Article

Public Misperception of Poverty Alleviation Program Policies

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Abstract: This article aims to explore the public misperception regarding the policy of the People with Social Welfare Problems (PMKS) by the Indonesian government. There was a view in the community that various efforts made by the government were the only way out of poverty. The data collection was conducted through observation, interviews, and documentation studies. The data analysis indicated that the public's perception of the PMKS service program policy was only limited to the short-term benefits of the program and is pragmatic. To escape the poverty the poor only awaited for government policies without having willingness from within the poor to change. This study only covered three areas in East Java. Therefore a more advanced study with greater sample size is needed

1. Introduction

According to Central Bureau of Statistics Jember East Java, various institutions have worked to alleviate poverty. However, they have not succeeded in alleviating social welfare problems. Unfortunately, the program policy for People with Social Welfare Problems (PMKS) has created a new dependency on the poor.

Table 1. Jember Regency Poverty Index 2018 - 2020

POVERTY INDICATORS	Poverty Index		
	2018	2019	2020
Poverty Line (000 Rupiah/capita month)	324.17	339.69	365.30
Number of Population Below Poverty Line (000)	243.42	226.57	247.99
Percentage of Poor Population (P0)	9.98	9.25	10.09
Change in Percentage of Poor Population (%)	-1.02	-0.73	84.00
Poverty Depth Index (P1)	1.45	1.22	1.42
Poverty Severity Index (P2)	0.33	0.24	0.31

SSource: Central Bureau of Statistics Jember East Java

The Indonesian Government has terminated the PNPM's National Community Empowerment Program because it failed to build the poor's independency (Muslim Azis, 2017). The Government has made quite wise policies, namely policies in the field of social protection for indigent families (RTSM) Family Hope Program (PKH), to tackle the poverty problems. However, during the implementation, some failures still occurred. According to (Linda Arman, 2018), these failures may relate to the old factors and the wrong choice of the type of coaching programs for the poor.

Studies on poverty alleviation program policies for people with social welfare problems (PMKS) generally fall into two trends. First, since poverty is a social phenomenon, so this is the concern of one of the government policy decision makers. Regarding the Poverty Alleviation-Policy Analysis, (Murdiyana & Mulyana, 2017a) described various kinds of government policies related to poverty alleviation. They presented the formulation and the results of the implementation of these policies that the implementation of social service program policies for people with social welfare problems would run well if, supported by mutual resources, good communication, organizational structure, and disposition, as stated by (Bedasari et al., 2020). Meanwhile, in terms of policy evaluation, (Syamsuida, 2016) explained that poverty alleviation policies could run well if the organization effectively supports the program in providing learning, mentoring, and building the poor's independence. Second, poverty is a religious problem, so the Government should make policies as stated in the Zakat Law Number 23 of 2011 and Government Regulation Number 14 of 2014. In poverty alleviation, productive zakat management has made a positive contribution. Dina Islamiyati (2020) has proven the positive effects of zakat and infaq (charity) on poverty from 2016-2018. Every 1% increase in the distribution of productive zakat, resulted in a 6.1% decrease in poverty. Public awareness about the problem of poverty is fundamental that all levels of the community should understand to encourage policy-making in action.

Contrary to the above concept, the majority of people were inaccurate in interpreting what poverty was. However, the majority understand the problem of poverty and its adverse impacts on society. Perceptions of poverty and various reasons require appropriate policies for awareness to make people's views right.

There has not been any study focused on the problems of public misperceptions of the program policy for people with social welfare problems (PMKS) in Indonesia. In this regard, this study comprehensively described three aspects of the poverty-alleviation program implementation first, how PMKS viewed government policies on poverty alleviation and who was responsible for the poverty in the community so far. Second, how did PMKS place various government poverty-alleviation programs in the community? Third, what was the attitude of PMKS regarding efforts to get them out of a slump? These three things are described in detail in Discussion Section.

The basis of this study was the argument that biased understandings and views about PMKS policies triggered misperceptions about the program's policy for people with social welfare problems (PMKS). The following were the factors that influenced the program failures:

1. The government has full responsibility for poverty.
2. People considered mentoring programs only routine activities in helping the poor.
3. The poor perceive that the solution to poverty should not come from the poor but from the government.

There were interrelated challenges about poverty and misperceptions that made the problems persistent, i.e., the problem of low income, productivity, low education, poor health and nutrition, and low economic level (John Cook, 2015). This condition correlated to the dimensions of perception of the causes of poverty. These factors included 1. Individualistic: Blaming poverty on the poor. 2. Fatalistic: Poverty arises due to misfortune and bad luck. 3. Structuralistic: Poverty arises due to situational factors such as low education and low salaries. Kluegel and Smith (1981 and 1986) analyzed psychological mechanisms such as beliefs about socio-economic status (income, class, and social status) and demographic variables (age, gender, place of residence, and religion) as determinants to explain the causes of poverty using psychological terms. Furthermore, subjective poverty may occur when someone feels poor. Subjective poverty arises due to differences in wealth between one family and another.

2. Materials and Methods

As previously described in the Introduction Section, this study aimed to examine the extent of the poor's misperceptions of PMKS service program policies in poverty alleviation. Accordingly, this research relied on interviews with respondents from the Social Service, 355 beggars and 766 scavengers of PMKS services receivers were purposively selected. The city of Jember was designated as the research location since Jember was the third metropolitan city in East Java, Indonesia, by population. In 2020, the number of people who occupied Jember was 2,536,729, consisting of 50.13% females and 49.87% males.

During the last ten years, the 2010-2020 period, the population of Jember Regency increased by around 204,003 people or 8.75 percent from 2,332,726 in 2010, with the highest number of beggars and scavengers compared to other districts in East Java, Indonesia. This study investigated the poor people's perceptions of poverty that shackles them. For this purpose, three criteria apply on respondents, first, beggars and scavengers aged 35 to 60 years. Secondly, beggars and scavengers were PMKS-service receivers. Thirdly, several officers from social services, who assisted in the PMKS service program. In total there were 10 respondents consisted of four beggars and four scavengers and two social services officials.

Table 2. Number of Poor Population by Regency/City in East Java (Thousand People)

Regency/City	2019	2020	2021
Malang	246.60	265.56	276.58
Jember	226.57	247.99	257.09
Probolinggo	207.22	218.35	223.32

Source: Central Bureau of Statistics Jember East Java

In addition to data on the number of poor people at the district level, there was also data on PMKS in Jember Regency, which occupies the highest level of the number of beggars, and psychopathic homeless people. The following Table presents the details.

Tabel 3. People with Social Welfare Problems (PMKS) in East Java

Regency/City	Beggar	Scavenger	Homeless Psychopath
Malang	220	-	139
Jember	355	776	299
Probolinggo	75	-	83

Source: Central Bureau of Statistics Jember East Java

The data were collected directly from interviews with the primary sources, scavengers, and social service program assistants. In addition, data sources from literature, journal articles, and other online poverty-alleviation-related sources on the internet.

The data collection techniques used in this research were 1). Interviews with beggars and four scavengers aged 35 to 60 who received regular PMKS program services. As a source of triangulation, interviews with the social-service-department officers; totaled two people who had been assisting the PMKS service program. These interviews were to obtain information directly from the informant about the problems they faced to analyze in this research. These interviews were open and unstructured and involved intense interactions and two-way communication. In open interviews, informants can freely express their opinions about poverty they understood and the aid provided by the social service. 2). The observation method in this study followed Martini (1992:74), where the perception observation of the poor and recordings were carried out with the assistance of the social service. The type of participant observation that the researcher applied was that the researcher was directly involved in the mentoring during activities carried out by informants both from the social service and from the poor. 3. Documentation, the researcher followed Hamidi (2004:72) in carrying out the documentation method. The documentation included data and information records from institutions, organizations, individuals, and pictures and photos taken during the activities.

The data analysis technique used in this study followed the interactive analysis of Moleong (year). This technique involves four analysis four components, a. data collection, data from interviews, literature, and policies on poverty are entered into a data bank and then processed. b. Data reduction. After collection, the data were sorted and filtered for relevance to the discussion topic of poor people's misperceptions about the PMKS service program. c. data presentation was performed after all data were sorted, and d. Concluding. The data processing results, with the four components above, became the basis of the conclusions.

3. Results and Discussion

Result

The result The results of this study indicated that poverty was not only triggered by external factors such as difficulties in developing supporting economic conditions but was also caused by wrong perceptions of the community. There were three misconceptions about poverty in Indonesia:

1. Poverty was considered a problem that was only the Government to blame. In this case, the Government should find a solution to get people out of poverty.

2. The perception of the poor was that the Government's assistance was routine to help the them. This perception resulted in the conditions where the poor were continually waiting for the Government's help.

3. There was an assumption that the solution to poverty must come only from the Government.

Consequently, people in this context were more passive and waited for the Government to solve their poverty. Sequentially, these three things were elaborated and presented as follows:

A. A view that the Government is the party responsible for poverty

Several people felt comfortable with unproductive jobs to support themselves and their families. This poverty was triggered by several factors, including the lack of desire to their "fate". One of the beggars, R1 (40) from Jember City begs every day in front of a shopping center and stated that:

"I became a beggar hanging out in front of Indomaret every day since this shop was established. Every morning, I beg, accompanied by a toddler I rented from a friend. I shift with my child after school and my husband in the afternoon. I am satisfied with the earning of begging" (Interview, in Jember 2022).

Another beggar, R1 (65) expressed his desire to escape poverty even though he feels comfortable with his current job. He is also waiting for help from the Government. He mentioned that:

"I am comfortable being a part-time beggar shared with three others and begging here for almost ten years. The government should think about the fate of our elderly who are still beggars" (Interview in Jember 2022).

What was mentioned by the two beggars was agreed with one of the governmenl officals R3, 45). This official has been handling PMKS in this area. He stated that it was caused by the absence of a strong desire to change.

"The willingness of the homeless (unemployed) and street children to escape poverty was minimal. The Government has done much assistance to poverty alleviation programs but has not shown significant results" (Interview in Jember, 2022).

Their understanding of the poverty they suffered was purely the responsibility of the Government. Another official within the Jember regional government, R4 (55), mentioned:

"People with PMKS understood that the poverty that afflicts them was the responsibility of the Government, so there was no awareness of the mutual success of government programs in poverty alleviation. After being assisted, they return to being beggars and street children" (Interview in Jember 2022).

From some of the informants' statements above appeared that there was a mistake in viewing poverty itself. The poor viewed the poverty they were suffering as the full responsibility of the Government, so there took no initiative from themselves to escape this condition. The Government was considered the party that would be able to give a solution. They were lazy and continued being beggars even though they could not change their fate.

The Government was indeed the leading actor in eradicating poverty, and it did not mean that the Government had to be the only party that ensured every poor family could meet all their basic needs. The leading actor in poverty alleviation should be a person or family who felt poverty. A person or family must try hard so that their basic needs can be met and be motivated to look for opportunities so that they can not only fulfill their basic

needs but become a prosperous family (Maslow, 1943; Williams & Page, 1989; Taormina & Gao, 2013; Montag, Sindermann). , Lester, & Davis, 2020).

B. Routine Mentoring activity to help the poor

A routine-aid-program implementation could become a dependable supplement for the poor to meet their life sustenance. Such a program activity was part of implementing an aid program under the Social Service for PMKS (people with social welfare problems) in the category of beggars. Some routine aids have made beggars dependent. As mentioned by one of the beggars (R7, 35), who has received aid several times:

"The department provided training for us in the form of sewing, tire patching, bouquet arranging, and so on according to the skills we have, but after the training, we returned to begging because for us begging has become our habit (Interview, Jember 2022)

Another beggar (R8, 45), described that the assistance provided helped overcome the economic problems and was dependable every period.

"We are delighted to receive a donation from the government, and it is beneficial for us, so we always wait for the aid, and we do not mind to queue long to receive assistance in any form" (Interview, Jember 2022)

Regarding the non-optimality of scheduled aid programs from the social-service point of view, R9 (45) described this issue as follows:

"We have run the program from the social service optimally, but did not produce results because PMKS were complacent and always hope to be helped without wanting to make changes" (interview, Jember 2022)

The poor have used donations as an additional passive income. It was apparent that the beneficiaries did not have the willingness to escape poverty. The implication of this was evident from BPS data, where the number of poor people in Jember Regency has continuously increased, as well as the number of PMKS groups with groups of beggars, scavengers, and psychopathic vagrants occupying the highest positions in the East Java region.

C. The solution to poverty is not from the community but the Government

The community viewed poverty as a social pathology. Consequently, the solution should be by the Government. The results of the interview with R10 explained:

"The government that must find solutions for the poor like us, the assistance we have received so far is sufficient to help but does not change our income" (interview, Jember 2022)

So far, only the Government that offered a solution to poverty. This routine poverty alleviation program has made the poor thought they did not have to make an effort to synergize with the Government. Similarly, R11 mentioned as follows:

"The Government has a solution to our problem, for example, assistance from the center, which is our right. We know that the local Government only accepts it because it is our right. What we will use it for is up to us" (interview result, Jember 2022).

The Government aid program receivers were continually waiting for their rights without having to fight out of poverty. This situation had made problem-solving against poverty unravel, and finding the desire-making offered by the Government was considered a prerogative of the poor. Respondent R12 conveyed statements as follows:

"The solution to our problems should come from the Government because they have a way to solve our problems. Whatever the Government does, we follow it (interview result, Jember 2022)

The accessibility factor had become the primary in this issue. The aid-receiving people of PMKS felt that they did not have broad access. This issue was why they assumed that all poverty solutions should come from the Government. Furthermore, this issue has implications for developing waiting habits for help from the Government and expertise in providing solutions to the problems of poverty they are experiencing.

These statements emphasized that the Government should synergize and collaborate with other parties, including low-income families, in finding appropriate solutions to the poverty issues. Several Parties may be appropriate for partnership with the Government, including private companies, non-profit institutions, and foreign aid to improve the poor's motivation.

Discussion

A. Aid program receivers became dependent on the Government to ease their economic problems

The Government poverty-alleviation programs had not succeeded in enabling the poor to escape their socioeconomic poverty. Economically, poverty had caused economic fulfillment to be suboptimal because the poor relied short-term on incomes, such as begging. This economic activity, through begging, sustained life for only a short term. The impact of this condition would deteriorate family life. In many cases, low-income families tended to perpetuate poverty because they passed on their socioeconomic behavior to their descendants. This condition resulted in a poverty cycle. That was maintained due to the wrong perception of this condition because they considered poverty their destiny. This perception would change through the intervention of other parties, especially the Government. (Kluegel & Smith, 1986), Who analyzed psychological mechanisms stated that beliefs and demographic variables were determinants in causing poverty. Belief about socioeconomic status is subjective poverty in psychological terms, which is when a person feels poor.

Furthermore, complicated economic conditions do not stand alone, in the sense that poverty also affects the mentality of the whole family. For example, a belief about poverty requires continuous assistance without any obligation to break it. Most poor people, no matter at productive or unproductive age, families with single or two sources of income (husband and wife), and widows with children do not have an awareness to change their complicated conditions (Mussida and Sciulli, 2021; Zagel and Lancker, 2022). The poor only expected aid from the Government because they believed their poverty was not their responsibility. The presence of the head of the family with alcohol dependency, excessive spending, debts, fewer opportunities to earn income, and only relying on government assistance have exacerbated this condition (Schess, J., et al,, 2020). Delegation of responsibilities, from individuals to Government, was typical. The Government and other parties should start realizing that many factors cause poverty. These factors include the livelihood environment (poverty incidents), capital (human and natural capital), strategies (income structure), outcomes (income), and transformation of structures and processes (policy systems). All livelihoods significantly influence the poverty alleviation processes (Yu, Gao, and Han, 2022). The biased perception, of course, increased the poverty circle in the community. In addition, the incomprehensive poverty-alleviation design worsened the condition because the nature of aid was more on consumable assistance. It did not touch on building awareness of the poor to change. The existing empowerment programs have only been able to introduce to the poor the existence of

poverty alleviation programs without any comprehensive follow-up impacts. Official measures issued by governments and policymakers often used the low-income family as the basic unit for determining who deserved the aid. This situation could cause problems since it can lead to misperceptions of whether families need help or not, in addition to the family data collection, which was often inaccurate with the actual situation (Tickamyer, 2022). The habit of the poor was also tricky to change because the program was only one-way, only from the Government.

The notion is that the responsibility to get out of poverty is the job of all parties. As a state administrator, the Government is responsible for ensuring its people a better life. However, a poverty-alleviation program would not work without a commitment from the aid receivers to strengthen themselves economically and socially. Because poverty is a multi-dimensional phenomenon, in this case, the Government's efforts through poverty-alleviation programs have become a stimulant for the change of the poor themselves, including a passive behavior that tends to wait for help from outsiders, especially from the Government. Subagiarta, I. W., & Yunitasari, D. (2021) confirmed that poverty positively correlates to the number of family members and the burden of family life.

Poverty, as stated in the theoretical basis, is rooted in problems of family demographic factors, government policies, and, most importantly, employment and education factors (Denisova & Kartseva, 2005). The most motivating factors for people to be free from poverty are work and education, which lead to the knowledge factor. Obtaining formal knowledge must indeed go through educational institutions. However, people can also gain knowledge through non-formal channels, providing transferable knowledge to increase their probability of getting a better job and fulfilling all needs (Page & Pande, 2018). Similarly, (Antriyandarti et al., 2018) stated that poverty alleviation programs usually cover capital assistance to improve their economic conditions. Poverty alleviation policies have three main functions in dealing with state poverty: verifying the formulation, controlling the implementation, and evaluating the impact of the implementation of poverty alleviation policies (Fisher et al., 2013).

B. Routine poverty-alleviation programs to help the poor

One of the dimensions of poverty is dependency, where the poor depend on the government for their fate. Various kinds of poverty alleviation programs and assistance carried out by the relevant agencies are considered routine programs even for the poor who are considered to increase costs. So that the mentoring program is "jagakno" by them and is not used as a forum to get out of the abyss of poverty. This is emphasized in the journal (Malul, 2019) which describes that the majority of people are inaccurate in interpreting what poverty is, but they understand that the problem of poverty has a negative impact on the whole community. In this case, there is a mismatch between what is expected by the government and what the poor people want. This misperception occurs continuously so that it is considered a "consistency", this is reinforced by the journal (al Amin et al., 2015) which reveals that the handling of the homeless (homeless and unemployed) is less than optimal due to human resource factors, both from the poor and from related agencies.

The unequal perception between what the government wants and the poor makes poverty alleviation programs not run optimally. The poverty alleviation program which is arranged "slickly" by the government is welcomed as a routine and used as an additional cost so that it is "dijagakno" to fulfill the economic desires of those of you who are poor, in line with this it is emphasized that misperception is a concept that refers to a misinterpretation or misunderstanding of information (Byron &

Landis, 2020). Imperfect interpretations can lead to misperceptions where in general, misperceptions are present due to the lack of literacy level of a concept, policy, rule and so on (Druckman et al., 2021). Misperceptions often occur due to a lack of communication or communication that is one-way so that there is no good space for transferring information (Borah et al., 2022). This happens a lot in the scope of public policies that involve government structures and public acceptance (Nyhan, 2021).

C. One of the dimensions of poverty is dependency, where the poor depend on the Government for their fate.

The poor believed that various poverty alleviation programs and assistance from relevant agencies were routine programs that became dependable source of income for the poor. (Malul, 2019) emphasized that most people were inaccurate in interpreting what poverty was, but they understood that the problem of poverty negatively impacted the whole community. In this case, there was a mismatch between what the Government expected and what the poor wanted. This misperception had been continually occurring, so it became persistent. In addition, Al Amin et al. (2015) supported the emergence of persistent misperception by stating that the homeless and unemployed alleviation program was suboptimal due to human factors from the poor and related agencies.

The suboptimality resulted from unequal perception between the Government and the poor. The routine poverty alleviation programs designed to empower the poor to become economically independent became additional income for the poor. Misperception leads to misinterpretation or misunderstanding of information (Byron & Landis, 2020). In addition, imperfect interpretations can lead to misperceptions where in general, misperceptions are present due to the lack of literacy of a concept, policy, or rule (Druckman et al., 2021). Misperceptions often occur because of one-way communication without space for transferring information (Borah et al., 2022). This situation frequently happens in public policies involving government structures and public acceptance (Nyhan, 2021).

D. The solution to poverty is not from the community but the Government

Government-poverty-alleviation program will only work if it is implemented in collaboration with relevant agencies as implementers and the poor as recipients. The understanding of the poor towards the problem of poverty becomes homework for the Government, and the making of solutions only provided by the Government will have implications for the inhibition of the ultimate goal of poverty alleviation. (Cook et al., 2015) describe the recurring problem of poverty and misperceptions, including the small income problem with excessive spending, education, health, and nutrition productivity, corrupt Government with inappropriate poverty alleviation policies, and low economic growth (Schess, J. et al., 2020; Yu, Gao and Han, 2022).

Various policies have been implemented from regime to regime in Indonesia but have been unable to get out of the poverty gap. Many factors have caused these failures, as described in (Sasmal & Sasmal, 2016), confirming that the implementation of poverty alleviation policies had several obstacles during the implementation of the poverty alleviation program and potential corruption. The involvement of government officials in using their powers for personal gain in designing and implementing poverty alleviation policies and manipulating the allocation of resources. The dominance of the Government's role in poverty alleviation programs and the lack of community involvement as objects also caused the failures in alleviating poverty (Zamrodah, 2016).

So far, one of the poverty alleviation programs implemented by the Indonesian Government was PNPM in various villages. According to (Li, 2016), PNPM helps rural communities to improve village infrastructure, from roads, irrigation systems, schools, and health facilities. However, during the implementation, this project lacked transparency, and many villages were not careful in calculating every rupiah of funds spent. Finally, Bappenas (National Development Planning Agency) confessed that it has not been able to measure the contribution of this project to reducing poverty. Poverty problem solving would never succeed without good cooperation between the Government and the poor. The "ngiroh" spirit to escape poverty must develop in the mindset of the poor. Thus, the poverty alleviation programs offered by the Government would run as they should.

4. Conclusion

1. In many countries, the problems of poverty alleviation policies have been formulated, implemented, and evaluated. However, many countries ignore how misperceptions about poverty arise and can undermine poverty alleviation policies. This study showed how Government poverty alleviation programs did not result in poverty relief, and the causes were public misperceptions of the PMKS poverty programs.

2. This study was a critique of previous research because previous research did not comprehensively investigate how the poor developed biased understanding and how conceptual misunderstanding led to biased perception. This situation was evident from several failures of the Government poverty alleviation programs, which include; the National Program for Community Empowerment of PNPM, Very Poor Families (RTSM) and the Family Hope Program (PKH)

3. Due to several resource limitations, this investigation only covered groups with social welfare problems (PMKS) under the Government PMKS program and several official social workers as informants. This research did not cover other PMKS program participants. Further research is needed to cover more economically less fortunate groups in more comprehensive and in-depth analysis to produce a more appropriate policy-making basis.

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