

Implementation of Stunting Policy to Improve Public Awareness and Accelerate Integrated Stunting Reduction in Jombang Regency

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Abstract

This program responds to the issue of stunting in Jombang Regency, namely the condition of growth failure in children due to malnutrition in the first 1,000 days of life, which threatens the quality of the generation facing 2045. Although the prevalence of stunting in Jombang (5.85% in early 2024) was below the national target (<14%), efforts to accelerate reduction are still needed in accordance with Regent Regulation No. 4 of 2022. This qualitative research aims to identify and analyze the implementation of integrated stunting reduction policies and their inhibiting factors. Data were collected through observation, interviews, and document studies, then analyzed using Soren C. Winter's policy implementation theory which emphasizes three behavioral aspects: inter-organizational relationships, lower-level bureaucrats, and target groups. The results show that implementation is running quite well, as evidenced by the decrease in cases from 5,509 (2022) to 3,428 (September 2024). However, several indicators have not reached the target, especially related to the suboptimal behavior of lower-level bureaucrats. The identified obstacles serve as learning materials for improvement. Therefore, it is recommended that the performance of policy makers be optimized and the human resource capacity of lower-level implementers be enhanced. Collaboration with the public and private sectors also needs to be strengthened to optimize comprehensive preventive measures for stunting.

INTRODUCTION

Stunting is a condition of growth and development failure caused by chronic malnutrition, which results in children being shorter than their age and affects the physical and functional development of the child's body (Abdat et al., 2020; Izwardy, 2019). Stunting occurs due to inadequate nutritional intake during the first 1,000 days of life (HPK), from conception to two years of age (Ministry of Health of the Republic of Indonesia, 2018). According to WHO (2013), stunting can affect motor, cognitive, personal, social, and language development, which are short-term consequences for toddler development. If left untreated, it can have long-term consequences. Long-term consequences will have adverse consequences, including mental retardation, reduced learning ability, and the risk of chronic diseases such as diabetes, hypertension, and obesity (Iswati, Arief Darmawan, and Rachmawati Novaria, 2024). Factors contributing to stunting include poverty, infectious diseases, nutrition, and community insecurity (Rahmawati & Agustin, 2020; Ulfah & Nugroho, 2020). Access to health services also influences stunting rates in a region, resulting from unequal access to health care between regions, necessitating adjustments to the prevailing conditions (Mastuti and Indahwati, 2021) (A et al., 2023).

The prevalence rate of stunting in Indonesia in 2022 is still at 21.6% of the target of 14% expected by President Jokowi as stated in Presidential Regulation of the Republic of Indonesia Number 72 of 2021 concerning the Acceleration of Stunting Reduction, Article 5 paragraph (1), namely: "in order to achieve the national target of stunting prevalence as referred to in Article 4 paragraph (2), an intermediate target of 14% (fourteen percent) must be achieved in 2024. To achieve this target, five pillars are set in the national strategy for accelerating stunting reduction, one of the core points of which is the involvement of regional governments in increasing commitment and leadership vision as well as increasing the convergence of specific interventions and sensitive interventions (Wulandari, 2021).

One example of local government involvement in stunting management is the Jombang Regency Government. Reported stunting cases in Jombang Regency in 2024 totaled 3,639 toddlers, with a stunting prevalence of 5.85%. The Jombang Regency Government's commitment to supporting President Jokowi's policies regarding stunting is marked by the issuance of Jombang Regent Regulation No. 4 of 2022 concerning the Acceleration of Integrated Stunting Reduction in Jombang Regency. Furthermore, since 2023, Jombang Regency has been led by an Acting Regent, whose quarterly performance assessment includes indicators for stunting management.

Jombang Regent Regulation No. 4 of 2022 explains that integrated stunting reduction acceleration activities are carried out using five pillars: appropriate government commitments and policies; regional campaigns focused on behavioral change and local wisdom; convergence, coordination, and consolidation of national, provincial, and district programs; promoting nutrition and food security/resilience policies; and program monitoring and evaluation. In addition to these five pillars, stunting reduction activities are carried out through specific nutrition interventions targeting adolescent girls; prospective brides; pregnant women; breastfeeding mothers; and children aged 0-59 months. Furthermore, sensitive nutrition interventions are carried out for the general public (Fauziah & Novandi, 2021; Purnamasari et al., 2022).

Initial observations showed a decrease in the number of stunted toddlers in 2024 to 3,639 from 4,441 in 2023. The decrease in the number of stunted toddlers is suspected to be the impact of Jombang Regent Regulation Number 4 of 2022. To find out this, it is necessary to conduct research regarding the Implementation of the Integrated Stunting Reduction Acceleration Policy in Jombang Regency and identify the inhibiting factors of the policy. The research was conducted within the scope of Jombang Regency with the main locus at the Jombang Regency Health Office. The research is based on the implementation theory proposed by Soren C. Winter (2004).

METHOD

The method used in this activity focuses on a participatory approach. This approach actively involves the community, especially mothers with toddlers, in every stage of the activity. With this participatory method, the community is not only a recipient of information but also plays a role as an agent of change (Hasan & Sangadji, 2024). Mothers are invited to participate in group discussions, share experiences, and engage in hands-on practice, so they can better understand the importance of stunting prevention. This active involvement is expected to foster a sense of ownership of the program and accelerate the desired behavioral changes.

Furthermore, this program prioritizes education through interactive counseling and live demonstrations. The counseling sessions are conducted in the community, involving mothers in discussions about the importance of balanced nutrition and proper parenting. During these sessions, mothers not only receive information but are also given the opportunity to interact and ask questions. One key activity is a demonstration of how to cook nutritious meals using locally sourced ingredients. This demonstration aims to demonstrate that healthy

food doesn't have to be expensive and can be prepared simply. Participants are given the opportunity to participate in the cooking process, allowing them to better understand and apply the information provided.

This study aims to determine how to increase public awareness through the implementation of an integrated stunting reduction acceleration policy in Jombang Regency. Data obtained in this study came from interviews, documentation, and observations to find images, notes, or photographs. The collected data were analyzed according to Sugiyono (2018:485) into three stages: data reduction; data presentation; and conclusion drawing. In this study, the researcher used a descriptive method, prioritizing accurate, factual, and systematic descriptions of specific facts. Therefore, this study will describe how the integrated stunting reduction acceleration policy is implemented in Jombang Regency and identify the inhibiting factors.

The focus of qualitative research is a crucial aspect to consider when collecting data in the field, ensuring the research's theme is consistent and aligned with the planned path. The focus of this research aims to ensure the data are not overly broad, allowing for focused discussion and more detailed results. This research focuses on the implementation of Jombang Regent Regulation No. 4 of 2022, a policy aimed at accelerating integrated stunting reduction in Jombang Regency, using Soren C. Winter's (2004) theory, which encompasses inter-organizational behavior, lower-level bureaucrat/implementer behavior, and target group behavior.

The primary location of the research was the Jombang Regency Health Office. This location was chosen because the Jombang Regency Health Office is the organization that implements local government health policies and initiated the integrated stunting reduction acceleration policy in Jombang Regency, as outlined in Jombang Regent Regulation Number 4 of 2022.

To achieve an empirical approach in research, various data sources are needed to support a study. Data sources are defined as the origin of data obtained and their determination is a crucial part in compiling a study because the data obtained influences the results of the study. In qualitative research, data sources are divided into two types: primary data obtained from key informants obtained through interviews with direct observation of the implementation of the integrated stunting reduction acceleration policy in Jombang Regency; and secondary data obtained through data results that have been further processed and

presented in the form of tables or diagrams, usually obtained from government agency reports, weighing results at integrated health posts (posyandu), scientific publications, or on websites.

This study uses data triangulation, which according to Moleong (2013:330) defines as a technique for determining data validity by utilizing something other than the data itself, which is used as a comparison and to check the data. The data triangulation used is source triangulation, which is carried out by checking information or statements with several previously determined informants repeatedly until valid data and information are obtained. Furthermore, the data validity test using triangulation is carried out through the following stages: comparing the data from observations with the data obtained.

in-depth interview results; comparing data from document and literature studies with interview results; and comparing in-depth interview results from several sources.

By combining data from all elements as well as the use of technology, and monitoring, the methods used in this PKM activity are designed to ensure that the stunting prevention education program can have a sustainable and significant impact on the community.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The implementation of the integrated stunting reduction acceleration policy in Jombang Regency is guided by Jombang Regent Regulation number 4 of 2022 based on the results of data analysis using the Soren c. Winter policy implementation model, there are 3 variables that determine the success of a policy, namely:

Inter-Organizational Relationship Behavior

According to Winter (2004), one of the determining factors for successful policy implementation is interorganizational behavior. Interorganizational behavior between organizations involved in accelerating integrated stunting reduction must be well-connected. No organization should feel superior to another. The relationship between one organization and another should be complementary, in accordance with the organization's main duties and functions in accelerating integrated stunting reduction. Interorganizational behavior encompasses two aspects: commitment and coordination.

In terms of commitment, the commitment statement document signed by the Regent demonstrates the seriousness of the Jombang Regency government in addressing stunting in Jombang Regency. This is supported by the allocation of a budget for stunting mitigation in the Regional Budget (APBD) and the innovation of the JOSS application to control the number of

stunting cases in each village and sub-district in Jombang Regency, demonstrating the strong commitment of the Jombang Regency government to address the stunting problem.

In terms of coordination, interviews, documentation, and observations revealed that inter-organizational coordination is implemented in various forms, from the implementation of integrated health posts (Posyandu) for toddlers, stunting counseling, routine data collection and reporting, to evaluation meetings. Furthermore, coordination is also carried out by involving pentahelix elements including academics, communities, entrepreneurs, and the media involved in stunting reduction funding initiatives in Jombang Regency. Good coordination can run well if no one is indifferent to the tasks and responsibilities given, so it can be concluded that inter-organizational coordination in accelerating stunting reduction in Jombang Regency is quite good.



Lower Level Bureaucratic Behavior

In addition to inter-organizational behavior, the behavior of lower-level bureaucrats is also crucial in policy implementation. The position of lower-level bureaucrats/implementers is closely linked to the success or failure of a public policy. At this level, implementers are in direct contact with the subject and focus of the policy. Therefore, no matter how good a policy is, if problems arise at this level, the results will be in vain. This indicator includes work ethic, organizational control, and professionalism.

Work ethic, which is a strong determination to achieve the best results in implementing a public policy, is crucial. This work ethic serves to motivate implementers to achieve established

targets. The implementers of the stunting reduction acceleration program in Jombang Regency have performed their assigned duties effectively.

This is demonstrated by the coverage of data collected from lower levels, reported and inputted through the joss.jombangkab.go.id application. It is also demonstrated by the achievement of performance indicators for accelerating integrated stunting reduction.

Recapitulation of Toddler Data in Jombang Regency

The work ethic of the implementers is influenced by organizational control in supervising the implementation process at the lower level as a liaison between policy makers and policy implementers at the lower level. This relates to the conformity of work results with the plans contained in the document for accelerating stunting reduction and its derivatives. In the indicator of sensitive intervention service data achievement, out of nine existing sub-indicators, six have been achieved. Control carried out by related parties is carried out in stages, from the Health Office which carries out control at community health centers, to community health centers carrying out control in their coverage areas. Therefore, it is stated that organizational control carried out by policy makers has been carried out well, so that activities to accelerate stunting reduction in the field are also carried out well.

Professionalism in accelerating integrated stunting reduction relates to the alignment of work results with individual responsibilities and adherence to existing regulations. In this sub-indicator, the quality and quantity of human resources significantly influence the achievement of the integrated stunting reduction acceleration process in Jombang Regency. The value of professionalism among public policy implementers is demonstrated in the achievement of the stunting reduction acceleration indicator. Of the 20 indicators available, eleven have met the target by the first semester of 2024. Several indicators have not been met in accelerating integrated stunting reduction, resulting in the professionalism of lower-level bureaucrats being declared below expectations, despite the interviewees' statements of professionalism.



According to Winter (2004), the final factor influencing successful implementation is the behavior of the target group. Target groups for integrated stunting reduction include adolescent girls; prospective brides; pregnant women; breastfeeding mothers; and children aged 0-59 months. This factor generates two indicators: positive and negative responses.

A positive response is used as an indicator of the effectiveness of a policy. A positive response is not only reflected in the target group's statement of approval for the policy but also in their participation and engagement in the implementation process of the integrated stunting reduction acceleration policy. From interviews, observations, and field documentation, researchers can conclude that the target group responded positively to the implementation process of the integrated stunting reduction policy. This positive response from the target group provides the foundation for maintaining the policy and, more importantly, improving its quality.

Number of Stunting Cases in 5 Years

A negative response is the opposite of the indicator above. This response is given by the target group when they feel dissatisfied with a policy. The presence of a negative response serves as evaluation material for policymakers for future improvements. Target groups sometimes hesitate to express their displeasure with public policies. In this case, there were no interviews with sources who provided negative responses. However, there is an implicit message conveyed by the Posyandu cadre who complained about receiving only a small honorarium, as in the interview above.

From the results of interviews, observations and documentation of researchers in the field, it can be concluded that the behavior of many target groups gave a positive response to the integrated stunting reduction acceleration policy, while negative responses were faintly heard in the researcher's interviews with informants.

Inhibiting Factors

The implementation of the integrated stunting reduction acceleration policy in Jombang Regency was expected to be smooth. However, conditions on the ground have yielded mixed results, preventing the policy from being implemented as expected. There are obstacles and barriers in the implementation process of the integrated stunting reduction policy in Jombang Regency. This is evidenced by several performance indicators for the integrated stunting reduction acceleration that have not yet met the target. This can be caused by several factors, including the organization, implementers, and target groups. Based on interviews, observations, and documentation conducted by researchers in the field, the factors inhibiting the implementation of the stunting reduction acceleration policy include:

1. **Target Participation and Accessibility:** There are obstacles in reaching target groups, such as reluctance to come to Posyandu, as well as lack of awareness for premarital health checks and post-natal family planning participants.
2. **Data System Fragmentation:** Overlapping data collection systems (multi-applications) cause duplicate work for cadres and data inconsistencies, such as differences in calculation results between platforms and input constraints due to the network.
3. **Low Nutrition and Health Literacy:** There is a lack of understanding among mothers regarding fulfilling children's nutrition, preventing stunting, and the importance of consuming Iron Supplement Tablets (ITD) for adolescent girls.
4. **Compliance with Health Services:** There is non-compliance with health service protocols, such as couples of childbearing age (PUS) who do not undergo premarital health checks.
5. **Operational Technical Constraints:** Program implementation is hampered by technical infrastructure issues, particularly unstable internet networks in several locations, thus hampering the data input process.

The obstacles that emerged above are in line with the failure to achieve the performance indicators for accelerating stunting reduction, so they can be used as evaluation material for improvements, so that the obstacles that arise can be overcome and the performance indicators for accelerating stunting reduction can be implemented according to the expected targets.

CONCLUSION

Based on the results of interviews, observations, and documentation conducted by researchers to analyze the implementation of the integrated stunting reduction acceleration policy in Jombang Regency, several important conclusions were obtained. The implementation

of this policy, when analyzed using policy implementation theory. In the behavioral indicators of bureaucrats at the level, which include work ethic, organizational control, and professionalism, each element has understood their duties and responsibilities, although there are still aspects that need to be improved considering that several targets for stunting reduction acceleration have not been achieved. Meanwhile, the behavioral indicators of target groups show that the majority of the community gave a positive response to the policy, although there were still negative responses that were not too significant but still need to be considered.

Policy implementation in Jombang Regency has shown quite good results, as seen by the decline in the number of stunting cases from 5,509 cases in 2022 to 3,428 cases as of September 2024. However, there are several inhibiting factors such as low participation of target groups in Posyandu, double workload due to the use of several toddler data input applications, data discrepancies between the Si Gizi and Joss applications, network constraints in some locations, and a lack of public awareness regarding the family planning program, consumption of Iron Supplement Tablets for adolescent girls, health checks for couples of childbearing age, and mothers' understanding of nutrition and stunting. Therefore, researchers recommend that the implementation of this policy be optimized through improved performance and budget support for policy actors, increased human resource capacity at the grassroots level, cross-sector collaboration, and strengthening preventive efforts through outreach and mentoring to target groups.

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