

Evaluation of Performance of the Non-Cash Food Assistance (BPNT) Program in Meeting the Basic Needs of the Poor and Vulnerable Communities

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ABSTRACT: In improving the level of social welfare, quality, and survival of the poor, vulnerable, and underprivileged groups, there is a social assistance program in the form of Non-Cash Food Assistance (BPNT) And BPNT has proven its efficiency in improving food access which aims to meet the basic needs and rights of Beneficiary Families (KPM). The purpose of this study is to evaluate the Non-Cash Food Assistance (BPNT) program in meeting the basic needs of the poor and vulnerable. The research method used is qualitative descriptive research. Data collection is carried out using secondary sources through a review of various literature, then data analysis through three stages, namely data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion. The performance of the Non-Cash Food Assistance Program (BPNT) in Indonesia shows positive results in helping to reduce the burden of spending on poor and vulnerable households by meeting food needs. This research has made a significant contribution in enriching the understanding of technology-based social assistance distribution models and BPNT has proven its efficiency in improving food access for the poor and vulnerable, contributing to financial inclusivity, and driving local economic growth through the involvement of local shops in distribution.

Keyword: Social Assistance, Program Evaluation, Poor People, Vulnerable Communities, BPNT Program.

INTRODUCTION

The Preamble to the Constitution of the Republic of Indonesia in 1945 mandated the government to be able to promote public welfare so that it is hoped that the government can ensure that its people are prosperous in birth and mind, and free from poverty to meet all basic needs of life. However, in reality, the challenges in achieving social welfare have not been fully resolved

under the mandate. There are still many people who have not received their basic rights and needs adequately and are still in poverty. Various factors such as economic inequality, lack of access to education and health services, and low awareness of basic rights have led to inequalities in the fulfillment of basic needs.

Under the goals of the state as enshrined in the preamble to the

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Constitution of the Republic of Indonesia in 1945, the laws and regulations that are the functions and duties of the Ministry of Social Affairs, and looking at the direction of national development of the 2020-2024 RPJMN, the Ministry of Social Affairs has formulated a goal in its strategic plan for 2020-2024 to improve the level of welfare, quality and survival of the poor, vulnerable groups and underprivileged people by being described in three strategic goals that reflect *outcomes* and are under the duties and functions of the Ministry of Social Affairs. Therefore, to achieve the goals that have been set, several instruments are needed in achieving the success of the distribution of social assistance for the BPNT Program, including the optimization of human resource capacity, in this case, the capacity of aid distribution officers and accompanying officers in the form of proportional human resource competencies according to ideal needs in improving effective and efficient performance. Furthermore, it is necessary to establish regulations such as cooperation agreements, standard operating procedures, technical instructions, and implementation instructions related to the BPNT Program's social assistance. The next instrument is needed to determine a companion in terms of the implementation of the use of social assistance for the BPNT Program, this is aimed at making social assistance for KPM more optimal (Lakin Directorate of Empowerment of Vulnerable Groups of the Ministry of Social Affairs, 2022).

Previous research conducted by (Agustina & Megawati, 2022) stated that the evaluation of the Non-Cash Food

Assistance Program (BPNT) Policy in Poverty Alleviation shows that policy inputs have been optimal, with a policy background that follows community problems, as well as supporting human resources, funds, and infrastructure. However, the implementation process has not been optimal due to the lack of use of the social assistance check application and the distribution mechanism that is not under the rules. However, the output of the program has been optimized by helping the underprivileged to meet their food needs, which has an impact on the poverty level in Mojokerto Regency. The positive impact of the BPNT program has also been optimized. The suggestion from this study is that the implementation of the program immediately shifts from the package system and follows the applicable general guidelines to increase the effectiveness of aid distribution.

The performance of the Non-Cash Assistance Program for the Poor is of great importance in ensuring the effectiveness and efficiency of the program in meeting the basic needs of the poor and vulnerable people. Through the performance of this program, shortcomings and successes can be identified, allowing the government and stakeholders to improve its implementation to be more targeted and have a real impact. In addition, the program's performance helps ensure optimal use of resources, reducing the waste and misuse of public funds. Thus, the research question in this study is "How effective is the Non-Cash Assistance Program (BPNT) in meeting the basic food needs of the poor?".

Based on the explanation of the program, the goals achieved, *outcomes* and impacts, instruments, and the budget in the Ministry of Social Affairs' performance report which is described as running well and under what has been targeted, it is still necessary to conduct a much more in-depth analysis of the evaluation of the BPNT Program to find out whether the program has an effective impact in achieving the planned program goals. Because in essence, effectiveness is used to measure the extent to which the implemented policy or program can be effective with the goals to be achieved.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The research method used in this study is qualitative descriptive research. Data collection was carried out using secondary sources through a review of various literature from the results of several studies and opinions of experts related to the problem and a documentation study of related articles was carried out. The analysis techniques are data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Effectiveness indicates that a program as a system implements various business activities by using certain resources and facilities to achieve its goals and objectives without eliminating these resources and without putting excessive pressure on implementation (Luthfi, 2019). Effective policies will be able to target key resources for the most productive use as state policymakers seek to overcome barriers and stimulate growth while protecting more vulnerable populations of communities (Astuti, 2019).

An analysis of the impact evaluation of the Non-Cash Food Assistance Program (BPNT) using six public policy evaluation criteria according to Dunn (2017) provides a comprehensive overview of the performance of this program. These criteria include effectiveness, efficiency, adequacy, equity, responsiveness, and accuracy. By evaluating BPNT based on these criteria, it can be measured to what extent this program has succeeded in achieving its goals, how efficiently the use of resources used, whether the benefits have been felt equally by the community, the extent of the government's response to the diverse needs of the community, and whether this policy is appropriate in overcoming existing problems. Thus, the evaluation using the Dunn framework helps provide a comprehensive understanding of the impact and effectiveness of the BPNT Program in the context of poverty alleviation.

Development in a country is essentially an effort that aims to change every aspect of the country's life from existing conditions to a better direction in the future. One of the developments being carried out by governments, especially in developing countries, is the problem of poverty alleviation (Firdausi & Hertati, 2022). Poverty is a low standard of living, that is, the existence of a level of material shortage in a number or group of people compared to the standard of living that is common in the society concerned. There are many poverty problems faced by many countries, especially in developing countries (Hasimi, 2020). Poverty is a very complex and multidimensional problem, where poverty is not caused by one factor but by multiple factors that

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are interrelated and influencing. So poverty itself also has a broad meaning, therefore poverty requires serious handling by involving various parties and fields (Agustina & Megawati, 2022). Considering that the poverty rate in Indonesia is still quite high.

Poverty still greatly affects economic growth in a country, this is because economic growth is an important indicator used as a tool to assess the performance of an economy in a country (Fajry, 2018). The explosion of poverty problems will endanger conditions in a country that will cause a crisis that has an impact on political stability. This poverty occurs because of human limitations in terms of meeting their needs, namely the need for clothing, food, and board. The problem of high poverty is an obstacle to development because the community does not have the ability and has many shortcomings (Fajri, 2022).

Poverty is caused by various factors, ranging from individual, social, cultural, and structural factors. Individual factors are related to pathological aspects, including the physical and psychological condition of poor individuals. Poor people are caused by the behavior, choices, or abilities of the poor individual himself in facing life. Then social factors, namely social environmental conditions trap a person to become poor, such as discrimination based on age, gender, and ethnicity that causes a person to become poor. The cultural factors are conditions or cultural qualities that cause poverty such as laziness, fatalism or giving up on fate, not having an entrepreneurial spirit, lack of respect for work ethic, and others. The last factor is structural factors, namely

structures or systems that are unfair, insensitive, and inaccessible, causing a person or group of people to become poor (Wahyuni et al., 2023). The poor have the same basic rights as other communities. Rights that are generally recognized are the fulfillment of food, health, education, employment, housing, clean water, land, and the environment, a sense of security from the threat of violence, and the right to participate in socio-political absorption of both women and men (Wulandari et al., 2022). Basic rights that are generally recognized include the fulfillment of food needs, health, education, employment, housing, clean water, land, natural resources, and the environment, a sense of security from treatment or threat of violence, and the right to participate in socio-political life, both for women and men (Sari et al., 2023).

The fulfillment of the rights of the poor can be achieved through poverty policies by involving efforts designed to ensure their access to basic needs and improve their quality of life. These policies include the provision of social assistance to meet food and housing needs, free or subsidized education programs to ensure access to proper education, and affordable health services to fulfill the right to health. In addition, poverty policy also includes the creation of economic opportunities through skills training and access to decent work, so that the poor can improve their living standards sustainably (Choriyah, 2018). Poverty policy is an effort in decision-making regarding poverty starting from determining targets by using indicators, handling, and countermeasures to overcome poverty problems. Poverty

alleviation in Presidential Regulation No. 15 of 2010 concerning the acceleration of poverty alleviation states that local government policies and programs are carried out systematically, planned, and in synergy with the business world and the community to reduce the number of poor people to improve people's welfare (Rahayu & Fitriani, 2023).

Poverty alleviation policies can be contained in three policy directions. First, indirect policies directed at creating conditions that ensure the continuity of every poverty alleviation effort; second, direct policies aimed at low-income groups; and third, special policies intended to prepare the poor themselves and the apparatus who are directly responsible for the smooth running of the program and at the same time spur and expand poverty alleviation efforts (Roidah, 2018). The government has concern for poverty alleviation, especially as stated in the Regulation of the Minister of Social Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia Number 25 of 2016 concerning Assistance for the Development of Business Facilities for Electronic Warung in Article 1 Paragraph 1 as follows:

"Handling the poor is a directed effort. Integrated and sustainable carried out by the Government, Regional Governments, and the community in the form of policies, programs, and facilities to meet the basic needs of every citizen."

One of the programs issued by the government to overcome poverty is the Non-Cash Food Assistance (BPNT) program. Non-Cash Food Assistance (BPNT) is one of the important social assistance provided by the government to reduce the burden of spending on poor households in accessing some of their food needs. The BPNT program

began to be implemented in 2017 in stages, as a transformation of the Rice for Prosperous Families Program (Rastra) which is considered to need to be perfected (Iwan Hermawan et al., 2021). The BPNT program is a national program managed by the Ministry of Social Affairs and delegated to the district or city level which is the regional authority to empower the community in efforts to alleviate poverty (Asrin et al., 2022). Non-Cash Food Assistance (BPNT) is food assistance that is distributed non-cash from the government to Beneficiary Families (KPM) every month through the Electronic Warung (e-waring) account mechanism. The BPNT program is organized by the government, to increase the effectiveness and efficiency, accuracy of social assistance distribution targets, and encourage financial inclusion (Sirega et al., 2023).

This program replaces direct food assistance with an electronic system that is more efficient and on target. BPNT beneficiaries are given an electronic card containing a certain balance every month, which can be used to buy various types of groceries at stores that have collaborated with the government (Ramadani, 2023). With the existence of BPNT, poor and vulnerable people can more easily get access to quality food without having to receive physical assistance, which often causes distribution and efficiency problems. In addition, this non-cash system also reduces the potential for misuse of aid funds and increases transparency and accountability in the distribution of social assistance (Eko Yudianto, 2019).

The objectives of the BPNT Program are: 1). reducing the burden of expenditure on poor and vulnerable families through fulfillment of food

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needs; 2). providing adequate and balanced nutrition to KPM which is a poor family and vulnerable group; 3). Improving the quality of basic food assistance services in terms of accuracy, time, quantity, price, quality, and administration; and 4). provide choice and control to the KPM in meeting food needs. Under this goal, the government hopes to reduce the burden of household spending, especially for poor and vulnerable households, to meet the need for nutritious food (Lakin Ministry of Social Affairs, 2022). Meanwhile, the benefits of this BPNT Program include: 1). to increase food security at the KPM BPNT level as well as a social protection and poverty alleviation mechanism; 2). to improve the efficiency of social assistance distribution; 3). increasing public access to financial and banking services; 4). increasing non-cash transactions; and 5). increasing economic growth in the regions, especially micro and small enterprises in the trade sector (Permensos RI No. 20 of 2019).

Based on the Performance Report of the Ministry of Social Affairs stating that the implementation of the BPNT Program has reached the set target and is running well, the field evaluation revealed several obstacles that need to be considered. But. data from the Central Statistics Agency (BPS), the number of poor people as of March 2023 was 9.36 percent or 25.90 million people with a composition of 7.29 percent or 11.74 million people in urban poverty and 12.22 percent or 14.16 million people in rural poverty (BPS, 2023). Meanwhile, when compared to the poverty target in 2024 is 7 percent, so in the last year the poverty rate must

be reduced by around 2.36 percent. The high poverty rate in Indonesia shows the need for government intervention to assist people in need. Through various programs and policies aimed at poverty alleviation, governments can help improve welfare and provide better opportunities for citizens to meet their basic needs.

Using six program evaluation criteria from Dunn (2017), several problems were identified in the implementation of the Non-Cash Food Assistance Program (BPNT). One of them is the lack of government socialization, which causes many poor families not to know the purpose of the program. In addition, there is a need to update Beneficiary Family (KPM) data periodically to ensure accuracy and relevance to the actual condition of the community. The issue of equity also arises in several areas, such as in Bengkalis District, where there are still KPM recipients of the Family Hope Program (PKH) who have not been registered as BPNT recipients, even though BPNT priority should be given to PKH recipients. However, there are positive results in the implementation of BPNT, such as effectiveness in Baadia Village and adequacy in Glagahan Village, which help the community meet their basic needs. However, the evaluation concluded that while the program has had a positive impact, there is still room for improvement in addressing the identified obstacles to ensure its effectiveness in poverty alleviation.

Although the BPNT Program has helped the poor and vulnerable in meeting their food needs and getting a positive response from aid recipients,

there are still several obstacles that need to be overcome. One of them is the lack of socialization of the program from the government to the public, which results in low awareness of the goals and benefits of this program. In addition, there is still a list of beneficiaries that is not updated in several regions in the Non-Cash Food Assistance (BPNT) program, which causes problems with equity and target accuracy that are not optimal. This results in several poor and vulnerable families not receiving the assistance they should get, while there are recipients who do not meet the criteria. To overcome this problem, it is necessary to evaluate the performance of the BPNT program to ensure that the assistance truly meets the basic needs of the poor and vulnerable. This evaluation includes periodic updates of beneficiary data, improvements to aid distribution mechanisms, and stricter supervision to improve the accuracy of targets and equitable distribution of aid.

The Non-Cash Food Assistance Program (BPNT) has become the main focus of the Indonesian government's efforts to overcome poverty. Although the Ministry of Social Affairs' Performance Report stated that the achievement of this program target has been good, the evaluation of its implementation revealed several obstacles. Some problems were identified, such as a lack of effectiveness in socialization in several regions, obstacles in data verification and validation, as well as problems with equity and accuracy of targets. However, this program has a positive impact, such as easing the burden of food expenditure for poor and vulnerable families in several regions. This evaluation is important to continue to

improve the implementation of the program and ensure that the benefits are equal for people in need.

CONCLUSION

The Non-Cash Food Assistance Program (BPNT) has become a significant initiative in poverty alleviation efforts in Indonesia, providing easier and more equitable access to food for poor and vulnerable families. Although it has had a positive impact, there are several obstacles in its implementation, such as lack of socialization, irregular data updates, and problems with equity and accuracy of targets. To increase its effectiveness, further efforts are needed to increase socialization, update beneficiary data regularly, and ensure that the program is on target. With continuous evaluation, it is hoped that BPNT can become a more effective instrument in helping to alleviate poverty in Indonesia.

Several recommendations can be put forward to increase the effectiveness of the BPNT Program. First, the government, especially the Ministry of Social Affairs, needs to ensure the continuity of this program so that it can continue to have a positive impact on the beneficiary communities. Second, it is necessary to evaluate and update beneficiary data periodically to ensure that it is on target. Third, it is necessary to improve the quality of services and information to beneficiaries, including training on the selection and purchase of healthy and nutritious food. Fourth, the BPNT program should be supported by community empowerment programs to reduce dependence on cash assistance

and improve their economic capabilities. Finally, collaboration between the Ministry of Social Affairs, other ministries/agencies, and the private sector needs to be improved to optimize the distribution of aid and the provision of quality food to beneficiaries.

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