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SYNERGY OF REGIONAL GOVERNMENT POLICIES IN HANDLING POVERTY BASED ON COMMUNITY EMPOWERMENT

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ABSTRACT Article Info:

Poverty is a complex problem that requires an integrated and synergistic approach between various government policies and programs. This study aims to analyze the synergy of government policies in management based on community empowerment in Cianjur Regency. The research method used is descriptive qualitative, with data through in-depth collection interviews, documentation studies, and field observations in various running national and regional programs. The study results indicate that synergy between programs and institutions plays a vital role in strengthening the effectiveness of poverty management. Despite limited resources and administrative barriers, program coordination, clear division of roles, and data sharing between agencies are key factors for success. The impact of community empowerment on poverty reduction can be seen in the increase in income, access to education and health, and significant socioeconomic changes. In conclusion, the based of policies on community empowerment is an effective strategy for overcoming poverty sustainably in Cianjur Regency. Recommendations are directed at strengthening the capacity of assistants, utilizing technology, and improving supporting infrastructure so that the program's positive impact can continue to be increased.

Keywords: Policy, Poverty, Community Empowerment, Cianjur Regency.

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INTRODUCTION

Poverty is one of the social problems that is still a top priority for national development in Indonesia. Poverty conditions impact limited access to basic needs such as education, health, food, and clothing and affect regional social and economic stability. Based on data from the Central Statistics Agency (BPS) in

2023, the number of poor people in Indonesia reached 25.90 million people or around 9.36 percent of the total population, while in Cianjur Regency, the poverty rate was recorded at 11.12 percent, higher than the national average (BPS, 2023).

The government has made Various efforts to overcome poverty through social assistance programs and community empowerment programs. Nationally, programs such as the Family Hope Program (PKH), Direct Cash Assistance (BLT), and Village Funds are the main instruments in reducing poverty rates (Sumarni et al., 2023). At the regional level, especially in Cianjur Regency, the local government is also developing programs based on local potentials and community empowerment, such as developing micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs), entrepreneurship training, and independent village programs.

However, there are still various problems in implementing poverty alleviation policies, especially related to synergy between programs and implementing institutions. Lack of coordination and integration between policies often leads to overlapping programs, inaccurate targeting, and low program effectiveness in significantly reducing poverty rates (Huda & Siswanto, 2024). Policy synergy is important to ensure that all programs implemented by the central government, local governments, and civil society organizations run in the same direction, support each other, and are based on the community's real needs.

In addition, the community empowerment-based poverty alleviation approach is considered more sustainable than the direct assistance approach alone. Community empowerment places the community as the leading actor in development by utilizing existing local potential and resources. This approach aims to reduce poverty rates and increase the community's independence and capacity to manage their socio-economic lives. Efforts to alleviate poverty through various community empowerment policies and programs have received much attention in previous studies at the national and regional levels.

Several previous studies have shown that one of the main challenges in poverty alleviation in Indonesia lies in the synergy between policies, cross-sector coordination, and active community participation in program implementation. Suntiana & Kanto (2015) showed that implementing various poverty alleviation programs in the regions still faces coordination problems between implementing agencies. The absence of good synergy causes overlapping programs and inaccurate targeting, so the goal of poverty alleviation has not been achieved optimally. Meanwhile, Nafisah & Kholifah R (2023) emphasized that community empowerment through developing productive economic enterprises can increase low-income families' income. However, the success of this program is still hampered by low community participation due to the lack of information and socialization of programs from the government to the target community.

Another study by Lailiyah & Wulandari (2025) revealed that a top-down approach still dominates the implementation of poverty alleviation programs. The involvement of the poor as the main subject of empowerment has not been maximized, so the programs implemented often do not match the local community's needs and potential. In addition, collaboration between village governments, social services, and civil society organizations is also considered

not to be running optimally. Mirlana et al., (2024) emphasized the importance of program integration between sectors in poverty alleviation efforts. Their research concluded that the success of a program is primarily determined by the clarity of the division of roles between institutions, routine coordination forums, and an integrated monitoring and evaluation system to prevent overlapping programs and budget duplication. Furthermore, Erlinda & Mayasiana (2023) stated that the independent village program based on local potential is quite effective in improving the welfare of low-income people. However, the program's success depends on the synergy between the village government, related agencies, and the community. Without good coordination and policy synergy, various empowerment programs implemented at the village level have the potential to be unsustainable.

From the various studies, the problem of policy synergy in poverty alleviation is an important issue that needs more serious attention in terms of planning, implementation, and program evaluation. In addition, the importance of participatory local potential-based community empowerment is also a key factor in ensuring the success of sustainable poverty alleviation efforts. Therefore, this study was conducted to examine in more depth how the synergy of government policies in poverty alleviation based on community empowerment in Cianjur Regency, as one of the areas in West Java Province that still faces a relatively high poverty rate compared to the surrounding areas.

METHOD

This study uses a qualitative descriptive approach to obtain a comprehensive picture of the synergy of government policies in handling poverty based on community empowerment in Cianjur Regency. The selection of this approach is based on the characteristics of the problem, which is contextual and requires a deep understanding of the dynamics in the field. Primary data in this study were obtained through in-depth interviews with several key informants, including elected officials, empowerment program implementers, community leaders, and program beneficiaries. In addition, secondary data were collected through documentation studies of policy documents, program reports, and the latest poverty statistics data from the Central Statistics Agency (BPS) and related agencies. The data analysis process was carried out qualitatively with the stages of data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion. The data reduction stage was completed to simplify the information obtained and focus on policy synergy. Furthermore, the presentation of data is arranged in the form of descriptive and thematic narratives that describe coordination between programs and institutions, division of roles, and supporting and inhibiting factors for policy implementation. The conclusion was drawn to provide an understanding of the effectiveness and impact of policy synergy on efforts to reduce poverty in Cianjur Regency.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

1. Portrait of Poverty in Cianjur Regency

Cianjur Regency, located in West Java Province, still faces significant challenges in overcoming poverty. According to the latest data from the Central

Statistics Agency (BPS), as of November 30, 2024, the percentage of poor people in Cianjur Regency reached 10.14%. This figure shows a decrease of 0.08% compared to the previous year, which recorded a figure of 10.22%. Despite the decrease, this figure is still higher than the average for West Java province, which in September 2024 was at 7.08%. The downward trend in poverty in Cianjur Regency over the past decade shows efforts to improve the community's economic conditions. In 2015, the percentage of poor people in this district was 12.21% and gradually decreased to 10.14% in 2024. This decrease reflects an improvement in the community's economic conditions, although this figure is still above the average for West Java province.

In terms of extreme poverty, Cianjur Regency also shows a positive trend. Data from the Coordinating Ministry for Human Development and Culture (PMK) noted that in 2022, the extreme poverty rate in Cianjur was 2.45%, which decreased to 1.55% in 2023 and fell again to 0.51% in 2024. This decline results from various efforts by the local government to improve community welfare. Poor people in Cianjur Regency generally have characteristics that reflect their social and economic conditions. Most of them work in the informal sector with irregular incomes, such as farm laborers, small traders, and casual workers. Low levels of education are also a characteristic, with many poor people only completing basic education or even not going to school at all.

In addition, access to basic services such as health, education, and decent housing is still challenging for low-income people in this area. Many live in underdeveloped areas with minimal infrastructure, impacting overall quality of life. This condition shows the need for a more holistic approach to dealing with poverty, which does not only focus on economic assistance but also on increasing access to basic services and community empowerment (Gomide et al., 2024). Factors such as limited access to business capital, low financial literacy, and lack of skills training are also obstacles for poor people to improve their standard of living. Existing empowerment programs often do not fully reach these groups or are not tailored to local needs and potential (Mustari et al., 2024). Therefore, poverty alleviation strategies in Cianjur Regency need to be more integrated and based on community empowerment, involving various stakeholders, including the government, private sector, and civil society organizations. By understanding the characteristics and challenges of poor people in Cianjur Regency, more effective and sustainable policies and programs can be formulated to alleviate poverty in this area.

2. Mapping of Poverty Handling Policy Programs in Cianjur Regency

Poverty is a multidimensional problem that is related to economic issues as well as social, educational, health, and food security aspects (Martias et al., 2022). Therefore, poverty alleviation requires collaborative efforts across sectors and government levels, from the central to regional levels. In Cianjur Regency, the issue of poverty has received special attention, considering the high poverty rate, which is still above the national average, as well as its vulnerability to various external factors such as natural disasters and fluctuations in food commodity prices.

In this context, mapping poverty alleviation policy programs is an important step in seeing how far the programs have been implemented and how effective they are in reaching people experiencing poverty in this area (Be & Utama, 2019). This mapping includes national programs that are implemented simultaneously throughout Indonesia, as well as regional programs that are specifically designed to address the characteristics of poverty in Cianjur. Not only that, the community empowerment approach is also an important strategy to build economic independence for people with low incomes so that they can improve their living standards sustainably.

The central government has designed several strategic programs to overcome poverty in Indonesia through various ministries and institutions, including the Cianjur Regency. One of the main national priority programs is efforts to eradicate extreme poverty, as stipulated in Presidential Instruction Number 4 of 2022 concerning the Acceleration of the Eradication of Extreme Poverty. This policy targets eradicating extreme poverty throughout Indonesia by 2024, with strategies focused on reducing the expenditure burden on poor households, increasing income through economic empowerment programs, and improving the environmental conditions of settlements and basic services (Akbar et al., 2023). National programs currently running in Cianjur Regency include various social assistance based on integrated social welfare data (DTKS), such as the Family Hope Program (PKH), Non-Cash Food Assistance (BPNT), and electricity subsidies for poor households.

The PKH program provides conditional assistance to low-income families with school children, pregnant women, toddlers, people with disabilities, and the elderly. This assistance is not only intended to ease the economic burden but also encourages changes in the behavior of people experiencing poverty to care more about education, health, and the welfare of family members (Erlinda & Mayasiana, 2023). In addition, the central government, through the National Nutrition Agency, has also launched the Free Nutritious Meal Program aimed at school-age children and pregnant women. This program is expected to be able to reduce stunting and malnutrition rates, which are still serious problems in several areas, including Cianjur. Other programs, such as the National Health Insurance (JKN) and the Smart Indonesia Program (PIP), also play a role in reducing the burden of expenditure on people with low incomes, especially in the fields of health and education.

The national program is complemented by various affirmative policies from the Ministry of Social Affairs, the Ministry of Villages, Disadvantaged Regions and Transmigration, the Ministry of Health, and the Ministry of Education that directly target poor villages and pockets of poverty in Cianjur Regency. The central government has also formed the Agency for the Acceleration of Poverty Alleviation (BP2K) to ensure that all poverty alleviation programs are integrated and coordinated at the regional level. At the local level, the Cianjur Regency Government has formulated several flagship programs tailored to the local community's socio-economic conditions and characteristics. One of the priority programs that continues to be implemented is the village food security program. Through the Village-Owned Enterprises (BUMDes), the village government in Cianjur buys agricultural products from residents at more competitive prices or equivalent to the government's highest retail price (HET). This effort aims to stabilize food prices in the local market while increasing the

income of small farmers, most of whom are poor community groups. In addition to the food sector, the local government prioritizes free health service programs for people experiencing poverty through the Community Health Check (Cekas) program held in all health centers. This program even reaches remote areas with a door-to-door system, where health workers directly visit villages with difficulty accessing health services.

In education, the Cianjur Regency Government initiated a scholarship program and educational facilities for school dropouts. Through cooperation with formal and non-formal educational institutions, children from low-income families who previously did not attend school can regain access to decent education. Community empowerment strategies are also important to Cianjur's poverty alleviation policy. This empowerment program aims to develop local economic potential, especially in villages. One is a job skills training program that strengthens micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs) and provides business capital for women's groups and village youth. In addition, the Cianjur Regency Government actively involves various community organizations, religious institutions, and the business world in poverty alleviation efforts. The synergy between the local government, the community, and the private sector is expected to expand the empowerment program's scope and create a more effective and sustainable model for handling poverty based on local wisdom.

Overall, the mapping of poverty alleviation policy programs in Cianjur Regency shows the integration between national programs and regional programs. However, there is still a need to optimize coordination between institutions and increase the capacity of poor community data collection so that program interventions can be more targeted. Community empowerment based on local potential needs to be continuously expanded, not only in the agricultural sector but also in the service sector, creative industry, and village tourism, to open up employment opportunities and increase the income of poor communities sustainably.

3. Synergy Between Programs and Institutions in Addressing Poverty in Cianjur Regency

Poverty alleviation is a complex challenge that one institution cannot handle partially alone. Therefore, synergy between programs and institutions is key to making interventions more effective, efficient, and sustainable. In the Cianjur Regency, this synergy is manifested in various forms, ranging from cross-sectoral program coordination and clear division of roles between institutions to data exchange that supports targeted program targeting. However, behind these efforts, various supporting and inhibiting factors affect the quality of this synergy. The synergy between programs and institutions in the Cianjur Regency involves an intensive local government coordination mechanism at the district, sub-district, and village levels. This coordination is done through official forums such as the Poverty Alleviation Acceleration Team (TP2K) and development planning deliberations (musrenbang), which integrate program planning and implementation between related agencies and institutions. Through this forum, institutions can align programs so they do not overlap and identify potential collaborations that can strengthen the results achieved (Akbar et al., 2024).

The division of roles is an important aspect of this synergy. Each institution's focus and capacity are adjusted to its main tasks and functions. For example, the Social Service focuses more on providing direct social assistance and social rehabilitation, while the Agriculture Service plays a role in food security programs and empowering poor farmers (Yansen & Saparang, 2024). The Health Service manages the health program for low-income people, while the Education Service focuses on improving access and quality of education for children from underprivileged families. This division of roles avoids program duplication while increasing the interventions' effectiveness. Data sharing is also an important foundation in ensuring strong synergy (Afandi et al., 2023). Integrating social welfare data (DTKS) to determine program targets is one of the main efforts to ensure that social assistance and empowerment programs are truly on target. In addition, the exchange of data between institutions, such as health, education, and employment data, allows for a more comprehensive identification of the needs of low-income people (Syahputra & Sukmana, 2024). This supports program planning that is more holistic and responsive to the real conditions of the community.

Several factors support the creation of synergy between programs and institutions in the Cianjur Regency. First, the political commitment of the local government that consistently encourages cross-sector coordination is the driving force of synergy. The availability of regional regulations and policies that regulate cooperation between agencies and coordination forums also strengthens this synergy structure. In addition, the existence of an integrated information system and data that various agencies can access increases accuracy and efficiency in program implementation. Then, competent and dedicated human resources in various agencies are another important factor that supports synergy. Those who understand the importance of collaboration and are willing to establish active communication between agencies can encourage the creation of productive synergy. Adequate information technology support also accelerates the flow of information and integrated decision-making.

However, several obstacles must be overcome for synergy to be more optimal. One of the main obstacles is the difference in vision and priorities between institutions, which sometimes causes competition or a lack of clarity in the division of roles. This can result in overlapping programs or needs that are not adequately accommodated (Nurandani & Sutiyoso, 2022). In addition, complicated bureaucratic constraints and administrative procedures can slow program coordination and implementation. Budget constraints are also a significant challenge, especially for institutions at the village and sub-district levels, which have an important role in direct implementation (Komang et al., 2020). The imbalance in budget distribution can cause some programs to not run optimally or hinder their synergy with other programs. Another factor is the lack of technological capacity and data systems that are not fully integrated in real-time, so there is often an information gap between institutions.

Finally, organizational culture factors and resistance to change also affect the quality of synergy. Some institutions or individuals tend to maintain old work patterns and are less open to more intensive collaboration. For this reason, strengthening the culture of cooperation through training, socialization, and awards for successful synergy is significant. Overall, the synergy between programs and institutions in Cianjur Regency shows good progress in poverty management based on community empowerment. However, for this synergy to have maximum impact, ongoing efforts must overcome existing obstacles and strengthen supporting factors through adequate policies, resources, and technology.

4. Impact of Community Empowerment Program on Poverty Reduction in Cianjur Regency

Poverty alleviation through community empowerment programs is an approach that is increasingly gaining attention in various regions, including Cianjur Regency. This approach prioritizes providing capacity and opportunities for poor communities to manage their resources independently and create sustainable economic opportunities. Unlike direct social assistance, which is temporary, empowerment focuses on strengthening the community's ability to escape the cycle of poverty permanently (Subiyakto et al., 2022). Therefore, understanding the impact of this empowerment program comprehensively is very important for assessing the effectiveness of future policies and planning. One aspect that best describes the real impact of community empowerment programs is through the voices and direct experiences of those involved.

Many program participants in Cianjur Regency expressed significant changes in their lives after participating in various empowerment activities, ranging from skills training and micro-business mentoring to forming joint business groups. They felt increased capacity and new opportunities to improve their family's economic conditions. Most of the community said that the skills training they received opened up new horizons that they had not previously imagined. For example, homemakers who participated in sewing and handicraft training can now produce goods with economic value that are in demand in the local market. The additional income from these crafts meets daily needs, including children's education and family health care. This shows that the empowerment program can increase household income sources that were previously very limited (Robby et al., 2023). In addition, farmer groups who participated in the empowerment program also reported increased harvest yields and agricultural productivity after participating in training on better farming techniques and gaining access to micro-business capital. This impact increased their income and reduced dependence on high-interest loans that had previously been an economic burden for low-income families.

No less important is the psychological and social impact felt by the community. Participants expressed increased self-confidence and enthusiasm to try harder, which they previously lacked. Interaction in joint business groups also strengthens social networks and solidarity between community members, creating an environment that supports each other in facing various life challenges. This success is also inseparable from the role of intensive assistance provided by the local government and partner institutions. Continuous assistance helps overcome technical and non-technical obstacles, from difficulties accessing markets to business management problems. This proves that empowerment is about transferring skills and building a strong network of support and motivation so that the community is genuinely independent.

From a socio-economic perspective, the impact of the community empowerment program in Cianjur Regency can be measured through significant changes in various indicators of community welfare. Quantitative evaluations conducted through various monitoring and evaluation reports show an increase in the average income of low-income families who participated in the program compared to the control group who did not receive similar interventions. This increased income results from increased business productivity and diversification of income sources driven by the empowerment program.

This increase in income, in turn, drives improved access to basic services such as education and health. For example, families who previously could not afford to send their children to secondary school can now finance their children's education. Likewise, spending on health needs has increased, reflecting increased awareness and economic capacity to maintain family health. Thus, the empowerment program has a positive impact that is not only economic but also touches on aspects of the community's quality of life more broadly. In addition, community empowerment triggers a multiplier effect on a community scale. Joint business groups formed in various villages create more dynamic economic activities, opening job opportunities and strengthening local markets. This shows how empowerment impacts individuals or families and strengthens the overall local economic structure. The increase in local economic activity also has the potential to reduce population migration to big cities, which has so far been one of the consequences of poverty in rural areas.

Socially, the empowerment program has succeeded in changing the pattern of poor communities' dependence on social assistance into a healthier dependence, namely on the social networks and social capital they build themselves. This is important for creating stronger social resilience so communities are better prepared to face various challenges and economic shocks in the future. Thus, community empowerment also contributes to building an inclusive and participatory social structure. However, it cannot be denied that implementing the empowerment program has several obstacles and challenges. The success rate of the program is greatly influenced by the readiness of the community to follow the change process, the capacity of the human resources of the assistants, and the support of infrastructure and market access, which are still limited in several areas. In addition, external factors such as fluctuations in commodity prices and climate change are risks that can hinder the sustainability of empowerment results. Another obstacle encountered is the gap in information and distribution of resources between regions, which causes some people to not feel the positive impact evenly. For this reason, improvements in the data collection system and stricter supervision are needed to make the empowerment program more targeted and inclusive.

In conclusion, the community empowerment program in Cianjur Regency has significantly impacted poverty rates and improved the community's quality of life. This program's success shows that a comprehensive empowerment approach based on community participation is an effective strategy to overcome poverty sustainably. However, to strengthen this impact, ongoing efforts need to be made to overcome existing challenges, strengthen the capacity of assistants,

and increase infrastructure support and market access so that empowerment can truly drive inclusive and sustainable socio-economic change.

CONCLUSION

Poverty alleviation in Cianjur Regency through a community empowerment approach has shown significant results and provided a positive picture in efforts to eradicate poverty sustainably. The synergy between central and regional government policies in implementing community empowerment programs creates a strong foundation for increasing the capacity and independence of poor communities. Through various national and regional programs that run simultaneously, the government has succeeded in providing access to training, business capital, and intensive assistance to vulnerable community groups, thereby opening up new economic opportunities that can increase their income. From a social and economic perspective, community empowerment has improved the welfare of low-income families with increased income, improved access to education and health, and formed social networks that support solidarity and cooperation between residents. Testimonials from the community as beneficiaries also strengthen the fact that empowerment programs can positively change mindsets and economic capabilities so that they not only overcome poverty temporarily but also build long-term socio-economic resilience. The synergy between programs and between institutions is one of the primary keys to this success. Good coordination, clear division of roles, and data sharing between agencies facilitate program implementation and minimize overlap and inefficiency. However, several challenges, such as limited resources, market access, and administrative barriers, need to be continuously improved to maintain the continuity and effectiveness of the program. Overall, the synergy of government policies based on community empowerment in Cianjur Regency is an effective model for dealing with poverty. In the future, strengthening synergy through increasing human resource capacity, utilizing information technology, and developing supporting infrastructure is needed so that the positive impacts that have been achieved can be maintained and expanded. This is important so that the goal of sustainable poverty alleviation can be realized in line with the vision of regional and national development.

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