

MOBILIZING PUBLIC LEGAL AWARENESS IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE COVID-19 HEALTH PROTOCOL: AN ACADEMIC STUDY ON PARTICIPATION AND COMPLIANCE

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Abstract - Legal awareness is a state in which there is no conflict in people's lives. COVID-19 has a high infection rate, but people's legal awareness about protecting themselves and others is still low. In an attempt to deal with COVID-19, the government has issued a regulation on Large-Scale Social Restrictions (LSSR) through the Ministry of Health, which is contained in Minister of Health Regulation Number 9 of 2020. However, there are still many people who lack the legal awareness to comply with government regulations. As a result, there has been an increase in the number of victims infected with the COVID-19 virus. This study aims to understand and analyze the consequences of the legal lack of community awareness in the implementation of COVID-19 health protocols on the spread of the virus in the community. This research uses a juridical-sociological approach using primary and secondary data. The data analysis is descriptively qualitative. The results showed that the lack of public legal awareness in implementing Large-Scale Social Restrictions caused the government's efforts to mitigate the distribution of COVID-19 in Indonesia to be ineffective. To increase legal awareness, preventive efforts such as coaching, appeals, and education of the public are needed, as are repressive efforts in the form of punishment for those who violate the rules.

Keywords: public legal awareness, large-scale social restrictions, Covid-19 virus.

INTRODUCTION

In a short period of time, the Coronavirus Disease 2019 pandemic, also known as Covid-19, has changed the global landscape in unexpected ways. No one could have predicted that this pandemic would cause such profound suffering for humanity. Even in a relatively short period of time, the spread of COVID-19 occurred rapidly on a wide scale and caused many casualties.

Coronavirus disease is an infectious condition caused by the coronavirus and characterized by primary symptoms related to respiratory distress. The disease has been in the spotlight since its emergence in late 2019 in Wuhan, China. Since then, it has spread rapidly around the world, causing the 2019 coronavirus pandemic that is still ongoing today. The impact of this pandemic has extended to all sectors of the global economy as a whole (Khayru, 2021).

On March 11, the World Health Organization (WHO) officially announced that the novel coronavirus, or COVID-19, has become a pandemic, with more than 118 thousand cases of infection recorded in more than 110 countries and territories around the world, presenting a risk of wider spread globally. This pandemic is not only a public health crisis but will also impact every sector. In Indonesia, COVID-19 cases have experienced a significant increase. This can be seen from the increase in the number of daily cases, mortality rates, and the number of patients requiring hospitalization (Issalillah, 2021).

After going through the initial phase, Indonesia has now entered a new stage in handling COVID-19, known as the "new normal". This concept reflects a condition where people can continue their activities as usual, including work, worship, and other activities, but by implementing changes in their daily habits. The new normal involves behavioral changes aimed at carrying out normal activities while still implementing health protocols, with the main goal of preventing the spread of COVID-19.

Simply put, the new normal is a continuation of the habits practiced during the lockdown period, or Large-Scale Social Restrictions (LSSR). LSSR is a regulation issued by the Ministry of Health to accelerate the handling of COVID-19 and is implemented in various regions. The LSSR rules are listed in Minister of Health Regulation Number 9 of 2020. These restrictions include activities such as school and workplace holidays, restrictions on religious activities, restrictions on activities in public places, restrictions on socio-cultural activities, restrictions on modes of transportation, and restrictions on other activities related to defense and security aspects. In the new normal, these activities are still carried out by implementing relevant health protocols.

In the Minister of Health Regulation, it is explained that all schools and workplaces will be closed, except for offices or agencies that are considered strategic in providing services related to defense and security, public order, food needs, fuel oil and gas, health services, the economy, finance, communication, industry, export/import, and logistics distribution, as well as other basic needs. The implementation of this LSSR aims to reduce the spread of COVID-19,

and it is expected that the community can comply with the regulations and health protocols set by the government. Public awareness of the dangers of COVID-19 that has been built before affects their compliance with health protocols, so people are more orderly in complying with these rules.

Public awareness is still not fully formed, especially in terms of protecting themselves before protecting others. It is important for each individual to consider the common good for the health of all of us so that the programs launched by the government can run effectively, the pandemic will soon pass, and conditions can recover to normal. Many people are experiencing difficulties in their daily lives and facing serious economic problems. The lack of legal awareness in the community has resulted in the implementation of LSSR not running effectively, as can be seen from the high rate of spread of the COVID-19 virus until the end of June. Although the government has made maximum efforts in prevention efforts, many people are still indifferent to the steps it has taken.

In this study, researchers will examine public legal awareness of the implementation of the COVID-19 health protocol. This involves the dynamic awareness and responsibility that individuals and communities have for improving and developing themselves. Such awareness is not only limited to understanding and obedience to existing provisions and regulations but also involves adherence to ethics and morals in accordance with prevailing customs and habits. If legal and volitional awareness have not been fully implemented by individuals and communities, then the observance of such awareness is still hampered. This is because people and society have not fully realized the soul and spirit reflected in the worldview that covers aspects of human life and society as a whole. In this study, researchers will investigate the level of legal awareness of the community in implementing the COVID-19 health protocol.

RESEARCH METHODS

The method applied in this research is the Juridical Sociological Approach, which aims to obtain legal knowledge empirically by being directly involved in the object of research (Soekanto, 2015). In addition, the author also uses the observation method to observe phenomena that occur in society. In analyzing the data, the author applies a qualitative approach that brings in-depth disclosure of facts based on the scientific characteristics of individuals or groups, with the aim of uncovering the meaning behind the observed phenomena (Marzuki, 2019).

In an effort to observe the phenomenon to be investigated, the author uses human senses such as sight and hearing. The observed phenomena are then recorded in notes that will be further analyzed. The data sources used in this research are primary data sources related to social facts related to the operationalization of law.

Observation is carried out with the main purpose of making notes or descriptions of behavior that occurs in reality, gaining an understanding of that behavior, or just finding out how often certain events occur (Nasution, 2019). In making observations, the author's interpretation can be different from other people's. In this context, the author observes community behavior in terms of compliance with the COVID-19 health protocol from the perspective of legal awareness.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

According to Soerjono Soekanto (2015), legal awareness involves compliance with the law in various aspects, including knowledge, recognition, and appreciation of the law in general. The focus of legal awareness lies in the understanding of legal knowledge, where this knowledge will form recognition and appreciation of legal rules. With this recognition and appreciation, there will be compliance with the law as a result.

Legal awareness, both at the individual level and in society as a whole, cannot be equated with robot behavior. This is because humans are not only obedient and compliant because of the rules but also involve dynamic awareness and responsibility. Legal awareness involves an understanding, recognition, and appreciation of the law, as well as a strong desire to improve and develop oneself within the context of the law. In this case, humans have the ability to think, reflect, and act responsibly based on their awareness of the law.

Thus, legal awareness is the understanding or values inherent in individuals regarding existing laws or laws that are expected to exist. What is emphasized in legal awareness are values related to legal functions, not legal assessments of concrete events in the community concerned.

Awareness of the law plays an important role in building a law-abiding society. With this awareness, it is expected that people will respect and appreciate legal institutions and rules as an important necessity in achieving legal obedience and order. Active participation and public awareness of health protocols regulated in the Decree of the Minister of Health Number Hk.01.07/Menkes/382/2020 concerning Health Protocols for the Public in Public Places and Facilities in the Context of Prevention and Control of Coronavirus Disease 2019 (Covid-19) have an important role. The community is responsible for preventing and controlling the spread of COVID-19; therefore, active participation from all levels of society is very important in this prevention process. The potential transmission of COVID-19 in public places and facilities can occur through movement, crowds, and social interactions that have the potential to result in

physical contact. Therefore, it is important for managers, organizers, and those in charge of public places and facilities to implement health protocols diligently to protect public health.

Indicators of legal awareness are concrete manifestations of the system of values that exists in society. The expected goal is that there be harmony between the law and the value system. According to Soerjono Soekanto (2015), the indicators of legal awareness are actually relatively concrete clues about the level of legal awareness.

The first indicator is legal knowledge. A person has knowledge that certain behaviors are regulated by written and unwritten laws. Such behavior may involve actions that are prohibited by law or actions that are permitted by law. When a regulation is promulgated and issued in accordance with legal and official procedures, the regulation has the force of law. There is an assumption that every member of the public is deemed to be aware of the existence of the law. An example is the issuance of Minister of Health Decree Number Hk.01.07/Menkes/382/2020 concerning Health Protocols for the Public in Public Places and Facilities in the Prevention and Control of Corona Virus Disease 2019 (Covid-19).

The second indicator of legal awareness is legal understanding. Legal knowledge alone is not enough; people also need to understand the applicable law. This means that the community must have a correct understanding of Minister of Health Decree Number Hk.01.07/Menkes/382/2020. To achieve this, the community needs to have the right knowledge and understanding of the essence and importance of the regulation. Through legal understanding, it is expected that the public will understand the purpose of laws and regulations and the benefits for those whose lives are regulated by these regulations.

The third indicator of legal awareness is legal attitude. Legal attitudes refer to a person's tendency to give an assessment of the law. This attitude can be in the form of fear of negative sanctions that will be received if they violate the law, motivation to maintain good relations with the authorities, motivation to maintain good relations with others, or obedience to the law because it is in line with their values. This legal attitude reflects how individuals or society in general perceive and respond to the law in everyday life.

The fourth indicator of legal awareness is legal behavior, which reflects individual or community compliance with applicable regulations. In the context of Minister of Health Decree Number Hk.01.07/Menkes/382/2020 concerning Health Protocols for the Public in Public Places and Facilities in the Context of COVID-19 Prevention and Control, legal behavior will be reflected in the real actions of the community to comply with the regulated health protocols. Legal behavior in this context includes wearing masks, maintaining physical distance, washing hands regularly, avoiding crowds, and following the rules and instructions set to prevent the spread of COVID-19. By complying with the regulations and protocols stipulated in the decree, individuals or communities demonstrate behavior that is in accordance with applicable laws, which in turn will help in the prevention and control of virus transmission. Consistent legal behavior and adherence to such regulations are important for creating a safe and healthy environment for individuals and society as a whole. Thus, good legal awareness and behavior will contribute to the effective implementation of the health minister's decree and efforts to prevent the spread of COVID-19.

In principle, the role of the community is very important in stopping the spread of COVID-19 and preventing more widespread transmission, especially in places that are frequented and involve the movement of people, social interactions, and crowds. Communities need to adapt to new habits that are healthier, cleaner, and comply with established protocols, with the participation of all elements of society and utilizing all available resources. However, unfortunately, there are still many people who do not comply with the health protocols set by the government when doing activities in public spaces.

Health protocols are guidelines or steps that must be followed to ensure the health and protection of individuals and communities from certain diseases. The main principle is to maintain individual and public health. Complying with health protocols can be done by applying the 3M principle, namely using a mask that covers the nose and mouth up to the chin when leaving the house or interacting with people whose health status is unknown, diligently washing hands with soap and running water or using alcohol-based hand sanitizers, and maintaining a minimum distance of 1 meter from other people to avoid exposure to droplets when the person speaks, coughs, or sneezes.

One of the strategies implemented by the Government to reduce the spread of COVID-19 is through the Large-Scale Social Restrictions policy. LSSR is a restriction on certain activities for residents in areas suspected of being infected with Corona Virus Disease 2019. This policy includes the closure of schools and workplaces, restrictions on religious activities, and restrictions on activities in public places or facilities. According to the Ministry of Health of the Republic of Indonesia in 2020, the implementation of LSSR must be based on epidemiological considerations, threat levels, effectiveness of measures, availability of resources, operational technical factors, as well as political, economic, social, cultural, defense, and security considerations.

Indonesia is one of the countries experiencing an increase in COVID-19 cases among its population. The COVID-19 Handling Task Force faces difficulties in addressing and managing patients with COVID-19 cases in Indonesia. Therefore, the Indonesian government took action by creating policies to suppress the spread of COVID-19. The policies implemented by the Indonesian government include Large-Scale Social Restrictions, the establishment of the COVID-19 Handling Committee, and National Economic Recovery, as well as requiring all Indonesians to

implement health protocols such as 3M (wearing masks, washing hands, and maintaining distance). However, the success of these policies largely depends on public compliance. It is important for all Indonesians to comply with these policies so that they can run effectively and efficiently to achieve the expected results.

In order for government policies to run effectively and efficiently, the main factor needed is the legal awareness that exists in society. The community has an important role in suppressing the spread of COVID-19. One of the roles of the community is to follow government recommendations through the implementation of health protocols, such as wearing masks, maintaining cleanliness, washing hands, and so on. However, there are often cases where people do not implement these things. As a result, the handling of COVID-19 cases in Indonesia has been hampered, and the number of cases has increased.

In addition to these primary factors, there are also secondary factors that play an important role. The Indonesian government has an obligation to achieve the state goals listed in the Preamble of the 1945 Constitution. One way to achieve these goals is to impose sanctions on people who do not comply with health protocols. These sanctions can encourage public legal awareness to obey and comply with government policies aimed at suppressing the spread of COVID-19 in Indonesia. Legal awareness and the application of sanctions are important factors because both are interconnected and complement each other in achieving these goals.

The success of handling the COVID-19 Pandemic is largely determined by the active participation of the community itself. Indonesia has a large and diverse population, so each individual needs to work together and complement each other to form a civil society, which is the embodiment of true Democracy. Democracy is not only about the majority vote but also involves the active participation and involvement of the entire population. Therefore, increasing public legal awareness is very important in order to form a civil society capable of handling and overcoming the COVID-19 Pandemic in Indonesia. The legal awareness of the Indonesian people is a major factor in efforts to handle and overcome the COVID-19 Pandemic in Indonesia.

COVID-19 is not just an ordinary virus but a pandemic that affects the whole world. The Indonesian government has taken steps to deal with the COVID-19 Pandemic, one of which is implementing a mandatory health protocol policy for the entire community. The importance of public legal awareness regarding compliance with this health protocol greatly affects the effectiveness of the implementation of the policy.

The lack of public legal awareness in the implementation of Large-Scale Social Restrictions is a significant problem, in accordance with the provisions contained in the Regulation of the Minister of Health of the Republic of Indonesia Number 9 of 2020 concerning Guidelines for Large-Scale Social Restrictions in Handling the Acceleration of Corona Virus Disease 2019 (Covid-19). As stated by Soerjono Soekanto, problems related to health protocols involve individual people who violate them, and it is questionable who is responsible and how law enforcement functions in this case. This is the task area of the health task force, and it needs to formulate effective strategies to appropriately address violations.

There are still many people who do not comply with the Large-Scale Social Restrictions rules implemented by the government, especially related to non-compliance with health protocols such as the application of 3M, activities outside the home, and the occurrence of crowds. In addition, the level of public compliance with wearing masks in crowds is also low. Therefore, the government and the COVID-19 Task Force are asked to take firm action against non-compliant communities and dissolve activities that cause crowds. In addition to people who violate and disobey, the organizers of activities that cause crowds must also be sanctioned.

The inadequate application of sanctions against violators of LSSR rules has caused people to not feel afraid, and many still violate them. Law enforcement officials have not dared to take firm action due to the lack of instructions to impose harsh sanctions, so they are limited to appeals. As a result, there is a difference between the actual social behavior of the community and the social behavior expected by law. The process of interaction in society continues, which can produce changes due to conflicts, needs, and desires of the community.

It is possible for people to disobey the law because they feel that the applicable law is not in accordance with their wishes. On the other hand, when a law is enacted, people who previously did not behave in accordance with the law may change their behavior to conform to the law. In this context, governments often face a difficult dilemma. It is difficult for the government to take decisive action in a situation that is not conducive, as doing so may invite criticism that the government is not protecting the people and making life difficult for them. In fact, the government could also be accused of making its people miserable. Therefore, the government must consider carefully and conduct a balanced policy between enforcing the law and safeguarding the interests and welfare of the people.

It would be understandable if the authorities representing the government were reluctant to apply the rules harshly. However, as good citizens, it is important for us to support the policies taken by the government, even though there may be risks that must be borne by the community as a consequence of implementing these policies. Ultimately, it is the responsibility of each individual to establish a good relationship with their fellow citizens. By protecting ourselves, we also protect others. Self-awareness is important so that we recognize that the actions we take to protect ourselves also have benefits for others.

The existence of government policies in dealing with the COVID-19 pandemic does have an impact that is felt especially by the lower middle class. People who work in the informal sector feel confused about meeting their daily needs. Laborers, expedition truck drivers, small traders, and online motorcycle taxi drivers find it difficult to make ends meet if they have to stay at home without working. Although the government has provided social aid to affected communities in the form of money and basic necessities in accordance with the stipulated provisions, some people still find it difficult to make ends meet. As a result, they tend to break the rules and continue their activities as usual, ignoring the risks involved.

In such a situation, there needs to be a comprehensive approach from the government to addressing the issue. In addition to providing social assistance, it is also important to consider measures that allow people to continue working while maintaining the recommended health protocols. For example, providing training and assistance for people who want to shift to business sectors that can still run during the pandemic, such as utilizing digital technology or implementing strict health protocols in the informal sector. In addition, proper education on the importance of complying with the rules and the impact of violating them is also needed so that people have better awareness.

The government also needs to work together with various relevant parties, including companies and community organizations, to find joint solutions to this challenge. With a holistic approach and active participation from all parties, it is hoped that a solution can be found that can maintain the health of the community while meeting their needs in a sustainable manner.

There are a number of people who do not feel worried about this pandemic situation, as can be seen from the number of people who continue to carry out activities without following health protocols, especially not wearing masks. Some of them may underestimate the situation because they consider it a hassle or because they feel the threat of the coronavirus has been exaggerated. Getting people to follow the rules is not easy, although it is important to minimize the spread of the coronavirus and maintain public health and safety. It is important for people to consciously realize that maintaining and complying with rules and being disciplined in health protocols is one way to protect themselves and reduce the spread of COVID-19.

Some communities have not yet demonstrated compliance in this regard. This is understandable and not entirely to blame, given that law enforcement officials have not imposed strict measures against such violations. Officers only give reminders and warnings. Therefore, it is natural that people do not feel afraid, and violations occur. This situation is a dilemma for the officers on duty because the situation is very sensitive for the community. If strict action is taken, it is likely to get protests, be considered not understanding the situation, and even cause public anger. This is the result, where the community cannot be organized to follow the government's recommendations.

The government, through the COVID-19 Handling Task Force, has appealed to the public to adhere to the 3M protocol to prevent the spread of the coronavirus. The 3M protocol consists of washing hands, wearing masks, and maintaining distance. However, although the COVID-19 pandemic situation has not shown any signs of improvement, public awareness of implementing measures to prevent the transmission of the coronavirus has actually decreased. The government has imposed Large-Scale Social Restrictions to reduce the spread of COVID-19 in the hope of minimizing coronavirus transmission. However, the implementation of LSSR during the COVID-19 pandemic has not met the desired expectations. The lack of public legal awareness in implementing LSSR is the cause of the ineffectiveness of the government's efforts to reduce the spread of the coronavirus in Indonesia. In addition, some people have not fully realized the importance of implementing LSSR. This situation becomes a concern when the implementation of LSSR is only a formality of regulations that are not seriously implemented by the community. There are still many residents who violate the rules even though there are sanctions, but the sanctions imposed are not strict. This makes people not feel afraid of existing sanctions, so there are still many who ignore and violate health protocols.

To support this, the government needs to apply strict sanctions to increase public compliance with existing policies. Cooperation between the government and the Indonesian people is very important, especially in building public legal awareness to jointly overcome the COVID-19 Pandemic in Indonesia so that it ends soon. Tightening measures are needed by law enforcement officials to limit the movement of people so that they do not carelessly carry out activities outside the home.

CONCLUSIONS

The implementation of government policies aimed at the community is still not optimal in terms of effectiveness and efficiency. There is a lack of legal awareness among the public, which is very important in efforts to reduce the spread of COVID-19. With increased legal awareness, it is expected that people will dutifully follow health protocols, including wearing masks, maintaining hygiene, washing hands, and maintaining distance. This aims to support the government in reducing the spread of the virus. Unfortunately, there are still many people who are not serious about complying with these health protocols.

The lack of public legal awareness about implementing LSSR has resulted in the government's ineffective efforts to reduce the spread of the coronavirus in Indonesia. This is proven by the increasing number of victims

exposed every day, which shows that public legal awareness is still not optimal. In addition, the deteriorating economic situation is also a contributing factor to the ineffectiveness of the implementation of LSSR in preventing the widespread spread of COVID-19. People do not feel afraid of sanctions because their application has not been maximized. Law enforcement officials have not dared to take firm action against violators of LSSR rules because the instructions given are more at the appeal stage than providing harsh sanctions.

It is important for the government and the community to work together to overcome the COVID-19 pandemic in Indonesia. The COVID-19 Task Force, on behalf of the government, has asked the public to adhere to the 3M protocol to prevent further spread. In this joint effort, public legal awareness is a crucial factor so that this pandemic can end soon.

Efforts to increase legal awareness are aimed in two directions. First, through preventive efforts that focus on prevention. This can be done by providing guidance, appeals, and education to the public to help them understand the provisions of the government. In this situation, it is crucial for citizens to comply with government directives regarding Large-Scale Social Restrictions and implement health measures for the common good. In addition, strict measures involving punishment for violations should be taken. The government should impose strong and consistent legal sanctions on individuals who violate the regulations. This aims to instill fear and deterrence in the community so that they think twice before committing an offense. By implementing these two approaches, it is hoped that people's legal awareness can increase so that they are more compliant with the rules set by the government.

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