



## THE GOVERNMENT'S EFFORTS TO OVERCOME POVERTY IN BENGKULU CITY

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### A B S T R A C T

Poverty is one of the economic and social problems that are difficult to overcome or at least can be reduced little by little. Poverty is a problem that is considered complex and can occur in any country. Poverty has an impact on some levels of society in urban and rural areas. That's why overcoming poverty must be done comprehensively, covering all aspects of people's lives. This study aims to determine the government's efforts in overcoming poverty in the City of Bengkulu. This paper concludes that the government has carried out various ways to overcome poverty in the City of Bengkulu, including improving education, revolving fund policies, financing working capital, fulfilling basic rights, and other programs implemented as an effort to overcome poverty in the City of Bengkulu. Therefore, the suggestion to be conveyed in this paper is that the strategy used to overcome poverty cannot only be seen from one dimension but requires a complete and thorough check of all aspects that cause poverty locally.

## INTRODUCTION

The development aims to improve the economy to create jobs and realize people's welfare by providing a decent life. The state must realize the welfare of the community in any aspect and a prosperous society is a society that can fulfill its own needs (Ahmad & Triani, 2018). One way to make it happen is to reduce the level of poverty in Indonesia. Poverty is one of the most difficult economic and social problems to overcome but at least it can be reduced little by little. Therefore, overcoming poverty must be done thoroughly covering all aspects of life.

Experts say that poverty is multidimensional. This means that because people's needs are different, there are many kinds of poverty. In its policy, poverty covers various aspects ranging from poor assets, the socio-political organization as well as knowledge and skills, poor internet or social networks, and financial and information resources. This aspect can be seen in the lack of availability of clean water, poor nutrition, inadequate health care, and low levels of education.

As noted by the Central Statistics Agency in 2018, from September 2017 to March 2018, the poor population in urban areas decreased by 128.2 thousand people (originally 10.27 million people), in September 2017 to 10.14 million people in March 2018), while in rural areas it decreased by 505,000 people (from 16.31 million in September 2017 to 15.81 million in March 2018). The urban poverty rate increased from 7.26% in September 2017 to 7.02% in March 2018.

Bengkulu Province had a poverty rate of 15.41% in 2018. This figure is higher than the national poverty rate of 9.66%. The average per capita expenditure below the poverty line can be categorized as poor people. The number of poor people in the City of Bengkulu reached 20.72% in 2016. However, in Bengkulu Province, there was a decline in the poor population to 18.82%.

Although the poverty rate has decreased, the level of inequality in expenditure in Bengkulu City remains high. Poverty in Bengkulu City can be seen in the character of the population through aspects of education and employment status (Nugraha, 2020). Before determining the policy steps to be taken, the government must recognize the phenomenon of poverty and its associated social problems (Primc & Slabe-Erker, 2020).

Based on the data and phenomena above, the researcher wants to conduct a study to understand the government's efforts in overcoming poverty in the City of Bengkulu. This study aims to determine the government's efforts in overcoming poverty in the City of Bengkulu.

### Basic Framework Poverty Theory

The essentials of environmental sustainability, poverty alleviation, and social justice (modified in part by the Sustainable Development Goals or SDGs) require ambitious social change (Scoones et al., 2020). Poverty has become an interesting topic in line with the development of social sciences. The pace of industrialization and the development of different concepts of economic development have given rise to various social studies, especially their impact on increasing the number of poor people (Arifin, 2020).

Poverty can be viewed from the economic, social, and political aspects. In the economic aspect, poverty occurs due to a lack of resources that can be used, where these resources can improve people's welfare. Economic poverty is divided into two, namely absolute and relative. Absolute poverty means individuals or groups who are unable to meet the minimum physical needs. Relative poverty, namely individuals or groups who are unable to meet their needs following the times (Barika, 2021)

Supriatna (1997) stated that there are five characteristics of the poor, namely,

- a) Does not have its factors of production.
- b) Opportunities to own productive assets independently do not exist.
- c) Have a low level of education.
- d) Average or mostly have no facilities.
- e) Relatively young and do not have adequate skills or education.

A series of influences on each other so that a country remains poor and experiences many obstacles to achieving a much better level of development is the purpose of the cycle of poverty (Barika, 2021)

BPS defines poverty as the ability to meet basic needs (basic needs approach). In the economic aspect, poverty is measured by individuals or groups who are unable to meet their basic non-food needs due to residual expenditure. According to BPS, poverty is based on the concept of the ability to meet basic needs (basic needs approach). In this approach, poverty is seen as an economic inability to meet basic food and non-food needs as measured from the expenditure side. A population is categorized as poor if it has an average monthly per capita expenditure below the poverty line (Badan Pusat Statistik, n.d.).

#### Impact of Poverty

Poverty affects income inequality and income inequality affects poverty, so it can be interpreted that poverty and income inequality have a causal relationship. Second, poverty affects education level and education level does not affect poverty, so it can be interpreted that poverty and education level only have a one-way relationship. Third, income inequality does not affect education level, and education level does not affect income inequality, so it can be concluded that income inequality and education level do not have a one-way or two-way relationship (Ahmad & Triani, 2018).

## MATERIALS AND METHODS

This study uses quantitative analysis with a descriptive statistical method approach. Descriptive statistics provide a very useful summary for policymakers. The results of the descriptive statistical analysis can be very useful input for decision-makers, depending on the form and method of presenting the results of the analysis (Agung, 2016). The descriptive statistical method is a step to analyze data by describing the data as it is. So descriptive statistics have no intention of generalizing conclusions on other data (Sholikhah, 1970). Sugiyono (2013) states that "Quantitative research methods can be interpreted as research methods based on the philosophy of positivism, used to examine certain populations or samples, data collection using research instruments, and data analysis is quantitative/statistical, with the aim of testing hypotheses that have been established" (Sugiyono, 2013).

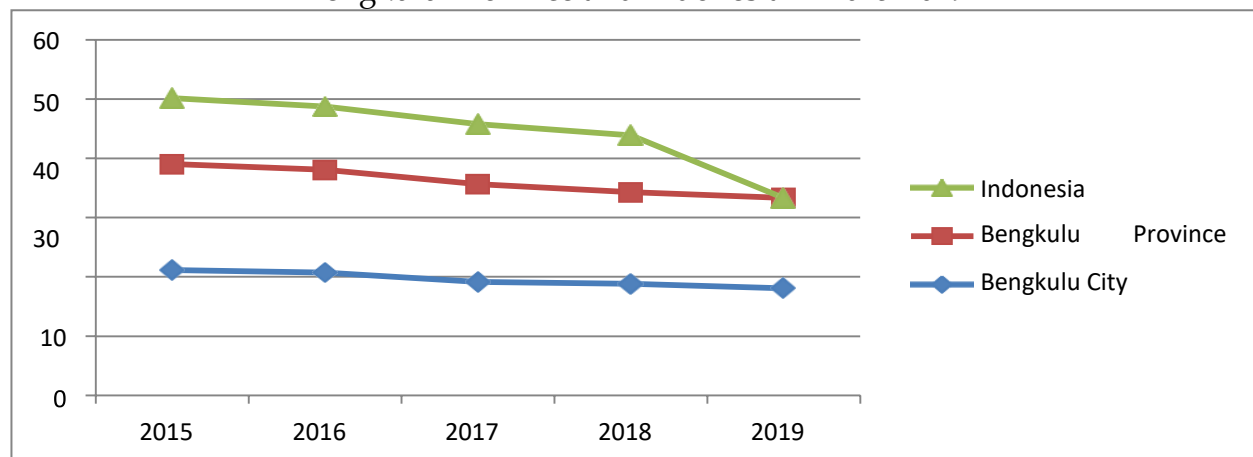
## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The poverty rate in Indonesia from 2015 to 2019 tends to decrease gradually although, with the COVID-19 pandemic, the poverty rate is expected to increase in 2020. When viewed from the percentage of the total number of poverty in Indonesia, the government has succeeded in reducing this number. poor population from 28,513,570 in September 2015 to 24,785,870 in September 2019. The poverty rate in urban areas is 39.77% and the poverty rate in rural areas is 60.23%.

The poverty rate of Bengkulu Province in 2019 was ranked 7th after Aceh Province and the Province with the second-largest poverty rate after Aceh Province. The poverty rate in the City of Bengkulu is among the four highest in Bengkulu Province. The poverty rate from 2015 to 2019 has decreased following the central poverty reduction program.

In Bengkulu City percentage of poor people for the last five years is still above the national poverty level. The number of poor people in Indonesia in 2015 was 11.13 percent and decreased to 9.22 percent in 2019. The poverty rate in Bengkulu City is still above the poverty level of Bengkulu Province. Bengkulu Province is the Province with the seventh-highest poverty rate in Indonesia.

Figure 1 Percentage of poor people in Bengkulu City, Bengkulu Province and Indonesia in 2015-2019



Data source : bps.go.id

The poor population in the city of Bengkulu is above the number of poor people at the provincial and national levels. In Bengkulu City percentage of poor people is in fourth place after Seluma, Kaur, and South Bengkulu districts. In 2014 the percentage of the poor population in Bengkulu City was 21.14 percent and decreased until 2019 to 18.09 percent. The decline in the poverty rate in Bengkulu City is in line with the decline in the poverty rate in Indonesia. On average, the number of poor people in Bengkulu Province was 17.88 percent, decreasing to 15.23 percent in 2019.

BPS said that spending on food accounts for the largest portion of 73.89% of non-food spending. 26.11% of non-food goods include expenses for house, clothing, education, and health. The depth of poverty reflects the gap between spending and the poverty line. The higher it is, the

bigger the gap between spending and the poverty line, and the closer to zero (0), the bigger the gap between spending and the poverty line. The poverty depth index (P1) in the City of Bengkulu in the last five years was the highest in 2017 and the lowest in 2019. In addition, in 2017 the poverty severity index was also the highest in five years. This indicates that 2017 was a condition where the disparity in expenditure between the poor was 1.55.

Therefore, the development of remote areas to renovate an area inhabited by people who have many socio-economic problems and physical limitations, then become a developed area

with people whose quality of life is equal or not far from other Indonesian people. The development of remote areas covers economic, socio-cultural, and security aspects. The Bengkulu City

government's efforts to overcome poverty emerged from the symbols they interpreted from the conditions in the area. The efforts made by the Bengkulu City government are as follows :

#### Education Improvement

Improving education is one of the characteristics and efforts to reduce poverty. In the City of Bengkulu, the number of children attending school is 12,999 children who are pursuing basic education. The allocation of children to school is divided into basic education (SD), junior secondary education (SMP) and secondary education (SMA). Parents' awareness of their children's education is quite high, namely 85%. The government has issued the Smart Indonesia Card (KIP) which is one of the factors driving the high number of children going to school in poor communities. In addition, the availability of educational facilities such as schools and madrasah increases the proportion of children attending school in poor communities (Statistics, 2020).

#### Revolving Fund Policy

The government's efforts, especially the City of Bengkulu to overcome poverty, are one of the priority programs. The SAMISAKE revolving fund is one of the policies of the Bengkulu City government in overcoming poverty. This revolving fund is to help build capital for business actors and/or groups to create healthy, resilient, and independent business actors that encourage equitable and equitable economic growth. One Billion One Kelurahan or SAMISAKE is a program created by the Bengkulu City government which is commonly known as the SAMISAKE revolving fund and the funds are managed by the City government and loaned to the community. This is a form of cooperation between the City government, the business world and the community as well as the non-government sector. Optimally utilize existing resources to create a stable, independent and

sustainable local economy that can create jobs and business opportunities. The legal basis for this policy is the Bengkulu City Regional Regulation Number 12 of 2013.

#### Working Capital Financing

Small businesses will have no difficulty returning the capital provided by the government through cooperatives and microfinance institutions (Microfinancial Institutions). Because business funding is more beneficial for community businesses who want to develop their business. Local governments can provide business, namely working capital financing for MSME commercial activities (Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises) such as wholesalers, shops, etc. convenience stores and other businesses, small industries, food industries, company factories and many more. SMEs can be financed through this financing facility as long as their business does not conflict with applicable regulations.

#### Government Programs

The rescue programs run by the government include the Social Safety Net (JPS) program, the BBM Subsidy Transfer Program, and the Energy Subsidy Impact Reduction Program (PPDPSE). At the same time, labor-intensive programs carry out job creation programs, productive economic institutional projects, and new businesses, all of which have the aim of providing income for the poor, improving skills and trade networks, and encouraging the development of pro-economic activities that bad. The next effort to overcome poverty is an empowerment program, which gives strength, authority, and flexibility to the poor to make choices according to their lives. In other words, empowerment is to encourage, motivate and inspire the poor to realize their potential and strive to develop that potential. This effort is led through the PNPM (National Program for Community Empowerment).

### Fulfillment of Basic Rights

In addition, efforts to overcome poverty by fulfilling basic rights have been carried out by the government, such as providing and expanding access to food, health services, education services, clean water, access to land, housing and sanitation, employment and business opportunities, the environment and natural resources, participation, population, gender inequality and injustice, acceleration of rural development, acceleration of development of underdeveloped areas and social protection. Meanwhile, efforts to overcome poverty through strengthening human resources are carried out through crash-program policies that are integrated with ongoing poverty reduction programs.

### CONCLUSION

The government considers people with social problems such as poverty as those who experience social dysfunction. This means that the government must be able to become a facilitator to transform the condition of the community into a social function, namely that the community can carry out its social roles and functions in society. The poor are not only improved economically but, above all, trained to be empowered in group forums to be able to play a role in their social environment. Under these conditions, the government adopted various actors, such as the Ministry of Cooperatives, the Ministry of Industry and Trade, the Ministry of Manpower and Bappenas as well as state-owned enterprises as well as banks and financial institutions. Various efforts to achieve it. This support is achieved through policies and the provision of other facilities

and incentives. In addition, a lot of support or assistance is needed in these efforts, such as support in the form of purchasing production equipment, purchasing other physical goods, and also requiring adequate, efficient and enforceable methods, mechanisms and procedures and focusing on the adequacy of business performance and development efforts with community capacity as one of the commercial actors in the populist economic system, especially in the form of the MSME formula. The implementation of the Community Empowerment Program is a system and model of change that is conceptually planned and desired for community empowerment which covers all aspects of community life, society and livelihood, both material and immaterial, through community institutions, with the aim of advancing efforts to improve the welfare of society. Various efforts have been carried out, various policies and programs have been implemented by the government to overcome this poverty problem. With that the amount of budget spent on poverty alleviation is negligible. The policy of overcoming the poverty crisis cannot be seen only from one perspective, but rather a complete and comprehensive study of all aspects of poverty locally. The provision of job opportunities is very important to overcome poverty caused by unemployment. Increased mobility of the workforce is achieved by training employees with other skills beyond the skills they can so that later they can work in new positions or in

terms of getting out of their comfort zone. Increased capital mobility is achieved by moving from dense locations to locations that are spacious or have high unemployment.

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