

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF SOCIAL ASSISTANCE DISTRIBUTION POLICY FOR EXTREME POVERTY ERADICATION IN INDONESIA

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ABSTRACT

Introduction/Main Objectives: In order to achieve target 1.1 of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), i.e., to end extreme poverty by 2030, the Indonesian Government encourages the distribution of social assistance as one of the main programs. **Background Problems:** There are several issues related to the distribution of social assistance that impact the effectiveness of this program. This study aims to investigate the challenges and evaluate possible solutions for the effectiveness of social assistance distribution. **Novelty:** This study proposes alternative solutions to improve the effectiveness of social assistance distribution in Indonesia. **Research Methods:** This research uses a descriptive qualitative approach and SOAR analysis (strengths, opportunities, aspirations, and results). The data have been obtained from a literature review and focus group discussions. **Finding/Results:** The results of the analysis identify three problems, namely (i) inaccuracy of the target beneficiary data, (ii) absence of formed cooperative between stakeholders in the distribution process, and (iii) the amount of cash in the social assistance has not been able to meet the cost of living in several regions in Indonesia. Solutions that can be used to overcome these problems are (1) updating the data and improving the accuracy of targeting of social assistance, (2) strengthening the synergy of the social assistance program organized by government, (3) an adjustment, carried out by local governments, of the value of social assistance benefits, and (4) strengthening the supervision of the social assistance distribution process. **Conclusion:** The alternative solutions above are "tactical" approaches that need to be employed by the government to increase the effectiveness of social assistance distribution to alleviate extreme poverty.

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INTRODUCTION

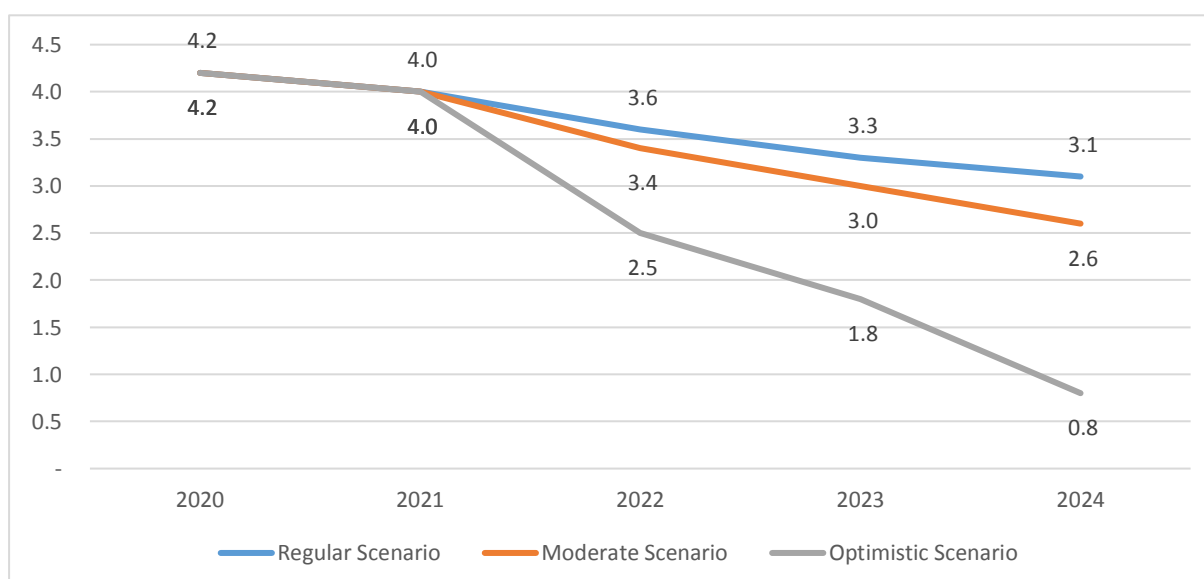
Ending poverty in all its forms everywhere is placed first out of the 17 goals set in the United Nations (UN) Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) framework (United Nations, 2016). To achieve this goal, the Government of Indonesia (GOI) has determined poverty alleviation as one of the priority programs as stated in the 2020-2024 National Medium-Term Development Plan (RPJMN) (Regulation of the President of the Republic of Indonesia Number 18 of 2020). This regulation set the poverty alleviation target, including extreme poverty, to be zero in 2024. This target is six years ahead of the world's agreed poverty reduction target, as stated in the SDGs. This is outlined by the issuance of Presidential Instruction Number 4 of 2022 on Accelerating the Eradication of Extreme Poverty.

To achieve a successful policy, the GOI has developed a simulation of the acceleration of poverty reduction and elimination of extreme poverty policy implementation towards eradicating extreme poverty (Hadi, 2022). The result of the simulation can be seen in Figure 1.

Figure 1 shows a simulation of scenarios as of 2024 in three crucial topics of extreme poverty elimination projections, namely the regular scenario, the moderate scenario, and the optimistic scenario. The regular scenario shows a relatively slow decline in extreme poverty due to business-as-usual efforts. Although it is projected that the moderate scenario will not be able to achieve the extreme poverty alleviation target, it can nevertheless provide better results compared to the regular scenario. The optimistic scenario is one that is projected to be able to approach the extreme poverty alleviation target of 0 percent in 2024. Achieving the extreme poverty alleviation target of 0 percent in 2024 with the optimistic scenario is possible but would require an extraordinary effort.

One of the extraordinary efforts taken by the government in seeking to alleviate extreme poverty is by providing social assistance. The results of the Survey of the Effectiveness of Social Assistance Implementation (*Survey Efektivitas Penyaluran Bantuan Sosial, SEPBS*) conducted in December 2021 show that, of the 35 districts or municipalities that are prioritized

Figure 1. Simulation of Extreme Poverty Elimination Projections (%), 2022-2024



Source: Hadi (2022).

for extreme poverty alleviation in Indonesia in 2021, 14 have experienced an increase in the percentage of extreme poverty. Indications show that this increase is related to the low accuracy of the distribution of social assistance, both routine social assistance—the Family Hope Program (*Program Keluarga Harapan*, PKH) and Non-Cash Food Assistance (*Bantuan Pangan Non Tunai*, BPNT)—and social assistance in the form of Direct Village Fund Cash Assistance (*Bantuan Langsung Tunai Dana Desa*, BLTDD), as well as Basic Food Assistance (*Bantuan Sembako*). The inclusion and exclusion errors can be directly attributed to the inaccuracy of targeting (Hadi, 2022). Prior to 2020, the exclusion and inclusion error rate for Integrated Social Welfare Data (*Data Terpadu Kesejahteraan Sosial*, DTKS) had reached 20 percent (Siyaranamual, 2020). Considering the recognition error rate is relatively high, there is a need for up-to-date and accurate data to determine the target beneficiaries of social assistance programs.

Seeing the high degree of inaccuracy of the data used in the social assistance distribution programs, further studies are necessary to find other challenges to these programs so that the alleviation of extreme poverty—which, according to the plan for the optimistic scenario, should have been achieved by 2024—can be realized. This study was conducted to identify these challenges and formulate strategies for realizing social welfare through the social assistance.

The main contribution of this paper is proposing alternative strategies that can be used by government to optimize the effectiveness of social assistance distribution in alleviating extreme poverty in Indonesia. Although many previous studies have already been conducted to analyze the effectiveness of the distribution of social assistance, most of this research has only

emphasized whether or not the distribution has been effective in reducing poverty (Nugroho, et al., 2021). Meanwhile, research by Mu'adi et al. (2022) mainly focuses on local government coordination in the assessment of social assistance distribution for small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). In the context of this previous research, the purpose of this study is to analyze the various challenges faced while attaining the program outcomes; this study will also explore alternative strategies for governments to optimize the effectiveness of the distribution of social assistance. We believe that the findings of our analysis here will be beneficial for future social assistance programs run by governments seeking to alleviate extreme poverty.

LITERATURE REVIEW

1. Extreme Poverty

Extreme poverty, as defined by the World Bank, is a population whose income is below the purchasing power parity (PPP) line, which is less than USD 2.15 per day. This PPP line is obtained from the lowest price values from various countries with the highest poverty rates in the world (World Bank, 2015). The PPP line is a globally agreed measure of extreme poverty. Although the most recent update of the global poverty line is based on PPP rates, the PPP poverty line rates still have some drawbacks because this line is not a relevant standard for measuring poverty, especially extreme poverty. PPP only formulates poverty based on the ability to meet daily nutritional (food) intake, while extreme poverty is considered to also include the inability of households to access services such as health, education, proper environment, and other basic services (Kamruzzaman, 2021; Molla & Chi, 2002; Manuel et al., 2018).

For this reason, efforts to eradicate extreme poverty do not only require an economic

approach but must also include social, cultural, and political approaches (Cigdem, 2023). The World Bank has stated that more than one-third of Indonesia's population belongs to the economic groups that were vulnerable to poverty and extreme poverty due to the COVID-19 pandemic (World Bank, 2023). Most of the extremely poor live in rural areas, have livelihoods in the agricultural sector, live in elderly female-headed households, are of non-productive age, or have disabled family members living with them (Hadi, 2022; Mohd et al., 2018; Cabrera & Perez, 2023).

2. Extreme Poverty Eradication Policy

The large number of people living in poverty is a problem that needs to be resolved. To do this, and to improve social welfare, poverty alleviation policies need to be implemented through various government schemes and measures (Rohima et al., 2013). An example of a potential scheme is called fiscal policy. The government must encourage increased revenues and intergovernmental transfers to create a significant fiscal gap for implementing poverty alleviation programs, including extreme poverty (Nursini & Tawakkal, 2019). Programs that the government can enact to alleviate poverty include providing social assistance to the poor (Barrientos, 2017), providing skills training, developing an entrepreneurial ecosystem (Ajide & Dada, 2023; Sharaunga, 2019), and supporting access to financial services or productive financing for the poor (Danquah et al., 2021).

Overall, policies for eradicating extreme poverty in Indonesia are designed according to the following four strategies (Hikmat, 2021; Republic of Indonesia, 2022; Hadi, 2022; Kurniasih, 2022). First, reducing the burden of spending. These strategies consist of (a) social assistance programs, which include the Family

Hope Program, Non-Cash Food Assistance or Basic Food Program, Smart Indonesia Program (*Program Indonesia Pintar*, PIP), and programs targeting the elderly and people with disabilities such as the rehabilitation program for uninhabitable houses (*Rumah Tidak Layak Huni*, Rutilahu) and the social rehabilitation assistance program; (b) subsidy programs, such as electricity subsidies, liquified petroleum gas (LPG) subsidies, and fuel subsidies; (c) social security programs, such as contribution assistance for contribution assistance recipient (*Penerima Bantuan Iuran*, PBI) national health insurance (*Jaminan Kesehatan Nasional*, JKN) program participants and Pre-Employment Cards (*Kartu Pra-Kerja*); and (d) the Social Safety Net (*Jaringan Pengaman Sosial*, JPS) that comprises programd that are adaptive during disasters and crises, such as direct cash assistance (*Bantuan Langsung Tunai*, BLT), direct cash assistance from village funds, and presidential assistance.

In the case of cash social assistance, in particular, it has a positive impact on reducing the burden of spending on the extreme poor within a short period of time. However, the results of our field survey show that the assistance in the longer term has had an unwanted effect on the way of thinking of the extreme poor, where some of them become demotivated to work. Social assistance is a benefit that is supposed to be temporary economic support, however, the dynamics of social assistance result in some individuals remaining poor due to them being in continuous need of social assistance as their regular income. Furthermore, most poor people are not taking advantage of social assistance to achieve welfare goals in terms of meeting basic social needs (Dwiputri, 2017). Another negative effect of cash social assistance is that it creates social jealousy and is sometimes disbursed for political

purposes at the local level. Therefore, cash social assistance should be gradually reduced to prevent the extreme poor from being demotivated and facing social jealousy.

In addition to subsidies and direct cash assistance, educational assistance is also considered to be a valuable source of knowledge and skill development for human resources that are facing poverty; it's essential for them to be ready to compete in the labor market. In his research, Reza (2023) argues that quality of education contributes to greater economic growth. The quality of human resources in terms of education is crucial to improving the productivity of the workforce and so enable them to compete with workers overseas. Capable human resource will be competitive and can earn income from foreign companies which could lead to prosperity that lifts families out of poverty (Nahar & Arshad, 2017).

Second, empowering the poor could be a strategy to increase their own income. This strategy consists of (a) regional potential development programs, for example empowerment of remote indigenous communities; (b) empowerment programs to improve the community's economy through assistance to SMEs, such as the development of social entrepreneurship; and (c) providing facilities for access to capital and insurance through the Credit for People (*Kredit Usaha Rakyat*, KUR) program, Ultra Micro Financing (*Kredit Ultra Mikro*, UMi), and National Civil Capital for Fostering Family Prosperity (*Permodalan Nasional Madani Membina Ekonomi Keluarga Sejahtera*) assistance, as well as farmer, live-stock, and fishers insurance programs.

This empowerment strategy for the extreme poor can be further strengthened by allocating larger budgets for business development and job creation at the local level, especially in sectors and regions that have become pockets of

extreme poverty. The results of our field survey show that people who are extremely poor are more in need of business development and job creation than cash social assistance.

Third, there is minimizing the enclaves of poverty. This strategy consists of (a) programs to increase access to basic services, such as sanitation, electricity, health facilities, clean water, and access to early childhood education; and (b) programs to increase connectivity between regions (road access and transportation), especially in rural areas, underdeveloped areas, remote areas, and the border areas between countries. These programs are aimed at facilitating access to resources, product distribution, and public services.

The International Labor Organization (ILO) has formulated social protection floors as a recommendation for forms of social security that can be provided by the government to eradicate poverty, including (i) providing access to essential services, such as health that is always readily available, easily accessible, acceptable to the public, and of good quality; (ii) fulfillment of minimum income for children, including access to nutrition and education; (iii) fulfillment of minimum income for the productive-age population who cannot access sufficient income due to illness, unemployment, pregnancy, and disability; and (iv) meeting the minimum income for the elderly population (ILO, 2012).

Apart from running these poverty alleviation programs, the government must pay attention to several important things about the effectiveness of such programs. Some of the things referred to include a solid commitment to poverty alleviation on the part of the government, decentralization of the process for identifying the target beneficiaries of social assistance, centralized arrangement of social assistance programs to minimize elite interests in the

regions (Zuo, 2021), and maximum utilization of data (Kharas, H., & Dooley, M., 2021).

3. Social Assistance Practices

Social assistance has been widely used as a means of providing social protection. Social protection is divided into three classifications: social insurance, social assistance, and labor market regulation. Social assistance in certain countries is broad in scope rather than based on income level. Social assistance is divided into two types, namely conditional cash transfers (CCTs) and unconditional cash transfers (UCTs) (Nainggolan, 2012). UCTs are programs often used to alleviate poverty in developing countries (Blattman et al., 2014). However, they need to be improved when the programs' approach does not align with their objectives and targets (Cesarini et al., 2017). Meanwhile, the implementation of CCT programs has had positive impacts in several countries. A CCT program can improve the quality of education and health (Raharjo & Program, 2015; Parker & Todd, 2017). A CCT program also improves quality of life and welfare by empowering the poor to become more independent (Rahmawati, 2017; Kuntjorowati, 2019).

The results of research conducted in India show that social assistance is a partial foundation of the social security system that makes an important contribution to human well-being (Drèze & Khera, 2017). In China, social security provides financial support to those living in poverty and those facing the threat of poverty. The results of a study by YU Le-rong and LI Xiao-yun (2021) show that spending on social security reduces income inequality and rural poverty. The social assistance program through cash transfers in Brazil is the world's largest CCT program (*Bolsa Família*) for poverty alleviation that focuses on child health,

education, and social assistance (Neves, J. A et al., 2022).

In Pakistan, there is the Benazir Income Support Program (BISP), which is a cash social assistance program that focuses on empowering women and providing fuel subsidies for poor households; this needs to be accompanied by the government's efforts to invest in the fuel sector so that the supply is not interrupted (Nawaz, S. & Iqbal, N. 2020). The implementation of cash assistance can be sustainable with a note that there is an institutional program, an exit strategy, and networking of social programs around beneficiary households. Some obstacles found in implementing cash assistance are differences in political priorities, program ownership, and weak collaboration between sectors (Addo et al., 2023).

Several things drive the success of cash social assistance in Mexico. For example, the program's target beneficiaries are well-known, delivery of cash assistance allows poor families to receive access to education, health, nutritious food intake, and the beneficiaries are able to develop businesses to escape the cycle of poverty; furthermore, the existence of good oversight facilities and communication between policymakers and beneficiaries, even in areas that are difficult to access and where marginalized communities live (World Bank, 2014).

There is strong evidence that social protection policies not only significantly reduce the prevalence of poverty; however, they also contribute to improving social cohesion and increasing productivity by securing household incomes and pushing up private consumption. This is the reason why social protection now is explicitly mentioned in the UN's agenda for 2030. According to SDG 1.3, countries shall "implement nationally appropriate social protection systems and measures for all, including floors, and by 2030, achieve substantial

coverage of the poor and the vulnerable.” In this regard, SDG 3.8 is also worth mentioning; it urges governments to “achieve universal health coverage, including financial risk protection (...) for all.” Moreover, SDG 5.4 and SDG 10.4 emphasize the importance of social protection policies in achieving gender justice and more social equality, both of which are of equal importance (Kaltenborn, 2017). In addition, the distribution of social assistance also causes beneficiaries to become dependent on the assistance for their income (Setyawardani et al., 2020).

METHOD, DATA, AND ANALYSIS

This qualitative study was compiled with a phenomenological approach. This approach is carried out to capture phenomena that occur through the experiences and perspectives of those who experience these phenomena (Connelly, 2010). In this study, the approach is used to examine data—obtained from the results of policy and literature reviews—related to the distribution of social assistance. This enables the authors to identify the challenges facing this distribution in Indonesia.

To gather these data, in-depth interviews and discussions were conducted with parties involved in implementing social assistance programs, both at the central GOI level and the level of

regional governments. The number of informants in this study was five from the GOI and four from regional governments, as shown in Table 1.

The data obtained—especially the results of the in-depth interviews and discussions—were then analyzed using the SOAR method to determine alternative solutions to increase the effectiveness of social assistance distribution. According to Solihin (2019), SOAR analysis is an analysis that highlights the strengths, opportunities, aspirations, and results for the variables that build a conception of the effectiveness of social assistance distribution. SOAR analysis is described as follows: (a) Strengths are the factors that become the primary source of strength and assets in the social assistance distribution programs, both tangible and intangible; with these strengths, improvements in the effectiveness of the social assistance distribution programs can continue to be developed in the future; (b) opportunities are available in the external environment and can be utilized to increase the effectiveness of the social assistance distribution programs. The ability to take full advantage of opportunities supports success in implementing social assistance programs. Therefore, each party must think positively and be open to looking at the dynamics of the external environment; (c)

Table 1 Table of Informants

Number of informant	Informant
Informant 1	Ministry of National Development Planning/Bappenas
Informant 2	The National Team for The Acceleration of Poverty Reduction (TNP2K)
Informant 3	Coordinating Ministry for Economic Affairs
Informant 4	Ministry of Social Affairs
Informant 5	Ministry of Village, Development of Disadvantaged Regions, and Transmigration
Informant 6	Social Services of Karawang
Informant 7	Village Empowerment Services of Karawang
Informant 8	Social Services of Pematang
Informant 9	Village Empowerment Services of Pematang

aspirations are the conditions of the social assistance distribution programs that are expected in the future, namely effective, efficient, integrated, and synergistic; and (d) results are interpreted as determining the extent of what has been achieved in the distribution of social assistance to determine its effectiveness in terms of targets determined previously.

The variables above are analyzed using the SOAR method to generate a choice of strategies that can optimize the social assistance distribution programs. The analysis process is structured as follows:

1. S-A strategy, namely, making a strategy by using the power to achieve aspirations.
2. S-R strategy, namely, making a strategy based on strengths to achieve measurable results.
3. O-A strategy, namely, making a strategy oriented toward the desired aspirations by taking advantage of opportunities.
4. O-R strategy, namely, creating an opportunity-oriented strategy to achieve measurable results.

There search analysis undertook the following steps:

1. Mapping issues to seek to identify the factors or variables that are likely to affect the social assistance distribution programs. This was done by conducting a desk study, holding focus group discussions (FGDs) with various ministries and agencies, and confirming the primary data and all additional information required.
2. Variable mapping can be used to obtain the four key elements that make up a SOAR analysis: the aforementioned strengths, opportunities, aspirations, and results.
3. Determining the urgency value (*nilai urgensi* (NU) and factor weight/ *bobot faktor* (BF) of each variable and then conducting an

assessment of each variable and scoring it based on value correlation between NU and BF.

4. Determining strategy choices to optimize the effectiveness of social assistance distribution programs by showing the relationship between variable mapping and the SOAR analysis. The SOAR approach suggests that alternative strategies are obtained from the highest possible scores for the NUs and BFs from the four key SOAR elements.
5. Determining policy choices to optimize the effectiveness of social assistance distribution programs based on the mapping of variables and SOAR analysis where the variables are ordered according to the highest NU and BF scores.

Based on the similarities identified by the results of the SOAR analysis, conclusions can be drawn, and strategy formulations recommended to optimize the social assistance distribution programs in the community.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

1. Extreme Poverty in Indonesia

The proportion of extremely poor people in Indonesia tended to decrease from 2014 to 2019, from 7.9 percent to 3.7 percent. This number increased again due to the COVID-19 pandemic to reach 3,8 percent in March 2020 and 4.0 percent in March 2021 (Central Bureau of Statistics, 2021). The distribution of cash social assistance programs has already become the main focus of Indonesian government policy in response to the global economic crisis in 2009 (Resosudarmo, et al., 2021).

Informant 2 said that most of the extremely poor in Indonesia are on the island of Java; they live in rural areas, and their primary income is from the agricultural sector.

Around 61 percent of the extreme poor in Indonesia live in rural areas and have a livelihood in the agricultural sector. Moreover, among the extremely poor, the number of people working in the agricultural sector is three times more than those working in the non-agricultural sector (Informant 2).

Because most of the extremely poor live in villages, the Ministry of Villages, Development of Disadvantaged Regions, and Transmigration (Kemendesa PDT) has a role in updating extreme poverty data at the village level through village SDGs data. On the other hand, Informant 5 said that the government also encourages the commitment of village assistants to assist the community with poverty alleviation.

According to Kemendesa PDT, there are two keys to handling extreme poverty: data on poor people by name and by address and continuous assistance from village assistants (Informant 5).

The eradication of extreme poverty in Indonesia is divided into three main pillars: reducing the spending burden, increasing income, and improving databases. Informant 3 said that social assistance is one of the leading programs to reduce the expenditure burden of extremely poor families.

The government strategy in eradicating extreme poverty is to make comprehensive efforts to improve people's welfare. This strategy is carried out through converging social protection programs, community empowerment, and database improvement. Currently, the government's flagship programs in social protection are social assistance and subsidy programs (Informant 3).

2. Challenges to Social Assistance in Indonesia

The social assistance distribution programs that are right on target, well integrated, with significant fundamental benefit values, as well

as optimal supervision, can increase the capacity for economic development. According to Carolina and Andini (2021), providing social assistance to individuals, families, or communities who are less fortunate (poor) is one of the ways to accelerate economic development; consequently, economic growth will increase, income inequality will decrease, and the poverty rate will decrease (National Team for the Acceleration of Poverty Reduction, 2018 and 2019).

The main problem facing eradicating extreme poverty in Indonesia today is the need to improve target accuracy and transparency in the distribution of social assistance (Ministry of Social Affairs, 2020a). As is well known, social assistance is one of the steps to eliminate extreme poverty, namely programs seeking to reduce the burden of extreme public spending, increasing income, and reducing poverty in enclave areas. Two survey results indicate that the distribution of social assistance targets needs to be corrected. According to the results of a survey by Saiful Mujani Research & Consulting (SRMC), as quoted by Noerkaisar (2021), government social assistance is still not on target because there continue to be residents who should be entitled to assistance but have yet to receive it. The results of the 2021 Extreme Poverty Social Assistance Program Effectiveness Survey (SEPBS) conducted by the Central Statistics Agency (BPS), submitted by Informant 2, show that routine social assistance (PKH, BPNT, and others) still targets all groups of people, both poor and not poor. Social assistance reached only 57.53 percent of its targeted recipients in decile 1, 57.42 percent in decile 2, 53.01 percent in decile 3, and 53.75 percent of those in decile 4. Social assistance also targets deciles 5 to 10, which are household groups not categorized as poor or vulnerable to poverty. The 2021 Extreme Poverty SEPBS

results also show that social assistance top-up distribution accuracy still needs to improve.

Field data collection and processing methods are important to maintaining a high level of accuracy. The Ministry of Social Affairs is responsible for delegating the task of data collection to local governments and to the village or sub-district government level. The process of updating data by local government is influenced by some aspects of local politics from the regional level to the village level; this includes local government budgets and political support through representation by the government.

Local political interests are often utilizing social assistance as a political tool to get political support during regional and local election campaigns. Politicians in some regions might simply attempt to buy votes or reward their supporters by using public social assistance. Some potential obstacles that can get in the way of optimizing the effectiveness of social assistance at the local level are cutting the amount of assistance given to each beneficiary, misappropriation of public funds for personal interest, the distribution of the assistance not being transparent or not being completed on time, and favoring certain groups on the basis of social, cultural, religious, or family relationship. Therefore, misappropriation of social assistance not only harms beneficiaries but also diminishes public trust in government. There is no doubt that the budget allocation has no significant effect on the effectiveness of social assistance in supporting poverty alleviation programs.

At the central GOI level, the inaccuracy of the targeting of social assistance distribution is most likely related to data that do not rank the welfare of households receiving social assistance. As is known, the integrated social welfare data used in 2021 (DTKS) as the baseline for the distribution of social assistance did not have a

household welfare rating, so the targeting of recipients was not quite right. The other challenges to social assistance are fluctuations of the global economy that cause national economic instability. The global economic downturns caused by the COVID-19 pandemic and the Russia-Ukraine conflict have had significant effects on the distribution of social assistance. The pandemic resulted in an economic crisis and uncertainty, while the conflict between Russia and Ukraine has increased the global instability. During the COVID-19 period, inflation was relatively high and led to a decline in aggregate demand and a weakening of people's purchasing power. In response, the GOI intensified its fiscal policy actions to maintain a balance between social assistance and inflation control. Various studies in the literature have stated that the implementation of social assistance policies has an important role to play in ensuring that Indonesia maintains its economy in the short term. Some research findings show that social assistance programs positively prevented households from declining into extreme poverty during the COVID-19 pandemic.

On the other hand, the amount of social spending on public assistance programs is relatively limited due to the impact of the world economic crises that have led to a weakening of the economy in Indonesia. Due to the limited budget—as well as ineffective mechanisms of social assistance—the government distributed the same amount of money to all regions, in which case it was not adjusting it to the cost of living in each region. Therefore, the benefit value of the social assistance received by beneficiaries was not at the same significant level.

2.1. Data Accuracy

Several studies show that social assistance provided to the community does not have clear

transparency, so many programs are still not on target. This is due to separate budget allocations and non-integrated data (Ayuningtyas, D., 2022). The data used as a database for various social assistance programs in the ministries or other institutions is the Integrated Social Welfare Data (DTKS) managed by the Ministry of Social Affairs. Apart from DTKS, there are also some data developed by other ministries and used according to the needs of social assistance programs from these ministries, such as village SDGs data at the Kemendesa PDT for the village direct cash assistance (BLT) program. Meanwhile, the Ministry of Home Affairs (MOHA/Kemendagri) has a database related to population and civil registration. Other ministries/institutions have yet to utilize this database optimally in distributing social assistance programs.

Returning to the ranking issue, the DTKS is a refinement of the 2005 Social Economic Data Collection (*Pendataan Sosial Ekonomi*, PSE) and the 2008 and 2011 Social Protection Program Data Collection (*Pendataan Program Perlindungan Sosial*, PPLS) conducted by BPS. PPLS 2011 data are for 40 percent of middle- to lower-income households with complete information by name and address of target households. The data ranking of the 2011 PPLS results was carried out by the National Team for the Acceleration of Poverty Reduction (TNP2K) using the Proxy Means Test (PMT) method. PMT predicts a person's income based on observable household characteristic data variables, such as the number of family members, educational status, housing conditions, asset ownership, etc. (Olken, B.A., 2019). The PMT model was built using macro data from the National Socioeconomic Survey (Susenas), which describes the characteristics of households in urban districts.

Initially, the TNP2K used decile groups—namely, decile 1 to decile 4—in categorizing

groups of the poor. However, currently, the DTKS no longer has ratings of household welfare and socio-economic characteristics because rankings using the PMT method are difficult to construct (Informant 2).

After eliminating data ranking in 2021, another method was used, namely verification and validation. This is regulated by Republic of Indonesia Law Number 13 of 2011 concerning Handling the Poor and Needy, and Regulation of the Minister of Social Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia Number 3 of 2021 concerning Integrated Social Welfare Data Management. However, in its implementation, the data verification and validation results still need to be updated. The results of discussions with our informants indicated that several things resulted in the process not producing accurate data, such as coordination between regions and related stakeholders that had not been well established, there was no support for specific budget allocations for data verification and validation, and inadequate facilities in the regions for conducting data verification and validation.

Updating data through the proposal process and verification and validation has only involved a few institutions other than the social services. The findings of the SMERU Research Institute (2022) show a need for more involvement by institutions other than the Social Service in updating the DTKS. Not all social services involve BPS, which has expertise in collecting household-level data on a large scale. The role of the Regional Poverty Reduction Coordination Team (TKPKD) and the provincial government in updating DTKS activities was also felt to be lacking (Widyaningsih et al., 2022). To overcome problems related to data accuracy, efforts were then made to target the acceleration of the elimination of extreme poverty (*Pensasaran Percepatan Penghapusan Kemiskinan Ekstrem*, P3KE) through the development

of data under the coordination of the Coordinating Ministry for Human Development and Cultural Affairs with collaboration between relevant stakeholders, namely the National Population and Family Planning Board (BKKBN), the TNP2K team, the Ministry of Home Affairs, and the BPS.

The P3KE data are a subset of the BKKBN Family Data Collection data, which already have a household welfare rating and have been validated with the National Identity Number (NIK) data by the Directorate of Population and Civil Disability at the Ministry of Home Affairs (Informant 2).

In addition to developing P3KE data, it is also necessary to rethink existing data management by coordinating and collaborating with stakeholders with relevant data and extreme poverty eradication programs.

2.2. Program Synergy Among Stakeholders

The inaccuracy of the distribution of social assistance targets revealed from the two surveys above is related to the use of the DTKS, which does not have household welfare rating as the baseline for the provision of social assistance. In addition to the data accuracy factor, another challenge faced in distributing social assistance is the inadequate integration of extreme poverty management programs among the stakeholders involved in the acceleration of extreme poverty reduction, especially among related ministries and agencies at the central level. According to Vice President (2019-2024) Ma'ruf Amin, as Head of the National Team for the Acceleration of Poverty Reduction, program integration—from planning to implementation in the field—is a challenge in itself to distribute social assistance right on target (Astuti, 7 October 2021).

The government's social assistance programs for the poor include PKH, BPNT, and PBI JKN, which are managed by the Ministry of Social

Affairs, and Village BLT, which are managed by the Kemendesa PDTT. These social assistance programs have their criteria for beneficiaries, data sources, and aid distribution systems involving specific stakeholders (see Table 2). The synergy between social assistance programs, as described in Table 2, is crucial to avoiding overlaps between social assistance programs, especially for programs that target the same beneficiaries but using different databases.

Problems might occur if the data released comprises a list of recipients of social assistance who are residents in the extremely poor category, but they have not been recorded by the Office of Population and Civil Registration (Disdukcapil) and do not have a National Identity Number (NIK). For this reason, it is hoped that the Ministry of Home Affairs, through the district/city governments, will immediately facilitate the extremely poor who do not yet have a NIK so that they can be registered by Disdukcapil and obtain a NIK which would mean the Ministry of Social Affairs could restore them to the DTKS and the list of recipients of social assistance. The aim of facilitating the extremely poor who do not have a NIK is so that those households that are entitled to social assistance are targeted when the assistance is distributed.

Meanwhile, related to the Village BLT program, the Village SDGs database can be used to clarify the accuracy of Village BLT distribution. This is necessary to avoid subjectivity in targeting beneficiaries, and the Village BLT distribution can therefore be carried out effectively. Village SDGs must add a menu containing a list of PKH/BPNT recipients from the Ministry of Social Affairs. Data on Village BLT recipients must also be recorded in the DTKS update. This aims to avoid overlapping social assistance programs so that the effectiveness of the distribution is optimized.

Table 2. Criteria, Data Sources, Distribution Systems, and Social Assistance and Subsidy Implementing Ministries/Institutions

Program	Criteria for Social Assistance Recipients	Data source	Social Assistance Distribution System	Ministry/Agency Implementation
PKH	Poor families who have at least one of the following conditions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● pregnant/postpartum women, ● early childhood (less than six years), ● elementary/MI children, ● middle school students, ● high school students, ● elderly (over 70 years), ● severe disabilities. 	DTKS	Non-cash distribution through channeling banks to accounts in the name of beneficiaries.	Ministry of Social Affairs
Groceries/ BPNT	Groceries/BPNT Poor families registered with the DTKS, preferably PKH beneficiaries.	DTKS	Distribution using: Welfare Family Card (<i>Kartu Keluarga Sejahtera</i> , KKS). Shopping application managed by the Distribution Bank and used by e-Warong in distributing basic food programs.	Ministry of Social Affairs
PBI JKN	Residents who have a NIK and are registered with the DTKS.	DTKS	Provision of Health Insurance Contribution Assistance.	Ministry of Social Affairs
Village BLT	Non-PKH/BPNT poor families. Loss of Livelihoods. Not yet recorded (exclusion error). Family members who are prone to chronic illness.	Village Information System	Distribution is carried out by the village government using a non-cash method (cashless) and/or cash every month.	Ministry of Villages, Development of Disadvantaged Regions, and Transmigration

Source: data processed by authors from several sources (documents and website of ministries in Indonesia) (2022)

2.3. The Real Value of Money

Another challenge to the implementation of the distribution of social assistance is the difference between geographical characteristics in each region can cause significant disparities between the actual value of social assistance received by beneficiaries. In addition to geographical conditions, budget and data limitations are obstacles to distributing social assistance (Sofi I, 2021). Monitoring the distribution of social assistance also creates challenges that take work to overcome. This oversight is necessary to prevent

the occurrence of corrupt practices by irresponsible parties. The number of cases of alleged social assistance corruption in several regions in Indonesia that are being handled by the police shows how vital the oversight function is for the social assistance programs (Alfedo & Azmi, 2021; Wahyuni, 2021; Macpal et al., 2021; Herdiana, 2020).

In 2021, the government had prioritized overcoming extreme poverty for 35 districts in seven provinces in Indonesia through the basic food top-up program. The target was 1,236,696 beneficiary families with elderly, disabled,

single-parent, orphaned dependents. Food top-ups were distributed through banks that were members of the Association of State-Owned Banks (Himbara), namely BNI, BRI, Mandiri, and BTN. The top-up amount given was IDR 300,000 (three payments) or IDR 900,000 per beneficiary (one payment). The amount disbursed by this program was the same for 35 districts in East Nusa Tenggara, Papua, West Papua, Maluku, West Java, Central Java, and East Java, which have different cost of living levels. This can be seen in the market and basic needs monitoring system data released by the Ministry of Trade. It can then be used to benchmark whether the amount of assistance provided can support beneficiaries by meeting needs.

In addition to price differences, geographical conditions and the availability of regional infrastructure also have the potential to further widen the gaps in the real value of the essential food top-ups received by beneficiaries. This means that the policy of applying the same amount of social assistance for all regions in Indonesia has implications in terms of the actual value of what is received by beneficiaries. This situation has the potential to undermine the goal of reducing the expenditure burden of the extremely poor. Furthermore, it hampers the acceleration of extreme poverty alleviation programs. However, implementing a policy that differentiates the amounts of social assistance based on conditions in each region can lead to a sense of injustice. Even in the same region, there are often differences in the prices of food commodities, making it difficult to implement policies that differentiate the value of social assistance.

To overcome the above situation, local governments can take a concrete role in overcoming differences in the value of the real benefits of social assistance received by

beneficiaries in their respective regions. For example, increasing the allocation for expenditure on social assistance in each local government budget would increase the actual value of the benefits received by the beneficiaries of social assistance so that the effectiveness of the assistance eases the expenditure burden felt by those living in extreme poverty.

3. Alternative Strategies in Social Assistance Program Disbursement

The results of discussions and interviews with informants were formulated into variables used in the analysis using the SOAR approach, which is intended to find ideal conditions for managing social assistance based on existing strengths and opportunities. This was then used in formulating strategies to increase the effectiveness of implementing social assistance programs to achieve poverty alleviation, especially extreme poverty. The variables used in the SOAR analysis as a result of the discussions and interviews were as follows:

Strengths

Key strengths (St) of the social assistance distribution programs include:

1. Laws and regulations become the legal basis for implementing social assistance distribution programs (St1).
2. Budget resources originate from national or local government budgets and other sources that can be used to finance several types of social assistance programs (St2).
3. There is a non-cash system for distributing social assistance involving Himbara (Association of State-Owned Banks: Bank Mandiri, Bank BNI, Bank Rakyat Indonesia) and PT Pos Indonesia (Persero) (St3)

Opportunities

Opportunities (Op) that exist and can be used to increase the effectiveness of the social assistance distribution programs consist of:

1. The commitment of ministries/agencies and local governments to synergize in the distribution of social assistance is getting stronger (Op1).
2. The local governments and the communities have joint initiatives to increase the effectiveness of the distribution of social assistance (Op2).

Aspirations

Aspirations (As) for the social assistance distribution programs in the future include:

1. Social assistance policies and programs across ministries/institutions become integrated (As1).
2. An accurate DTKS that has a household welfare rating based on name, address, and NIK will be realized (As2).
3. The value of social assistance will be adjusted by local governments so as to

provide the same real value of benefits throughout Indonesia (As3).

4. Supervision of the implementation of social assistance program distribution will be improved (As4).
5. Social assistance from non-governmental organizations and private companies will be integrated with the government in supporting extreme poverty alleviation programs (As5).

Results

Some of the results (Re) of the effective implementation and achievement of the distribution of social assistance are as follows:

1. Distribution of social assistance shows a decrease in inclusion and exclusion errors (Re1).
2. Distribution of social assistance can reduce poverty and extreme poverty (Re2).

The results of the formulation of the variables above can be turned into strategies to achieve aspirations as shown in Table 3:

Table 3. Strategies to Achieve Aspirations and Results

S - A	Under regulations that encourage program integration between ministries/agencies in social assistance programs.	Strategy 1
	Sufficient budget support to support the updating of DTKS data so that it includes household welfare ratings.	Strategy 2
	APBD financing support in realizing equal value of social assistance benefits distributed throughout Indonesia.	Strategy 3
	Regulatory support for the distribution of social assistance from non-governmental organizations and private companies, which leads to the acceleration of extreme poverty alleviation	Strategy 1
O - A	Ministries/agencies and regional governments are mutually committed to program integration, including efforts to equalize the value of social assistance benefits throughout Indonesia.	Strategy 3
	Local governments and communities participate in supervising social assistance programs so that they can support the increase in the effectiveness of social assistance distribution.	Strategy 4
O- R	The commitment of ministries/institutions in program synergy and integration can realize effective program implementation so that the target of reducing poverty and extreme poverty can be realized.	Strategy 1
	Local governments and communities contribute together in ensuring the accuracy of the distribution of social assistance targets so that the inclusion and exclusion error	Strategy 2 Strategy 4

rates can be reduced.

Based on the results above, there are several potential strategies that can be implemented to drive forward the reduction of extreme poverty through social assistance distribution programs. These include:

1. Regulations to integrate social assistance programs

Integrating social assistance programs can be carried out between ministries/institutions and involve local governments and non-governmental organizations. Regulations are needed to bind relevant stakeholders so that social assistance programs can effectively reduce poverty and extreme poverty.

2. Timely and accurate updates of the DTKS for a high level of accuracy and social welfare ratings

Ministries/agencies and local governments are encouraged to contribute to the budget for updating the DTKS. In addition, local government and community awareness and involvement are encouraged to ensure the accuracy of the distribution of social assistance targets so that inclusion and exclusion errors can be reduced.

3. Equalized value of social assistance benefits

There are differences in the value of benefits for social assistance beneficiaries over cash social assistance. For this reason, local government support is needed in completing the delivery of social assistance from the central GOI so that equality in the value of social assistance benefits is realized between regions. This support is expected to come from the local governments' budgets, regulated legally through regulations.

4. Supervision that covers the implementation of social assistance programs at the national and local levels

One of the reasons for the emergence of various challenges in the distribution of social assistance is the existence of weak supervision. For this reason, better supervision is encouraged by involving local governments and the community in supervising the implementation of social assistance.

CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

Various challenges face social assistance distribution programs if they are to achieve the alleviation of extreme poverty, which, according to one optimistic scenario, should have been achieved by 2024. These include the inaccuracy of the data for targeting social assistance beneficiaries, the lack of cooperation and coordination between all the stakeholders involved in the distribution process, and the amount of social assistance not being able to meet the cost of living in several regions in Indonesia. The SOAR analysis was used to formulate the strategies governments can use to overcome some of these challenges described above. The results obtained are several strategy solutions to address the weaknesses of social assistance distribution. The first strategy is for the government to improve the accuracy of integrated social welfare data (DTKS) in order to ensure social assistance can be delivered to the right beneficiaries. Apart from that, there is a need for a synergy of policies between ministries and institutions and supervision of program implementation that fosters the involvement of local government in social assistance distribution in order to increase the effectiveness of programs seeking to accelerate the eradication of extreme poverty. Based on the results of price disparity between the western and eastern regions of Indonesia, there is an urgent need for local governments to allocate adequate funds in

their budgets to support and provide the additional social assistance required. Therefore, local government would have sufficient capacity to meet the basic needs of poor communities in their own regions in accordance with the average current prices in each region. This alternative solution would likely encourage more effective targeting in the implementation of social assistance programs in alleviating extreme poverty and accelerate the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

The current state of research emphasizes social assistance distribution strategies that will be more effective and efficient in eradicating extreme poverty. Then for future research, an approach examining human behavior in the social environment is needed for a more in-depth exploration to see how poor people take advantage of the value of the benefit channeled through social assistance programs.

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