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IMPLEMENTATION OF SOCIAL SAFETY NET POLICIES FOR VULNERABLE GROUPS

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to analyze social safety net policies for vulnerable groups during an economic downturn due to the COVID-19 pandemic. They are also analyzing whether policies during a pandemic can protect vulnerable workers. Data collection is done by literature study and secondary data. The research results show that social safety net policies during the pandemic could still not entirely save the people's economy. During the COVID-19 pandemic, several social safety net programs presented new problems at the implementation level, especially at the grassroots level. Some problems that arise are the uneven distribution of aid distribution, uncertainty of procedures and requirements for receiving assistance, data on target recipients that are not up-to-date, emergency conditions of residents who need them but are not registered, and problems of informal sector workers who are migrants. The government needs to review the social safety net policy and improve poverty data to be integrated.

Introduction

The COVID-19 pandemic was officially announced in Indonesia starting March 2, 2020, with two positive cases. The government responded with a lockdown. Vulnerable workers are a group affected by the crisis. The lockdown was one of the most severe moves in history, leaving most workers unprotected and causing unparalleled suffering (Parwez, 2022). Social Safety Nets provided by the government are considered the hope of saviors.

As the world's fourth most populous country, Indonesia has a significant impact, especially on vulnerable workers. As of March 25, 2022, Indonesia's positive coronavirus (COVID-19) cases reached 5,986,830 cases, and 154,343 died (Mathieu et al., 2021). The COVID-19 pandemic in Indonesia has led to a socio-economic crisis that almost all levels of society feel. Vulnerable workers are the most affected group by the COVID-19 pandemic due to the cessation of the operations of the companies where they work (Olding, Barker, McNeil, & Boyd, 2021).

According to (Kurniawansyah et al., 2020), poverty in Indonesia has increased to 1.63 million due to the pandemic. The crisis, which is the impact of COVID-19, is suspected by the ILO as the most severe crisis since World War II because the number of job losses is increasing rapidly and is predicted to continue to grow. Based on the World Employment and Social Outlook Trends 2022 (WESO Trends) results, the unemployment rate is expected to reach 207 million people (Fedryansyah, 2016).

Meanwhile, in Indonesia, the Ministry of Manpower (Kemnaker) recorded that as many as 72,983 employees had become victims of termination of employment (PHK) due to the COVID-19 pandemic (Valentino et al., 2021). Four sectors worst affected by COVID-19 are retail and wholesale trade, manufacturing, real estate, transportation and retortion. In the textile industry, 2.16 million workers or 80 percent of workers, have been laid off due to the COVID-19 pandemic (Tirto. id, April 27, 2020). These laid-off and laid-off workers increase the number of vulnerable workers in Indonesia.

In April 2020, the Indonesian government prepared a scheme to protect vulnerable workers from crisis risks (Yulianti et al., 2022). The assistance scheme is provided in the form of cash transfers through an increase in the Family Hope program from the number of PKH recipient families by 9.2 million to 10 million with an increase in the number of benefits by 25 percent, an increase the number of Basic Food Card recipients from 12.5 million to 20 million, with the previous value of Rp 150 thousand to Rp 200 thousand; increase the Pre-Employment Card budget from Rp 10 trillion to Rp 20 trillion with the number of beneficiaries increased to 5.6 million people; providing free electricity tariffs for 24 million 450 VA customers and 50% tariff discounts for 7 million 900 VA customers in April, May, June 2020 (Katadata, March 31, 2020). Social safety nets in the form of social security and health are expected to minimize the negative impacts experienced when a crisis occurs and guarantee that at least they can live a decent life. Later, they can bounce back after the crisis has passed.

This study analyzed how social safety nets can save vulnerable workers during the pandemic (Mathieu et al., 2021). Amid income shortages and demands that life must go on while the price of necessities soars, the Social Safety Net policy is one of the hopes to save them from critical conditions. Second, mapping the Social Safety Net that has been implemented so far along with obstacles and challenges in its implementation. Third, formulate appropriate Social Safety Net policy recommendations to rescue vulnerable workers. Amid the crisis and the worsening and uncertain situation of the COVID-19 pandemic when it will end, agile policy interventions are needed to minimize the occurrence of a prolonged crisis.

Conceptually, vulnerable workers have a variety of definitions and classifications. (Baihaqi, 2023), a modern economist, explains the condition of vulnerable workers comprehensively. His book "The Precariat: The New Dangerous Class" calls vulnerable workers a precariat. Standing explained that vulnerable workers work erratically based on contracts, working hours, uncertain guarantees, and uncertain scope. Some scholars define vulnerable workers as informal sector workers whose conditions are far from standard values and have high risks. However, according to (2011), vulnerable workers include informal sector workers and, more broadly, all workers in economic uncertainty. The insecurity received is almost the same as informal workers, even in some cases, formal sector workers experience the same insecurity as vulnerable workers.

Research Methods

This research approach is qualitative descriptive. The source of data in this study is secondary data. Secondary data are obtained through literature studies and literature studies of related primary data, previous research results, and statutory documents related to social safety net policies and their implementation.

The research process begins with a desk review based on the elaboration of data, theory, previous research and literature review. From the desk review, the preparation of research instruments was carried out, which were then tested through pilot testing. The results of the pilot testing instrument were then revised again to be used as the final instrument in data collection. After the data is collected, it is analyzed through the stages of data aggregation, organization and classification of data according to research question units. The stages of data aggregation are unique in the form of data abstraction so that general patterns are obtained. The data is then organized chronologically, categorically and classified into typologies. Furthermore, it is analyzed to compile an explanation of the phenomenon of the object being studied. Data analysis was carried out based on recording all data derived from previous studies and statutory documents relating to the Social Safety Net Policy during the Covid-19 Pandemic Crisis.

Results and Discussion

At the Limited Meeting (Ratas) on Tuesday, April 7, 2020, the President briefed on the Effectiveness of Social Safety Net Program Distribution that: (1) the implementation is really on target, data is also from the beneficiary group; (2) Distribution as soon as possible, as quickly as possible, precisely, and quickly; (3) The distribution mechanism is carried out as efficiently as possible, not complicated, and difficult for the community.

In practice in the field, through the Ministry of Social Affairs, the government has allocated a budget of Rp 203.9 T for social protection in handling COVID-19. Of this amount, it is used for 1) Family Hope Program Rp 37.4 T; 2) necessities IDR 43.6 T; 3) Jabodetabek Social Aid IDR 6.8 T; 4) Non-Jabodetabek Social Aid Rp.32.4 T; 5) Pre-Employment Rp 20 T; 6) Electricity Discount IDR 6.9 T; 7) Logistics/Food/Basic Food Rp 25 T; 8) Village Fund Direct Cash Assistance Rp 31.8 T.

1. Family Hope Program

The Family Hope Program is targeted to reach 10 million Beneficiary Groups (KPM) with social aid distribution, initially carried out every three months to every month with double benefits in April, May, and June.

Table 1
Family Hope Program Recipients

Group	Year	Moon
Pregnant Women	IDR 3 million	IDR 250 thousand
Early Childhood	IDR 3 million	IDR 250 thousand

Group	Year	Moon
Anak Sekolah • SD • JUNIOR • SMA	Rp 900 thousand 1,5 MillionRp 2 Million	IDR 75 thousand IDR 125 thousand IDR 166 thousand
People with Disabilities	Rp 2,4 million	IDR 200 thousand
Seniors	Rp 2,4 million	IDR 200 thousand

In one family, the assistance is given to a maximum of 4 people. The highest assistance provided is IDR 10,800,000/year or IDR 900,000/month, while the lowest is IDR 900,000/year or IDR 75,0000/month.

2. Basic Food Assistance Program (BPNT)

The target of this program is 20 million Beneficiary Groups from the previous 15.2 million Beneficiary Groups (KPM) with an expansion of 4.8 million KPM. The index was also increased from the previous IDR 150,000 to IDR 200,000 per month in April-December 2020 and March-December 2020 for existing KPM.

3. Jabodetabek Basic Food Social Assistance

This program aims to meet the needs during the emergency period and anticipate that the Jabodetabek community will not go home. The target locus of assistance is DKI Jakarta, with 1.3 million households, and Bodetabek, with 600 thousand families, with an assistance value of IDR 600,000 per family per month (April-June 2020) and IDR 300,000 per family per month (July-December 2020). The form of assistance provided was in the form of Basic Food Packages (Rice, Cooking Oil, Sardines, Corned Beans, Tea Bags, Sweet Soy Sauce, Bottled Sambal, Instant Noodles, Bath Soap, and UHT Milk) and 25 Kg of Rice. The assistance was sent by PT Pos from the provider's warehouse of the goods (Provision and Packaging of Basic Food) to the local RT / RW and then handed over to the recipients.

4. Social Cash Transfer

This assistance is given to 9 million households outside Jabodetabek, focusing on people who have not received PKH or BPNT, with an assistance value of IDR 600,000 per family per month (April-June 2020) and IDR 300,000 per family per month. Media distribution through PT Pos and Bank accounts by Himbara.

Reflecting on the crisis leading up to the 1998 reform era, at least it was the beginning of the government issuing a social safety net program for the first time in Indonesia. According to the records of the SMERU research institute, the social safety net program implemented by the government targets various fields, including food security, education, health, employment, and community empowerment (Noerkaisar, 2021). At the end of the Social Safety Net program in that era, the target of the program, namely beneficiary households, had experienced an increase in per capita consumption of 4-10%.

In the case of the COVID-19 safety net program, at least the government has seven programs that seem to be the "trump card" for the government to get out of the abyss of slowing economic growth during the pandemic. The seven programs are the Family Hope Program (PKH), Cash Intensive Labor (PKT), Direct Cash Transfer (BLT), Basic Food Card, Pre-Employment Card, electricity subsidies for certain groups, and unique social assistance for the Jabodetabek area. The presence of these various programs presents new problems at the level of implementation, especially at the lower level of "grassroots."

Data problems become the "faucet" for opening the problem of implementing social safety net programs not supported by transparent and accountable bureaucracy. The phenomenon of the President getting angry then emerged and became public consumption, including statements by policymakers considered inappropriate in unraveling the "tangled threads" of implementing social safety net programs. This phenomenon seems to be a justification that the policies made do not solve problems but increasingly cause new problems and are far from the policy principles that, according to Hugh Huclo (1989), are present in order to solve problems. Several times, the Ombudsman also criticized implementing this social safety net program as an attitude to increasing complaints related to the central government's promises for people affected by COVID-19.

Guy Standing (2011), in "The Precariat: The New Dangerous Class," explains that vulnerable workers work erratically based on contracts, working hours, uncertain guarantees, and uncertain scope. Formal workers are vulnerable when their employment contracts are erratic, wages are below the average living level, and they do not have health insurance or social security. Vulnerable workers are the group most at risk of crisis impacts because their average income is only in the range of USD 100-200 per month, and they have no social protection or health protection. When economic conditions decline, their lives are also threatened. The International Monetary Fund (IMF), in its report "A Crisis Like No Other, An Uncertain Recovery," predicts that Indonesia's economic growth will decline to its lowest point after the 1998 economic crisis, minus 0.2%. The economic impact of the COVID-19 pandemic ultimately also affects workers, especially workers in the tourism, trade, manufacturing, and agriculture sectors.

There are at least some notes on the problems that occurred during the distribution of social safety net program assistance targeting Jabodetabek residents, including the uneven distribution of aid, uncertainty of procedures and requirements for receiving assistance, target recipient data that is not up to date, emergency conditions of residents who are in need but not registered, and problems of informal sector workers who have the status of migrant ID cards. Among these various problems, it is generally more related to updating beneficiary data and appropriate distribution schemes. Regarding the problems of immigrants, incredibly informal workers with immigrant status need to get separate treatment from the government.

In this case, informal workers who are migrants will find it challenging to be covered in the social safety net assistance program scheme, which is included in the category of special social assistance in the Jabodetabek area. Meanwhile, to get this

assistance, informal workers must take care of some bureaucratic documents that take a long time. Meanwhile, if you want to take care of social assistance that comes from the region, it is necessary to mobilize back to the area where he is registered. In contrast, social distancing policies are still applied in Jakarta (such as closing public transportation access and general transportation administration procedures that require additional costs such as rapid fees, etc.). This condition is a separate problem that is necessary to get discretion from the government so that social safety net programs can be felt for informal sector workers.

In addition to social assistance programs specializing in the Jabodetabek area, other social safety net programs have also reaped similar polemics. Reflecting on the polemic of the pre-employment card, it does not have so much of a meaningful effect or impact on informal sector workers in the Jakarta area. This is considering that in the Jakarta area, to take part in training as the facilities provided in the pre-employment card program activities are relatively the same and easily accessible through other free media. This means that pre-employment cards are not appropriate to be applied in the DKI Jakarta area, which generally already has access to accessible facilities (such as Wi-Fi corners, etc.) to surf in cyberspace to access content that is business ideas, business opportunities or soft skills.

The general public, especially informal workers, expects more direct assistance without intermediaries (vendors), especially in the pre-employment card program. There is a selective system, meaning that the general public cannot be covered (get) and cause double assistance with other social safety net programs (Saputri, 2022). With a total budget of approximately Rp 20 trillion, the pre-employment card program is very ineffective and inefficient for beneficiaries because part of the funds distributed will be used to purchase training packages and incentive schemes provided in the system. This incentive scheme also reaps problems because the nominal assistance cannot be received directly but is still digital money (entered in the e-wallet digital wallet).

In a problematic situation like today, informal sector workers are faced with no longer how to get a new job but more towards "eat today or not eat." The transfer of pre-employment programs or assistance schemes is more desirable for the informal worker sector affected by the pandemic, mainly if the paid package fees and incentives provided in the pre-employment card program can be distributed in cash transfer to direct beneficiaries; it can also be a solution to cover people who are not registered (switch) in other social network programs.

Conclusion

Policy reform in the social protection system is the primary key to accelerating poverty reduction due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Therefore, it is necessary to immediately accelerate the improvement of the Integrated Social Welfare Data (DTKS) nationally, accelerate the digitization of village monographs, and increase the capacity of local governments to support the self-updating of DTKS to support the accuracy of data

on various social assistance as a social safety net system Social safety net policies that are not based on solid integrated data cause these policies to be not on target.

The social safety net program, predicted to be the leading solution to protect people affected by COVID-19, seems fragile in its planning and implementation. The polemic of the social assistance program, especially in the Jabodetabek area, and the pre-employment card program as the above phenomenon are some of the minor problems that appear behind the big problems of the social safety net program as a whole. In the case of the COVID-19 safety net program, at least the government has seven programs that seem to be the "trump card" for the government to get out of the abyss of slowing economic growth during the pandemic. However, in its implementation, the presence of these various programs presented various new problems at the level of implementation, especially at the lower level of "grassroots." In this case, informal workers who are migrants will find it challenging to be covered in the social safety net assistance program scheme, which is included in the particular social assistance category of the Jabodetabek area. With a total budget of approximately Rp 20 trillion, the pre-employment card program could be more effective and efficient for beneficiaries because part of the funds distributed will be used to purchase training packages and incentive schemes provided in the system. This incentive scheme also reaps problems because the nominal assistance cannot be received directly but is still digital money (entered in the e-wallet digital wallet).

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