

THE FUNCTION OF THE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT IN AN EFFORTS TO REDUCE THE SCHOOL DROPOUT RATE IN CISEWU DISTRICT, GARUT REGENCY

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Abstract

This study examines the role of the Garut District Education Office in reducing school dropout rates in Cisewu Subdistrict. The research is motivated by the high dropout rate caused by the absence of specific policies, limited access and program outreach, and unequal educational infrastructure. Using Ryas Rasyid's government function theory (Laboolo) covering regulation, public service, empowerment, and development the study applies a qualitative descriptive approach with purposive sampling, interviews, and observation. Findings indicate that these four functions are not yet optimal due to lack of regulation, weak institutional collaboration, and budget constraints. Affirmative policies and stronger inter-stakeholder cooperation are needed to enhance the Education Office's performance in sustainably reducing school dropout rates.

Keywords: Department Of Education, Dropout Students, Function.

A. INTRODUCTION

Education is the most powerful weapon to change the world, as Nelson Mandela once said. However, education in Indonesia is not yet equally accessible to all its people due to various factors, one of which is the very high dropout rate, especially in regions with less favorable geographic and economic conditions.

According to Law Number 20 of 2003, education is a conscious and planned effort to create a learning atmosphere and process so that students actively develop their potential to possess spiritual and religious strength, self-control, personality, intelligence, noble morals, and the skills needed for themselves, society, the nation, and the state.

In Indonesia, education governance encompasses several stakeholders, including local governments, schools, teachers, and the community. The central government plays a crucial role in developing the national curriculum, implementing education policies, and allocating budgets for the education sector. Local governments also have the authority to adapt education to the needs of their regions. Schools, as implementing units of education, are responsible for implementing the curriculum and ensuring the quality of teaching. Teachers assist students in their learning and development. Community involvement, including parents, is also crucial in supporting education.

Adistiana Oliandra and Harmani Tasman (2024:262) view the goal of education as a process experienced by students, always involving learning experiences, and in this process, growth occurs. The goal of education in Indonesia is to provide access and educational opportunities to all citizens with the aim of improving the quality of life, human resources, and contributing to national development. However, the Indonesian education system has faced serious challenges

in its development. The main challenges are the very high dropout rate and educational inequality between urban and rural areas.

Urban areas generally have more facilities and qualified teachers than rural schools. According to the Central Statistics Agency (BPS) in 2022, West Java with a population of around 49.4 million people with the number of children dropping out of elementary, junior high, high school, and vocational high schools in each region can be concluded that spatially the most dropouts are in West Java Province as many as 10,884 people per 2020/2021 academic year, as the province with the largest population in Indonesia, West Java should have great potential to become a center of quality education, but in reality, West Java province has the highest dropout rate compared to other provinces. Especially for areas in the southern part of West Java Province, it is considered more lagging behind in terms of education quality, and also a high dropout rate compared to areas in the northern part of West Java Province. This southern West Java is dominated by mountainous, hilly and coastal areas, such as in Garut, Tasikmalaya, and Ciamis Regencies. This condition makes access to schools difficult, especially for children living in remote areas. The area in southern West Java, namely Garut Regency, besides having mountainous geography, and also a high dropout rate, Garut Regency has a relatively low economy.

According to data from the Garut Regency Central Statistics Agency (BPS) in 2022, the poverty rate in Garut reached 10.42%, higher than the West Java Province average of 7.98%. This also leads people in Garut Regency to choose to work to support their families rather than attend school.

Table 1. List of details of school dropout rates per sub-district in Garut Regency showing the number of junior high school students in 2021.

No	District	Number of Students Dropping Out of School	Number of Junior High School Students	Amount Percentage
1	Cisewu	99	897	11%
2	Pamulihan	35	608	5,7%
3	Cibatu	132	2371	5,6%
4	Sucinaraja	40	707	5,6%
5	Cigedug	97	1829	5,3%
6	Pasirwangi	135	2581	5,2%
7	Banjarwangi	82	1909	4,3%
8	Pangatikan	41	1010	4,1%
9	Sukawening	70	1879	3,7%
10	Bayongbong	143	4165	3,4%
11	Mekarmukti	23	819	2,8%
12	Cibalong	44	1577	2,7%
13	Lewigoong	37	1438	2,6%
14	Cisurupan	76	3001	2,5%
15	Sukaresmi	37	1535	2,4%
16	Limbangan	88	3963	2,2%

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17	Pakenjeng	69	3153	2,2%
18	Talegong	24	1135	2,1%
19	Tarogong Kaler	73	9784	2%
20	Banyuresmi	66	3563	1,9%
21	Caringin	26	1364	1,9%
22	Bungbulang	46	2558	1,8%
23	Cikelet	25	1407	1,8%
24	Karangpawitan	72	4270	1,7%
25	Karangtengah	27	1649	1,6%
26	Cikajang	52	3307	1,6%
27	Malangbong	66	4295	1,5%
28	Cibiuk	22	1609	1,4%
29	Selaawi	31	2135	1,4%
30	Cilawu	60	4241	1,4%
31	Paeundeuy	9	676	1,3%
32	Cisompet	27	2285	1,2%
33	Garut kota	85	7935	1,1%
34	Kadungora	45	4111	1,1%
35	Leles	30	2992	1%
36	Samarang	46	4479	1%
37	Tarogong Kidul	61	6353	1%
38	Wanaraja	12	1553	0,8%
39	Singajaya	7	954	0,7%
40	Kersamanah	12	2226	0,5%
41	Cihurip	2	631	0,3%
42	Pameungpeuk	2	1600	0,1%
TOTAL		768	104498	

Source: Garut Regency Education Office 2021

The table above shows that junior high school dropout rates are high, particularly in Cisewu District compared to other districts. The number of dropouts in Cisewu District in 2021 was 99 out of a total of 897 junior high school students, representing 11%. This is significantly lower than the dropout rate in Garut Kota District, where 85 out of a total of 7,935 junior high school students dropped out, representing 1.1%.

The Education Office, specifically the Garut Regency Education Office, is responsible for addressing this issue as the institution responsible for implementing education and addressing dropout rates. The Garut Regency Education Office faces limitations in implementing its programs to improve education quality and reduce dropout rates, particularly in Cisewu District. Cisewu District is among the areas with high school dropout rates, compared to districts located in urban areas or close to the center of Garut Regency, such as Garut City District. Factors underlying the high school dropout rate in Cisewu include the lack of specific regulations to reduce the dropout rate, limited access to services due to the Education Office's location being

too far from students and the community in Cisewu District, limited outreach from the Garut Regency Education Office, and a lack of infrastructure and educational facilities.

The objectives of this study are: To determine the role of the Education Office in reducing the dropout rate in Cisewu District, Garut Regency.

B. LITERATURE REVIEW

Functions of Government

According to Ryas Rasyid (in Labolo, 2006), the functions of government encompass four main aspects: regulation, public service, empowerment, and development. These four functions provide a framework for government institutions to effectively exercise their authority in meeting the needs of the community. The regulatory function ensures the existence of policies and regulations that govern public life in a fair and directed manner. The public service function emphasizes the importance of providing efficient and equitable services to the community. Meanwhile, the empowerment and development functions are oriented towards increasing community capacity and creating sustainable prosperity. Indicators:

- Regulation: the existence of specific regulations and policies in the education sector.
- Service: equitable and responsive access to education services.
- Empowerment: community outreach and participation in education.
- Development: equitable distribution of school facilities and infrastructure.

Public Administration

Waldo (1948) stated that public administration is a process that combines organizational theory, management, and ethical values in the delivery of public services. Public administration is not only oriented towards bureaucratic efficiency but also towards moral legitimacy in the implementation of public policy. The government, as a public servant, must be able to balance public interests with the organization's ability to implement programs. Thus, the effectiveness of public policy depends on the integration of administrative structures and public service values. In the context of education, this theory emphasizes the importance of cross-agency coordination so that education policies can be implemented optimally in the field. Indicators:

- Efficiency: implementation of targeted education programs.
- Accountability: transparency in budget allocation and use.
- Coordination: synergy between the Education Office, village governments, and other stakeholders.
- Responsiveness: the ability to respond to the educational needs of the community.

Community empowerment

According to Ndraha (1990), community empowerment is a process that fosters the capacity of individuals and groups to actively participate in managing their own social and economic lives. The government acts as a facilitator, creating a conducive environment for developing community independence. In the context of education, empowerment means increasing community awareness, motivation, and participation in supporting the sustainability of children's education. Empowerment also involves collaboration between educational institutions, families, and the government to minimize social and economic barriers to education. This process is fundamental to the success of sustainable human development. Indicators:

- Community participation in education outreach.
- Awareness of the importance of primary and secondary education.
- Collaboration between schools, government, and parents.
- Community capacity building through training or support programs.

C. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This research method is a qualitative approach with a descriptive method, the key informant in this study is the Head of the Garut Regency Education Office, the informants in this study are the Head of the Cisewu District Education UPT, Elementary and Junior High School Principals in Cisewu District, Elementary and Junior High School Teachers in Cisewu District, Students who dropped out of school and Parents of students. Data collection in this study through field studies, namely by direct research conducted by interviews, observation and documentation. The collected data is presented according to its type and classified descriptively. The data analysis process is carried out in three stages, namely data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing. This technique was chosen by considering and synchronizing the data analysis process from various sources and from different techniques since data collection, data reduction, data presentation and conclusion drawing. With this flow the data will be simplified to see the relationship, category and nature of the data so that appropriate conclusions can be drawn.

D. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Education is the process of improving knowledge, human resources, and intellectual values. Therefore, education is a long-term investment and ensures the sustainability of the future through knowledge and good manners.

The government, as the organizer, functions to fulfill its duty of educating the nation's children through education. It goes beyond simply carrying out its duties, including building educational institutions, providing infrastructure, providing teaching staff, and ensuring that all school-age Indonesian children receive formal and equitable education.

The government's responsibility for education is vested in the Ministry of Education, which delegates authority to the Education Office, including the Garut Regency Office. This Office is tasked with ensuring that school-age children attend both public and private schools and ensuring the education system operates effectively in the region. The Education Office is crucial in human resource development, assisting schools in developing plans and programs to improve the quality of education, thereby ensuring that the programmed plans of each educational institution are more effective and efficient in achieving their stated goals. In Article 217 of Law Number 23 of 2014, the Office is defined as a regional apparatus tasked with implementing regional affairs and authorities. This means that the government, through the Education Office, ensures that the Indonesian people receive equal access to education, especially in Garut Regency. Therefore, the Education Office's role is crucial in educating the nation's children and ensuring that all Indonesian children receive equal access to education.

Functions are rights and obligations that must be fulfilled by an agency or the government. The Garut Regency Education Office's role is to ensure that all school-age children receive equal access to education. However, the Garut Regency Education Office's efforts have not been 100% successful, resulting in many school-age dropouts who lack access to education. Dropouts are defined as students who do not continue their education or complete their compulsory education, which can be caused by both internal and external factors. The compulsory school age ranges from 7 to 18 years old, but this study focuses on the Garut Regency Education Office, which administers education from elementary to junior high school levels. In this research, the researcher explains the problems that cause children to drop out of school in Garut Regency, especially in Cisewu District, so that he can examine the function of the Garut Education Office in efforts to reduce the number of school dropouts, in overcoming the problem, the researcher can see in the following interview:

According to the results of the interview with Robi, a school dropout, he stated:

"I've never heard of a government program to address dropouts, especially the Garut Hebat (Great Garut Card), but if this happens, it would be great if a policy was established to help students return to school." (Interview Results, 2025).

In an interview with Mrs. Titin, a parent of a dropout and a member of the Cisewu District community, she stated:

"It's difficult to apply for the PIP program to the government. I've also applied for my child, but there hasn't been any response from the government." (Interview Results, 2025).

According to the results of the interview with Akbar, a school dropout in Cisewu District, he stated:

"When I was in school, outreach was only conducted at school, and usually once a year, each time I moved up a grade. Furthermore, outreach for educational programs like the PIP (Public Service Program) was not targeted and tended to be ineffective. The PIP application process was considered complicated and convoluted. I applied but never received any further response from the government." (Interview Results, 2025).

According to Ridwan, a high school dropout in Cisewu District, he stated:

"In my experience, the quality of school buildings is generally good and adequate, although some facilities are incomplete. When I was in elementary school, the school didn't have a library or a health center. However, when I moved on to junior high, both facilities were available. In terms of damage, there were only a few minor issues, such as holes in the roof and broken windows." (Interview Results, 2025).

The responses from the informants above illustrate that school dropouts are caused by several factors. These include internal factors such as economic constraints and relying solely on government assistance programs. External factors include the lack of specific regulations from the Garut Regency Education Office to reduce the dropout rate, the uneven distribution of educational services such as PIP assistance, the lack of public awareness of the importance of schooling from the Education Office, and the uneven distribution of school development and facilities in Cisewu District.

In 2024-2025, there were a number of school dropouts in Cisewu District, particularly at the elementary and middle school levels. The total number of dropouts was as follows:

Table 2. School Dropout Rate in Cisewu District 2024-2025

N O	Number of School Dropouts (Primary School)	Number of Students (Elementar y School)	Percentag e	Number of School Dropouts (Junior High School)	Number of School Dropouts (Junior High School)	Percentag e
1.	94	2761	3,4%	54	757	7,1%

Source: Cisewu District Education Unit, 2025

The table shows that the school dropout rate in Cisewu District in 2024-2025 shows a concerning situation, particularly at the junior high school level. The dropout rate for junior high schools reached 7.1% (54 students out of a total of 757), while for elementary schools the percentage was 3.4% (94 students out of a total of 2,761). Although the number of elementary school dropouts is higher, the proportion of problems is more critical at the junior high school level due to the high percentage. This data confirms the urgency of specific interventions at the junior high school level.

This study examines the function of the Education Office in reducing the school dropout rate in Garut Regency, Cisewu District. In this case, the researcher used theory as a benchmark for this research, making this research more focused and measurable, and able to identify the common threads of the problem and address the dropout rate in Garut Regency, especially in Cisewu District.

Regulation

The Garut Regency Education Office's function must include developing clear and binding policies to reduce the dropout rate in Cisewu District. This function emphasizes the creation of regulations that align the institution's objectives with its implementation capacity, such as the issuance of Regional Regulations specifically regulating mechanisms for reducing dropouts. Without specific regulations, response efforts tend to be reactive and uncoordinated between the Education Office, government, schools, and the community.

There are no regulations regarding reducing the number of school dropouts

The Garut Regency Education Office acts as an implementer of education policy and an extension of the central government in addressing the dropout problem in Cisewu District. As the agency responsible for regional education affairs, this office has the authority to issue regulations and special programs tailored to local conditions.

An interview with Mr. Asep Wawan Budiman, Head of the Garut Regency Education Office, stated:

"There are no regional regulations specifically governing the school dropout rate. It is only based on Articles 1-2 of the 1945 Constitution, stating that every citizen has the right to education, and every citizen is obliged to attend basic education, and the government is obliged to finance it." (Interview Results, 2025).

An interview with researcher Mr. Agus Rajab, Head of the Cisewu District Education Unit, stated:

"Currently, Garut Regency, particularly Cisewu District, does not have specific regulations specifically addressing efforts to reduce the school dropout rate." (Interview Results, 2025).

The responses provided by the informants above indicate that the Garut Regency Education Office's regulatory role in reducing the dropout rate in Cisewu District is still guided by West Java Regional Regulation Number 5 of 2021 concerning the Implementation of Education and Article 31 Paragraphs 1-2 of the 1945 Constitution as the legal basis for guaranteeing the right to education for all citizens, including the government's obligation to provide funding for basic education.

It can be argued that the Garut Regency Education Office, in its efforts to implement this regulatory function, should play an active role in formulating firm and binding policies to reduce the dropout rate, especially in Cisewu District. This is due to the Garut Regency Education Office's lack of regional regulations specifically aimed at reducing the dropout rate.

There is a policy plan in an effort to handle school dropouts

Efforts to reduce the dropout rate are being implemented by the Garut Regency Education Office to address the dropout rate in Cisewu District. An interview with Mr. Asep Wawan Budiman, Head of the Garut Regency Education Office, stated:

"The regulation is based on the "Let's Return to School Actively Through the Great Garut Card (AKAS KGH)" program, which will be launched this year. The goal is simple: we created the "Let's Return to School Actively Through the Great Garut Card (AKAS KGH)" program. The goal is to return ATS students to school until they complete their education at that level and then continue on to the next level, within our authority, which is elementary and junior high school. Then, we increase school participation rates, which ultimately improves the education index, which will support the Garut Regency Human Development

Index (HDI). Third, reducing the dropout rate is clear: first, we restore ATS students and second, we reduce the dropout rate (APS). Interview Result, 2025).

Interview with researcher Mr. Agus Rajab, as Head of the Cisewu District Education Unit, who stated that:

"The Garut Regency Education Office is preparing to launch the Great Garut Card (KGH) program as a strategic solution, which is planned to be implemented in the upcoming academic year." (Interview Results, 2025).

Interviews, particularly with dropouts, revealed that they were unaware of the new policy, the Great Garut Card (Kakar Garut Hebat) assistance program. As noted in an excerpt from a researcher's interview with dropout Robi, who stated:

I've never heard of a government program to address dropouts, especially regarding the Great Garut Card (Kakar Garut Hebat), but if this were to happen, it would be great if a policy was established to help them return to school (quote from researcher's interview with a dropout student in Cisewu District, Garut Regency, July 19, 2025).

The responses provided by the informants above indicate that the solution to reduce the dropout rate in Garut Regency, the Great Garut Card (KGH) program, is still in the planning stage and will only launch next year. Without clear regulations, programs like the Great Garut Card (KGH) risk ineffectiveness going forward, especially in reaching dropouts in remote areas who are often overlooked in data collection. Optimizing the regulatory function of the Education Office requires a regional legal umbrella that is able to bind all stakeholders and guarantee accountability in program implementation, including widespread socialization to remote areas such as Cisewu District.

Public Service

That services in education must be oriented towards justice and fulfilling community needs such as access to schools and direct access to educational services from the Garut Regency Education Office.

Unequal distribution of educational services

According to Mr. Dede Ferdiyanto, as head of the planning division at the Garut Regency Education Office, who stated that:

"The Education Office addresses the challenges of damaged roads and long distances through collaborative service functions with various parties. By utilizing the currently substantial village funds, villages are expected to play an active role in building road infrastructure in their areas, and coordination with the Public Works and Public Housing Office is also being carried out to improve road access. For long-distance transportation, purchasing school buses is considered ineffective due to budget constraints (Interview Results, 2025).

According to Mr. Komana, as the principal of SDN 2 Girimukti, Cisewu District, who stated that:

"Because of the road access, there are students who complain because the road is inadequate, especially during the rainy season, parents are worried about many disasters such as landslides because the location of the school is in the mountains, so the school provides dispensation during the rainy season in implementing entry hours, the home time is not too burdensome because the school is located in the mountains." (Interview Results, 2025).

Then an interview with Ridwan, a school dropout from Cisewu District, who stated that:

"Even though this damaged road is normal for me, here in the dry season it often rains at 2 pm, especially during the rainy season, the road to school becomes slippery and it is difficult to go to school because I walk 1 kilometer from home to school. This causes me to lose my

enthusiasm for studying because of the damaged road access, especially when it rains.” (Interview Results, 2025).

The above responses indicate that the Education Office's collaborative service function with the Village and the Public Works and Spatial Planning (PUPR) Office has not been optimally implemented. Many access roads to schools are damaged, with potholes, rocks, and flooding during rain. This damaged road condition in Cisewu District poses a serious obstacle for the Garut Regency Education Office in providing equitable education services. As a result, many students walk for kilometers or even skip school altogether due to a lack of adequate transportation.

Although damaged roads are commonplace for students in Cisewu District, challenges such as slippery roads during rain and the one-kilometer walk required, especially during the rainy season, pose serious obstacles for students in Cisewu District, Garut Regency, where the risk of landslides can be a concern for parents. In response, schools are offering flexible school start and end times to accommodate the geographic challenges. Although this solution does not fully address the root of the problem, namely the need for improved road infrastructure to ensure student safety and enthusiasm for school.

Educational service efforts in the form of the PIP program

This is the researcher's interview with Mr. Eram Suparman, as the head of the Junior High School division of the Education Office, who stated that:

"The Education Department's programs include PIP assistance, school equipment assistance such as uniforms, shoes, and bags, and also the provision of non-formal schools such as PKBM to reduce the dropout rate." (Interview Results, 2025).

The statement was clarified by Mr. Dede Ferdiyanto, as Head of the Planning Division of the Education Office, who stated that:

“The Garut Regency Education Office implements various educational service programs to minimize the dropout rate, including through the Smart Indonesia Program (PIP), the provision of learning support tools (including uniforms, shoes, and school bags), and the implementation of equivalency education through the Community Learning Activity Center (PKBM).” (Interview Results, 2025)

In contrast to the statement in the interview with Robi as a school dropout:

"One of my friends got the PIP program, but for me, getting PIP was quite difficult even though I had submitted the required documents to the village, and I have been waiting until now and there has been no response from the government (quote from the researcher's interview with a school dropout in Cisewu District, Garut Regency on July 19, 2025)." (Interview Results, 2025)

The responses above indicate that the implementation of educational assistance programs such as the PIP in Cisewu District, Garut Regency, continues to face challenges in distribution. Although some students have benefited from the program, there have been complaints about the complicated application process and the slow response time from authorities, as experienced by one student who expressed difficulty obtaining PIP despite having submitted the required documents. This highlights the need for improvements to the service system, particularly in administration and accelerated aid distribution, so that the dropout program can effectively reach all its targets.

Empowering

The empowerment function of the Garut Regency Education Office must be directed towards creating community independence in resolving the issue of school dropouts, where the government must provide space for active participation through a socialization program on the importance of schooling, so that efforts to reduce the number of school dropouts in Cisewu

District can be sustainable when students and the community have the awareness and independent ability that education is important.

Lack of socialization of the importance of education

Interview results According to Mr. Dede Ferdiyanto, as the head of the planning division at the Garut Regency Education Office, he said:

"Actually, the Garut Regency Education Office for empowerment in this case, socialization, has no specific period limit, but we continuously carry out socialization in collaboration with various parties such as the District, Education UPT, Principals and Teachers to campaign to prevent students from dropping out of school." (Interview Results, 2025).

Based on an interview with Mr. Agus Rajab, Head of the Cisewu District Education Unit, the Education Office conducted outreach to schools in the district solely through online platforms such as Zoom. He stated:

"The Garut Regency Education Office provides more virtual guidance through online platforms "such as Zoom, while direct outreach and training to schools is carried out by us, the Cisewu District Education UPT, as representatives in this area." (Interview Results, 2025).

A similar statement was also made by Mrs. Yani, as the Principal of SDN2 Pamayalan, Cisewu District, saying:

"The Education Office provided outreach online via Zoom to us, the principals. The Education Office did not directly visit the school. The Cisewu District Education Unit (UPT Pendidikan) carried out outreach directly to the schools and students. We, the school, are also directly responsible for communicating with parents and students about external and internal issues related to the importance of attending school." (Interview Results, 2025)

The above statement is in contrast to the interview with Akbar, a school dropout, who said: "When I was still in school, socialization was only done at school, and even then, it was usually once a year after each class promotion. Moreover, socialization of educational programs such as PIP tended not to be on target." (Interview Results, 2025).

Thus, the education program outreach conducted by the Garut Regency Education Office has not had a significant impact on reducing the dropout rate in Cisewu District. This is evident in the community's low understanding of education and educational assistance programs like the PIP (Public Education Assistance Program), as well as a lack of motivation to continue school. The lack of ongoing government outreach has made many families less interested in utilizing available programs.

Development

The development function carried out by the Garut Regency Education Office is that development is an instrument for increasing equal access to education and improving the quality of education for all members of society. The development function in education aims to create equitable social welfare by providing access to quality education. In Cisewu District, this function is realized through the implementation of the Education Office's authority to build and develop school facilities.

Uneven distribution of school development and facilities

Based on the results of an interview with Mr. Dede Ferdiyanto, as Head of Planning for the Garut Regency Education Office, the Education Office is improving educational facilities by prioritizing the most severely damaged buildings due to budget limitations. According to him, he said:

"Limited school facilities should not be a barrier to school attendance. Minor damage such as broken benches or leaking roofs can be handled directly by the school. Meanwhile, the Garut Regency Education Office, in coordination with the local Technical Implementation Unit (UPTD), provides annual rehabilitation assistance for moderate to severe damage,

although with budget constraints that require certain priorities. The selection of schools to be rehabilitated is based on the level of damage (priority for the most severe) and the requirement of 100 students (budget effectiveness), so not all facility proposals can be accommodated in one budget year. (Interview Results, 2025).

Based on the results of an interview with Mr. Agus Rajab, Head of the Ciswu District Education Unit, the Education Office is responsible for facilities such as libraries and UKS, as he said:

"The Garut Regency Education Office is responsible for providing core facilities such as libraries, while repairing minor damage falls under the responsibility of the schools. The Education Technical Implementation Unit (UPT) acts as a supervisor, ensuring facility standards are met and recommending repairs if necessary." (Interview Results, 2025).

Another response was also conveyed by Mr. Rustiamin, as the Principal of SDN 3 Sukajaya, Cisewu District, who said:

"The current school building meets Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) and is deemed suitable, but there are still limitations in supporting facilities such as the library and the health unit (UKS). The school has submitted a request to the Education Office to build these two facilities, but the request was rejected on the grounds that the minimum number of students must reach 100 before they can be realized." (Interview Results, 2025)."

The above statement is in contrast to the interview with Ridwan, a school dropout, who said:

"In my experience, the quality of school buildings is generally good and adequate, although some facilities are incomplete. When I was in elementary school, the school didn't have a library or a health center. However, when I moved on to junior high, both facilities were available. In terms of damage, there were only a few minor issues, such as holes in the roof and broken windows." (Interview Results, 2025).

That the development function carried out by the Garut Regency Education Office should act as a strategic instrument to encourage equal access to education while improving the quality of learning for all levels of society, especially in terms of equal distribution of facilities and is also not yet in line with Government Regulation Number 57 of 2021 Articles 35-37 stipulates standards for school facilities and infrastructure which include three main aspects: (1) building quality that must meet the Indonesian National Standard (SNI) for construction, (2) availability of basic facilities such as classrooms, libraries, laboratories, and sanitation, and (3) accessibility for people with disabilities through the provision of ramps and special toilets. These three standards are mandatory references in the construction and management of educational facilities to create a safe, decent, and inclusive learning environment for all students. The Education Office requires a minimum policy of 100 students for the construction of libraries and UKS (such as the rejection of the application of SDN 3 Sukajaya), The experience of students like Akbar reflects the positive development of facilities from elementary to junior high school levels, but also reveals structural problems: (1) Uneven development between levels and locations, (2) Rigid policies (student quotas) hinder the fulfillment of minimum standards, and (3) Temporary solutions (conversion of space) are not sustainable answers. To increase effectiveness, the Education Office needs to: (a) Revise policies based on the real needs of small schools, (b) Prioritize equity over quantity of students, and (c) Strengthen collaboration with UPT in monitoring the specific needs of each school.

E. CONCLUSION

Based on the research findings on the Function of the Education Office in Reducing School Dropout Rates in Cisewu District, Garut Regency, it can be concluded that the four government functions according to Ryas Rasyid's theory regulation, service, empowerment, and

development have not been optimally implemented in the context of implementing education policies in the region. Key findings indicate that the absence of specific regulations regarding dropout management strategies has resulted in unfocused programs, weak service functions due to minimal cross-sector collaboration, limited empowerment due to ineffective online outreach, and uneven development of educational facilities due to budget constraints and policy provisions that are not yet adaptive to field conditions.

These results indicate that the research objective of identifying the effectiveness of the Education Office's functions has been achieved and also contributes by strengthening the functional perspective of the regional bureaucracy on the issue of educational equity. This study recommends the need for more adaptive affirmative action policies and cross-agency synergy between the Education Office, the Ministry of Public Works and Housing (PUPR), and village governments to ensure equitable access to and access to educational facilities. For further research, a mixed methods approach is recommended to quantitatively measure the program's impact on reducing dropout rates and to expand the focus on the effectiveness of inter-agency collaboration. The limitations of this research lie in the limited scope of the region and observation time, so that in the future, longitudinal studies are needed to provide more comprehensive and sustainable policy recommendations for regional policy makers.

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