



Public policy in poverty reduction study of implementation BLT program in West Pasaman District

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ARTICLE INFO

Article history:

Received May 19, 2023

Revised Jun 03, 2023

Accepted Jun 14, 2023

Keywords:

BLT;
Public Policy;
Poverty Alleviation.

ABSTRACT

The problem of poverty is a serious problem for a government, both the central government and the district government. Poverty reduction has a strategic role in efforts to accelerate poverty reduction in an area. One of the government's efforts to reduce poverty in Indonesia is in West Pasaman district, namely by implementing the Direct Cash Assistance (BLT) program based on Presidential Instruction No. 3 of 2008 dated May 14, 2008. Poverty is also defined as a condition where one's basic needs are not fulfilled. The problem of poverty is a very complex and multidimensional problem. Therefore, poverty alleviation efforts must be carried out in a comprehensive manner and cover various aspects of life and be implemented in an integrated manner. In accordance with what was described above, the purpose of this study was to find out the extent to which the West Pasaman Regency government's policies are in tackling poverty, one of which is by distributing Direct Cash Assistance (BLT).

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INTRODUCTION

Poverty is a socio-economic problem that is not only experienced by developing countries, but also experienced by developed countries, such as the United Kingdom and the United States. One of the developing countries experiencing poverty problems is Indonesia. The problem of poverty is a very complex and multidimensional problem. Therefore, efforts to reduce poverty must be carried out in a comprehensive manner and cover various aspects of life and be carried out in an integrated manner (Rakhmat & Firdaus, 2019)(Maulana et al., 2018).

Poverty is considered as a comprehensive problem because poverty is related to the inability of a person to meet the economic, social, cultural, political needs and participate in society (Belasari et al., 2022)(Desrinelti et al., 2021). The Draft Law on poverty provides an understanding that poverty is a socio-economic condition for a person or group of people who do not understand their basic rights to maintain and promote a dignified life (RI Draft Law). West Sumatra consists of 19 districts. One of these districts is West Pasaman Regency which ranks 12th in the number of poor people in 3 consecutive years, namely in 2020 the number of poor people in West Pasaman Regency is 3,847

people, in 2021 6,159 people, and in 2022 it has decreased compared to 2021 that is as many as 3,588 people.

The definition of poverty has been elaborated by several experts or institutions, including BAPPENAS (1993), which defines poverty as a state of deprivation that occurs not because of the will of the poor, but because of the inability to avoid it due to the power of the poor among them. Poverty is defined as a low standard of living, namely the level of material deprivation for some people or groups of people compared to the prevailing standard of living in the community concerned (Hastjarjo & Wahyunengseh, 2020)(Mawaza & Khalil, 2020).

Poverty is essentially a condition of deprivation that occurs not because the poor want it, but because they cannot avoid it by their own strength (Taufik & Sugiarto, 2019). Poverty is marked, among others, by attitudes and behaviors that accept conditions as if they cannot be changed, reflected in a weak will to progress and low productivity, coupled with limited ownership of capital, low levels of education and limited opportunities to participate in development. (Tan, 1996).

Therefore, in efforts to eradicate poverty, it is necessary not only to find solutions related to the problem of poverty, but also to know the causes and consequences of the problem of poverty, trace its sources, and really explore the potential contained in poverty resource (Falah et al., 2022) (Huraerah, 2013). The agricultural community can be explored.

Findings from Laksmono (1999), Yesudian (2007) and Rakhmat (2015) among several studies related to the implementation of poverty alleviation programs in various countries indicate that the failure is due to poor targeting of aid. Based on this study, it is known that the inaccuracy of targeting is mostly caused by the bias of program implementation in the community by field officers. Based on the description above, the problem to be solved in this study is how the West Pasaman Regency government policy in tackling poverty through the Direct Cash Assistance (BLT) program and whether the distribution of BLT is carried out evenly in West Pasaman Regency.

Poverty reduction policies are a priority in the 2004-2009 Medium Term Development Plan (RPJM) and are detailed in the annual Government Work Plan (RKP) and serve as a reference for annual development implementation by ministries/agencies and local governments (Papilaya, 2020). In accordance with Presidential Decree Number 15 of 2010 concerning the Acceleration of Poverty Reduction. Poverty alleviation is defined as policies and programs implemented systematically and systematically by the government and regional governments, in collaboration with the business world and the community, to reduce the number of poor people so as to increase poverty rates community benefits (Choiriyah, 2018)(Hakim et al., 2021). While the poverty alleviation program is defined as activities carried out by the central government, regional governments to increase the welfare of the poor through social funds, empowering the people, empowering micro-economic struggles, and another program in order to raise economic activity (Rakhmat & Firdaus, 2019)(Fauzi, 2020).

The nature of public policy as a direction of action in a government can be seen from several categories, such as policy demands, policy decisions, policy statements, policy results, and the impacts of the policy itself. Thus, the policy taken will determine the success of the program that will be carried out to overcome the problem. In accordance with the topics discussed, public policies are needed in poverty alleviation.

According to Anderson in Winarno (2000) public policy has several implications, namely: first, public policies are always oriented towards specific aims or goals and are planned by actors involved in the political system. Second, policy is the direction or pattern of action taken by government officials. Third, policy is what the government does and not what the government expects. Fourth, public policy may be in a positive or negative form

From the description above, it can be concluded that public policy is basically a series of actions taken by the government, both active and passive, to address public problems. Direct Cash Assistance (BLT) is direct assistance in the form of a certain amount of cash to Target Households (RTS), namely households that fall into the categories of very poor, poor and near poor. The program

was allocated by the government as social protection for the poor to reduce the negative impact of adjustments to the compensation policy for reducing fuel subsidies. In order to compensate for the reduction in fuel subsidies, the objectives of the BLT scheme are to first, lighten the burden on the poor so that they are still able to meet their basic needs. Second, preventing a decrease in the welfare of the poor due to economic difficulties. Third, increasing shared social responsibility.

Direct cash assistance or *unconditional cash transfers* launched by the government in 2008 aimed to help the poor not be too affected by rising fuel prices. Direct cash assistance or *unconditional cash transfers* launched by the government in 2008 aimed to help the poor not be too affected by rising fuel prices. Government policy making a policy on BLT aims to help the poor or people who are in the lower middle category (according to Bambang Heru) who will definitely feel the impact of the increase in fuel prices (Choiriyah, 2018)(Monica, 2022).

RESEARCH METHOD

This type of research is a qualitative research with descriptive analysis method. Moleong (2005) explains that a qualitative descriptive approach is a research approach where the data collected is in the form of words, pictures and not numbers. The data in this study were obtained by conducting field observations, interviews, photographs and documentation. The steps that the writer took in collecting data were conducting field observations first, then conducting interviews, after the interviews were carried out, the next step was to take documentation. After all the data was obtained, the researcher began to write down the findings. Descriptive research aims to explain or describe in detail the results of the research in accordance with the facts that exist and are written systematically (Nazir, 2005). The focus of this research is to explain the implementation of poverty alleviation policies through the distribution of the Direct Cash Assistance (BLT) program in West Pasaman district.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

West Pasaman Regency consists of 11 sub-districts namely, Pasaman, Kinali, Luhak Nan Duo, Talamau, Transverse Valley, Mount Tuleh, Sasak Ranah Pesisir, Sungai Aur, Koto Balingka Sungai Beremas, and Ranah Batahan. Of the eleven sub-districts, it was recorded that the population in West Pasaman Regency was 440,060 people.

In 2023, according to the data obtained, it is recorded that the number of poor people in West Pasaman Regency is approximately 34.97 thousand people with a percentage of 7.51%. In order to make it clearer the data on poor population in the last three years can be seen in the table below.

Table 1. Poor population data (Source Central Bureau of Statistics of West Pasaman Regency)

District	Number of Poor People (Thousand)		
	2021	2022	2023
Pasaman Barat	31,53	31,64	34,97

This is a challenge for local governments in overcoming poverty. The issue of poverty in various regions is not a new topic and something we have just heard about. One of the things the government has done to tackle poverty is by providing Direct Cash Assistance (BLT) to the poor.

The implementation of the distribution of the Direct Cash Assistance (BLT) program to the community must be carried out evenly. The thing that must be considered in channeling these funds is the economic condition of the people who will receive the BLT assistance. It is undeniable that the distribution of BLT in several regions was not in accordance with the instructions for distributing BLT funds. In West Pasaman Regency, based on data obtained by researchers in the field, it is evident that the distribution of BLT funds is carried out evenly in each sub-district. The researcher witnessed

firsthand the distribution of the BLT to the people in the Pasaman sub-district. Documentary evidence can be seen below.



Figure 1. BLT submission photo

Direct Cash Assistance (BLT) is a government program to provide assistance to the poor due to rising oil prices. The objectives of holding the BLT program for these RTS are: 1) Lighten the burden on the poor so that they are still able to meet their basic needs ; 2) Preventing poverty and decreasing social welfare due to economic difficulties; 3) Increase social responsibility as fellow human beings.

Government policies in poverty alleviation programs such as the Direct Cash Assistance Program (BLT) are included in cluster-1 along with the rice assistance program for the poor (Raskin), the family hope program (PKH), the community health insurance program (Jamkesmas) or previously known as Askeskin. for free health care, scholarship programs for poor students, as well as assistance programs for other socially vulnerable groups.

Direct cash assistance (BLT) is given to people with certain categories. There are three categories of people who receive BLT, namely the very poor, poor, and nearly poor categories. This program is provided by the government as social protection for the poor to reduce the negative impact of the compensation adjustment policy for reducing fuel subsidies.

Cash funds or unconditional direct cash assistance provided by the government which began in 2008 were intended for the poor so they would not feel too much of the impact of the increase in fuel prices. The government's goal in providing this BLT program policy is to help the poor who feel the impact of the increase in fuel prices. It is considered by the government that there will be no more subsidies for fuel in 2008 that will increase the amount of the State Budget and that there will be a deficit in the state treasury. Therefore, this BLT was given as compensation for the poor. The measure of the success of giving BLT is the change in the community itself after receiving the assistance.

Based on the data that researchers have collected and found in the field, it can be concluded that the implementation of public policy in the distribution of Direct Cash Assistance (BLT) in West Pasaman Regency is carried out in accordance with the instructions and techniques provided by the government. There was no misuse of BLT funds or discrepancies in the economic conditions of the BLT beneficiary communities. In this case the local government has also implemented public policies well.

CONCLUSION

Based on the discussion described above, it can be concluded that one of the public policies in overcoming poverty is the Direct Cash Assistance (BLT) program which is carried out in every region, one of which is in West Pasaman Regency. According to the data obtained in the field, this Direct Cash Assistance (BLT) program has been implemented effectively in West Pasaman Regency,

this right is proven by data on BLT recipients according to the recipient categories set by the government. Through the BLT program, poor people feel helped so that poverty reduction has been implemented in the area with the aim of improving the lives of their people. This research is also expected to be input for other regions to implement public policies, one of which is in implementing the Direct Cash Assistance (BLT) program to the community. For future researchers, this research can be taken into consideration in the hope of providing constructive and positive improvements.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Thank you to all parties who have participated in the research until this manuscript was published, especially to the Padang State University (UNP) educational institution which has facilitated the author so that this article can be completed to the final stage and to my supervisor Aldri Frinaldi and Syamsir who has provided many directions so that this article can be completed properly.

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