral regulations are also needed to create consistency in the implementation of RJ at all levels.

B. Lack of Understanding and Capacity of Law Enforcement Officers in Implementing Restorative Justice

One of the significant obstacles in the implementation of Restorative Justice (RJ) in Indonesia is the limited understanding and capacity of law enforcement officers regarding the basic principles of RJ. As an approach that emphasizes the restoration of social relations, RJ requires in-depth knowledge, skills, and awareness from law enforcement officers to manage conflicts inclusively and fairly. However, in reality, most law enforcement officers are still trapped in a retributive paradigm that prioritizes punishment as the main solution. (Iskandar 2021)

According to Article 5 of the Attorney General's Regulation Number 15 of 2020, termination of prosecution based on restorative justice must meet several requirements, including reconciliation between the victim and the perpetrator and the perpetrator's willingness to compensate or provide other forms of restitution. However, in practice, many prosecutors do not fully understand these requirements, so that termination of prosecution is often carried out unilaterally without a fair dialogue process

between the victim and the perpetrator. This condition indicates a lack of adequate training for prosecutors to implement the principles of RJ in accordance with applicable regulations.

At the police level, the Circular Letter of the Chief of Police Number SE/8/VII/2018 also regulates the implementation of RJ, which emphasizes that police officers must facilitate dialogue between perpetrators, victims, and the community to reach a mutually beneficial agreement. However, the absence of detailed technical guidelines often causes police officers to only use RJ as a means to resolve cases quickly, without ensuring that victims receive their rights fairly. For example, in some cases of minor theft, the perpetrator is only asked to apologize without any concrete recovery mechanism for the victim. This is contrary to the principle of RJ which emphasizes the recovery of the victim's losses. (Ismaidar and Rahmayanti 2023)

On the other hand, Article 1 number 6 of Law Number 11 of 2012 concerning the Juvenile Criminal Justice System (UU SPPA) defines restorative justice as the resolution of juvenile criminal cases by involving the perpetrator, victim, the perpetrator/victim's family, and other related parties to jointly seek a fair solution. The SPPA Law also stipulates that in juvenile criminal cases, law enforcement officers are required to prioritize the RJ approach before proceeding to the formal judicial process. However, many officers do not understand the essence of this rule, so that the RJ approach often becomes merely a formality without producing a meaningful resolution for all parties involved.

This lack of understanding is not only due to a lack of training, but also to the lack of integration of RJ principles into the education curriculum of law enforcement officers. Currently, training for law enforcement officers, such as police, prosecutors, and judges, still focuses on formal legal procedures, with little attention to alternative approaches such as RJ. In fact, the success of RJ depends heavily on the ability of officers to understand the dynamics of conflict and facilitate an inclusive and fair dialogue process. (Suradi 2019)

In addition, the absence of standard operating procedures (SOP) in the implementation of RJ also exacerbates this problem. For example, in the Attorney General's Regulation Number 15 of 2020, it is not explained in detail how the mediation process should be carried out, who should be involved, and how to ensure that the results of the mediation truly

reflect justice for victims and perpetrators. As a result, each law enforcement institution has different interpretations and implementation methods, which often lead to inconsistencies and injustice in the RJ process.

In some cases, the lack of understanding of law enforcement officers also leads to violations of victims' rights. For example, in cases of domestic violence, officers often force victims to forgive the perpetrators without providing adequate protection or support for the victims. This is contrary to the principles of RJ which emphasize the protection of victims' rights and the restitution of the losses they have experienced. In addition, the absence of a clear monitoring mechanism also allows for deviations in the implementation of RJ, such as pressure from officers to resolve cases quickly in order to reduce the workload.

Internationally, countries that have successfully implemented RJ have shown that intensive and ongoing training for law enforcement officers is a key to the success of this approach. For example, in New Zealand, all law enforcement officers are required to undergo specific training on RJ, which includes mediation techniques, conflict management, and social justice principles. This training not only enhances their understanding of RJ but also equips them with the practical skills needed to implement the approach effectively. This experience suggests that Indonesia needs to adopt similar measures to improve the capacity of law enforcement officers in implementing RJ.

In addition to training, it is also important to create an effective oversight mechanism to ensure that RJ is implemented in accordance with its basic principles. For example, in Canada, every RJ process must be reported and supervised by an independent committee consisting of representatives from the community, academics, and legal practitioners. This mechanism not only increases accountability but also provides space for the community to participate in the RJ process. If a similar mechanism is implemented in Indonesia, it can help reduce irregularities in the implementation of RJ and ensure that this approach truly creates balanced justice for all parties.

C. Restorative Justice Transformation in the Indonesian Criminal Justice System Towards a Just and Rehabilitative Legal Approach

The Indonesian criminal justice system is at a major crossroads in seeking a balance between legal certainty and social justice. Within the framework of the transformation of the criminal justice system, Restorative Justice (RJ) has emerged as a progressive approach that places restoration, reconciliation, and rehabilitation as top priorities. However, efforts to implement RJ currently still face various structural obstacles, one of which is the inconsistency of regulations and overlapping regulations between law enforcement institutions. In this context, the birth of an independent Restorative Justice Law (UU RJ) is an urgent need to end regulatory confusion and create a strong, clear, and integrated legal foundation. (Rado and Badillah 2019)

Currently, regulations related to RJ are spread across various sectoral regulations, such as Attorney General Regulation Number 15 of 2020, Circular Letter of the Chief of Police Number SE/8/VII/2018, and Supreme Court Regulation Number 2 of 2012. Although these regulations show progress in accommodating the principles of RJ, their scope and implementation are often inconsistent and sectoral. For example, the Attorney General Regulation only applies to minor crimes, while the Circular Letter of the Chief of Police gives the police greater freedom to determine the types of crimes that can be resolved through RJ. On the other hand, PERMA limits the application of RJ to certain cases without providing adequate technical guidance.

The lack of regulatory integration creates confusion in practice. For example, in cases involving children as perpetrators of crimes, Law Number 11 of 2012 concerning the Juvenile Criminal Justice System (UU SPPA) requires the RJ approach, but its implementation often conflicts with the interpretation made by prosecutors or police. This difference not only creates legal uncertainty, but also reduces public trust in the fairness of the criminal justice system. (Isnawati and Khosianah 2022)

From a legal perspective, this inconsistency is contrary to the principle of legal certainty, which is one of the fundamental principles in a state of law. Sudikno Mertokusumo in legal theory states that legal certainty can only be achieved if the rule of law is clear, firm, and does not give rise to multiple interpretations. Therefore, without integrated regulations, the principles of RJ are difficult to apply consistently, so that their potential to create true justice cannot be maximized.

The birth of an independent RJ Law has several urgent matters to consider:

1. **Unifying Principles and Legal Framework**
The RJ Law can unify various principles and rules that are currently spread across various sectoral regulations. This law can be a strong and uniform legal basis for all law enforcement institutions, from the police, prosecutors, to the courts, to implement RJ consistently. With an integrated legal framework, the RJ process no longer depends on the interpretation of certain individuals or institutions, so that legal certainty can be achieved.
2. **Expanding the Scope of RJ Application**
Currently, the application of RJ is limited to minor crimes or certain cases, as regulated in the Attorney General's Regulation and PERMA. In fact, the RJ principle can be applied to various types of crimes, including more complex cases, such as environmental crimes, corruption, or even domestic violence, as has been done in other countries. The RJ Law can provide clear guidance on the scope of RJ application, including case criteria, implementation mechanisms, and the roles of each party involved.
3. **Improving Accountability and Oversight**
The law could also create a better oversight mechanism for the RJ process. Currently, there is no clear mechanism to ensure that RJ is implemented in accordance with its basic principles. The RJ Law could provide for the establishment of an independent oversight body tasked with monitoring the implementation of RJ, ensuring transparency, and preventing abuse of authority.
4. **Strengthening the Capacity of Law Enforcement Officers**
The RJ Law can be the basis for developing a structured training program for law enforcement officers. This training should include an understanding of RJ principles, mediation techniques, conflict management, and communication skills needed to facilitate dialogue between victims, perpetrators, and the community.
5. **Increasing Community Participation**
One of the strengths of RJ is its participation that involves the community in the conflict resolution process. The RJ Law can regulate this participation in a

more structured way, including the role of local communities, traditional leaders, or civil society organizations in the RJ process. Thus, this approach not only creates individual justice, but also builds broader social harmony.

Experiences from other countries show that the success of RJ is highly dependent on the existence of specific and comprehensive legislation. For example, in New Zealand, specific legislation such as the Children, Young Persons, and Their Families Act 1989 provides a strong legal basis for the implementation of RJ, especially in the case of children. This law not only regulates the mechanism of RJ, but also establishes technical guidelines, the rights and obligations of the parties involved, and the monitoring mechanism.

Similarly, in Canada, RJ has been integrated into the criminal justice system through various pieces of legislation, such as the Youth Criminal Justice Act and the Corrections and Conditional Release Act. These laws provide clear guidelines on when and how RJ can be applied, reducing legal uncertainty and increasing the effectiveness of the approach.

In Indonesia, similar laws could include several key elements, such as:

- **Definition and Basic Principles of RJ:** Establish a clear definition of RJ and its basic principles, such as inclusivity, transparency, and fairness.
- **Scope of Application:** Regulates the types of criminal acts that can be resolved through RJ, including the criteria and limitations.
- **Implementation Procedures:** Provides technical guidance on the mediation process, the role of the mediator, and resolution mechanisms.
- **Rights and Obligations of Parties Involved:** Regulating the rights of victims, perpetrators, and the community in the RJ process.
- **Supervision and Accountability:** Establish an independent supervisory body tasked with monitoring and evaluating the implementation of RJ.
- **Sanctions for Abuse:** Establish sanctions for officers or other parties who abuse the RJ process.

IV. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Restorative Justice (RJ) is a progressive approach in the criminal justice system that is oriented towards restoration, reconciliation, and rehabilitation. However, the implementation of RJ in Indonesia is currently hampered by inconsistent regulations, lack of capacity of law enforcement officers, and the absence of an integrated legal framework. Reliance on sectoral regulations such as Attorney General Regulation Number 15 of 2020, Circular Letter of the Chief of Police Number SE/8/VII/2018, and PERMA Number 2 of 2012 creates fragmentation in the implementation of RJ, resulting in legal uncertainty and potential abuse of authority. To realize a just and rehabilitative legal system, a strong legal basis is needed through the birth of the Restorative Justice Law as the main instrument to unify the principles, procedures, and mechanisms for implementing RJ at all levels of law enforcement institutions.

First, the government and the DPR need to immediately draft and pass an independent Restorative Justice Law, by integrating the principles of restorative justice into the national criminal law system. This law must include a definition, scope, implementation procedures, monitoring mechanisms, and strict sanctions to ensure consistent and integrated implementation. Second, intensive training programs must be developed to increase the capacity of law enforcement officers to understand and apply the principles of RJ professionally. This step needs to be supported by comprehensive public education to increase public awareness of the importance of RJ as a more humane alternative approach to creating sustainable criminal justice. With these steps, RJ can become the foundation for the transformation of criminal law towards a system that is more just and in accordance with the values of Pancasila.

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