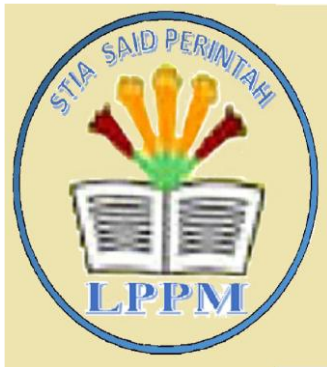

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The Pathology of Bureaucracy in the Implementation of Poverty Alleviation Programs

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Abstract

This study investigates bureaucratic issues within poverty alleviation programs in Batumerah Village, Ambon City, using a qualitative phenomenological approach. The findings reveal that corruption, nepotism, and ineffective policy implementation severely undermine the success of these programs. Additionally, limited awareness and poor governance further exacerbate these problems. To address these challenges, comprehensive bureaucratic reform is essential, emphasizing transparency, accountability, public participation, and improved data management. Developing evidence-based policies and promoting long-term economic empowerment, including job training and financial support, are crucial for enhancing community well-being and ensuring the sustainability of poverty alleviation efforts.

Keywords : Pathology of Bureaucracy,
Program Effectiveness,
Dependence, Equality

Introduction

The poverty rate in Sirimau District, Ambon City, has shown significant fluctuations over time, heavily influenced by conditions in Batumerah Village. In 2015, Sirimau had a total of 86,753 impoverished residents, with Batumerah contributing 36,080, representing 41.56% of the district's poor population. However, by 2020, there was a notable decline, with the overall number of impoverished individuals in the district dropping to 6,249 and Batumerah's figures falling to 1,537 (24.59%).

Despite this progress, poverty levels surged again in 2021, as the number of impoverished residents in Sirimau rose to 51,905, while Batumerah's share increased to 17,249 (33.23%), indicating economic instability. Although the poverty rates decreased in 2022, with 13,028 impoverished individuals in Sirimau and 3,015 in Batumerah (23.14%), there was another rise in 2023, bringing the total number of poor residents to 16,273 in Sirimau and 3,973 in Batumerah (24.41%).

These fluctuations illustrate that, despite improvements in 2020, poverty levels in both Sirimau and Batumerah remain unstable, with sharp increases in both 2021 and 2023. Of particular concern is the consistently high proportion of impoverished residents in Batumerah compared to the overall district, highlighting the need for targeted interventions to address the village's specific challenges. Further research is essential to understand the underlying causes of these fluctuations and to develop sustainable poverty alleviation strategies.

Despite ongoing government efforts to implement various poverty alleviation programs, the number of impoverished residents in Batumerah continues to rise. This paradox raises concerns about the effectiveness of bureaucratic structures, often termed "bureaucratic pathology," which may hinder both administrative decision-making and field-level implementation (Smith, 1998). Such bureaucratic inefficiencies can undermine the success of these programs and potentially lead to unintended policy failures.

Several bureaucratic issues have been identified as significant obstacles to the success of poverty alleviation initiatives. These include unclear criteria for selecting beneficiaries, excessive administrative costs, insufficient community involvement, and weak accountability mechanisms. Additionally, policy fragmentation and political interference complicate program implementation, while inadequate risk management and misallocation

of funds further exacerbate inefficiencies. Unclear roles and responsibilities, lack of transparency, unresponsiveness to public complaints, and conflicts of interest also hinder the achievement of poverty alleviation goals. These challenges indicate a systemic problem that requires comprehensive reform. Understanding these bureaucratic deficiencies is essential for diagnosing the root causes of policy failures and for developing strategies to enhance the effectiveness of poverty alleviation programs in Batumerah.

Community participation in poverty alleviation programs has been extensively studied, particularly regarding the impact of local government policies on program effectiveness. Previous research, including studies by Irawan, (2024) and Putnam, (2000), underscores the importance of clear policies and active community involvement. However, many studies have overlooked the internal bureaucratic factors that obstruct the successful implementation of these programs (Putnam, 2000). The novelty of this study lies in its focus on bureaucratic issues, such as unclear beneficiary selection criteria and lack of accountability, that impede program success. This research aims to identify these bureaucratic barriers and propose reforms to improve transparency, accountability, and community participation.

The primary research question explores why the number of impoverished residents in Batumerah continues to rise despite ongoing government interventions, indicating possible bureaucratic inefficiencies. This study aims to identify specific bureaucratic obstacles that hinder the success of poverty alleviation programs and to analyze how reforming these bureaucratic processes can improve their effectiveness. Additionally, it seeks to provide recommendations for more inclusive and transparent policies while promoting greater community participation in development initiatives.

This research offers a novel perspective by systematically examining bureaucratic inefficiencies in the context of poverty alleviation programs at both administrative and operational levels. While previous studies have largely focused on evaluating program outcomes, this one emphasizes the internal bureaucratic obstacles that impede success. The persistent increase in poverty, despite continuous government efforts, underscores these administrative challenges. Thus, the research aims to pinpoint specific bureaucratic barriers to program implementation and propose strategic recommendations to enhance governance, efficiency, and accountability in poverty alleviation efforts in Batumerah. This

approach yields valuable insights into governance issues within archipelagic regions, service gaps, and regional management, providing critical findings that can inform future research and policy enhancements (Research Findings, 2024).

Theoretical Study

Public Implementation

Public policy refers to the actions undertaken by governments to address societal issues. Dunn (Wibawa, 2006) and Dye (Winarno, 1992) assert that public policy encompasses both governmental actions and inactions, while Anderson and Dunn, (2000) define it as a series of interconnected decisions made by government agencies in response to societal conflicts. Policy formulation is shaped by the demands of various stakeholders, with Wahab, (2004) emphasizing the influence of political figures in this process (Wibawa, 2006). Ripley, (1985) identifies five stages in the policy process: agenda-setting, formulation, legitimation, implementation, and evaluation (Suaib, 2016).

An illustrative example of public policy implementation is the "leak lung" fishery policy in Ogan Komering Ilir (OKI) Regency, which aims to optimize local revenue (PAD). The policy follows a structured process, starting from problem identification and continuing through to evaluation (Andi & Gruntur, 2019). Studies on policy implementation underscore the notion that the success of a policy is determined by more than just its formulation. Pressman and Wildavsky, (1979) argue that the implementation stage is as critical as policymaking itself (Pressman and Wildavsky, 1973), while Islamy, (1988) highlights the importance of assessing both the positive and negative societal impacts of policies (Haque M., 2001). Mazmanian and Sabatier (1983) define policy implementation as the execution of legislative or executive decisions that delineate policy objectives (Mazmanian, 1983). Edwards III (Abdul Wahab, 1990) views implementation as the intermediary between policy formulation and its outcomes (Wahab, Solichin Abdul, 1999).

Bardach, (1977) defines implementation as a control mechanism designed to prevent deviations from the intended policy outcomes (Eugene Bardach, 1977), while Effendi, (2000) sees it as the process of translating political decisions into concrete actions (Effendi, 2014). Successful policy implementation requires an effective system to realize the policy objectives. For the leak lung fishery management, this entails aligning legal

frameworks and political decisions with the needs of the community and empirical conditions. Additionally, success depends on policy design, institutional capacity, and the socio-economic environment. Sabatier and Mazmanian (Wibawa, 2006) propose that policy outputs lead to compliance from target groups, which in turn results in observable impacts that inform regulatory adjustments (Wibawa, 2006). This study evaluates the alignment of the leak lung fishery policy with regional regulations, its impacts, and the factors influencing its effectiveness.

Policy evaluation is a critical process that assesses the success of achieving the policy's objectives and includes an analysis of observed outcomes. Research by Marno Wance, et al., (2024) highlights shifts in public service paradigms, the adoption of new technologies, service quality, village governance, and the impacts of climate change (Marno Wance, Herizal, Alimin Alwi, Ummu Syahidah, 2024). Cheema and Rondinelli, (1983) identify the key indicators of policy success, which include goal attainment, improvements in local governance, increased productivity and income, enhanced community participation, and better access to government services (Wibawa, 2006). Jackson and Morgan (1978) define performance as the extent to which set objectives are achieved (Wibawa, 2006), while Wibawa, (1994) conceptualizes performance as the assessment of the achievement of policy goals by the involved stakeholders (Wibawa, 2006).

Policy Implementation

Policy evaluation is a process that measures the success of achieving set objectives, requiring an assessment of policy performance. This concept is reflected in observed program outcomes, which encompass various aspects of policy implementation. Research findings by Herizal et al., (2020) highlight shifts in public service paradigms, the adoption of new technologies in service delivery, service quality, the evolving roles of village governance, and trends related to climate change (Marno Wance, 2022).

Cheema and Rondinelli, (1983) identify several indicators of policy success, including goal attainment, improved local governance, increased productivity and income, enhanced community participation, and better access to government services (Silalahi & Syafri, 2015). Jackson and Morgan, (1978) define performance as the achievement of predefined objectives (Morgan, 2006), while Wibawa, (2006) conceptualizes performance as an

assessment of the extent to which policy goals have been achieved by the involved stakeholders (Wibawa, 2006).

Pathology of Bureaucracy

Policy evaluation plays a crucial role in assessing the success of achieving objectives by analyzing the outcomes of programs (Herizal et al., 2020). Key findings emphasize shifts in public service paradigms, the adoption of service technologies, improvements in service quality, evolving roles in village governance, and trends related to climate change. Bureaucratic pathology, referring to dysfunctions within government administration, emerges from structural inefficiencies, leadership challenges, and rigid bureaucratic behaviors (Dwiyanto, 2015). It manifests in ineffective organizations, inefficient bureaucratic actions, and overly formalized structures, all of which hinder adaptability and operational efficiency.

In the context of Indonesia, bureaucratic pathology is closely linked to Weberian bureaucracy. While initially designed to streamline governance, its impact has been exacerbated by a paternalistic culture. This hierarchical structure encourages excessive deference from subordinates to superiors, often for personal gain, thereby intensifying inefficiencies (Agus Dwiyanto, 2011). The resulting bureaucratic behavior creates systemic issues that obstruct effective governance and hinder public service delivery.

Method

This research was conducted at the Village Office of Batumerah in the Sirimau District of Ambon City. Key informants included the King of Batumerah, the Village Secretary, government officials, members of the Saniri (advisory council), and affected residents. Data was collected through primary sources such as questionnaires, interviews, and observations, as well as secondary sources, including relevant literature, official documents, and reports. The location was chosen due to its high level of service delivery and the dense population of Ambon City.

The study utilized qualitative data analysis based on the interactive model developed by Miles and Huberman, (2014) which consists of three stages: data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing. Data reduction involves identifying key elements and relevant themes, while data presentation organizes the findings systematically using

descriptions, charts, and tables. Conclusions synthesize insights from all informants, with initial interpretations remaining open to revision based on further evidence.

Results and Discussion

The Level of Understanding among Stakeholders, Including Local Government, Related Institutions, and the Community, About the Pathology of Bureaucracy in the Implementation of Poverty Alleviation Programs in Negeri Batumerah.

Here is a detailed description of the level of understanding among stakeholders regarding the pathology of bureaucracy in the implementation of poverty alleviation programs in the State of Batumerah, along with the roles and impacts of each actor. Stated by the Head of the Social Service Department of Ambon City, J. Slarmanat, SH, M.Si (58 Years), he stated that:

"Local officials, including those in the Social Services Department, generally focus on budget management and program implementation, without a deep understanding of bureaucratic pathologies such as corruption, nepotism, and abuse of power. This lack of understanding can lead to low awareness of potential deviations, a lack of regular evaluations, and a lack of transparency in program information. As a result, the policies implemented may not take into account bureaucratic issues, and the programs could fail or not meet expectations, especially if there are discrepancies in the distribution of aid".

Explained by Mr. A. Hatala, (58 Years), during a visit to the Batumeah Government Office, stated:

"Most of the society, especially those with low education, do not understand the pathology of bureaucracy." They usually focus more on the outcomes of the program, such as receiving aid, without understanding the underlying processes. Some citizens may not understand how the program is supposed to be run or their rights as beneficiaries. Public misunderstanding can lead to - Without sufficient knowledge, the community cannot effectively monitor the program, which could potentially allow deviations to go undetected. - If the community is unaware of nepotism or corruption, they might consider everything that happens as normal, thus not striving to fight for their rights. The community may be reluctant to participate in the decision-making process because they feel they do not have a voice or sufficient understanding".

Added by the Head of the Social Service Department of Ambon City, J. Slarmanat, SH, M.Si (58 Years) stated that:

"Strategies that need to be implemented to improve the effectiveness of poverty alleviation programs include education and training on the pathology of bureaucracy, organizing workshops and seminars, as well as educating the community about their rights and how to oversee the programs. In addition, it is important to build participatory mechanisms for the community to provide input and reports, as well as to create a monitoring system that involves all parties, including independent teams from the community and the government. With this approach, it is hoped that the program can be more transparent and maximally beneficial to the community".

The findings on stakeholders' understanding of bureaucratic issues in Batumerah's poverty reduction programs highlight significant gaps. Local officials focus on budget management and execution, neglecting issues like corruption and nepotism, which leads to poor oversight and limited transparency. Residents, especially those with lower education, lack awareness of the bureaucratic processes, hindering their ability to monitor and challenge the program effectively. A comprehensive strategy involving education, training, workshops, and participatory mechanisms is needed to improve transparency, accountability, and program effectiveness.

The Quality of In-Depth Analysis on the Causes and Impacts of Bureaucratic Pathology on the Effectiveness of Poverty Alleviation Programs in the State of Batumerah.

Andi Muhammad Yusuf (Chairman of the Financial Services Authority of Maluku Province, 56 years old) said that:

"Until now, there has been no comprehensive and systematic study conducted to understand how deviant bureaucratic practices such as corruption, nepotism, and abuse of authority can affect the effectiveness of the program." This indicates that oversight of the bureaucratic mechanisms in poverty programs is still weak, which allows for the potential abuse of power and budget misappropriation. In my opinion, if the impact analysis of this bureaucratic pathology is conducted regularly, the risk of misconduct can be minimized. With comprehensive monitoring and evaluation, stakeholders can more quickly detect deviant practices and identify patterns that tend to lead to abuse. Without this analysis, poverty programs are vulnerable to deviations that not only harm the budget but also weaken public trust in the government. As a result, the benefits of the program that is supposed to be aimed at the poor community do not reach the target optimally, and the problem of poverty persists or even becomes more difficult to overcome".

Furthermore, it was explained by Andi Muhammad Yusuf (Chairman of the Maluku Province Financial Services Authority, 56 years old) that:

"The importance of attention from all authorities to seriously conduct a thorough evaluation of the pathological aspects within the bureaucracy." According to him, this responsibility does not rest solely with one institution but involves collaboration among various parties to ensure that poverty alleviation programs can be implemented with high transparency and accountability. With structured analysis, any deviations that arise can be identified early, allowing corrective measures to be implemented promptly. Yusuf believes that such an approach will not only enhance the effectiveness of poverty alleviation programs but also build a cleaner, more professional, and service-oriented bureaucracy".

Added by Josias P. Loppies, Head of the Industry and Trade Office of Ambon City (57 Years), that:

"The assistance programs distributed by the relevant agencies are fundamentally based on data received from the villages." This means that the role of the village as the provider of data for aid recipients is very important because the accuracy and validity of that data will determine the success of the program in reaching the communities that truly need it. According to Loppies, if there is a mistake in determining the recipients of aid or targeting inaccuracies, the root of the problem often does not come from the implementing agency, but from the village officials who provide the initial data. Therefore, to reduce the possibility of deviations or bureaucratic pathologies, such as nepotism or distribution errors, village heads should be more proactive in analyzing the data collected and reported. As the frontline in the data collection process, the village head has the responsibility to ensure that the data is accurate and representative of the community's conditions. Thus, if there is any inaccuracy in the distribution of aid, the village authorities can directly identify and address the issue before the data is submitted to the departmental level".

Continued by Josias P. Loppies, Head of the Industry and Trade Office of Ambon City (57 Years), that:

"In my opinion, village heads should also involve the media or press as part of the efforts for transparency in the data collection and distribution of aid." Involving the media not only provides access to information for the community but also serves as a form of public oversight that can minimize the potential for deviations. With the involvement of external parties such as the media in the oversight, it is hoped that the data on aid recipients can be more accurate, and the public will have greater trust in the ongoing process. This transparency will also provide an opportunity for the community to give feedback or raise objections if they feel there are discrepancies in the data collection or distribution process. So with these steps, the village head can identify and manage potential bureaucratic pathologies from the early stages, as well as improve accountability at the village level. This will help create a more effective and transparent aid distribution chain, which will ultimately enhance the overall success of poverty alleviation programs in the State of Batumerah.

The findings on program impact in Batumerah identify bureaucratic issues hindering poverty reduction success, including weak supervision, inaccurate village-level data, and lack of transparency. One perspective calls for a study to uncover corrupt practices like nepotism, periodic evaluations, and cross-agency collaboration. The other stresses the need for accurate data to target aid effectively and suggests involving the media as an external watchdog. Strengthening supervision, improving data accuracy, and using external monitoring are seen as essential for enhancing program effectiveness.

The Quantity and Quality of Problem-Solving Recommendations Generated from the Research, Including their Relevance to the Identified Root Causes of the Issues.

The statement by the Head of the Cooperative Office of Ambon City, Mientje Tupamahu, SH. (58 years old), expressed concern over the low quality of recommendations in problem-solving produced from various studies, particularly in the context of managing community assistance programs. She stated that:

"Often, the recommendations proposed are not closely related to the root of the problem that has actually been identified. This reflects obstacles in finding sustainable and targeted solutions. The main constraint conveyed by Tupamahu is closely related to the phenomenon of "bureaucratic pathology," which includes issues within the system and culture of bureaucracy that tend to hinder the effectiveness of public services. Bureaucratic pathology generally refers to the inefficiency, lack of transparency, and lack of accountability that occur within the bureaucracy, making it difficult to achieve the goals of assistance programs. At various levels, this pathology can cause dysfunction in the organizational structure of the government, leading to delays in decision-making, and increasing the opportunities for corruption or abuse of power".

Continued by the Head of the Cooperative Office of Ambon City, Mientje Tupamahu, SH. (58 Years), that:

"In the case of community assistance programs, this bureaucratic pathology is evident from several factors often encountered in the field, such as:" - Ineffective Internal Communication: The numerous layers of bureaucracy can slow down the flow of information between decision-makers and program implementers in the field. As a result, the root of the problem is not always well understood, and the recommendations produced become less relevant to the needs of the community. - Lack of Accurate and Precise Data: Incomplete or outdated data results in suboptimal problem analysis. As a result, the recommendations formulated are

often not based on the real conditions in the field and instead lead to "generic" solutions".

Stated by the Head of the Social Service Department of Ambon City, J. Slarmanat, SH, M.Si (58 Years), he stated that:

"Minimal Stakeholder Involvement: Stakeholder participation in formulating problem-solving recommendations is often inadequately accommodated." This results in the solutions produced being less reflective of the actual needs of the community that should be served. - Limitations in Bureaucratic Human Resource Capacity: In this case, the capacity of officials to understand good research methods and how to integrate research results into policies becomes an important factor. Human resources that are poorly trained in policy analysis and public service management can lead to the formulation of weak and unstrategic recommendations. - Influence of Political and Personal Interests: Another factor to consider is the influence of certain interests that often color the formulation of policy recommendations, resulting in recommendations that are not independent and serve the interests of individuals or specific groups rather than the public interest".

Research on the quality of problem-solving recommendations in Batumerah's community assistance program reveals that these recommendations often fail to address the root causes of issues. Bureaucratic weaknesses, such as inefficient internal communication due to excessive layers, contribute to miscommunication between decision-makers and field implementers. Inaccurate or outdated data leads to generalized solutions, and the lack of stakeholder involvement results in overlooking community needs. Additionally, limited research capacity among bureaucratic personnel and political or personal biases further diminish the quality of recommendations. To improve this, enhancing communication, ensuring data accuracy, involving stakeholders, building bureaucratic capacity, and reducing personal influence in policymaking are essential.

The Level of Adoption and Implementation of Recommendations in Problem-Solving by Local Governments and Related Institutions in Improving the Effectiveness of Poverty Alleviation Programs.

Explained by Andi Muhammad Yusuf (Chairman of the Financial Services Authority/OJK) of Maluku Province, (56 Years) who highlighted one of the important issues

in the poverty alleviation program, namely the low level of adoption and implementation of recommendations by local governments and related institutions. He stated that:

"Although research and policy recommendations to address poverty continue to evolve, their implementation is often hindered by rigid and layered bureaucracy. Procedures that are too formal and inflexible slow down decision-making, while the lack of understanding and political will from local leaders often hinders the implementation of innovative recommendations that could reduce poverty. As a result, many recommendations end up as reports without any real action".

Continued by Josias P. Loppies, Head of the Industry and Trade Office of Ambon City (57 Years), that:

"The implementation of poverty alleviation recommendations is hindered by limited resources, whether human, financial, or infrastructural. Local governments often focus on other basic needs, resulting in limited allocation of funds for poverty alleviation. Moreover, bureaucratic pathologies such as corruption, inefficiency, and lack of accountability exacerbate the situation. Bureaucracy that focuses more on routine and formal procedures also finds it difficult to adapt to new methods, making innovative recommendations hard to accept. The lack of accurate and relevant data also makes it difficult to implement recommendations according to the needs of the poor community".

It was also stated by the Head of the Social Service Department of Ambon City, J. Slarmanat, SH, M.Si (58 Years) that:

"Political interests influence the implementation of poverty program recommendations, where local leaders often prefer programs that benefit their political or popularity gains, even if they are not effective for poverty reduction. The lack of coordination between agencies also hinders the integrated implementation of programs, often causing overlaps or gaps. Moreover, the low participation of the community in poverty programs results in a lack of acceptance of recommendations, thereby hindering implementation".

It was also stated by J. Kakerissa (52 years old), one of the observers of bureaucratic diseases, that:

"The low implementation of recommendations has caused poverty alleviation programs to stagnate, become ineffective, and lead to inefficient budget usage. To address this, reforms are needed in several aspects: enhancing bureaucratic capacity through training, transparency and accountability in budget management, inter-agency coordination for program integration, and a participatory approach involving the community in planning and implementation. With these reforms, policy recommendations can be implemented more effectively to reduce poverty in Maluku Province".

The analysis of research findings on poverty reduction recommendations in Maluku Province identifies significant challenges stemming from structural and cultural factors within the bureaucracy. A rigid bureaucratic framework, cumbersome procedures, and inflexibility hinder decision-making and innovation. Limited human, financial, and infrastructural resources complicate implementation, while corruption, inefficiency, and lack of accountability worsen the situation. Inaccurate data leads to misaligned recommendations, and political interests overshadow effective poverty reduction efforts. Poor inter-agency coordination causes program overlaps, and insufficient community participation results in recommendations without local support. Addressing these issues requires bureaucratic reform, focusing on capacity building, budget transparency, improved coordination, and a participatory approach involving the community in policymaking.

The Existence of Changes or Improvements in Bureaucratic Practices that Lead to Increased Transparency, Accountability, Community Participation, and Effectiveness in Program Implementation.

M. Tubaka, (47 years old), a social observer, emphasizes a critical issue in poverty alleviation programs in areas like Ne: the lack of transparency, accountability, and community involvement in bureaucratic processes. This shortcoming undermines the effectiveness of these programs, which often prioritize short-term assistance such as cash transfers or food packages over long-term empowerment. As a result, these initiatives often foster dependency instead of independence, leaving the community without the skills or support needed for sustainable poverty alleviation. The focus on project-oriented solutions overlooks the importance of capacity building and economic empowerment, both essential for effectively addressing poverty in the long run.

Explained by Mr. A. Hatala, (58 Years), when met at the Batumerah Government Office that:

"Community participation in the entire process of poverty alleviation programs is very important. Without community involvement, programs often do not meet their needs, and the assistance provided becomes misdirected. The lack of participation also reduces community support, which tends to view aid as something given without their active role. Furthermore, the lack of transparency can lead to deviations or abuse of power, reducing public trust in the government and causing apathy towards future programs".

Statement by M. Tubaka (47 years old), a social observer, in this Province, he explained that:

"Programs that are solely project-oriented often do not provide long-term impact because they do not involve training or empowerment, thus creating dependency. Unlike the empowerment approach, which involves skills training and ongoing support, project-based programs only provide temporary solutions. Tubaka suggests changes in bureaucratic practices by involving the community in planning and evaluation, increasing transparency, and strengthening accountability. With these reforms, poverty alleviation programs can have a long-term impact and build the economic resilience of the community".

The research emphasizes that inadequate transparency, accountability, and community participation significantly undermine the effectiveness of poverty reduction programs. These programs often focus on temporary assistance, such as cash transfers or food packages, fostering dependency rather than self-reliance. Critical elements like capacity building and economic empowerment, necessary for sustainable poverty alleviation, are often neglected. Engaging the community is essential, as programs without participation tend to misalign with actual needs and lack support. Insufficient transparency can lead to irregularities and abuse of power, diminishing public trust. To create lasting impacts, reforms should focus on community involvement in planning, increased transparency, and strengthened accountability.

Changes or Improvements in the Quality of Poverty Alleviation Programs in Batumerah, Including the Improvement of the Beneficiary Selection Process, Increased Transparency, or Strengthening of Oversight Mechanisms.

Mr. A. Hatala's statement (58 years old), encountered at the Batumerah State Government Office, revealed that:

'The poverty alleviation program in Batumerah has not been effective, with issues in the beneficiary selection process, transparency, and oversight. The main criticism is the lack of a clear and accurate selection mechanism. Without an integrated and updated database, aid recipients are often misidentified. The non-transparent selection process raises suspicions and potential deviations, such as nepotism. The lack of public participation in the selection process also leads to a mismatch between expectations and reality, causing the program's benefits to be unrecognized by the community".

Continued by Mr. A. Hatala (58 Years Old), King of the Batumerh Kingdom, who stated that:

"The lack of transparency in the implementation of the poverty program in the State of Batumerah hinders the success of the program. Without transparency in the flow of funds, it is difficult to monitor budget usage and prevent deviations. The absence of regular reports and open evaluations prevents the public from monitoring program developments, resulting in less accountability from the bureaucracy. Weak oversight also leads to fund misuse, and the lack of independent supervisors worsens the situation. Without adequate complaint channels, the community struggles to report issues, allowing deviant bureaucratic practices to continue".

Continued by Mr. M. Tubaka (47 years old), a social observer, in this Province, he explained that:

"The poverty alleviation program in Batumerah is too focused on short-term project approaches, leading to unsustainable outcomes. Aid such as cash or food packages is not accompanied by efforts for economic empowerment, leading the community to become dependent on assistance without capacity building. Community participation is also minimal, with a lack of socialization, space for providing input, and joint evaluation. This causes the program to be irrelevant to the needs of the community and less effective in improving long-term welfare".

The research findings highlight several challenges in Batumerah's poverty reduction program, particularly in beneficiary selection, transparency, and monitoring. The beneficiary selection process is often inaccurate due to the lack of an integrated, up-to-date database, leading to misidentification of recipients. Insufficient transparency in fund distribution and the absence of regular reporting weaken accountability, creating opportunities for irregularities such as nepotism and budget misuse. Weak oversight is compounded by the lack of an independent watchdog and inadequate channels for community complaints. The programs focus mainly on short-term assistance, neglecting sustainable economic empowerment. Additionally, the lack of community involvement in planning and evaluation results in programs that often do not address the community's actual needs. To improve effectiveness, it is essential to enhance beneficiary selection, increase transparency, establish independent oversight, and integrate long-term economic empowerment strategies.

Revision or Formulation of Public Policies Based on Research Findings and Recommendations to Improve the Effectiveness of Poverty Alleviation Programs.

Continued by Mr. M. Tubaka (47 Years), Social Observer and Academic at IAIN Ambon, he explained that:

"The revision of public policies for poverty alleviation in Negeri Batumerah must be based on valid research so that the policies are more relevant and targeted. Research helps identify the root causes of poverty, understand the characteristics of impoverished communities, and determine the groups that need assistance. In addition, research enables the development of success indicators that include income improvement and a reduction in dependency on aid. The research recommendations also provide insights for designing sustainable policies, such as job training programs and business capital support, so that communities can become self-sufficient and escape poverty".

Mr. A. Hatala (58 Years) King of the Kingdom of Batumerh, on the same occasion also stated that:

'Research serves as a foundation for formulating more transparent and accountable policies, with verifiable data to enhance public trust and encourage participation. Research recommendations also improve program oversight, such as involving third parties to ensure the flow of funds and program effectiveness. Research helps in more effective communication with the community, such as intensive socialization and the use of local languages to enhance understanding. Additionally, research supports policies that are adaptive to changes in socio-economic conditions, such as designing job training programs according to market needs".

The research findings suggest that revising poverty reduction public policies in Negeri Batumerah should be based on valid research to ensure their relevance, accuracy, and effectiveness. Research is crucial for identifying the root causes of poverty, understanding the characteristics of impoverished populations, and determining priority groups for assistance. It also helps develop success indicators, such as increased income and reduced dependency on aid. The recommendations stress the importance of sustainable policies, such as job training and business capital support, to promote self-reliance. Involving third parties in monitoring fund allocation improves transparency and accountability, while verifiable data builds public trust and encourages community participation. Additionally, research supports the creation of adaptive policies and improves

communication with communities through targeted outreach and the use of local languages.

Discussion

Many local officials and the public have a limited understanding of bureaucratic issues such as corruption, nepotism, and abuse of power. This lack of awareness hampers effective program evaluation, reduces transparency in aid distribution, and limits community participation in oversight and decision-making, thereby exacerbating dependency and inequality. In poverty alleviation programs, these bureaucratic problems significantly undermine effectiveness. Weak oversight and insufficient data transparency lead to deviations from program objectives, diminishing public trust and reducing overall impact.

Bureaucratic issues, ineffective internal communication, inaccurate data, low stakeholder participation, limited human resources, and political influence obstruct the development of effective policies. Addressing these challenges requires improvements in communication, data management, community engagement, human resource capacity, and political accountability. However, rigid bureaucracy, resource constraints, political interference, and minimal community involvement hinder the implementation of poverty alleviation efforts. Reforming bureaucratic processes, enhancing institutional capacity, and increasing community participation at all stages of implementation are essential for improving program sustainability and effectiveness.

A lack of transparency and accountability continues to hinder long-term empowerment efforts. Ensuring community involvement in beneficiary selection and establishing transparent oversight mechanisms are critical to preventing resource misallocation and fund misuse. Bureaucratic reforms that actively engage the community in planning and evaluation are vital for achieving sustainable, long-term impacts. Additionally, integrating data-driven mechanisms for selecting aid recipients can help reduce nepotism and improve efficiency. To strengthen poverty alleviation initiatives, policies should be revised based on rigorous research, emphasizing long-term economic empowerment through job training and business capital support while reinforcing oversight and community involvement.

Conclusion and Suggestions

Bureaucratic issues like corruption, nepotism, and abuse of power continue to weaken the effectiveness of poverty alleviation programs. A lack of understanding among local officials and community members, along with deficiencies in policy formulation and program implementation, further exacerbates dependency and inequality.

To improve program effectiveness, comprehensive bureaucratic reforms are necessary. These should include enhanced transparency, accountability, and increased community participation. Strengthening data management, building human resource capacity, and introducing more rigorous oversight mechanisms will help ensure the sustainability and success of these initiatives. Policy formulation should be based on thorough research and focus on long-term economic empowerment strategies, such as job training and support for business capital. By adopting these recommendations, we can improve program management, restore public trust, and reduce factors that undermine poverty alleviation efforts.

Recommendations

Training and education for both officials and the community are vital to reduce misunderstandings about bureaucratic processes and to promote active participation in decision-making and monitoring. A transparent and integrated data system is essential for accurately targeting assistance and ensuring effective program oversight. Comprehensive bureaucratic reform encompassing simplified procedures, improved human resource capacity, and enhanced oversight mechanisms is necessary, with community involvement included at every stage of planning and evaluation.

Strengthening community oversight in aid distribution and beneficiary selection is crucial for preventing misuse and enhancing accountability. Policies should be based on valid research and local data to effectively address poverty and promote economic empowerment through skills development and access to business capital. Long-term support for job training, skill-building, and business capital is essential for fostering sustainable economic resilience.

Limitation and Future Research

This study has several limitations. The sample size was small, primarily consisting of local officials and a few residents of Negeri Batumerah, which may not reflect the broader population. The research focused mainly on the bureaucratic aspects of poverty alleviation programs, neglecting other factors such as local culture and political dynamics. The data relied on available sources at the time, potentially overlooking recent social and economic changes. Additionally, the qualitative methodology limits the generalizability of the findings to other regions with different social and cultural contexts.

Future research should involve a more diverse range of stakeholders to provide a comprehensive understanding. Exploring how local culture and political dynamics influence poverty reduction programs could offer valuable insights. Additionally, adopting quantitative or mixed-methods approaches could validate the findings and improve generalizability. Longitudinal studies are recommended to assess the long-term impact of these programs and how bureaucratic reforms and community participation affect sustainability.

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