Implementation of a Berkah Integrated Service and Referral System Policy in Handling the Poor in Pandeglang District Banten Province

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Abstract:

After the Covid-19 pandemic, the economy in most countries worldwide suffered severe setbacks, including those classified as developed nations. According to World Bank data, nearly 700 million people currently endure extreme poverty, prompting diverse countries to devise policies aimed at alleviating poverty. This study aims to address three key questions: 1) How is the policy implemented? 2) What are the factors contributing to success or failure, and what efforts are made to mitigate determinants of failure in policy implementation? 3) How innovative is the policy implementation? Employing a descriptive qualitative research method, this study utilizes Prof. Muchlis Hamdis' Policy Implementation model for analysis. The findings of this research indicate that: 1) The implementation of the BERKAH Integrated Service and Referral System policy can be considered successful, as evidenced by a reduction in poverty rates, adherence to standards and procedures, efficient resource utilization (human, asset, financial, and technological), and streamlined policy execution. 2) Twelve factors were identified as influencing success, including consistency in policy content derivation and specification, alignment with central-level policies, absence of authority abuse, strong learning mechanisms, effective networking among policy implementers, and adequate resources and technological precision. However, three factors were found to contribute to failure: insufficient budget allocation, low motivation among policy implementers, and lack of policy information dissemination. 3) The study also identifies two significant innovations: cultural adaptation in theoretical approaches and regulatory innovation involving changes from regent regulations to regional regulations.

Keywords: *Poverty, Social Problems, Social Protection, Social Management, Culture*

1. Introduction

The issue of global poverty primarily affects Sub-Saharan African nations, regions entrenched in armed conflict, or remote rural areas lacking adequate access to economic, healthcare, educational, and social resources (Bjornlund et al., 2022). Furthermore, this predicament significantly impacts children from impoverished backgrounds.

The solution to global poverty hinges on enhancing the well-being of citizens within each country. This is gauged by the extent to which a nation ensures equitable access to essential services such as healthcare, education, and infrastructure. Providing convenient and fair access to these resources is pivotal in alleviating poverty, as it empowers individuals to fulfill their basic needs (Anser et al., 2023).

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Policy makers play a crucial role in guaranteeing and safeguarding citizens' access to justice (Liefaard 2019). Ensuring proper and equitable access to healthcare, education, and infrastructure signifies the government's commitment to enhancing the welfare of its people. Gradually diminishing poverty levels yields positive outcomes for future generations.

The COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated global poverty, with projections indicating a surge in extreme poverty worldwide (World Bank, 2022). Additionally, the conflict between Russia and Ukraine has further exacerbated poverty levels, particularly in Europe and America, due to economic repercussions from the UN Security Council's embargo on Russia.

In the context of Banten, Indonesia, certain districts and cities, including Pandeglang, Lebak, Tangerang Regency, and Tangerang City, contribute significantly to the region's high poverty rates. Pandeglang Regency, in particular, stands out with a poverty rate of 9.27%, almost reaching the national average of 9.36%.

To address high poverty rates, the Banten Provincial government must employ innovative strategies and maximize available resources. Effective governance relies on creativity and innovation, which contribute to a robust governmental system. Additionally, district and city governments must formulate responsive and practical policies to foster growth and development.

Analyzing regional conditions and devising realistic policy programs are essential tasks for district and city governments (Wolfram et al., 2019). Strategic planning, encompassing short-term and long-term development goals, is critical for progress in infrastructure, economic prosperity, and regional security (Li & Huang 2023).

Utilizing regional resources requires professionalism and astute managerial skills. Empowering local communities and leveraging their potential are fundamental tasks for governments aiming to improve societal conditions. In Pandeglang Regency, efforts to combat poverty must navigate complex cultural dynamics, particularly the influence of traditional figures such as Ulama, Umaro, and Jawara.

Engaging community leaders in poverty alleviation programs, as demonstrated by the successful Kampung Domba development project, is crucial. Traditional figures wield significant influence and can expedite sustainable development initiatives. However, the optimal empowerment of these local leaders remains a challenge, as evidenced by the limited involvement of informal leaders in the BERKAH Integrated Service and Referral System.

Efforts to address poverty in Pandeglang Regency should recognize and leverage the influence of traditional figures, whose cultural significance shapes community attitudes and behaviors. By actively involving these leaders, policymakers can enhance the effectiveness of poverty alleviation strategies and foster inclusive development in the region.

2. Theoretical Background

Policy implementation is the phase where government policies, meticulously crafted to achieve specific objectives, are put into action (Hill & Hupe, 2021). It marks the initiation of executing designed policies as a concerted effort to reach desired targets. Typically, these policies, often manifested as programs or activities, are strategically aligned with the goals outlined in the development strategy (Howlett, 2019). The implementation phase is crucial within the policy process, signifying the active engagement of the state in fulfilling its functions once policies are set in motion (Cappano & Howlett, 2020).

Various approaches are employed in policy implementation (Arundel et al., 2019), encompassing structural, procedural, obligation/behavioral, and political dimensions. Each approach offers distinct insights and methodologies for effective policy execution.

In preparing for policy implementation, careful consideration of potential success, failure, obstacles, and opportunities is imperative, alongside an assessment of the organizational capacity entrusted with executing the program (Nwogwugwu & Ishola, 2019).

Policy implementation is commonly categorized into two primary groups: the top-down and bottom-up approaches. As elucidated by Matland in Hamdi (2015: 98), the literature on policy implementation often dichotomizes into these two approaches—the top-down approach, driven by centralized decision-making, and the bottom-up approach, emphasizing grassroots participation and local initiatives.

3. Methodology

The research methodology for investigating the implementation of the Berkah Integrated Service and Referral System Policy in addressing poverty in Pandeglang District, Banten Province, employs a qualitative descriptive design. This approach is selected due to its suitability for exploring the intricacies of the research topic through multiple informants or sources, allowing for a flexible and in-depth analysis of the issues at hand.

To analyze the implementation of the policy, various types of data are collected, including audiovisual recordings depicting real-life poverty conditions in the field, recent photographs illustrating the poverty situation in Mandalawangi District, relevant regulatory documents pertaining to policy implementation, and responses from respondents or informants. These data serve as the foundation for conducting

factor analysis to discern factors contributing to the success or failure of the policy implementation process.

In qualitative research, there is no strict sampling and population mechanism since the aim is not to generalize findings to the broader population. Instead, qualitative research seeks to delve deeply into specific phenomena and contexts. Thus, data collection in qualitative research relies on purposive sampling. Purposive sampling involves selecting informants based on specific criteria, ensuring that they possess relevant insights into the issues under investigation. The informants chosen for this study are those who are considered to have the most comprehensive understanding of the problem at hand, enabling a nuanced exploration of the research topic within its contextual framework.

4. Empirical Findings/Result

In understanding policy implementation, we will be tied to policy implementation theory which is the starting point in weighing, assessing and comparing. In this research, researchers have established Prof.'s policy implementation theory. Muchlis Hamdi which is briefly as follows;

The implementation of a policy will ultimately be faced with an assessment of several indicators and various factors behind the policy. Indicators of policy implementation will consist of a series of descriptions (things or circumstances) regarding the dynamics of policy implementation movements. This description is related to dynamics, productivity, linearity and efficiency. Productivity can be seen from the number of achievements of the target group, linearity can be seen from the degree of conformity with standards (procedures, time, costs, place and implementers), while efficiency can be seen from the level of resource utilization (implementers, assets and technology).

Meanwhile, the implementation of policies will be influenced by various factors of success or failure which are called determinants. These determinants relate to policy substance, implementing task behavior, network interactions, target group participation, and resources, in implementing a regional policy.

Productivity in Achieving Policy Targets
As understood above, productivity is used to measure and analyze the level of success of an implemented policy. In this case we will analyze the number of policy targets that can be reached or achieved in real terms in the field. Whether seen from the perspective of policy formulators, policy implementers or policy target groups. The analysis of these productivity indicators is as follows;

Productivity Achievement of Policy Target Groups
We can interpret productivity as a form of achievement from the efforts made. Productivity can take the form of calculations and changes in conditions. To understand this, researchers conducted interviews with several informants. Of the 5

planned informants, the researcher succeeded in interviewing 3 informants, with relevant interview excerpts as follows; The SLRT BERKAH policy for handling the poor has reached the target group quite well, this can be seen statistically, the number of poor people in Pandeglang has decreased by 1.4%, namely from 131,430 poor people in Pandeglang to 114,650 people. And this achievement is better than the reduction in poverty in other areas in Banten. The SLRT BERKAH policy for handling the poor is a breakthrough from the Pandeglang Regency Government in overcoming quite high poverty. And in our opinion, through this policy, the number of poor people who are reached or handled is quite good, up to 1.4% or reduced by 16,780 people by the end of 2022. And we hope that this achievement will be even better in the future.

From the data that the author obtained in the field, it can be seen that since the implementation of the SLRT BERKAH policy in overcoming poverty in Pandeglang, it has provided progress in the achievements of the target group. The magnitude of this achievement was spread across 35 sub-districts, but there were only 3 sub-districts where the achievement was not very significant. These sub-districts are Pulosari District, Cikeusik District and Mandalawangi District, with a target group reach of only 1,520 households for Cikeusik District, 34 households for Mandalawangi District. Meanwhile, for Pulosari District, there were actually 707 additional poor households. However, overall at the district level, the SLRT BERKAH policy can be said to be productive, namely reaching a target group of 27,367 households and 77,631 people. Thus, what the Head of Social Services said about the reach of the target group is true, namely more than 75,000 people.

When compared with the reduction in poverty at the national level which only reached 0.21% in March 2023, as released by Central BPS, Pandeglang Regency is among those who have succeeded in dealing with poverty in the region, because it was able to reduce the amount of poverty by up to 1.4%. In this way, the SLRT BERKAH policy for handling the poor has achieved productivity. So according to Prof. Muchlis Hamdi's theory of policy implementation, from the indicator point of view of the achievement of the number of policy group targets, it can be said to be successful.

Policy Linearity Regarding Standard Procedures, Time, Cost, Place, and Policy Implementation
Linearity is the nature of a linear relationship between variables, meaning that every change that occurs in one variable will be followed by changes of equal magnitude in the other variables. Linearity can also be interpreted as the conformity of the standard fulfillment process with the standard specification guidelines that have been determined. Thus, assessing or analyzing the linearity of a policy will be faced with the relationship between one policy and other policies, both in terms of regulations and the background to the formation of the policy.

The linearity of a policy consists of the following elements; standard procedures established by a policy, the time related to the establishment of the policy, the place or location of the policy implementation, as well as the policy implementers themselves.

Policy Linearity Against Standard Procedures

Linearity as explained above is part of the policy implementation indicator, and is used to measure the success of a policy. To measure the success of the SLRT BERKAH policy, it is necessary to examine the extent to which standard policies and procedures are linear to other policies that regulate the same object. To understand the linearity of SLRT BERKAH's policy towards these standards and procedures, researchers conducted interviews with several informants. Of the 6 planned informants, the researcher succeeded in interviewing 5 informants, with relevant interview excerpts as follows; In reality, the SLRT BERKAH policy for handling the poor is related and in harmony with poverty regulations at a higher level, and is based on the same conditions, namely quite high poverty. This poverty management policy has gone through a long agenda setting process in dealing with severe poverty conditions in Pandeglang Regency. This also makes the preparation of poverty management policies always adhere to higher benchmarks or policy references and follow applicable standard procedures. Some policy regulations for handling the poor that are used as references are as follows; a) Minister of Social Affairs Regulation Number 15 of 2018 concerning Integrated Service and Referral Systems for Handling the Poor and Disabled People; b) Regulation of the Director General of Social Empowerment, Number 161 of 2020 concerning General Guidelines for Implementing Integrated Service and Referral Systems and Social Welfare Centers for Handling the Poor and Disabled People.

Based on the explanation above, researchers found similarities and harmony between Regent Regulation Number 31 of 2019 concerning the Establishment of SLRT BERKAH for Handling the Poor and two regulations concerning SLRT at the Center, namely Minister of Social Affairs Regulation No. 15 of 2018 concerning Integrated Service and Referral Systems for Handling the Poor and Disabled People and Regulation of the Director General of Social Empowerment, No. 161 of 2020 concerning General Guidelines for Implementing Integrated Service and Referral Systems and Social Welfare Centers for Handling the Poor and Disabled People.

Thus, it can be said that the formation of SLRT BERKAH Handling the Poor, has linear standards and procedures towards the same regulations at a higher level. So in theory, Prof. Muchlis Hamdi, the SLRT BERKAH policy can be said to fulfill many of the policy's successes.

Policy Linearity Over Time

Linearity over time can be interpreted as meaning that a policy has time linearity if its formation and implementation is in accordance with existing conditions and moments. To understand whether the SLRT BERKAH policy has linearity over time, researchers tried to conduct interviews with several informants. Of the 7 planned informants, the researcher succeeded in interviewing 5 informants, with the following results; The Ministry of Social Affairs implemented a Minister of Social Affairs Regulation in 2018 regarding SLRT, citing the high national poverty level, requiring a policy that is able to synergize and combine data on the poor so that it can be handled appropriately. Likewise, the Pandeglang Regency Government has a background of high levels of

poverty. So when the central SLRT policy was implemented, we welcomed this by immediately following up on the establishment of institutions that deal with the poor. With the timely formation of SLRT BERKAH, it is hoped that it will be able to equalize movement in handling the poor between the regions and the center.

Based on the results of the interview, the researcher tried to examine in a literate way the issuance of Integrated Service and Referral System regulations at the central level with the establishment of SLRT BERKAH in Pandeglang Regency. It was found that Minister of Social Affairs Regulation Number 15 of 2018 concerning SLRT was promulgated on 8 August 2018 while Regent Regulation Number 31 of 2019 was promulgated on 8 July 2019. This means that the Pandeglang Regency Government formed SLRT BERKAH less than a year after the SLRT at the center was formed. With a time span of less than a year, this shows the alertness and accuracy in following up on the SLRT policy at the center.

With the Pandeglang Regency Government's alacrity in following up on this SLRT regulation, it can be said that the establishment of the BERKAH SLRT for Handling the Poor, has linearity over time. So in theory, Prof. Muchlis Hamdi, it can be concluded that the BERKAH SLRT policy fulfills the policy's full success.

Linearity of Cost Policy
Linearity towards costs can be interpreted as meaning that a policy is said to have linearity towards costs if its implementation has appropriate funding sources, regulations and utilization. To understand whether the SLRT BERKAH policy has linearity towards costs, researchers conducted interviews with several informants. Of the 7 planned informants, the researcher succeeded in interviewing 4 informants, with relevant interview excerpts as follows; Every policy certainly requires financial support for institutional operations or policy implementation. Likewise, the SLRT BERKAH Secretariat requires operations for those carrying out the main tasks within it. So far, the Pandeglang Regency Government has allocated poverty funds to each SKPD which is responsible for poverty alleviation tasks in the region. The poverty budget allocation is sourced from APBN assistance, Provincial APBD assistance, Pandeglang Regency APBD and other non-binding sources. The SLRT BERKAH Secretariat has been funded directly by the activities budget allocated to the Social Service. Starting from social assistance and social protection. Despite the limitations, we are trying to continue to carry out the Regent's mandate in handling the poor through the SLRT BERKAH that has been formed.

From the three regulations regarding SLRT above, researchers found that there is uniformity in the rules and similarities in administration in financing SLRT operations both at the center and in the regions. Thus, what the Pandeglang Regency Government has done and also what the informants above have said, regarding the funding of the SLRT BERKAH secretariat, has linearity and has met the cost references mandated by the SLRT regulations at the center. Thus, the formation of SLRT BERKAH can be said to have linearity in terms of costs. So in theory the implementation of Prof.'s policy. Muchlis Hamdi, it can be concluded that the SLRT BERKAH policy meets the requirements for policy success.

5. Conclusions

Departing from the series of analyzes above, the conclusions from research on the implementation of the SLRT BERKAH policy in Pandeglang Regency are as follows; The implementation of the BERKAH Integrated Service and Referral System policy for handling the poor in Pandeglang can be said to be successful. This can be seen from; a) There is productivity, namely reducing the number of poor people and reaching target groups; b) Policy regulations have linearity regarding standards and procedures, time, costs. place, as well as policy implementers of poverty management policies at the central level; c) The Pandeglang government has made efficiency in utilizing human resources, asset resources, financial resources and technology utilization.

The implementation of the BERKAH Integrated Service and Referral System policy has 11 (eleven) factors that influence success and 4 (four) factors that influence failure. Factors that influence success are as follows; a) There is consistency in the derivation of policy content; b) There is consistency in policy specifications; c) There is alignment of policy content with other policies at the central level; d) There is no tendency to abuse authority from policy implementers; e) There is a high level of learning, both from policy implementers and target groups; f) Established working networks between policy implementers; g) Establishment of a network of authority relations at government levels; h) There is a fairly high level of acceptance by the target group; i) There is a contribution from the target group according to existing procedures; j) Sufficient number of policy implementing officers; k) The accuracy of the technology applied.

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