



The Analysis of Stunting Implementation Policy in Tegal Regency

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Abstract

Tegal is a regency with the highest stunting prevalence in toddlers in Central Java with a percentage of 22.3% in 2022. Currently, the regency has become the prioritized locus of stunting intervention in Indonesia. Tegal regency government issued the Regent Rule of Tegal Number 4 in the Year 2023 about the Communication Strategy of Behavioral Changes in Lowering Stunting Prevalence in 2023 - 2026 as the prevention and effort of decreasing the stunting rate. This research revealed the implementation of stunting prevention policy in Tegal by applying the exploratory implementation model of George Edward III, Marilee S. Grindle, and Mazmanian & Sabatier based on the triangular perspective of policy analysis. This descriptive qualitative research describes a variable orally from the respondents and the doers by observing them. The researchers collected the data by interviewing, documenting, and promoting the literature study. The researchers also interviewed the Health Agency of Tegal and Public Health Care of Kedungbanteng district. The results showed that the applied policy met the regulation in terms of local government and local apparatus organization, OPD, with collaboration and effort to realize inter-sectoral cooperation from regency to village levels. The concrete step in preventing stunting includes the provision of nutritionist teams at Kedungbanteng Public Health Care and the establishment of a police center to prevent stunting prevalence. The results were - gaining the top 99 awards of Public Service Innovation in 2023 by the Ministry of State Apparatus Utilization and Bureaucratic Reform. However, the researchers found hindrances in distributing stunting prevention at most public health care units in Tegal. They had not applied the concrete steps and had to improve the human resources by joining training for the cadres so they could use the measuring tool of stunting for toddlers.

Keywords: Mitigation, Policy Implementation, Stunting

I. Introduction

Approximately 162 million toddlers, under five age years old, in the world suffer from stunting. This situation becomes an influential problem for human development. Stunting refers to a situation of toddlers with lower height than normal toddlers. Stunting refers to a situation with the measurement of greater body length and height than the two deviation standards based on the growth average standard by WHO. The possible effects, for both long and short terms, include increased rates of morbidity and mortality, poor development, increased communicable and non-communicable disease, obesity, low-fat oxidation, low energy output, insulin resistance, high risk of suffering diabetes, hypertension, dyslipidemia, low performance, and poor reproduction for mother in the future.

Stunting, in developing countries including Indonesia, must receive immediate and sustainable management due to the negative impacts on future generations. There are three factorial categories with the potential to cause stunting. The first factor is from parents. An example is the nutritional status of mothers on the first 1000 days of the first birth.

The other example includes the different social, educational, height, and job of parents. The second factor deals with the children, such as the nutrition, infection, weaning process (six months or more), sex type,

and age of the child. The third factor is - the environmental factor. Examples are water resources and toilet availability. Besides that, a significant correlation is observable between stunting in toddlers in Indonesia and some factors, including low birth weight, prematurity, family size, infection, and breastfeeding.

Indonesia is the third country with the highest stunting prevalence in Southeast Asia. Therefore, the government attempts to decrease the stunting prevalence as the priority project as stated in the Mediate-Term Establishment Plan from 2020 - 2024. This effort is important to improve the health and nutritional level of society and decrease the stunting prevalence to 14%.

The data from the Basic Health Research in 2018 found the percentage of toddlers aged between 5 and 59 months with very short heights in Central Java was 31.15% while toddlers with short heights were 20.06%. The stunting prevalence in Tegal, based on the Nutritional Status Survey of Indonesia, SSGL, decreased by 5.7% from 28% in 2021 to 22.3% in 2022. Tegal becomes one of the regencies as the stunting priority locus in Indonesia.

The determination of the prioritized locus is based on the indicators of stunting toddler numbers, stunting prevalences, and poverty level. Tegal Regency successfully lowered the poverty level from 7.90% in 2022 by 0.60% to 7.30% in 2023. Therefore, Tegal achieves the eighth rank as a regency with the lowest poverty level in Central Java. Although the poverty rate has decreased, the Tegal government encounters many challenges. One of them is unemployment. The unemployment level in Tegal is correlated to the workforce match, educated unemployment, and rotated or substituted workforce. These matters make the government become the central focus of the national and provincial governments to decrease stunting prevalence.

The efforts to decrease stunting and optimize its prevention encourage the Tegal government to issue the Regent Rule Number 4 in the Year 2023 about the Communicative Strategy of Changing the Behaviors in Accelerating the Decreased Stunting Prevalence in the Period of 2023 - 2026. The Regent Regulation, as found in Article 2, that the effort of decreasing stunting is to improve public awareness and to change the primary behaviors that influence the stunting risk factors by promoting communicative strategy of changing the behaviors on the six vital behavioral changes.

The effort of decreasing stunting requires specific nutritional and sensitive nutritional interventions. Heretofore, the efforts of decreasing stunting could not run fully and optimally because of the high stunting prevalence in the Tegal regency. Therefore, based on the indicators of stunting and the high prevalence of poverty, sustainable efforts are useful to prevent and mitigate stunting prevalence in Tegal and to decrease the stunting prevalence rate by 3.4%. These efforts could realize a lower stunting prevalence than 14% in 2024.

Based on the background, this research attempts to determine the policy implementation of mitigating stunting in Tegal. A policy implementation refers to an extension from the formulation and policy determination processes as an individual or collective effort with a focus on the applied policy objectives. Research about policy is important, especially for an applied implementation.

II. Materials & Methods

This research applied the qualitative descriptive approach. This qualitative descriptive research collected the data from a scientific background to interpret and describe the phenomenon with the involvement of the researcher as the key instrument. The researchers attempted to reveal the participation of the street sellers in formulating the revitalization policy. The applied method was suitable to answer the research problems. The applied sampling techniques were purposive and snowball techniques. Then, the researchers collected the data by triangulating the data. The researchers analyzed the data inductively. The qualitative research results emphasized the interpretation and meaning rather than the generalizations of the findings (Albi, 2018). The purposive sampling technique has clear pre-determined objectives about the informants for a further comprehensive interview process and observes the reality carefully and specifically with the

focus of the research. This research collected the data from the interviews with the stakeholders to ensure the validity of the Tegal citizens' responses.

III. Result and Discussion

The Policy Context

1. The Action Program

The effort of identifying the target data requires situational analysis for the stunting mitigation program plan in the Tegal Regency. After that, the relevant strategies for the program could be arranged. The Tegal government applied for 8 convergent programs. The implementation of the prioritized stunting locus since 2018 is relevant to the following statement by the primary informant.

"Many action plans, approximately about 8 convergent steps annually."

The eight convergent steps include situational analysis, activity plan, stunting discussion, regional regulation formulation, human cadre development, stunting data management system, measurement, stunting data publication, and annual performance review.

The observation found that the stunting prevention program increased at the levels of Adolescence such as the administration of iron supplements for adolescents especially female adolescents at the integrated health service; and screening the children's health at schools, starting from primary, junior high school, and senior high school levels along with the related education. Based on the interview with pregnant mothers, the implementation of integrated antenatal care might include maternal exercises, pregnancy care, basic care for babies, nutritional addition for pregnant mothers, monitoring the development at the integrated health service for toddlers, vitamin A administration, and anthelmintic administration.

For some villages, they also held toddler class activities for those suffering from low nutrition and the Empowerment of Families with Toddlers program (BKB). The activities were useful for mothers of toddlers to lower the stunting in the village. The government also established the Nutritional Recovery Unit for Toddlers, *Pelita*, as the innovation of Kedungbanteng Public Health Care in lowering stunting in the working environment. An informant also shares relevant information. Here is the excerpt.

"The activities at the integrated health care service also include the Empowerment for Family with Toddlers. I always join them."

"There are toddler classes once a month including this month at the village hall."

"Thank God the same matter also goes for Pelita and the nutritional team of Kedungbanteng public health care. I initiated this action and received the award of Top 99 Innovation of Public Service in 2023 held by the Ministry of Administrative and Bureaucratic Reform of the Republic of Indonesia."

Based on Presidential Rule Number 72 of the Year 2021, the stunting mitigation policy must focus on the specific medication from the adolescent period. Article 7 of Regent Regulation Number 50 the Year 2019 applies that the targets of specific intervention include pregnant women, breastfeeding mothers, toddlers younger than six months, and children aged between 6 and 23 months. Therefore, the Regent Regulation requires revision. The informant explains :

"We need to revise the regent regulation because the targets are only 1000 although the practice is accurately done on adolescents."

The efforts to lower stunting prevalence require sectoral cooperation, collaboration, and coordination. Therefore, a recommendation is important to apply future policies.



2. Communication

The efforts to decrease the stunting prevalence require excellent coordination and communication among the sectors. The combination of interpersonal communication, mass media, policy advocacy, strategic data implementation, and social activity implementation could be an effective strategy to decrease the stunting rate significantly. For example, the following informant explains the communication and coordination in the Tegal regency.

"The TPPS team also collaborates across sectoral fields to lower stunting prevalence. Therefore, the coordination is excellent."

The communication among the local government, public health care, and village about stunting management was applicable via WhatsApp. Besides that, every village in Tegal had monthly stunting discussions. An informant explains that:

"After discussing the stunting, we discuss the stunting management and further actions. The village chiefs always share the method of calculating stunting and I found excellent responses there."

The village midwives and the cadres of the integrated health care service shared the information with the society. The cadres also shared information about the activities at the integrated healthcare service via direct announcements or other media.

"I also share the information via Facebook and Mushola."

Therefore, the communication and coordination in Tegal are excellent but need improvement. The improvement is important because the communication and collaboration among the related parties of the applied policy must avoid mistakes.

3. The Bureaucracy Structure

The bureaucratic structure shows the implementation of the policy and the task. The structure divides and prevents the tasks from overlapping so the policy realization runs smoothly. The collected information by the informants indicates the responsibility of mitigating stunting in Tegal. The informant explains the job and responsibility divisions for every policy executive. Besides that, the standard operational procedure could be the guideline for carrying out the stunting mitigation program in Tegal. This finding is relevant with the statement of the informant and the observational results.

"Every division has specific tasks such as the individual in the department of mother-child health and other individuals working at PHBS. They will have related tasks and responsibilities."

"... related to detecting stunting, so the clowns carry out routine weighing, there must be a separate SOP, there is also a separate SOP regarding the management of stunting"

Based on the excerpt, the policy of mitigating stunting in Tegal is based on the bureaucratic structure, and the Local Apparatus Executive Unit (SKPD) to carry the responsibilities.

IV. Conclusion

The policy of mitigating stunting in Tegal regency is done based on the applied regulation. However, the researchers found some hindrances during the policy implementation that hindered the objective achievements. The examples are the actor and executor aspects. The applied policy ran excellently although some informants across the sector found the policy implementation was not maximum. The related aspects dealt with the inadequate anthropometry infrastructure and facilities and low human resources to improve. The aspect of the policy process related to program execution runs adequately and has the SOP to promote. The government and the related agencies are also responsive and helpful in carrying out the program. The efforts of decreasing stunting and optimizing stunting prevention encourage the Tegal government to issue the Regent Regulation Number 4 in the Year 2023 about The Communicative Strategy of Behavioral Changes to Accelerate the Decreased Stunting Prevalence in the Period of 2023 - 2026.

The researchers suggest all parties improve the cross-sectoral coordination and communication from the regency, district, and village levels to improve the socialization and understanding of stunting mitigation for all social element sectors. On the other hand, the government could provide early detection facilities and infrastructure to measure stunting and improve human resource competence by promoting training for the cadres so they can use the stunting measuring tools for toddlers.

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