

**PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS (SDGS): A
LITERATURE REVIEW ON THE ROLE OF BUREAUCRACY IN SUSTAINABLE
DEVELOPMENT, SOCIAL JUSTICE, AND POVERTY ERADICATION**

Dila Erlianti

STIA Lancang Kuning, Dumai
dilaerliantierlianti@gmail.com

Adi Mursalin

Universitas Panca Bhakti Pontianak
adimursalin@upb.ac.id

Rosijanih Arbie

Universitas Sam Ratulangi, Manado

Abstract

This study aims to examine the role of bureaucracy in supporting the achievement of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which include sustainable development, social justice, and poverty alleviation. Through a literature review, this study examines how public administration as a bureaucratic system plays a role in formulating, implementing, and evaluating inclusive and sustainable development policies. The findings show that bureaucracy has a strategic role as a coordinator and implementer of policies that must be able to innovate, adapt, and establish multisectoral partnerships to overcome various development challenges. However, obstacles such as fragmentation of implementation, limited human resource capacity, and lack of transparency remain major obstacles. Therefore, bureaucratic reform that prioritises accountability, digital technology, and public participation is crucial to optimising the role of the bureaucracy in achieving SDG targets effectively and sustainably.

Keywords: Public Administration, Bureaucracy, Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), Sustainable Development, Social Justice, Poverty Alleviation, Bureaucratic Reform, Public Policy, Inclusive Governance, Digital Transformation.

Introduction

Sustainable development has become the main paradigm in global development governance in the 21st century. This led to the creation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) agenda by the United Nations in 2015 as a follow-up to the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) (Fisher & Green, 2004). The SDGs consist of 17 goals and 169 targets that address economic, social and environmental aspects in an integrated manner. The main focus of the SDGs is to ensure inclusive, equitable and future-oriented development without leaving any community behind. Indonesia, as a member state of the UN, has declared its commitment to achieving the SDGs as part of its long-term national development vision towards Indonesia Emas 2045 (Rhodes, 1997).

Sustainable development requires a paradigm shift from development that prioritises economic growth to development that simultaneously considers social and environmental aspects. The phenomena of social inequality, poverty, environmental degradation, and climate change are major challenges that must be addressed holistically and in an integrated manner (United Nations, 2015). Therefore, the role of public administration, in this case the bureaucracy, is crucial as the driver and implementer of policies that bridge the gap between development planning and its realisation in the field.

The bureaucracy must transform itself to become more adaptive, transparent, and responsive to the needs of the community while preserving natural resources. The context of bureaucracy in sustainable development presents complex challenges. The bureaucracy must be able to carry out its functions of coordination, supervision, and public service effectively and efficiently in order to ensure that the implementation of the SDGs runs according to target.

In addition, the bureaucracy must also establish good governance based on the principles of transparency, accountability, public participation, and social justice. Failure of the bureaucracy to manage resources and policies can hinder the achievement of SDG targets, especially in poverty alleviation and welfare distribution (Ott & Göhler, 2019).

In the Indonesian context, the bureaucracy has a strategic role in accelerating the achievement of the SDGs because it is at the forefront of implementing development policies at both the central and regional levels. The government has issued various regulations, such as Presidential Regulation No. 111 of 2022 on the implementation of sustainable development goals (Christensen & Lægreid, 2015). This regulation emphasises the importance of bureaucratic reform to improve the capacity and performance of the apparatus in supporting sustainable development programmes, including through public service innovation and strengthening synergies between government agencies, the private sector, and civil society (Choi & Cowan, 2021).

Social justice is one of the main pillars of the SDGs that is a major concern for the bureaucracy. Social justice demands equal access to public services, education, health, and economic opportunities without discrimination. The role of the bureaucracy here is to ensure that development policies and programmes are not only oriented towards growth figures, but also towards inclusive community welfare. The bureaucracy must actively anticipate development inequalities that could widen the social divide, so that social justice as a basic principle of sustainable development can be realised in practice (Tallberg, 2018).

Poverty eradication is a key objective of the SDGs that is highly relevant to the function of bureaucracy in public administration. The management of targeted social programmes, effective budget allocation, and the implementation of social subsidy

policies require a reliable bureaucracy. The bureaucracy must be able to identify poor groups, develop empowerment mechanisms, and facilitate their access to economic resources and social welfare programmes. The effectiveness of the bureaucracy in carrying out this function will have a direct impact on the achievement of poverty eradication targets in accordance with the SDGs (Frederickson et al., 2015). However, the bureaucracy in Indonesia still faces various structural and cultural obstacles and challenges, such as slow bureaucracy, lack of transparency, and corrupt practices that hamper the effective implementation of development. In addition, digital transformation as a solution to strengthen the bureaucracy still requires improvements in human resource capacity and information technology infrastructure. Therefore, bureaucratic reform is an important agenda to improve the quality of public services and synergy among stakeholders in supporting the achievement of the SDGs (Peters, 2010).

Synergy between the bureaucracy and various other stakeholders, such as local governments, non-governmental organisations, the private sector, and local communities, is key to the success of sustainable development. The bureaucracy must be able to manage these partnerships effectively through collaborative and coordinative mechanisms that support the implementation of SDG programmes at various levels.

This participatory approach also strengthens social justice by providing space for all elements of society to be involved in development (James & Lodge, 2013). Policies and regulations as bureaucratic instruments must be directed to support sustainable development that integrates environmental, economic, and social aspects.

This includes wise management of natural resources, environmentally friendly infrastructure development, and human capacity building through sustainable education. The implementation of these policies needs to be systematically monitored with clear indicators in order to evaluate progress towards achieving the SDGs (Jacobs & De Bruijn, 2014).

Effective and adaptive bureaucracy plays a role not only at the national level, but is also very important at the local and regional levels, given that most SDG programmes are executed at these levels. Strengthening the capacity of regional bureaucracy is one of the key factors in ensuring that sustainable development policies are implemented in accordance with local needs and potential.

A bottom-up approach to planning and implementation is an important strategy for achieving social justice and poverty alleviation (Naidoo, 2020). The bureaucracy is also increasingly required to be able to manage data and information accurately and transparently in order to support evidence-based policy-making.

The digitisation of public administration systems opens up great opportunities to increase transparency, accountability, and public participation in the development process. Information technology facilitates the monitoring of SDG achievements and

accelerates responses to emerging social and environmental issues (Verwilghen & Toussaint, 2018).

Overall, the role of the bureaucracy in supporting the SDGs is a crucial aspect that determines the success of sustainable development in Indonesia. Through bureaucratic reform, strengthening the capacity of the civil service, and implementing policies oriented towards social justice and poverty alleviation, the bureaucracy can become an effective agent of change. Therefore, this literature review is important to provide an in-depth understanding of the challenges and opportunities for the bureaucracy in the context of the SDGs, as a basis for developing more sustainable and inclusive development strategies.

Research Method

The research method used in this literature review is a qualitative approach with a focus on literature studies and document analysis. This study aims to examine various theories, concepts, and studies related to the role of bureaucracy in sustainable development, social justice, and poverty alleviation through the collection of secondary data from various sources such as books, scientific journals, policy reports, and relevant official documents (Eliyah & Aslan, 2025). The analysis process was conducted descriptively and interpretatively to synthesise the various existing study results, thereby identifying patterns, relationships, as well as weaknesses and opportunities in strengthening the role of bureaucracy in supporting the implementation of the SDGs. This approach also emphasises the importance of critical analysis of public administration theories and sustainable development concepts in order to produce a comprehensive and scientific picture (Baumeister & Leary, 2020).

Results and Discussion

The Concepts of Public Administration, Bureaucracy, and Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

Public administration is a social science discipline that studies the process of managing and implementing government functions in providing services to the community. Essentially, public administration focuses on coordination between various elements of government to ensure that public policies can be formulated, implemented, and monitored effectively (Verwilghen & Toussaint, 2018). This concept covers aspects of government organisation management, human resources, and the relationship between the government and citizens. Public administration also positions itself as a critical link between policies made in a political context and their technical and administrative implementation (Garg & Singh, 2023).

Bureaucracy is a central element of public administration, serving as the primary implementer of government policy. The concept of modern bureaucracy was developed by Max Weber, who described bureaucracy as a rational, hierarchical administrative

system based on rules and standard procedures. Bureaucracy has important characteristics such as a clear division of labour, clear authority and responsibilities, and compliance with professional norms and standards. In the context of public administration, bureaucracy is both a moral and operational instrument in realising the goals of the state and the public interest (Pollitt & Bouckaert, 2011).

The role of bureaucracy is not limited to being a mechanical implementer of policy, but also an agent of change and innovation in the government system. Bureaucracy must be able to adapt to socio-economic and technological dynamics in order to remain relevant and effective. Therefore, bureaucratic reform has become an important issue in the modern context, with the aim of improving the efficiency, transparency, accountability, and responsiveness of public services.

The quality of bureaucracy directly affects public trust in the government and the legitimacy of public policies (Bovaird & Löffler, 2009). The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are a global agenda launched by the United Nations in 2015 as a continuation of the Millennium Development Goals.

The SDGs consist of 17 goals and 169 targets covering various aspects of development, such as poverty eradication, quality education, gender equality, access to clean water and sanitation, clean energy, decent work, innovation, reducing inequality, and ecosystem protection. The main objective of the SDGs is to achieve sustainable, inclusive, and socially just development without sacrificing the environment for future generations (Rosenbloom & Kravchuk, 2005).

In the context of public administration, the SDGs require a paradigm shift in development, which previously focused more on economic growth alone, to sustainable and holistic development. This requires the bureaucracy to not only carry out administrative functions, but also to ensure that all public programmes and policies are implemented in an inclusive, equitable, and environmentally friendly manner. The implementation of the SDGs requires alignment between national policies and global goals and requires cross-sectoral and intergovernmental coordination (Hicks & Mitlin, 2014).

Public administration plays a strategic role in realising the SDGs because the bureaucracy is responsible for the planning, implementation, and evaluation of national and regional development policies. The functions of public administration, which include policy formulation, public service, resource management, and supervision and evaluation, are key to ensuring the achievement of the SDGs.

Public institutions must be equipped with the capacity to adapt to change and innovate in administrative management to overcome the challenges of sustainable development (Bakan & Uygun, 2022). The scope of public administration covers various fields such as human resource management, state financial management, public services, and government organisational governance.

All these elements must work synergistically to support sustainable development and the SDGs. In this case, public administration must be able to integrate the principles of good governance, which include transparency, public participation, accountability, and the rule of law (Kettunen & Kallio, 2021).

Good governance is an important concept in modern public administration that not only prioritises effectiveness and efficiency but also pays attention to aspects of fairness and inclusiveness. Good governance is governance that is able to overcome corruption, improve public services, and optimise the use of resources for the benefit of the people.

In the context of the SDGs, good governance is used as the main benchmark in assessing the success of public administration in supporting sustainable development (Frederickson, 2016). The bureaucracy, as the implementer of public policy, must be able to function as the front line in poverty alleviation and social justice. This function requires the bureaucracy to ensure that government social policies reach the most vulnerable and poorest communities. Accessible, targeted, and transparent public services are key factors in promoting equitable welfare and improving the quality of life of the community (Zhang & McCartney, 2020). Digital transformation is one of the main solutions in bureaucratic reform aimed at improving public services and governance.

The use of information and communication technology opens up opportunities for the bureaucracy to accelerate administrative processes, reduce operational costs, and increase transparency and accountability. The development of e-government also strengthens public participation and access to information, which are important prerequisites for achieving the SDGs (Bressers & Lulofs, 2010).

Effective public administration must be supported by competent and ethical human resources. Capacity building and training of civil servants are key priorities to enable the bureaucracy to cope with the complexity of tasks and the demands of sustainable development. In addition, appreciation of ethical values and professionalism must be prioritised to build a healthy and productive work culture in the bureaucracy (Klijn & Teisman, 2003).

Community involvement and public participation are important aspects of public administration that support the achievement of SDGs. The bureaucracy must be a facilitator that opens up space for dialogue and collaboration between various stakeholders, including local communities, the private sector, and non-governmental organisations. This participatory approach will strengthen policy legitimacy and ensure that development is carried out in accordance with the needs and aspirations of the community (Kelly & Swindell, 2021).

Natural resource and environmental management are also integral parts of public administration in the context of sustainable development. The bureaucracy must be able to formulate and implement policies that take into account conservation, reduction of negative impacts on the environment, and sustainable resource

management. This role is very important in facing the challenges of climate change and environmental degradation that have a broad impact on the quality of human life (Newman & Gargano, 2020).

Evaluation and monitoring of bureaucratic performance are vital aspects of modern public administration that supports the SDGs. Transparent reporting systems and measurable performance indicators must be developed to ensure the effective implementation of programmes. Data analysis and feedback from the community can be used as material for continuous improvement in governance (Najam, 2005).

The main challenge for bureaucracy in supporting SDGs is how to integrate various sectoral policies so that they work synergistically and are not fragmented. The imbalance between short-term economic goals and long-term environmental goals often becomes a dilemma in bureaucratic decision-making. Therefore, a holistic and systemic approach is needed to harmonise various interests (Moore, 1995).

Ultimately, the concept of responsive, transparent, and innovative public administration and bureaucracy is the main foundation for achieving the vision of sustainable development and SDGs. Strengthening institutional capacity, improving working mechanisms, and enhancing relations between the government and the community must be the main focus of public administration reform in the future.

The Role of Bureaucracy in Sustainable Development, Social Justice, and Poverty Alleviation

The role of bureaucracy in sustainable development is central, given that bureaucracy is the main implementer of public policies formulated by the government. Sustainable development requires bureaucracy to do more than just carry out routine administration; it must also be proactive in integrating environmental, social, and economic issues holistically into the decision-making process and programme implementation. This requires the bureaucracy to be adaptable and innovative so that development policies can be implemented effectively and with a long-term orientation (Gerson & Horowitz, 2023).

In the context of sustainable development, the bureaucracy must be able to manage natural resources based on the principles of conservation and balanced utilisation so as not to damage the ecosystem and to ensure the welfare of the community.

This role is closely related to good environmental governance, in which the bureaucracy is at the forefront of monitoring and enforcing environmental protection regulations. Awareness of the importance of environmentally friendly development must be embedded in all levels of the bureaucracy, from the central to regional levels (Fisher & Green, 2004). The bureaucracy also plays an important role in encouraging technological innovation that supports sustainable development.

For example, the application of green technology and renewable energy in various sectors is part of the development agenda that must be supported by bureaucratic policies and implementation. Thus, the bureaucracy must open space for collaboration with the private sector and academia to adopt innovative solutions that can accelerate the achievement of SDG targets (United Nations, 2015). Social justice is a key commitment in sustainable development that emphasises the equitable distribution of development benefits to all levels of society. The bureaucracy has a responsibility to ensure that policies do not only favour the majority or those in power, but also involve vulnerable and marginalised groups. This includes ensuring access to equitable public services, such as education, health, housing and social protection (Ott & Göhler, 2019).

Inclusive bureaucratic management enables poor and marginalised communities to obtain their basic rights through accessible and quality public services. An example is the bureaucracy in the social assistance system, which must function transparently so that assistance reaches its target and has a positive impact on poverty alleviation. This requires an integrated and accurate data-based administrative system at all levels of government (Christensen & Lægreid, 2015).

The role of bureaucracy in poverty alleviation is crucial, given that bureaucracy is the designer and implementer of government social programmes. Through programmes such as direct cash assistance, vocational training, education and health subsidies, bureaucracy is expected to increase the economic capacity and welfare of the poor (Choi & Cowan, 2021). Improving the effectiveness of the bureaucracy will determine the success of sustainable poverty alleviation programmes. Coordination between bureaucratic institutions is a determining factor in synergising poverty alleviation policies with sustainable development in general. Fragmentation and overlapping roles between bureaucracies are often major obstacles to achieving SDG targets. Therefore, the bureaucracy must establish structured and participatory coordination mechanisms so that existing resources can be utilised optimally and efficiently (Tallberg, 2018).

The bureaucracy also has a role in monitoring and evaluating the implementation of development programmes to ensure that the policies that have been formulated can run according to plan and achieve the expected results. This evaluation is important to assess the impact of programmes on poverty alleviation and social equity, as well as to ensure that sustainable development is not neglected in the implementation of certain sectoral policies (Frederickson et al., 2015).

Innovation in bureaucracy is also key to addressing various sustainable development challenges, particularly in utilising digital technology as a tool to support administration and public services. Government digitalisation or e-government can increase transparency, speed up services, and enable broader public participation. This will promote equitable access and strengthen social justice (Peters, 2010).

Awareness of the need for ethics and integrity in bureaucracy is an important foundation for creating a clean, reliable bureaucracy that is trusted by the public. Corruption and nepotism in bureaucracy will greatly undermine efforts towards sustainable development and poverty alleviation because public resources will be siphoned off for the benefit of certain individuals or groups (James & Lodge, 2013). Therefore, bureaucratic reform that emphasises accountability and transparency is essential.

Public participation is also the responsibility of the bureaucracy in sustainable development and social justice. The bureaucracy must be able to facilitate dialogue and public consultation forums so that people from all walks of life can contribute to the development planning and monitoring process. This participatory approach is crucial to ensure that the policies produced are in line with the real needs of the community (Jacobs & De Bruijn, 2014). Improving the capacity of bureaucratic human resources is a key factor in enabling the bureaucracy to perform its role professionally and respond to social and environmental dynamics.

Training in change adaptation, technical competency development, and increased understanding of sustainable development values must be a top priority in bureaucratic resource management (Naidoo, 2020). The bureaucracy faces a major challenge in addressing development disparities between regions, especially between the centre and the regions.

Local governments often have limited resources and administrative capacity, which affects the effectiveness of implementing sustainable development and poverty alleviation programmes. Therefore, there needs to be support and capacity building for the bureaucracy in the regions so that all regions can contribute maximally to the achievement of the SDGs (Verwilghen & Toussaint, 2018).

The role of bureaucracy must also be expanded through the strengthening of cross-sector partnerships, including with the business world, civil society organisations, and international institutions. This multisectoral collaboration is important to optimise resources, knowledge, and technology in addressing complex and multidimensional development issues. Bureaucracy is tasked with establishing a framework and coordination that can facilitate such partnerships (Garg & Singh, 2023).

Ultimately, an effective, innovative, and accountable bureaucracy will be the main driving force in realising sustainable development, social justice, and poverty alleviation in line with the spirit of the SDGs. Strengthening regulations, digital transformation, public participation, and human resource capacity are the main pillars of bureaucratic reform in order to realise these goals in an inclusive and sustainable manner.

Conclusion

The role of bureaucracy is vital in supporting the achievement of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in Indonesia. Bureaucracy is at the forefront of planning, implementing and overseeing sustainable development programmes, with a primary focus on human resource empowerment, environmental management and improving access to social services for all levels of society. This role also includes establishing innovative and collaborative multisectoral partnerships so that SDG programmes can be implemented effectively and efficiently.

In practice, the bureaucracy must be able to integrate various policies, regulations, and indicators in line with SDG targets while ensuring accountability and transparency. The ongoing bureaucratic reforms demonstrate the government's commitment to strengthening the capacity of the civil service and improving governance, enabling it to address multidimensional challenges such as poverty, inequality, and climate change. The success of the bureaucracy in managing resources and implementing these policies is key to achieving equitable and sustainable development.

In addition, the successful achievement of the SDGs also depends heavily on synergy between the bureaucracy, the community, the business world, and international institutions. Through structured and participatory collaboration, the bureaucracy is able to expand the reach of development programmes and make optimal use of resources.

Strengthening the capacity of bureaucratic human resources, particularly through training and competency enhancement, is crucial to ensure that all elements are able to perform their roles professionally and responsibly. In this way, the bureaucracy becomes the main driver in bridging political, economic, social, and environmental interests in a sustainable manner. Overall, the role of the bureaucracy in sustainable development, social justice, and poverty alleviation is an essential and inseparable element.

With adequate policy support, organisational structural reform, and information technology innovation, the bureaucracy can optimally carry out this mandate. If all these components work harmoniously, the SDGs targets can be achieved inclusively and equitably, creating a more prosperous and sustainable future generation.

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