STUNTING PREVENTION PROGRAM IN NORTH BENGKULU REGENCY

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to analyze the stunting prevention program in North Bengkulu Regency through the AGIL concept proposed by Talcott Parsons in the theory of Structural Functionalism. This study uses a qualitative research approach, with case studies. The type of research used is a more in-depth descriptive. Research data were collected through observation techniques, unstructured interviews and document collection. Research informants were determined through purposive sampling technique. The results showed that there were 4 stunting prevention programs in North Bengkulu Regency, namely maternal and child health service programs, nutrition counseling programs and supplementary feeding, social protection programs and sanitation and clean water programs through the use of village funds. These four programs were able to reduce stunting rates in the research locations. Implementation of the program is emphasized on the process of community empowerment. The main targets are changes in personal health behavior and environmental health behavior. The process of adaptation, goal setting, integration, and pattern maintenance are also fairly well systemized in the program realization process. In the future, program implementation needs to be accompanied by the economic maturity of the community.

Keywords: Program, Prevention, Stunting

INTRODUCTION

The stunting (short) toddlers’ incidence has become one of the major nutritional problems faced in Indonesia (Rahmawati et al., 2020). Therefore, this problem is being one of the targets in the 2nd Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) such as eliminating hunger and malnutrition forms in 2030, and also achieving food security (Ishatono, 2016). The purpose of this program is to reduce the stunting rate until 40% in 2025 (Jendela, 2018).

In realizing this target, the government set stunting as one of priority programs (Purnamasari et al., 2020). Currently, Indonesia has a high stunting rate in fourth rank in the world (Izah et al., 2020). Therefore, the government of Indonesia implemented an integration program of stunting prevention intervention that involves the governments and institutions (SSaputri, 2019). In 2018, there are about 100 districts in 34 provinces that were designated as priority locations for stunting reduction and there is an increase of about 60
Bengkulu is one of the provinces that received specific training from the government program which aims to reduce stunting rates in Indonesia (Rahmadhita, 2020). Based on national standards, the stunting rate should not reach above 20% (Rahayu et al., 2020). Unfortunately, the stunting rate in Bengkulu Province reached 28% from the total number of toddlers 143,000 in ten districts/cities. It means that there are 40,000 toddlers who were born stunted.

Based on the Electronic Recording of Community-Based Nutrition Report (Elektronik Pencatatan Pelaporan Gizi Berbasis Masyarakat/EPPGBM), the district with the highest stunting rate was in North Bengkulu Regency, followed by Kepahiang Regency, Lebong Regency, and Muko-Muko. As for Kaur and South Bengkulu, the stunting rate is already below 20%. In May 2019, North Bengkulu Regency was designated as a Stunting Locus of 38.5% at the National level. As for this case, the Regent formed a Stunting Reduction Team (TIM Penurunan Angka Stunting/TPAS) by involving 17 related regional apparatus organizations (Organisasi Perangkat Daerah/OPD) to conduct data analysis, planning, discussing and regulating. In April 2020, because of their hard work the stunting rate in North Bengkulu decreased to 10.35%.

The government of North Bengkulu Regency is greatly concerned of the stunting problem in Bengkulu Province. From the first observation, it is found that in 2018 the highest stunting problem was in North Bengkulu Regency with about 38.5%. However, in 2019 after stunting reduction team hard work in coping the problem, they succeeded in reducing the stunting rate to 10.35%. This result was very significant and interesting to be studied. Based on this condition, the researchers were interested in studying deeper about the strategy of the stunting prevention program in North Bengkulu during pandemic CoVid-19.
In accordance with the initial process of identifying research problems, the appropriate research approach used was the case study approach. A line with Yin’s opinion in (Creswell, 2013) qualitative research with a case study approach is a research that begins with identifying a case in real life in the context or setting contemporary (Sabari, nd).

**Sampling Technique**
This study used a purposive sampling technique for determining the informant or subject of the study. In this technique, the subjects were selected in accordance with the required characteristics (R, 2016). Based on this technique and research objectives, the subjects of this study were the Stunting Rate Reduction Team (TIM Penurunan Angka Stunting/TPAS) and the Regional Apparatus Organization (Organisasi Perangkat Daerah/OPD) North Bengkulu.

**Data Resources**
The data of the strategy on successful stunting prevention program in CoVid-19 pandemic in North Bengkulu Regency were got from some resources, they were:

1. **Primary Data.** The primary data of the research was obtained from the results of direct interviews with research’s subject (without any intermediary media). The primary data related to the information from the Stunting Rate Reduction Team (TIM Penurunan Angka Stunting/TPAS) and the Regional Apparatus Organization (Organisasi Perangkat Daerah/OPD)

2. **Secondary Data.** The secondary data in this study were in the form of books, notes, reports and archives. The secondary data were got from Stunting Rate Reduction Team (TIM Penurunan Angka Stunting/TPAS) and the Regional Apparatus Organization (Organisasi Perangkat Daerah/OPD)

**Data Collection Techniques**
In qualitative research the main data were words and actions. The other data were called additional data such as documents (Afrizal, 2014). The data collection techniques in this research will be carried out through three things, they were:

1. **Observation technique (Hasanah, nd).** Firstly, observation had been done to see the socio-cultural conditions of the community, and conducting an interaction with stunting rate reduction team (TIM Penurunan Angka Stunting/TPAS) and regional apparatus organization (Organisasi Perangkat Daerah/OPD) as an recognition and socialization about the plan of research activity would be done. Furthermore, the observation technique was conducted while 2 others data collection techniques were used. It was done in order to compare the information obtained with the actual reality, so the research obtained valid and reliable research data.

2. **Interviews (Judge, 2013).** The interview process would be carried out in an unstructured manner where the researcher will ask open-mindly research questions to research’s subject, listen to them carefully and then form research questions. The researchers were also committed to spend a lot of time in the research’s field.

3. **Documentation.** The collection of various documents was done to support the research primary data. The documents were about the data of research needs from Stunting Rate Reduction Team (TIM Penurunan Angka Stunting/TPAS) and the Regional Apparatus Organization (Organisasi Perangkat Daerah/OPD) North Bengkulu

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Data Analysis

The process of analyzing the data had been done from the beginning action in research's field. The team analyzed the results of the research by anonymizing the names of the subjects, then interpreting the data that has been collected together. Data analysis was carried out inductively, which was started from a specific perspective to a more general one through three stages: data reduction, data presentation, and drawing conclusions (Sugiyono, 2014). The analysis of the research results referred to the theory of Structural Functionalism Talcot Parsons: AGIL concept.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

In April 2020, the government of North Bengkulu Regency succeeded in reducing the stunting rate of children significantly from 38.5% to 10.35%. The government implemented optimally in using village funds in stunting prevention programs, and maximized the community participation in concrete steps. For all who actively participated were part of community members, so it became the strength in stunting prevention programs in this area.

The following descriptions were the stunting prevention program used in North Bengkulu Regency:

Maternal and Children Health Service Program

Health Service Program for maternal and children in general aims to achieve independence in healthy living through optimal health services and various efforts, while for mothers and families this program aims to form the small happy family norms (Norma Keluarga Kecil Bahagia Sejahter/NNKBS) and also increase the children level health to get a good facility to grow and develop optimally. Basically, this program has a final target as the basis of improving people's quality. Meanwhile, the specific goals in this program are:

1. Forming and improving mothers' ability (knowledge, attitudes and behavior), in overcoming self-health and her family by using appropriate technology to foster family health, and Posyandu.
2. Optimizing the toddlers and preschoolers health service independently in the family circle, Posyandu, Karang Balita and in Kindergarten.
3. Expanding the range of health services for infants, toddlers, pregnant women, maternity mothers, postpartum mothers, and breastfeeding mothers.
4. Ensure the quality of health services for pregnant women, maternity mothers, postpartum mothers, breastfeeding mothers, infants and toddlers.
5. Encouraging the roles of the community, families and all their members to overcome the health problems of mothers, toddlers, preschoolers, especially by improving the role of mothers and their families (Simamora, 2021)

This program is about the procurement of health facilities and infrastructure. Besides health check and treatment activity, the main point is community empowerment programs especially in raising people awareness about how important the healthiness of mothers and their babies is to prevent stunting problems in North Bengkulu Regency. Villages become the focus of this program. It means that autonomy was fully given to the village administration and team for its implementation. Some problems appear because what is going to change are the communities' culture and habit in raising awareness of mothers, breastfeeding mothers, infants, and toddlers' healthiness. It happens in the middle to lower economic levels of the family. They were difficult to
maintain food quality to be consumed and focused on supplying enough food quantity. Based on (Guntoro, 2020) cultural and social change always start from the community's response to the life's development (Azizah, nd). The more advanced information technology becomes one of the big factors that encourage cultural changes in social life (Gunawan et al., nd). Socio-cultural change is a symptom of the social structures and cultural patterns changes in a society.

A line to Guntoro's statement, human habits and economic level are related to their income and the complexity of their need to live. The economy levels become the basis of social and habitual changes. It means that when the community's economy develops well, it will affect the social or socio-cultural behavior of the community, such as the ways of thinking, acting, life-styling, friendship or ideology.

The challenges in implementing this program are related to the statements above. However, with a systematic and consistent approach carried out together, the lower communities are able to change their habits by prioritizing nutritional needs gradually, especially for pregnant women, breastfeeding mothers, infants and toddlers; but they rely on local government assistance. It is necessary to improve the community's economy so they could fulfill nutritional needs and health insurance for pregnant women, breastfeeding mothers, infants and toddlers.

Children identity cards (Kartu Identitas Anak/ KIA) services is one of the health facilities provided by the local government (Restuastuti & Chandra, 2007). This program takes an important position in preventing stunting in this area, especially related to monitoring the progress of pregnant women, infants and toddlers in all villages, North Bengkulu Regency. The local government has provided health facilities and services that can be utilized by all communities optimally. By sequential and consistent process, the facilities are adequately and meet the standards of good health service.

The development of facilities also prioritizes community social capital so the integration could run well. Cooperation and solidarity between communities and local government are the most prominent social capital and the key success of health facilities development (Maria et al., 2018). In conclusion, the availability of health services in the villages brought a major change in the health quality of pregnant women, breastfeeding mothers and toddlers, and gradually reduced the stunting rate in North Bengkulu Regency at this time. However, it could not guaranteed permanently, because the implementation of the program is fully assisted by the use of village funds, while the economic condition of the community has not made any efforts to improve it.

**Nutrition Counseling and Supplementary Feeding Program**

In this program, the activity is conducted by increasing mothers and families' understanding of nutrition and realization on giving additional food for toddlers based on healthy standard, guaranteed and good food quality (Tiara Rosania Hestuningtyas, 2014). Additionally, the supporting activity is an aspect of quality, food safety, and nutritional value based on target need. All the activities are supported by village funds. The foods are directly delivered to the toddlers' mother in the range age 6 months- 2 years. Besides that, pregnant women get the milk, and the babies between 0-6 months are socialized to get exclusive breastfeeding. During the CoVid-19 pandemic, the provision of additional food is done by following the protocols. Unfortunately, in the beginning the implementation is interfered with by any reporting/ information that the snacks were consumed by other family members, not the target program.

To overcome this problem, the local government collaborates with stunting...
prevention. The team in the village internally approaches the families who receive the program. They need quite a long time to adapt to reach the goals, but the integration between the government and community is important to be used in its implementation. It is useful to reach the goals based on the setting that has been planned before.

Nutritional problem is categorized as problems in the life-cycle; started from pregnancy, infants, toddlers, adolescents, to the elderly. It can be assumed, nutritional problems could happen in all age range (Mustafa et al., 2015). It is noted that the implementation of nutritional counseling and supplementary feeding programs are not only for pregnant women. So, improving mothers’ knowledge of nutrition needs to be improved. As stated by (Wati et al., 2020) the lack of mothers’ knowledge on health problems, specifically the knowledge of nutritional needs for family (especially children) becomes the obstacle in stunting prevention programs. For that reason, it needs an effort to increase their understanding.

Basically, nutritional counseling and supplementary feeding are the integrated activities with Posyandu. However, those are government programs which aim to prevent stunting problems in villages. Those are conducted together at the same exact time, and the programs are free for all.

The stunting convergence service process in the village by the government is directly funded by village funds (Permanasari et al., 2020). Therefore, the local government has to maximize the benefits for the community, especially for families who have stunting children. However, in the implementation process, it really requires good cooperation between the community and the health team in the village in order to achieve stunting convergence.

There is an obstacle in the beginning of implementation. It lacks good cooperation between the practitioners (Stunting Rate Reduction Team \( (TIM \text{ Penurunan Angka Stunting/TPAS}) \)) and the Regional Apparatus Organization \( (Organisasi \text{ Perangkat Daerah/OPD}) \) and community. It is caused by the adaptation process doesn't running well. A line to AGIL Talcot Parson scheme that the main key of successful system in society is adaptation process (Ramadani, 2019). The cultural domination in society is highly influential to the successful program implementation. Each individual basically has a different behavior, conditions and goals. Therefore, the efforts are needed to achieve harmonization between culture, habits and community behavior to program implementation, in sociological terms it called adaptation (Choirudin, 2016). Likewise, how it is correlated to the real condition. However, adaptation could run well and effectively as time goes by as the target goals.

**Social Protection Program**

Social protection is direct program by conducting interaction with the society. It started by socialization activity which aims to increase public understanding of the danger and prevention of stunting problems. This is a new understanding for people in villages, especially for middle to lower economic level families.

The result of this study found that the information of stunting prevention in North Bengkulu Regency was conducted by empowerment approach. This approach is specific as well as the strength of stunting prevention in this area. After the people started empowered their thoughts, behavior, and daily habitual in prevention efforts followed by the next step taken. It can be said that every program begins by building human resources whether the society or practitioners Stunting Rate Reduction Team \((TIM \text{ Penurunan Angka Stunting/TPAS})\) and the Regional Apparatus Organization \( (Organisasi \text{ Perangkat Daerah/OPD}) \) of the program.
Although the implementation is not easy, the key is the cooperation between communities with the local government in social capital. As stated by (Sehabuddin, 2016) social capital has an important role in improving Posdaya ability in empowering the community. The basic parts are belief, networks, cooperation, and self-reliance which have significant impact on economic growth through various mechanisms such as increasing a sense of responsibility towards community needs, increasing participation in each stage of development, and automatically strengthening the harmony of society in achieving the goals. A line to (Faedlulloh, 2015) opinion which stated that a forming belief of society impacts automatic changes on other social capital components.

At the beginning activity, the obstacles are in the form of difficulty felt by society in receiving new understanding; difficulty in gathering the society; difficulty in convincing society about how important maintaining good food nutrition for them. The most difficult is empowering families who have stunting problems. It is caused by some factors such as low economic income.

In addition, during the implementation of the program using village funds, it could not resist for too long. The government can’t afford the provision of additional food and vitamins in a continuous period. The impact of this program could not be permanently based on village funds. This condition certainly requires a comprehensive strategy to increase the ability and independence of the community to prevent stunting. Based on (Suharto, 2015) the government needs a strategy with long-term impact to build an income allowance scheme that balances between the protection and opportunity in helping the poor and vulnerable groups to deal with poverty conditions. This is supported through the human resource information and economic increasement opportunities. After this strategy was implemented, a permanent prevention program could be achieved.

Sanitation and Clean Water Program

The next program carried out by the North Bengkulu Regency Government in dealing with stunting is the sanitation and clean water program based on community. The main points of this activity are the community’ institution and social capital. Building a social capital community by considering belief, networks, and norms. The purposes are to raise public awareness to cooperate, volunteerism in providing material and non-material assistance, including the willingness of the community to attend every meeting in preparation for program implementation, including in the control or maintenance process that will be done.

The funds in this program came from the village’s accommodation, including community’s donations. The implementation of this program is going well because previous programs have been organized systematically. So that volunteerism and community cooperation has been implemented efficiently. It is proved by the minimum salary provided in this program because of some reasons such as the workers are from local village communities, who voluntarily donate their energy and materials such as stones and sand collected by themselves. Furthermore, a sense of belonging reduces the damage risk and increases community control over sanitation building, and also maintained by used village funds.

Analysis

By using AGIL Scheme proposed by Talcot Parsons in the theory of structural functionalism, this study is analyzed as follows.
Adaptation

Humans have instincts and sense to understand, and solve various problems in social life (Turama, 2018). In this study found that the government of North Bengkulu Regency has been implemented stunting prevention program by representative villages. It can be seen from the several steps taken in implementing the program, starting by socialization activities conducted through program recognition followed by adaptation programs. Based on the researchers’ opinion, these steps are valuable as the adaptation for communities.

Here, adaptation is the main factor in social life. Social relationships always need adjustment, to realize the balance of society requires adjustment (RatihRahmawati, 2019). This process is prioritized in stunting prevention efforts in this area.

In this implementation process, the stunting prevention team (TIM Penurunan Angka Stunting/TPAS) that has been formed by the local government as the subject of this study in various socialization activities conducted some activities which purpose to unify the program with the community. The teams provide an understanding regarding a healthy lifestyle and nutritious foods. Furthermore, after the providing community’s understanding had started to improve, Regional Inflation Monitoring and Control Team (Tim Pemantauan dan Pengendalian Inflasi Daerah/ TPID) began to affect the communities behavior to leave their old-lifestyle into a new, healthier lifestyle because an unhealthy environment will certainly have an impact on healthiness. Changing human's behavior impacts several things; first, the availability of clean water; second, a comfortable environment without pollution. These things change communities' health because they have a hygiene environment. If this was analyzed by AGIL Talcot Parson Scheme, the adaptation process to the stunting prevention program runs conceptually slowly from the most basic to complex health behavior changes.

Goal Attainment

Goal attainment is a step in setting priorities among various goals in the system, and then becomes an effort to move parts of the system to realize the goals that have been set (Arisandi, 2015). After analyzing the AGIL concept, the local government has the responsibilities in stunting prevention in each village. They have the ability to set priority steps in stunting prevention by conducting socialization and empowerment activities at every stage of the program. At this stage, empowerment is used as the key activity program then followed by the next stage. In empowerment activities, the main targets are behavior change then influence the communities to move on another step of prevention program to reach the goals. Finally, after one year, the implementation in North Bengkulu Regency successfully reduced the stunting rate.

Integration

Integration is a process of unifying the elements that exist in a system with the purpose for balancing and sustainability of a system (George Ritzer, 2004). The successful implementation of the stunting prevention program in North Bengkulu Regency also cannot be separated from the integration elements incorporated in the stunting management system in this area. From the study results with AGIL scheme it can be explained that the integration process between the government and stunting prevention team with the community was realized after half a year implementation. The key of integration showed the successfulness of the adaptation process with the precise program's objectives. Setting the goals and careful planning by the local government and the establishment of good cooperation and maintaining good relationships helped by
local assistants, they were able to achieve the goals that have been set quite well.

There are some obstacles found in the practice of integration at the beginning process. The lack of practitioners understanding of their roles and function as implementers. Moreover, until the end of activity, they don’t understand. But it was covered by a team from the community who were serious about breaking the stunting chain in their area.

**Latent Pattern Maintenance**

A system requires repairment and refinement of patterns in order to improve the workings and capabilities of the system (Revision & Raho, 2021). Through this concept, it can be explained that the local government and the health team generally have been able to change health behavior and environment in their areas. But, there are small numbers of people who hardly change their behavior and integrate with the program. It is shown from the fact that the stunting problem still existed although the rate has decreased. At least this program has been successful to reduce the stunting rate. The motivation, sanitation need, supplementary food given as an effort of stunting prevention program conducted.

However, currently there are small numbers of people who are less able to maintain healthy behavior in an unclean environment. Seeing the real conditions that occur in the community, the latency efforts carried out are by increasing a new program in the social protection activity (*Bina Keluarga Balita* / BKB), which was previously carried out in one activity in 2020-2021, but the local government will try to improve the program again in 2023. It can be assumed that the efforts of **Latent Pattern Maintenance** by the government are beneficial in the implementation of the previous year’s program, where the new pattern will be applied the following year.

**CONCLUSION**

Based on the findings of research study, it can be concluded that there are 4 (four) programs carried out in the context of stunting prevention program in North Bengkulu Regency, they are;

1. Maternal and child health service program. This program takes the form of procurement of health facilities and infrastructure. However, in its implementation, the activities conducted are not limited in the form of health services, health checks and treatment. The priority in this program is to achieve independence in healthy living through optimal health services and efforts, followed by increasing the level of children's health in order to obtain facilities for maximum growth and development.

2. Nutrition counseling and supplementary feeding programs. The activity of this program is done by increasing the understanding of mothers and families about nutrition, providing food for toddlers by giving supplementary food according to health standards and guaranteed nutritional content and quality. The program has been implemented according to its objectives, and uses village funds. It means that the economic empowerment of the community has not been able to meet the demands of this program. So it could be that the impact of the program will not be felt permanently.

3. Social protection program. This program directly interacts with the community. The implementation begins with outreach activities which aim to increase public understanding of the dangers and methods of stunting prevention programs. The goals are the recognition, formation, and maturation of public health behaviors that can
protect infants and toddlers from stunting.

4. Sanitation and clean water program. The targets are in the form of provision of clean water, and shaping environmental hygiene behavior to maintain the quality of water that has been provided by nature. The sanitation and clean water program is going well. It happened because in the previous programs the community's social capital had begun to be systematically organized. So that volunteerism and community cooperation made a successful movement for this program.

SUGGESTIONS

It is necessary to evaluate the implementation program in order to solve the stunting problem in North Bengkulu Regency, especially related to the right socio-cultural approach in maximizing stunting prevention programs in this area. There are a small number of people who hardly change their behaviors that overlap with stunting prevention programs. It is caused by the difficulty in adapting to the new requirements that change their habitual, culture and behavior of the community. Furthermore, it happens to the middle to lower economic level of the community. The impact is the difficulty of stunting prevention programs reaching its goal.

The implementation of the program should be accompanied by some efforts to improve the economy level, such as by giving entrepreneurship training, providing business capital in the communities (Usaha Mikro Kecil Menengah/ UMKM). It is hoped that stunting prevention programs can be in line with the community’s economic level to balance on the nutritional standards fulfilment for pregnant women, breastfeeding mothers, infants and toddlers.

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