



Implementation of The Village Community Development and Empowerment Program through Priorities of the Use of Village Funds in the Coastal Area, Aceh Barat Regency

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Abstract

This study aims to investigate the effectiveness of the Village Community Development and Empowerment Program (P3MD) in the coastal areas of West Aceh Regency, with a focus on the priority use of village funds. Specifically, the study explores the changes in the community's economy before and after the implementation of village funds and examines the initiatives taken by the village government to enhance economic conditions. Descriptive analysis is employed as the analytical method to evaluate the outcomes. This study shows that the policy assistance of the Village Community Development and Empowerment Program in West Aceh Regency has not yet achieved optimal effectiveness in its implementation. This can be observed from the three approaches used to measure the effectiveness of mentoring in P3MD in Aceh Barat District. Two indicators, including the source approach and the target approach, have not worked well. In the future, policy implementers need to focus more on optimizing resources and involving a wider range of target groups.

Keywords: *Community Development, Village Funds, Coastal Areas, West Aceh*

Abstrak

This study aims to investigate the effectiveness of the Village Community Development and Empowerment Program (P3MD) in the coastal areas of West Aceh Regency, with a focus on the priority use of village funds. Specifically, the study explores the changes in the community's economy before and after the implementation of village funds and examines the initiatives taken by the village government to enhance economic conditions. Descriptive analysis is employed as the analytical method to evaluate the outcomes. This study shows that the policy assistance of the Village Community Development and Empowerment Program in West Aceh Regency has not yet achieved optimal effectiveness in its implementation. This can be observed from the three approaches used to measure the effectiveness of mentoring in P3MD in Aceh Barat District. Two indicators, including the source approach and the target approach, have not worked well. In the future, policy implementers need to focus more on optimizing resources and involving a wider range of target groups.

Kata Kunci: *Pemberdayaan Masyarakat, Dana Desa, Kawasan Pesisir, Aceh Barat*

A. Introduction

The development of villages has become a priority in accelerating the achievement of community welfare levels (Marlita and Widodo 2020). This aligns with the principle of regional autonomy as an instrument for improving people's welfare by always paying attention to the interests and aspirations that grow in society, especially in rural communities. However, the broad authority granted to the village government and rural communities requires optimal assistance. Without assistance, there will be opportunities for irregularities and abuses of authority, resulting in state financial losses and hindering the realization of community welfare (Jalilah Ilmiha et al. 2023).

The enactment of Law Number 6 of 2014 concerning Villages confirms the political commitment of the state to protect and empower villages, enabling them to become strong, advanced, independent, and democratic entities that provide a solid foundation for governance and development (Flambonita 2014). The organization of villages also aims to prepare them to respond to the processes of modernization, globalization, and democratization while maintaining their identity. Strengthening and empowering rural communities align with the third *nawacita*, "building Indonesia from the periphery by strengthening regions and villages."

One significant agenda is to oversee the implementation of the Village Law through assistance. The placement of village assistants is reflected in the Village Community Development and Empowerment Program (P3MD), which has been adopted since 2014 (Gunawan 2021). P3MD is a program that aims to accelerate poverty reduction in an integrated and sustainable manner to improve community welfare. The approach of the Community Development and Empowerment Program (P3MD) involves providing employment and income opportunities for the poor, improving the efficiency and effectiveness of activities, and fostering community togetherness and participation.

With the policy of assisting the Village Community Development and Empowerment Program (P3MD), it is hoped that village financial management will be carried out properly and accountably. This is important because the funds allocated to the village are substantial and require effective management by the village government. The implementation of the Village Fund policy needs to address the management dimension in accordance with the character of public policy, as put forward by Nugroho (2003): "One way for a policy to achieve its goals is to directly practice it in the form of programs or through policy formation derived from public policy."

In policy studies, the practical execution of policies is commonly referred to as policy implementation (Angga 2022; Febriansyah et al. 2022; Kinanti and Yusran 2022). According to Van Meter and Van Horn quoted in (Wibawa 1994; Winarno 2012), policy implementation encompasses the actions taken by the government and private sector, either individually or collectively, with the intention of achieving specific goals. The term "implementation" is always associated with policy, indicating the practical implementation of a given policy. As stated by Anderson, as cited by Wahab (2005), policy represents intentional actions undertaken by one or more actors in response to existing problems or challenges. The term "effectiveness" encompasses the concept of success or achievement. It is defined as the extent to which an organization attains its

predetermined goals (Handyaningrat 1996; Robbins 1995). Effectiveness is considered achieved when the desired goals or targets are reached as planned (Indrawijaya 2002). To measure the effectiveness of an organization, three approaches proposed by Lubis and Huseini (1987) can be utilized: (1) the source approach, which focuses on measuring the effectiveness of inputs and prioritizes resource acquisition, both physical and non-physical, to meet the organization's needs; (2) the process approach, which assesses the effectiveness of program implementation by examining internal activities and organizational mechanisms; and (3) the target approach, which emphasizes output measurement and evaluates the organization's success in achieving results according to the plan.

An example of such a policy is the Village Community Development and Empowerment Program (P3MD), a national program that serves as a policy framework for implementing poverty reduction initiatives based on community empowerment. P3MD is executed through the harmonization and development of program systems, mechanisms, and procedures, as well as the provision of assistance and stimulus funding to encourage community-driven initiatives and innovations in sustainable poverty reduction efforts. P3MD was developed by the government to ensure more coordinated and sustainable poverty reduction endeavors. Its overarching goal is to promote village self-reliance in development and enhance the welfare and employment prospects of the rural poor. P3MD achieves its objectives through mentoring. As specified in Law Number 6 of 2014 concerning Villages, village assistance involves activities carried out by Local Village Facilitators to empower communities through guidance, facilitation, and support in the planning, implementation, and monitoring of the Village Fund Program.

Villages in Aceh Barat Regency receive Village Funds (Dana Desa/DD) every year. Several villages in West Aceh Regency were recipients of DD in 2020 and 2021, as specified in West Aceh Regent Regulation Number 17 of 2020, which amended West Aceh Regent's Regulation Number 07 of 2020 concerning the procedures for the allocation, distribution, use, monitoring, and evaluation of Village Funds in West Aceh Regency for the fiscal year 2020. Additionally, Regulation of the Regent of Aceh Barat Number 06 of 2020 provides the procedures for distributing and determining the details of Village Funds for each village in Aceh Barat Regency for the fiscal year 2020. The allocation of Village Funds in Aceh Barat Regency aims to accelerate rural development to address the significant population growth, requiring equitable distribution of physical development and community empowerment across various aspects of life.

The effectiveness of the implementation of development programs and community empowerment policies in West Aceh Regency remains unknown. Initial observations indicate that the implementation of these programs and policies in West Aceh Regency has not been optimal. Regarding the P3MD policy in Aceh Barat Regency, one can observe the diversity in educational levels among assistant staff, which reflects their ability to understand and address village issues, as well as their level of understanding in providing capacity building to village government officials and community institutions. Additionally, there is a challenge regarding human resources or village officials who have not been able to optimally carry out village financial

management and sometimes prioritize incorrectly, especially on a priority scale. This study aims to analyze the effectiveness of the implementation of the program's policy assistance.

B. Method

The research is conducted in Aceh Barat Regency, specifically chosen as the study location. A qualitative descriptive research method is employed to thoroughly describe the ongoing nature of the P3MD Policy Implementation in Aceh Barat District. The informants in this study consist of individuals who possess a comprehensive understanding of the P3MD Policy Implementation issue in Aceh Barat District, totaling 31 participants. They are selected based on their expertise, knowledge, and involvement in the subject matter.

Data collection techniques include interviews, observations, and documentation. Through in-depth interviews, valuable insights and experiences related to the P3MD Policy Implementation are gathered. Observations allow for direct observation of the actual implementation process and its impact on the local community. Documentation, such as reports and official records, provides additional information and context. The collected data is analyzed using an interactive model of qualitative analysis developed by Miles and Huberman (1994). This model involves several stages, which include data reduction, data presentation, and drawing conclusions or verification. In this study, the author evaluates the effectiveness of mentoring based on the criteria proposed by Lubis and Huseini (1987). These criteria are the source approach, the process approach, and the target approach.

C. Result and Discussion

The results of research on the effectiveness of implementing the Village Community Development and Empowerment Program (P3MD) policy in Aceh Barat District can be described based on the three approaches used.

1. Source approach

The effectiveness of the P3MD policy implementation process in improving the welfare of the people in West Aceh Regency relies heavily on the utilization of available resources. These resources include human resources, time, and financial resources. The availability and proper utilization of these three resources significantly impact the mentoring process in P3MD in Aceh Barat District and determine the achievement of desired targets. When there is sufficient resource support, the mentoring process in P3MD can be carried out effectively. However, if there is a lack of resource support during the implementation of P3MD mentoring, the process may not proceed as planned or agreed upon. Based on an interview conducted by the author with the Sub-District Head of Johan Pahlawan, it was stated that:

"In the P3MD mentoring process, the influence of human resources within P3MD itself is highly significant. The success or failure of this process depends on P3MD's ability to provide valuable knowledge and other necessary expertise. Without proper assistance in the field, the desired outcomes cannot be achieved."

Therefore, human resources play a crucial role in determining the success of P3MD implementation at various levels, including villages, sub-districts, and districts" (Interview, April 2020).

The opinion expressed by BPD Mekar Jaya highlights the vulnerability of fund management, particularly with regards to the Village Fund. Mismanagement and lack of transparency in handling significant funds can lead to community vulnerability. Currently, a large portion of the Village Funds is allocated to infrastructure and village development, while community empowerment initiatives receive minimal attention. This raises concerns about improving the welfare of the community. Infrastructure projects often benefit specific individuals, while activities focused on community empowerment, such as training for farmers or courses for aspiring seamstresses or bakers, as well as workshops and carpentry, remain unfunded. The Village Funds, intended to enhance the welfare of the village community, are not utilized effectively (Interview, April 2020).

Based on this perspective, it is evident that sufficient and appropriate financial support is crucial for the smooth progress of village development and community empowerment. It is necessary to ensure good governance of the Village Fund, ensuring that funds are allocated appropriately and used for the benefit of development and community empowerment in West Aceh Regency. Consequently, it can be concluded that human resources, financial resources, and time resources are the key factors influencing the effectiveness of P3MD policy implementation in West Aceh District. These three dimensions serve as indicators that determine the success of the P3MD Policy Implementation Effectiveness in West Aceh District. The resource approach, which emphasizes the influence of various criteria on the effectiveness of P3MD policy implementation, aligns with the opinion expressed by Lubis and Martani (1987).

2. Process Approach

The success of the mentoring program implemented in the Village Community Development and Empowerment Program (P3MD) in West Aceh Regency heavily relies on the implementation process carried out by village facilitators. Village facilitators in P3MD Aceh Barat Regency play a crucial role in enhancing community participation and village institutions in the development activities within the village.

The assistance provided in P3MD in West Aceh Regency is carried out by village assistants, whose task is to support villages in implementing village development and empowering the village communities. The implementation process of the P3MD program has been progressing well. This is affirmed by an interview conducted with one of the Village Heads of Padang Seurahet regarding the mentoring process in the P3MD of West Aceh Regency. The Village Head stated:

"In the implementation of development activities in Aceh Barat Regency, the community is not treated as the object of various development projects, but rather as the subject of their own development efforts. This is evident in the execution of P3MD activities in Aceh Barat Regency, which is organized in a manner that commences from the planning process involving all community elements. The village development planning process consists of sequential activities managed by the Village Government, with the participation of the BPD and community

elements in a participatory manner. This is done to effectively allocate and utilize village resources, thereby achieving the goals and objectives of village development. Subsequently, we proceed to the budgeting process, where all activities are based on the proposals outlined in the Village RKP document. These proposals are later included in the Village APB budgeting document, which provides clarity on how village finances are managed, including the procedures for allocation, distribution, use, monitoring, and evaluation of the Village Fund. Following this, we enter the implementation phase, which aligns with the procurement of goods and services, as well as reporting and accountability. The Village Head submits a report on the realization of the Village Budget implementation to the Regent/Mayor twice a year. To ensure the smooth progress of the P3MD implementation process, guidance and supervision are conducted. The Regency Government fulfills its function of fostering, monitoring, and evaluating the utilization of Village Funds throughout the planning, implementation, accountability, and utilization stages. This is facilitated through the establishment of a dedicated coaching work unit." (Interview, May 2020)

Based on the informant's perspective, it is evident that the success of the P3MD Policy Implementation Effectiveness in West Aceh Regency lies in the approach of involving all stakeholders within the P3MD, including the District Government, Village Government, Community, and Facilitators, in the activity implementation process. Thus, adopting a process-oriented approach is crucial in assessing the effectiveness of program implementation in the P3MD Policy Implementation in Aceh Barat District. This viewpoint aligns with the findings of Lubis and Martani (1987).

3. Goal Approach

The level of assistance in P3MD Aceh Barat Regency can be assessed based on the extent to which the goals and objectives of village facilitators are achieved in policy implementation. A target serves as a tool for measuring the effectiveness of an organization, including P3MD, which involves a series of activities conducted systematically and structured according to standard operating procedures.

Empowerment within the village context entails establishing a shared understanding of development among the 336 villages in West Aceh Regency, taking into account the varying dynamics within different sub-districts and even within individual hamlets. For instance, in one village, traditional hierarchical positions may still carry more weight than the voice of a sub-district head, while in other places, open communication may be possible, albeit with certain constraints to show respect to the host. It is challenging to treat all villages in West Aceh Regency equally, with the Village Fund aiming to promote inclusiveness regardless of gender, race, or ethnicity. While this may seem feasible in theory, human nature is not easily defined solely by observable behavior.

Disseminating Law Number 6 of 2014 to the village community is a complex task, as it involves raising awareness among villagers about actively participating in their own village development. The Head of the Community and Village Empowerment Service of West Aceh Regency affirmed this difficulty in an interview, stating:

"The field assistants play a vital role in supporting village governments and communities by imparting knowledge that enhances their understanding, attitudes, skills, behavior, capabilities, and awareness to develop villages and utilize available resources. However, in certain sub-districts and villages, the mentoring process remains ineffective due to insufficient placement of assistants in those areas, inconsistent presence of assistants at the task location, and the relatively low capacity of village government officials to comprehend the knowledge conveyed by professional assistants." (Interview, May 2020)

The data presented above indicates that the involvement of facilitators in the village development process entails their participation in the planning, implementation, and evaluation of village activities for one year, as part of their responsibilities. Moreover, active engagement and alignment with ongoing processes are crucial, and any deviations from prescribed procedures should be evaluated for future improvements. It is not solely the responsibility of the facilitators themselves; the village, sub-district, and local governments must also contribute to the mentoring process. Based on the informant's perspective, the success of P3MD Policy Implementation Effectiveness in West Aceh Regency is influenced by the target-oriented approach, with professional assistants playing a pivotal role in empowering rural communities in a sustainable manner by providing human resources and management. These findings align with the theory proposed by Lubis and Martani (1987) regarding organizational effectiveness.

D. Conclusion

The effectiveness of P3MD policy implementation in Aceh Barat District is influenced by the availability and proper utilization of resources, the involvement and processes carried out by village facilitators, and the achievement of goals and objectives. To ensure the success of P3MD, it is essential to address resource gaps, enhance the mentoring process, and prioritize inclusivity and sustainable development, in line with the theory proposed by Lubis and Martani. By adopting these approaches, the P3MD program can contribute to the welfare and empowerment of communities in West Aceh Regency.

The policy assistance of the Village Community Development and Empowerment Program in West Aceh Regency has not yet achieved optimal effectiveness in its implementation. This can be seen from the three approaches used to measure the effectiveness of mentoring in P3MD in Aceh Barat District. Two indicators, including the source approach and the target approach, have not worked well. In the future, policy implementers need to focus more on optimizing resources and involving a wider range of target groups.

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