

Policy Implementation of Poverty Alleviation in Lebak District of Banten Province

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Abstract

The phenomena used as the object of this research were the implementations of poverty alleviation policies in Lebak District, Banten province, which was the district with the highest poverty in the province. The research objectives were to uncover and address issues of policy implementations on poverty alleviation through Rural PNPM in Lebak, and to acquire a new concepts of the implementation of poverty policy in order to improve the effectiveness of the handling problems of rural poverty in disadvantaged areas.

The obtained conclusions were that the implementations of poverty alleviation policy in Lebak were optimal but not maximal. Implementations of poverty alleviation policy were judged quite optimal, since the implementations of the policy that apply in the form of Rural PNPM Mandiri successfully accommodate the aspirations, motivate and mobilize the potential of rural communities to jointly carry out activities such as the development of infrastructures of village road; and savings and loans for women. Policy implementatios of poverty alleviation in Lebak were not maximal, since the implementatios of the policy were not based on the support of budget resources, incentives of economic infrastructures and social networking infrastructure which were needed to address the overall problems of rural poverty in disadvantaged areas. Those conclusions were reinforced by empirical findings that indicated weakness in the implementation of standards and policy objectives as well as the lack of the provision on budget resources and incentives.

Keywords: Policy Implementation of Poverty Alleviation, Rural PNPM Mandiri, Policy Standards and Objectives, Resources and Incentives

Introduction

As the poor population in Indonesia, reported by Coordinating Ministry of Society Welfare 2008, were amounted to 30.036.353 persons associated with total of budget allocation for Community Direct Aid (BLM) amounted to Rp. 6.568.610 million, the resources and the efforts streamlining the poverty alleviation were not optimal. Moreover, when those resources and efforts met with condition and situation faced by Indonesia nowadays which still faced various problems such as the high cost of education, the high cost of health and the high cost of basic needs. Meanwhile, the increasing of unemployment, low income of villagers and the higher cost of election, were strengthening the belief that the efforts of poor community empowerment have not been effective yet.

One spesific area with the high number poor population in in Java was Lebak district. This district is one of many districts in Banten Province which had the largest number of poor people amounted to 52.8% of poor households. One of the poverty alleviation programmes conducted in Lebak was the National Programme for Community Empowerment “Mandiri” in Rural area (called Rural PNPM Mandiri), which was distributed to several districts in Lebak.

Rural PNPM Mandiri was a programme to accelerate poverty alleviation in an integrated and sustainable way (The Technical Operational Guidance of Rural PNPM Mandiri, Directorate General for Rural and Community Empowerment, Ministry of Home Affairs 2008). This programme was expected to increase prosperity and job opportunities of the poor in rural areas by encouraging independence of community in decision making and management of development. Poverty alleviation policy through Rural PNPM Mandiri programme was conducted in the Sub District Cikukur in Lebak District with expectations that the poor in this area could be more prosperous and independent. Policy could be valued as good policy if the implementation could be run properly in accordance with its planning. So, it was necessary to make a research about the problems faced in the implementation of poverty alleviation policies, especially in Lebak district.

Literature Review

Theory of Implementation of Public policy

Model of public policy implementation given by Van Meter and Van Horn mentioned by Hill and Hupe was relevant to criticize the policy implementation of poverty alleviation. Hill and Hupe (2002:45) said :

Van Meter and Van Horns's presentation of their theoretical perspective starts with a consideration of the need to classify policies in terms that will throw light upon implementation difficulties. Their approach is comparative simple. They suggest that there is a need to take into account the amount of change required and the level of consensus. Hence they hypothesize that implementation will be most successful where only marginal change is required and goal consensus is high'. They present this, however, in terms of an interrelationship, suggesting, for example, that high consensus may make high change possible, as in a wartime situation. We will see that a number of subsequent theorists have tried to get beyond these very basic propositions about the characteristics of policy, though with only limited success. Van Meter and Van Horn go on to suggest a model in which six variables are linked dynamically to the production of an outcome 'performance'.

Van Meter and Van Horn (in Hill and Hupe, 2002:46) described six variables determining the policy performance from the implementations of public policy as followed:

- *policy standards and objectives, which elaborate on the overall goals of the policy decision... to provide concrete and more specific standards for assessing performance;*
- *the resources and incentives made available;*
- *the quality of inter-organizational relationship;*
- *the characteristics of the implementation agencies, including issues like organizational control but also, going back surely to inter-organizational issues, 'the agency's formal and informal linkages with the "policy-making" or "policy-enforcing" body;*
- *the economic, social and political environment; and*

- *the 'disposition' or response of the implementers, involving three elements: 'their cognition (comprehension, understanding) of the policy, the direction of their response to it (acceptance, neutrality, rejection) and the intensity of that response.*

The description above mentioned that there were six variables forming the policy performance, as followed: policy standards and objectives, resources and incentives, the quality of inter-organizational relationship, the characteristics of implementing agencies, social environment, economy and politics, and implementer responses. In the context of the policy implementations of poverty alleviation in Lebak, the author assembled a concept of the understanding: (1) policy standards and objectives could be defined as objectives and the standards of goal achievement on the implementation of poverty alleviation policies (2) the resources and incentives could be interpreted as resources and incentives on the policy implementations of poverty alleviation, (3) the quality of inter-organizational relationships could be defined as the quality of inter-organizational relationship related to the process of implementation of poverty alleviation policies, (4) characteristics of the agency of policy implementation or better known as the status, powers and functions of each agency involved in the process of implementation of poverty alleviation policies, (5) social environment, economics and politics could be interpreted as a socio-economic conditions of communities in the area of implementation of poverty alleviation policies, namely Lebak district, and (6) response of the implementers could be interpreted as a tendency of responsibility by policy implementers which were include awareness, direction and intensity of the responsibility for implementation of poverty alleviation policies.

Based on the theory of policy implementation by Van Meter and Van Horn (in Hill and Hupe, 2002:46), the Implementations of poverty alleviation policies in improving the welfare of poor households were seen as a process of implementation of the National Program for Rural Community Empowerment (PNPM Rural) revealed from a series of critical factors which included policy standards and objectives, resources and incentives, quality of interorganizational relationships, characteristics of the implementation agencies, economic, social and political environment, and the response of the Implementers. From this point of view, it could be drawn some principal questions include: Principal questions about the policy standards and objectives; Principal questions about raising and utilization of resources and incentives; Principal questions about the quality of interorganizational relationships: Principal questions about the characteristics of the implementation agencies; Principal questions about the condition economic, social and political environment, and Principal questions about the response of the Implementers.

Materials and Methods

The research used qualitative methodology approach. The informants on this research were sixteen people which consisted of ten (10) experts of poor community development, four (4) local officials, dan 2 activists Rural PNPM Mandiri. The determination of those informants used purposive sampling methods. The collection of secondary data used literature review, documentary studies and observations. The collection of primary data used interview methods using interview guidance which containing principals of open questions. The analysis of the data used descriptive analysis methods.

The object of this research were the phenomena of policy implementations of poverty alleviation conducted in the form of Rural PNPM Mandiri in North Cigoong village and south Cigoong village located in Cikukur sub-district, district of Lebak, Banten Province.

Results and Discussions

From the discussion that were focused on the approach of public policy implementation theory by Van Meter and Van Horn, it were identified the weaknesses in implementation process on the policy of poverty alleviation in Lebak. Those weaknesses were identified from the application of policy standards and objectives that were inappropriate with the dimensions of poverty problems in rural community in disadvantaged areas, and the limited of resources and incentives to actualize the policy standards and objectives according to the complexity problem of rural poverty in disadvantaged areas.

Implementations of policy standards and objectives in the implementation process of poverty alleviation policy in Lebak were based on the Operational Directive (PO) of Rural PNPM issued by the Directorate General of Rural Community Development (DG PMD) in the Ministry of Home Affair. In the PO was stated:

“Policy of regional development acceleration, especially in rural areas, is the main focus of Rural PNPM Mandiri. PNPM Mandiri program aims to improve the resource potential of rural areas by improving the quality of societal life through educations, economics, socials, cultures and infrastructures.”

Based on theoretical view, the policy statement mentioned above were ideal, but its implementations were not likely to succeed on improving the quality of rural life through educations, economics, socials, cultures and infrastructures, when the resources and incentives that were defined as environmental resources and incentives to change the fate of the poor become prosperous and independent, were very limited. Or it could be stated that the supply of environmental resources (economic conditions, social and cultural conditions, and the provision of infrastructures) and incentives to increase the income of poor families were not sufficient to actualize the policy standards and the standards of the objective achievement as stated by the PO Rural PMPN Mandiri, published by DG PMD. It was impressed that the goal of Rural PNPM as stated in the PO ignored the objective conditions of local resources which were the integral part of the objective conditions of rural poverty. The policy statement clearly did not consider to the fact that the structures of the poverty problems in certain area that consisted of poor areas, poor households and poor population. By understanding those structures, it would be difficult to actualize the policy standards and the standards of the objective achievement of poverty alleviation as stated in the PO of Rural PNPM Mandiri, if the support of resources and incentives to ctualize the policy goals were very limited. In this context, the phenomena of poverty in Lebak were very clearly correlated with actual connditions of Lebak as disadvantaged areas, or more appropriately called “poor areas”.

Because of the considerations that the structures of the poverty problems in an area were so complex correlated with many factors, and it showed the characteristics of the problems were different with other areas, so the problems of the poverty alleviation policy such as in Lebak District were believed to occur also in other poor areas, especially in the poor areas in eastern part of Indonesia. If the policy formulation contained in the PO of Rural PMPN

Mandiri and other poverty alleviation policies in other sectors were not immediately adjusted to the characteristics of the structures of poverty problems in each region, and also did not pay attention to the consequences of decentralization and regional autonomy policies, then the success of efforts to alleviate poverty in Indonesia were limited only to the "performance statistics" term.

From the contexts explained above, it was unwise if the government was only relied on quantitative approach to assess the success of the efforts on poverty alleviation. Qualitative approach was also required to assess the reality of the success of poverty alleviation. For example, if there were a hundred poor families in certain area, and then through the Rural PNPM Mandiri activity or other programmes, those poor families could be reduced to 50 poor families. The successful of the reduction of the number of poor families turned out to be valued by only indicator of the increasing income from these poor families, considering they succeed to manage venture capital assistance given by government. The increasing income of poor families and the decreasing number of poor families were insignificance if they were related to inflation rate which always increased, the high cost of education, cost of health, cost of transportation and the very-limited job opportunity. Based on this perspective were fairness and objectivity be required revealing the success of poverty alleviation. It meant that success and failure of the policy implementations of poverty alleviation actualized in a variety of PNPM Mandiri packages should be examined thoroughly and be associated with overall problems of poverty in rural communities, especially rural communities in disadvantaged areas such as Lebak district.

Based on the fact of the policy implementations of poverty alleviation and noticing successes and failures of those policy implementations, the policy implementations of poverty alleviation in Lebak deemed worthy to be optimal but not maximal. This assessment can be explained that the policy implementations of poverty reduction in Lebak considered to be quite optimal, since the implementation of poverty alleviation policies applied in the form of Rural PNPM Mandiri were succeed to accomodate the aspirations, motivate and mobilize the potential of rural community to jointly carried out activities such as the development of infrastructures of village road and savings and loans for women. Policy mplementations of poverty alleviation in Lebak were not maximal because these implementations were not based on the support of budget resources, economic infrastructural incentives and social networking that were needed to address the overall poverty problems of rural communities in disadvantaged areas. Poverty problems of rural communities in disadvantaged areas were not restricted only to economic issues, but also involved non-economic issues such as intellectual limitations, the weakness of mental attitude, physical constraints, and limitation of social resources. These issues were clearly not independent, since so many factors correlated or affected by one to another. These problems seemed more comprehensive when it were correlated with the fact that Lebak was a disadvantaged areas which still faced a series of problems such as regional infrastructures and sicio-cultural constraints. Therefore, it could be concluded that the policy implementations of poverty alleviation in Lebak were optimal but not maximal considering regional infrastructures and sicio-cultural constraints.

The conclusion was strengthened by empirical findings that indicated a weakness in the implementation of policy standards and standards of goal achievement as well as the lack of provision of budget resources and incentives. Those two points weaknesses were affected each other. Empirical findings could be explained the following:

First, the weakness of the implementation of policy standards and the achievement of policy objectives were that the formulations of poverty alleviation policies were centralized, so it were ineffective and inefficient to address

the poverty problems of rural communities in disadvantaged areas. It were considered as ineffective and inefficient, because of the centralized policy tends to equate the problems of poverty conditions in different rural areas and regions; caused a range of a long and very hierarchical standard operating procedure; widened the opportunities for wastefulness and deviation of resources; and inappropriate with the demands of the implementation of government system that followed policy of decentralization and regional autonomy. Therefore implementations of standards and policy objectives of poverty alleviation which were centrally determined were not maximal to solve the overall poverty problems of rural community in disadvantaged areas. This issue in Lebak district was associated with the limited of budget resources and incentives.

Second, the lack of resources and incentives were not only an obstacle in the process of policy implementations of poverty alleviation, but also an obstacle to development in Lebak which still had the status as disadvantaged areas. Based on these conditions, the allocations of budgetary resources from the government through the implementation of the Rural PNPM Mandiri and other poverty alleviation programmes were not automatically able to cope with the overall poverty problems of rural communities in Lebak district. If this issue was getting worse when the lack of budgetary resources was not accompanied by the provision of incentives such as provision of infrastructures of regional economy and widely social networks, then automatically the implementations of the policy were not maximal to solve the overall poverty problems of rural communities in disadvantaged areas.

To that end, national policies for poverty alleviation in Indonesia were needed to be reformulated into poverty alleviation policies which were structured according to the structural problems of poverty in each region and adjusted with the implementation of the governmental system that followed the pattern of decentralization and regional autonomy. In this context, the reformulation of poverty alleviation policies in Indonesia must be based on the synergy of balance between the determination of standards and policy objectives, with the capacity of the support of resources and incentives to implement those standards and policy objectives.

Concluding Remarks

The result of this research represented that policy implementations of poverty alleviation in North Cigoong Village and South Cigoong Village in Sub district Cikukur, using theory of public policy implementation approach by Van Meter and Von Horn, and with consideration that the implementations of the policy might represent the phenomena on implementations of poverty alleviation policy in Lebak, then the conclusions were given as follows:

Policy Implementations of poverty alleviation in Lebak district were optimal but not maximal. This implementations were decided to be optimal, since the implementation, in the form of Rural PNPM Mandiri, successfully accommodated society's aspirations, motivated them and mobilized the potential of rural community to jointly carried out activities such as the development of infrastructures of village road as well as savings and loans for women. Policy implementations of poverty alleviation in Lebak were not maximal, since this implementations were not based on the support of budget resources, incentives of economic infrastructures and social networking that were needed to address the overall poverty problems of rural community in disadvantaged areas. This conclusions were

reinforced by empirical findings that indicated the weakness on the implementation of policy standards, the achievement of the goals and the availability of budget resources and incentives.

The new concepts obtained were about the policy of poverty alleviation that synergized the balance of determination of the objective standards and target policy with the capacity of resource supports and incentives, which were formulated based on the policy of decentralization and regional autonomy; and were implemented with the approach of Poverty Alleviation's Trilogy including Coping Strategies of Poor Areas; Coping Strategies of Poor Households; and Coping Strategies of the Poor. The success of coping strategies for poor areas were based on the indicators of Regional GDP growth; the success of coping strategies for poor households were based on Human Development Index, and the success strategies for the poor based on indicators such as change in mental attitude and the development of value systems of the society.

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