

# The Social Support Programme's Role Analysis in Reducing Poverty: A Case Study in Indonesia

Eko Wahyudi Nugrahadi<sup>1</sup>, Firman Saputra<sup>2\*</sup>, Nabila Rizki Ramadhani<sup>3</sup>, Nazia Safira Lubis<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1-4</sup>Economic Education, Universitas Negeri Medan, Medan, Indonesia

Email: <sup>2)</sup> [firmansap@mhs.unimed.ac.id](mailto:firmansap@mhs.unimed.ac.id)

**Received:**  
January 02, 2025

**Revised:**  
February 07, 2025

**Accepted:**  
February 12, 2025

**Online:**  
February 13, 2025

## Abstract

This study aims to analyze the effectiveness of social support programmes in reducing poverty in Indonesia through qualitative research methods and literature review. Social support programmes such as the Family Hope Program (Program Keluarga Harapan, PKH), Non-Cash Food Support (Bantuan Pangan Non-Tunai, BPNT), and Direct Cash Support (Bantuan Langsung Tunai, BLT) have been implemented by the government with the goal of improving the welfare of poor families. The data collected comes from official government reports, case studies, and relevant previous research. The analysis results indicate that these programs have successfully improved access to education, healthcare, and income for poor families, although challenges such as inaccuracies in beneficiary data, complex bureaucracy, and the risk of misuse of authority remain. This study recommends several strategies to maximize the effectiveness of social support programs, including improving data accuracy, simplifying bureaucracy, enhancing transparency, and leveraging digital technology. With the implementation of these strategies, it is hoped that social support programs can become more effective and targeted, thereby significantly and sustainably reducing poverty in Indonesia.

**Keywords:** Program, Social Support, Poverty

## 1. Introduction

Poverty is one of the fundamental problems faced by many developing countries, including Indonesia. The high poverty rate reflects not only low per capita income, but also limited access to basic services such as education, health, and housing. According to data from the Central Statistics Agency (BPS) in 2023, despite a decline in the poverty rate, around 9.71 percent of Indonesia's population still lives below the poverty line. This condition demands various strategic efforts from the government to significantly reduce the poverty rate. This can be seen in the diagram below which illustrates the level of poverty in Indonesia from 2012-2023.



**Figure 1. Number and Percentage of Poverty in Indonesia (2012-2023)**  
Source: Processed from National Economic Survey data, September 2012-March 2023



Overall, the poverty rate in Indonesia has decreased in both number and percentage from September 2012 to March 2023. However, as a result of rising prices of basic goods, in September 2013, March 2015, March 2020, September 2020, and September 2022, there were increases in the number and percentage of poor people. Social support programs, such as the Family Hope Program (PKH), Non-Cash Food Support (BPNT), and Direct Cash Transfer (BLT), aim to help the poor and vulnerable financially. These programs aim to improve the quality of life of the poor in the long term in addition to meeting basic needs.

Various studies have shown the positive impact of social support programs in reducing poverty and improving community welfare. For example, research conducted by Sari et al. (2024) shows that PKH significantly improves access to education and health for beneficiary families. Similarly, a study found that BPNT contributed to improving the food security of poor households (Rachman et al., 2018).

However, the implementation of social support programs in Indonesia is not free from various challenges (Agustin, 2022). Issues such as the accuracy of recipient targeting, budget limitations, and the effectiveness of aid distribution are often obstacles that hinder the optimization of the program's impact. Therefore, a comprehensive analysis of the role of social support programs in reducing poverty is essential to identify strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats.

This article aims to analyze the role of social support programs in reducing poverty in Indonesia using case studies and a review of recent literature. Through this analysis, it is hoped that a deeper understanding of the effectiveness of social support programs can be obtained and policy recommendations can be made to improve the performance of these programs in poverty alleviation efforts in Indonesia.

## 2. Literature Review

### 2.1. Poverty

The ability to meet basic living needs is a way to measure poverty, according to BPS (2020). The monetary approach defines poverty as the inability of an individual to reach the minimum consumption level set based on the poverty line (Kharisma et al., 2020). The total calculation of the food poverty line value and the non-food poverty line value is known as the poverty line value. People are considered poor if their average monthly expenditure per capita falls below the established poverty line. In 2021, the poverty line in Indonesia was Rp 472,525 per capita per month, consisting of a food poverty line of Rp 349,474 and a non-food poverty line of Rp 123,051. The minimum income required for individuals to achieve a decent standard of living is referred to as the established threshold (Katadata, 2018).

#### 2.1.1. Absolute and Relative Poverty Theories

##### a) Absolute Poverty

According to this theory, poverty is measured based on a fixed standard of basic needs necessary for living, such as food, shelter, and clothing. If a person or household's income is not enough to meet these basic needs, then they are categorized as poor. This theory is often used in international measurements by institutions such as the World Bank. One study that supports this theory is Sen (1982) work in his book "Poverty and Famines: An Essay on Entitlement and Deprivation" which explains the concept of absolute poverty with a focus on rights and entitlements.

##### b) Relative Poverty

This theory argues that poverty should be measured relative to the standard of living in a particular neighbourhood. This means that a person is considered poor if they are unable to achieve a level of living that is considered decent by the majority of the people around them. Townsend (1979) in

his book "Poverty in the United Kingdom" argues that relative poverty is more relevant in understanding social inequality and social exclusion.

#### **2.1.2. Theory of the Culture of Poverty**

This theory, popularized by Lewis (1959) in *Five Families: Mexican Case Studies in the Culture of Poverty*, states that poverty can be passed down from one generation to the next through the values and norms held by impoverished communities. According to Lewis, poor communities develop a distinct culture that reflects their adaptation to their circumstances but also reinforces the cycle of poverty by hindering social and economic mobility.

#### **2.1.3. Structural Theory of Poverty**

This theory emphasizes structural and systemic factors that cause and perpetuate poverty. It argues that poverty is not the result of individual failure but rather the consequence of inequities in the distribution of resources and opportunities within society. Structuralists, such as Galtung (2023) in *A Structural Theory of Imperialism*, assert that social, economic, and political institutions play a crucial role in creating and sustaining inequality and poverty. This theory focuses on injustices in access to education, healthcare, employment, and social justice.

#### **2.1.4. Social Support**

Social support, also known as *bansos*, refers to financial aid or material support provided to individuals, families, communities, and the general public to protect them from social threats (Sitanggang, 2014). According to the Ministry of Finance Regulation (2015), social support involves the transfer of money, goods, or services from the government to economically disadvantaged communities. The primary goal of this support is to ensure that underprivileged groups can maintain a balanced and stable livelihood (Ministry of Social Affairs, 2017).

Rahmansyah et al. (2020) stated that one way the central and regional governments take responsibility for the conditions of impoverished and neglected individuals is through social support policies. The standards for social support are established by Minister of Home Affairs Regulation No. 32 of 2011. Based on their financial capacity, regional governments can provide social support to individuals or community groups. These individuals or groups include:

- a) Individuals, families, or communities experiencing unstable situations due to social, economic, political issues, natural disasters, or other natural phenomena; and
- b) Non-governmental organizations operating in the fields of education, religion, and other sectors that protect individuals, groups, and communities from social threats.

### **3. Methods**

This study employs a qualitative descriptive method, which is a research approach used to determine the value of one or more independent variables without making comparisons or establishing relationships between variables (Sugiyono, 2013).

#### **3.1. Research Design**

This study will use a qualitative approach with a case study as the primary method. A qualitative approach allows researchers to gain an in-depth understanding of the role of social support programs in reducing poverty in Indonesia through detailed case study analysis.

### 3.2. Case Study Selection

Case studies will be selected from various regions in Indonesia that have relevant social support programs proven to be effective in reducing poverty levels. The selection of case studies will consider Indonesia's geographical, demographic, and economic diversity.

### 3.3. Data Collection

Data will be collected from multiple sources, including a literature review that gathers data from relevant articles on the role of social support in reducing poverty in Indonesia. Additionally, secondary data from official reports and policy documents will also be utilized.

### 3.4. Data Analysis

Qualitative data obtained from document analysis will be analyzed thematically. A thematic analysis approach will enable researchers to identify patterns, themes, and key issues emerging in the context of social support programs' role in reducing poverty in Indonesia.

## 4. Results and Discussion

### 4.1. The Role of Social Support Programs in Reducing Poverty in Indonesia

In Indonesia, numerous social support programs are designed to help poor and vulnerable families meet their basic needs. The Family Hope Program (PKH) is one of the key programs that provides conditional cash support to poor households with school-aged children, pregnant women, toddlers, persons with severe disabilities, and the elderly. The support is distributed through banks affiliated with the Association of State-Owned Banks (Himbara), with beneficiaries identified using data from the Integrated Database (BDT). Another program, Non-Cash Food Support (BPNT), provides aid in the form of electronic cards that can be used to purchase food at designated e-warung (electronic warungs) and is supervised by the Ministry of Social Affairs with support from local governments. Additionally, Direct Cash Support (BLT) is distributed through Himbara banks or post offices to poor and vulnerable families affected by emergencies such as the COVID-19 pandemic or natural disasters. The distribution of this aid is verified by village or sub-district governments.

Another critical program, Cash Social Support (BST), provides direct cash transfers to beneficiaries' bank accounts or through post offices to support poor and vulnerable families affected by the pandemic or other disasters. For students from low-income families, the Smart Indonesia Card (KIP) provides educational support through Himbara banks and is overseen by the Ministry of Education and Culture. Meanwhile, the Healthy Indonesia Card (KIS) offers free healthcare services to individuals and families registered in the Integrated Database (BDT), which can be accessed at health facilities partnered with BPJS Kesehatan. The government continuously monitors and evaluates these programs to ensure their effectiveness in achieving their objectives, using data from the BDT (sources: Ministry of Social Affairs, World Bank, and related government reports).

### 4.2. Analysis of the Effectiveness of Social Support Programs

Research and data on the effectiveness of social support programs in reducing poverty in Indonesia show mixed results. For example, the Family Hope Program (PKH) has proven effective in improving the welfare of beneficiary families. According to the Ministry of Social Affairs (2020), PKH has successfully increased access to education and healthcare for children from poor families while also boosting household income. A study conducted by the World Bank (2021) supports these findings, showing that PKH has significantly reduced poverty levels in certain regions by ensuring that aid reaches the right beneficiaries through the Integrated Database (BDT).

Additionally, Non-Cash Food Support (BPNT) has helped poor families meet their food needs more flexibly and with greater dignity compared to direct food aid. Research by the National Team for the Acceleration of Poverty Reduction (TNP2K, 2019) found that BPNT improved the nutritional intake of beneficiary households, although there were challenges in the distribution and accessibility of e-warong in remote areas. Furthermore, Direct Cash Support (BLT) distributed during the COVID-19 pandemic was also deemed effective in providing a rapid and direct social safety net for economically affected families. According to Statistics Indonesia (BPS, 2021), BLT helped mitigate the rise in poverty during the pandemic by providing cash aid that could be used immediately for daily necessities.

#### **4.3. Supporting and Inhibiting Factors in the Success of Social Support Programs**

The success of social support programs in reducing poverty in Indonesia is influenced by various supporting and inhibiting factors. Key supporting factors include accurate targeting, adequate funding, and effective inter-agency coordination. Research by TNP2K (2020) indicates that the accurate use of the Integrated Database (BDT) ensures aid reaches the families that genuinely need it. Additionally, consistent and sufficient funding from both central and local governments helps sustain the programs and reduces the risk of aid discontinuation. Good coordination between government agencies, at both national and local levels, also enhances program effectiveness by ensuring smooth implementation and supervision.

However, several challenges hinder the success of social support programs (Lensoni et al., 2022). Data inaccuracies and lack of up-to-date information often pose major problems. Despite the use of the BDT, weaknesses in data collection can result in inaccurate beneficiary targeting, leading to mistargeted aid distribution. A study by the SMERU Research Institute (2021) highlights that errors in beneficiary data can cause aid to be allocated improperly. Additionally, bureaucratic complexity and inefficiencies slow down the aid distribution process, as lengthy administrative procedures delay the disbursement of support to recipients.

Moreover, corruption and abuse of power in some regions can reduce the amount of aid reaching the rightful beneficiaries. Geographical and accessibility challenges in remote areas also limit the reach of social support programs, preventing equal distribution of aid. To overcome these obstacles, continuous improvements are necessary in data management and aid distribution systems, along with greater transparency and accountability in program implementation. The use of advanced information technology and greater community involvement in monitoring processes can also enhance the effectiveness and sustainability of social support programs in Indonesia.

#### **4.4. Strategies to Maximize the Impact of Social Support Programs**

To maximize the impact of social support programs in reducing poverty in Indonesia, the government can implement various evidence-based strategies. Improving the accuracy and timeliness of beneficiary data is a crucial first step. Research by TNP2K (2020) suggests that integrated data systems and Big Data analytics can ensure more accurate and well-targeted aid distribution. Additionally, simplifying bureaucracy and digitizing aid distribution processes, as analyzed by the SMERU Research Institute (2021), can enhance efficiency and accelerate aid disbursement.

Transparency and accountability are also critical. Research by the World Bank (2021) emphasizes the importance of regular audits and community participation in monitoring programs to prevent mismanagement and corruption. Inter-agency collaboration, as recommended by studies from the Ministry of Social Affairs (2020), can strengthen coordination and synergy in program implementation.

Furthermore, diversifying social support programs to include skills training, education access, and healthcare services, as proposed by the OECD (2020), can empower poor families to become more self-sufficient and improve their overall quality of life. Periodic program evaluations and adjustments



based on evaluation findings are also essential to maintaining program relevance and effectiveness, as suggested by TNP2K research. By adopting these strategies, the government can enhance the impact of social support programs and achieve more significant and sustainable poverty reduction in Indonesia.

## 5. Conclusion

Social support programs in Indonesia have shown positive results in efforts to reduce poverty, with key programs such as the Family Hope Program (PKH) and Non-Cash Food Support (BPNT) successfully improving the welfare and access to basic services for poor families. However, the effectiveness of these programs still faces various challenges, including inaccuracies in beneficiary data, complex bureaucracy, and the risk of misuse of authority. To overcome these obstacles and maximize the impact of the programs, the government needs to implement more efficient, transparent, and sustainable strategies.

To enhance the effectiveness of social support programs in reducing poverty, the government can take several measures. First, improving data accuracy by utilizing information technology such as integrated data systems and Big Data to update and ensure the accuracy of beneficiary data, as well as conducting community-based data collection and regular field verification. Second, simplifying bureaucracy by streamlining administrative procedures and reducing bureaucratic steps through the digitalization of aid distribution processes.

Third, enhancing transparency and accountability by making beneficiary data and aid allocation publicly accessible and conducting regular audits while involving the community in program oversight. Fourth, strengthening inter-agency collaboration by improving coordination among government institutions at both central and regional levels to enhance synergy in program implementation, and establishing cross-sectoral task forces dedicated to poverty alleviation.

Fifth, diversifying programs by developing social support initiatives that go beyond cash transfers to include skills training, access to education, healthcare, and business capital support. Lastly, conducting regular evaluations and policy adjustments based on assessment findings to ensure the continued relevance and effectiveness of the programs. By implementing these strategies, the government can optimize the impact of social support programs in significantly and sustainably reducing poverty in Indonesia.

## 6. References

- Agustin, L. (2022). Pengaruh Pengangguran, Ipm, Dan Bantuan Sosial Terhadap Kemiskinan Di Provinsi Jawa Timur. *EKONIKA : Jurnal Ekonomi Universitas Kadiri*, 7(2). <https://doi.org/10.30737/ekonika.v7i2.2221>
- BPS. (2021). *Laporan perkembangan kemiskinan di Indonesia selama pandemi COVID-19*. BPS (Badan Pusat Statistik).
- Galtung, J. (2023). A structural theory of imperialism. In *Imperialism* (pp. 59–108). Routledge.
- Katadata. (2018). *Berapa Garis Kemiskinan Penduduk Indonesia?*
- Kharisma, B., Remi, S. S., Wardhana, A., & Minarso, D. (2020). Modal sosial dan kemiskinan di Jawa Barat. *Jurnal Ekonomi Dan Bisnis*, 23(2), 317–338.
- Lensoni, Andriaty, S. N., Zahara, H., Kala, P. R., Anggriani, Y., Raisah, P., Karma, T., Khumairah, R., Sari, M., & Naira, A. Z. (2022). Pengaruh Sosialisasi terhadap Peningkatan Pengetahuan Masyarakat Desa Lambroe Bileu Aceh Besar. *PORTAL RISET DAN INOVASI PENGABDIAN MASYARAKAT*, 2(1), 35–39. <https://doi.org/10.55047/prima.v2i1.360>
- Lewis, O. (1959). *Five families: Mexican case studies in the culture of poverty*. Basic Books.
- Ministry of Social Affairs. (2017). *Pedoman Umum pelaksanaan sistem layanan Dan rujukan terpadu*

- untuk Perlindungan sosial dan penanganan Kemiskinan.
- Ministry of Social Affairs. (2020). *Laporan tahunan Program Keluarga Harapan*.
- OECD. (2020). *Social protection in East Asia and the Pacific: Stocktaking of social protection reforms*. OECD Publishing.
- Rachman, B., Agustian, A., & Wahyudi, N. (2018). Efektivitas dan Perspektif Pelaksanaan Program Beras Sejahtera (Rastra) dan Bantuan Pangan Non-Tunai (BPNT). *Analisis Kebijakan Pertanian*, 16(1). <https://doi.org/10.21082/akp.v16n1.2018.1-18>
- Rahmansyah, W., Qadri, R. A., Sakti, R. T. S. R. A., & Ikhsan, S. (2020). Pemetaan permasalahan penyaluran bantuan sosial untuk penanganan Covid-19 di Indonesia. *Jurnal Pajak Dan Keuangan Negara (PKN)*, 2(1), 90–102.
- Sari, T. D. D. P., Wahyudi, F., & Rachmawati, R. (2024). Analisis Dampak Program Bantuan Sosial Terhadap Pengentasan Kemiskinan Di Desa Rambipuji Kecamatan Rambipuji Kabupaten Jember. *JEMBAR-Journal Of Economics, Management, Business, and Accounting Research*, 2(1), 99–109.
- Sen, A. (1982). *Poverty and famines: an essay on entitlement and deprivation*. Oxford university press.
- Sitanggang, B. (2014). *Implementasi kebijakan penyaluran hibah dan bantuan sosial kemasyarakatan di Kabupaten Kubu Raya*. Tanjungpura University.
- Sugiyono. (2013). *Metode Penelitian Kuantitatif Kualitatif dan R&D*. Alfabeta.
- TNP2K. (2019). *Bantuan Pangan Non-Tunai: Evaluasi dan rekomendasi kebijakan*. TNP2K (Tim Nasional Percepatan Penanggulangan Kemiskinan).
- TNP2K. (2020). *Analisis data Basis Data Terpadu untuk penyaluran bantuan sosial*. TNP2K (Tim Nasional Percepatan Penanggulangan Kemiskinan).
- Townsend, P. (1979). *Poverty in the United Kingdom: a survey of household resources and standards of living*. Univ of California Press.
- World Bank. (2021). *Program Keluarga Harapan (PKH) impact evaluation*. World Bank Publications.