



Towards Collaborative Governance in Handling Poverty in Riau

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Abstract. This paper aims to describe the efforts of the Riau Province regional government in addressing poverty in the area. Poverty remains a global issue that requires serious government attention, and reducing poverty is a key goal in achieving sustainable development. The presence of 1.4% of the population living in extreme poverty in Riau Province highlights the urgency of this task. The research uses a qualitative approach, gathering both primary and secondary data. The findings reveal that the local government has focused on collaborative governance, involving various stakeholders in poverty alleviation efforts. The success in addressing poverty in Riau Province hinges on consolidation, cross-sectoral collaboration, and cooperation across different authorities.

Keywords: Poverty, Collaboration, Consolidation.

1 Introduction

Indonesia continues to struggle with poverty. According to the Central Statistics Agency, the poverty rate in March 2023 was 9.36%, a slight decrease of 0.21 percentage points from September 2022 and 0.18 percentage points from March 2022 [1]. In Riau Province, poverty levels have also improved, with the poverty rate at 6.68% in March 2023. Additionally, 1.4% of people, or 100,300 individuals, were still in extreme poverty in September 2022. Key factors contributing to poverty, such as high unemployment, unequal income distribution in rural areas, and limited access to education and health insurance for women, require urgent attention [2]. Poverty is a major challenge identified in the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) [3]. In line with this, the Riau Provincial Government is actively working to reduce poverty. Through their 2019-2024 vision of becoming a competitive, prosperous, dignified, and advanced region in Indonesia, the local government is focusing on inclusive economic growth, improving human resources, and promoting equitable infrastructure development. Research on poverty alleviation has been carried out by experts with various perspectives. The first is to examine strategies for handling poverty as carried out by [4]–[6]. Second, discussing the handling of poverty from a gender perspective which was studied by [7]–[9]. Lastly, there are various policies to reduce poverty discussed by [10]–[12]. The study on poverty described previously is different from the research we conducted which focused on actor interactions within a collaborative governance framework in overcoming poverty problems in Riau Province. Specifically, this research aims to answer the question, what is the process of actor collaboration in handling poverty in Riau Province?

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I. D. A. Nurhaeni et al. (eds.), *Proceedings of the 1st Joint International Conference on Social and Political Sciences: Challenges and Opportunities in the Future (JICSPPS 2023)*,
Advances in Social Science, Education and Humanities Research 884,
https://doi.org/10.2991/978-2-38476-350-4_23

2 Method

This study uses a qualitative method. According to Leavy [13], qualitative research tries to understand in depth a human phenomenon from the aspects of activities, situations, environments and objects. The field study carried out aimed to collect information using data collection techniques through in-depth interviews and document searches. Research informants focused on elements of local government and members of the Riau Province Legislative.

Data analysis in qualitative research according to Bailey [14] is carried out after the data is collected and grouped according to their respective categories. This data analysis also carried out identification of the focus of the study, analyzed using relevant theories to answer the research questions and ultimately a conclusion was drawn from the analysis that had been narrated.

3 Finding and Discussion

To address the research questions, a collaborative governance framework is applied. According to Ansell & Gash [5], collaborative governance is a modern approach in government management that brings together various policy stakeholders in a shared forum to reach a consensus. Emerson & Nabatchi [6] describe collaborative governance as the processes and structures for public policy decision-making and management that involve collaboration across public agencies, different levels of government, and the public, private, and civic sectors to achieve a common public objective that couldn't be achieved otherwise.

Departing from the theory put forward by Ansell & Gash, several important aspects of collaborative governance can be explained in overcoming the problem of poverty in Riau Province.

3.1. Institutional design

Poverty reduction has become a key priority for the Riau Provincial Government. The issue of poverty extends beyond just low economic conditions, encompassing access to education, healthcare, and employment opportunities. Presidential Instruction Number 4 of 2022 on the Acceleration of the Elimination of Extreme Poverty provides a national legal framework for addressing poverty at the regional level. However, there are no specific regional or governor regulations focused on poverty alleviation. Existing regulations pertain to social assistance and financial aid provided to community groups and villages within Riau Province's districts and cities.

To address poverty, the Riau Province Poverty Alleviation Coordination Team (TKPK) was established, led by the deputy regional head. Formed through Governor of Riau's Decree No. KPTS 1442/X/2020, this team holds regular coordination meetings to review the programs and activities of regional agencies related to poverty reduction. Examples include improving Integrated Social Welfare Data (DTKS) and providing social assistance to those in need.

However, undeniable that the majority of poor people in Riau Province are in protected forest areas such as several villages in Kampar Regency. Most of the villages in Kampar Kiri Hulu District are protected forest areas and have not been touched by much development. Apart from geographical issues, regulations regarding protected forest areas are also an inhibiting factor in poverty development in the area

Furthermore, pro-poverty alleviation policies in Riau Province with existing funding lead to three basic programs. First, reducing the burden on society through social assistance and social security. Second, increasing community income through social or community empowerment programs. Finally, reducing pockets of poverty through livable housing and sanitation programs.

3.2. Actor Collaboration Process

Poverty alleviation efforts in Riau Province are not solely handled by the regional government, despite being within its authority. Instead, the regional government coordinates and collaborates with various parties, including the central government, private sector, and local communities. Both the Riau Provincial Government and the Regency/City Regional Governments work together in advancing development and reducing extreme poverty in the province.

One example of this collaboration is shared budgeting between the Riau Provincial Government and district/city governments for implementing Universal Health Coverage (UHC). UHC ensures that all citizens have equitable access to quality health services, including promotive, preventive, curative, and rehabilitative care, at affordable costs. In 2023, the Riau Provincial Government allocated \$14.65 million for the UHC program.

Furthermore, the central government through Ministries and Institutions intervened in efforts to alleviate poverty through synergy with community empowerment programs with local governments with entrepreneurial activities, increasing access to capital and developing community skills. In this way, the target of this community empowerment program can be effective in creating a prosperous society.

Collaboration with the private sector and the community in overcoming poverty is carried out using various approaches. An institutionalized approach was taken with the establishment of the Riau Province Corporate Social Responsibility Forum (TJSP). This TJSP forum functions to provide benefits to the community both directly and indirectly. The private sector provides CSR for poor communities in an institutionalized manner and through collaboration built with local governments.

The next approach is with a zakat program carried out by various parties. The potential for zakat in Riau Province reaches 112.688.753 USD. However, the new zakat collected until July 2023 is 2.441.591 USD. The distribution of zakat has a direct impact on the social and economic life of the community. Zakat is a solution in poverty alleviation programs which always depend on the APBD. This zakat distribution is directed at poor communities where each district/city in Riau Province receives zakat funds of 375.540 USD or receives 1000 aid packages.

4 Conclusion

Based on the field findings previously explained, the conclusion of this research is that collaboration between actors, across sectors and across authorities has made a positive contribution in efforts to reduce poverty levels in Riau Province. The Riau Provincial Government collaboratively invites all elements to be directly involved in overcoming long-standing poverty. However, until now there is still unfinished homework in overcoming poverty in areas included in protected forest areas. For this reason, regulations are needed that are adaptive to the development of social life in society while still relying on collaborative efforts.

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