

# Evaluation of the Budget Policy for the Empowerment of the Coastal Poor through the Development of an Integrated People's Salt Business with Geomembrane Technology 2018-2019 (Study in Aceh Utara Regency)

Saharuddin<sup>1</sup>, Endang Larasati<sup>2</sup>, Sri Suwitri<sup>3</sup>, Ida Hayu Dwimawanti<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1,2,3,4</sup>Universitas Diponegoro, Indonesia

[saharuddin@unimal.co.id](mailto:saharuddin@unimal.co.id)

## Abstract

*The approach used in this study uses a descriptive qualitative approach, which is a research that is included in the type of qualitative research. According to Moleong (2007), qualitative research is research that intends to understand phenomena about what is experienced by research subjects such as behavior, perceptions, motivations, actions, etc. holistically, and by means of descriptions in the form of words and language, in a context. Natural specialization and by utilizing various natural methods. The research focus has two objectives, firstly, by setting the research focus, it means limiting the extent of the study, thereby determining the research site more focused. Second, determining the focus will streamline the information received. Data collection techniques are the most important step in research, because the main purpose of research is to obtain data. The model of economic empowerment of salt farmers through PUGaR which leads to community-based participatory development (in this case cooperatives) is unable to respond to the local wisdom of salt farmers in North Aceh. Where the traditional salt management system done by family members. Those involved in salt production come from one family member consisting of father, mother, children and other cousins. if, through the PUGaR program, salt farmers must convert their business land into a community outside of their main family system. This pattern is then based on field findings contrary to the wishes of the community.*

## Keywords

community empowerment; budget policy; salt business



## I. Introduction

The budget is the government's work plan in the form of money for a certain period. In addition, the budget is an important indicator in making economic policies owned by the government and describes a comprehensive statement about a country, where citizens depend on the state to provide excellent services and infrastructure (Edwin 2005). On the other hand, the budget is the embodiment of policies, political commitments and priorities in deciding how the format of local government administration will be, which includes where the money should be spent and where the money will come from. (Priyono and Pranarka 1996)

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Furthermore, the notion of empowerment, etymologically empowerment comes from the basic word "daya" which means strength or ability. Starting from this understanding, empowerment can be interpreted as a process towards empowerment, strength or ability, and or a process of giving power/strength/ability from parties who have power to parties who are less or not empowered (Price and Patofisiologi 2005). The notion of "process" refers to a series of actions or steps that are carried out chronologically systematically which reflect the gradual efforts to change people who are less or not yet empowered towards empowerment (Sulistiyani and Rosidah 2009). While the community is defined as a group of citizens who are in a village, city with a certain ethnicity or nation. (Njoroge et al. 2015)

Community empowerment is often difficult to distinguish from community development because it refers to overlapping meanings in its use in society. In this study, community empowerment and community development are intended as community empowerment that is intentionally carried out by the government to facilitate local communities in planning, deciding and managing their resources. Community empowerment is an effort to increase the dignity of the lower levels of society, which in their current condition are unable to escape the trap of poverty and underdevelopment. In other words, empowerment is enabling and empowering the poor.

Community empowerment budget as an alternative strategy in development has developed in various literatures and thoughts although in reality it has not been maximally implemented. (Kasmel and Andersen 2011) The poor are often a helpless group either because of internal constraints from within themselves or external pressures from their environment. Therefore, the existence of a community empowerment budget is one of the most important policy pillars in poverty alleviation (Novianto 2019). TKPKD as a coordination forum for poverty alleviation does not play its roles and functions optimally; there is still a sectoral ego from each SKPD in implementing the program,

Aceh Utara Regency is 3,296.86 km<sup>2</sup>, or 329,686 Ha. Administratively, Aceh Utara Regency consists of 27 sub-districts, 70 settlements, 852 gampongs. Each sub-district is divided into 1 (one) to 4 (four) settlements. The total population of Aceh Utara Regency is 593,492 people with a growth rate of 2.00 percent per year. With an area of 3,296.86 km<sup>2</sup>, the population density reaches 180 people/km<sup>2</sup>. In a decade, namely the period 2008-2017, the percentage of the poor population in Aceh Utara Regency continued to decline from 27.56 percent in 2008 to 19.20 percent in 2015. However, based on the National Statistics Agency, the last two years the percentage of poor people in Aceh Regency North experienced an increase of 19.46 in 2016 to 19.78 in 2017.

In a decade, namely the period 2008-2017, the percentage of the poor population in Aceh Utara Regency continued to decline from 27.56 percent in 2008 to 19.20 percent in 2015. However, based on the National Statistics Agency, the last two years the percentage of poor people in Aceh Regency The North experienced an increase of 19.46 in 2016 to 19.78 in 2017. The poverty rate of the community in 2008 reached around 15.42 percent, while in 2017 poverty in Aceh experienced a decrease in the poverty rate but was still in the position of 10.64 percent. . The trend of the annual trend shows that the poverty rate continues to shrink until the end of 2017. However, Aceh is positioned as a priority area with a poverty percentage that is greater than the national level which was above 16.79 percent in 2017. This situation illustrates that the level of welfare of the people of Aceh Utara Regency is still low, some of the population still lives in poverty. To overcome the problem of poverty, real efforts must be made by the government in the form of policies for community empowerment. The budget policy of the Aceh Utara Regency Government should give priority to poverty alleviation, especially through budget allocations earmarked for poverty reduction programs. Thus the poverty rate can be reduced (Brekke et al. 2014).

Community empowerment can be carried out by many elements: government, universities, non-governmental organizations, the press, political parties, donor agencies, civil society actors, (Sinurat and Manurung 2021) or by local community organizations themselves. The government bureaucracy is of course very strategic because it has many advantages and extraordinary strengths compared to other elements: it has funds, a lot of apparatus, the authority to make legal frameworks, policies for the delivery of public services, and others. The Aceh Utara Regency Government has legal authority to make policies to provide public services and has advantages in the field of funding, but has not been able to empower the poor.

## **II. Review of Literature**

### **2.1 Public Policy**

The term policy is distinguished from the word wisdom which means wisdom or wisdom. Policy is a general statement of behavior rather than the organization. In the opinion of Alfonsus Sirait in his book Management defines policy, as follows: "Policy is a guideline for decision making" (Sirait 2009).

Thomas R. Dye in (Islamy 2009) defines public policy as whatever the government chooses to do or not to do. (Nugroho 2014) describes public policy in two meanings. First, it concerns the things the government decides to do and the things the government decides not to do. Second, policies in the sense of regulations per legislation, both those made by the legislature and those made by the executive as implementing rules for public policies made by the legislature.

### **2.2 Public Policy Evaluation**

Evaluation is a process to determine the relevance, efficiency, effectiveness and impact of program or project activities in accordance with the objectives to be achieved as well as systematically and objectively. Evaluation is also defined as a measurement of the desired and unwanted consequences of an action that has been taken in order to achieve some of the objectives to be assessed. Value can be defined as every aspect of a situation, event/event, or object categorized by an interest preference into the following criteria: "good", "bad", "wanted" and "unwanted".

### **2.3 Supporting and Inhibiting Factors of Policy Evaluation**

#### **a. Uncertainty over Policy/Program Objectives**

It is often the case that a policy requires the attention of people and groups who have different interests and values. This condition encourages the occurrence of unclear goals because they must reflect the many interests and values of the actors involved in policy formulation.

According to Anderson, which was rewritten by (Winarno 2013), he stated that at least six problems will be faced in the policy evaluation process:

- a. Uncertainty over the objectives set for implementing the policy should be clear. When policy objectives are unclear or scattered, as is often the case, the difficulty arises in determining the extent to which these objectives have been achieved.
- b. Causality. If an evaluator uses systematic evaluation to evaluate policy programs, he must ensure that changes that occur in real life must be caused by policy actions.
- c. Diffuse policy impacts, for example, we know what is meant by externalities or spillover effects, namely an impact caused by a policy on conditions or groups other than those who are the targets or objectives of the policy.
- d. Difficulties in obtaining data Lack of statistical data from other relevant information may prevent evaluators from conducting evaluations.

- e. Official resistance. Often, even though an official realizes that the program he is implementing has failed, they hide the failure simply because they are afraid of being fired or dismissed from their position.
- f. Evaluation reduces impact. This is often seen in the neglect or criticism of evaluation as something that is not basic or even considered unconvincing.

### **b. Economic Constraints**

Policy evaluation is not an easy problem, let alone to be called simple, on the contrary evaluation is a complicated job because it involves many interrelated elements, for example involving people who are not only from the party conducting the evaluation but also the people being evaluated. (Winarno 2013) suggests that evaluation is a complicated and complex process. This process involves the various interests of the individuals involved in the evaluation process. The complexity of the evaluation process is also because it involves the criteria that are intended to carry out the evaluation. This means that failure to determine criteria will hinder the evaluation process to be carried out.

### **c. Official Resistance**

Each evaluation carried out will describe the performance of an organization. The results obtained can certainly lead to various attitudes, reactions, and different levels of support for each employee with different organizational conditions and characteristics in each organization ((Wilson 2004); (Wilson and Brekke 1994)). This condition raises the challenges of change in the form of disappointment that comes from humans. One of the problems that arise from human resources (in this case employees) is having a tendency to be immune to change.

Oreg, 2003 in (Diah 2015) states the concept of resistance as an individual characteristic that reflects a general (negative) approach to change and a tendency to avoid or resist it. Furthermore, (Oreg 2003) explains that the source of resistance comes from within the individual which includes an aversion to loss of control, cognitive rigidity, a lack of psychological resilience, an intolerance for adjustment periods involved in change, a preference for low levels of stimulation and novelty, and an aversion to give up on old habits.

### **d. Empowerment Policy**

The basic thinking of a government policy (public policy) always begins with thoughts about the preparation or formulation, implementation or implementation, evaluation, until finally an assessment. All of these require various rational and objective thoughts so as to create justice and dignity, of course, will provide great benefits to life for the community in general and more specifically for the community itself.

According to (Drucker 1987) the effectiveness of a policy is an appropriate level between the empirical output in a system and the expected output. Policy can be used as an effective evaluation tool or its actions, according to Zulkadi (in (Wahyuningsih 2005)) which can be seen from the ability to solve problems, effectiveness, actions, can be measured by their ability to solve problems or problems faced before and after the action is carried out how much great problem solving. Drabkin (in (Wahyuningsih 2005)) policy is the result of an in-depth analysis of various alternatives which leads to a decision about the best alternative. While Bernard (In (Gibson 2008)),

This empowerment has a two-way goal, namely releasing the shackles of poverty and underdevelopment and strengthening the position of the community strata in the power structure. Empowerment is both a process and a goal. As a process, empowerment is a series of activities to strengthen the power or empowerment of weak groups in society, including individuals who experience poverty problems.

### **e. Empowerment of the Poor**

A budget is a written plan regarding the activities of an organization which is stated quantitatively for a certain period of time and is generally expressed in units of money (Nafarin 2009). According to (Garrison and Noreen 2007), the budget is a detailed plan about the acquisition and use of financial resources and other resources over a certain period of time.

According to (Garrison and Noreen 2007), the budget does not only function as a planning tool, but also as a tool for controlling. Planning includes the development of goals for the future, while control is a tool to ensure and ensure that all management functions are carried out in accordance with previously determined plans. Furthermore, empowerment is a concept whose focus is on power. Empowerment, whatever the assumption, is to accept the existence of power as a factor, and to make those who are not powerful have power, namely the powerless are given power through empowerment so that they become full power. Pranarka in Prijono and Pranarka, 1996.

Empowerment according to the above definition shows the efforts of a party in mobilizing community participation and strengthening the ability of the lower classes of society who are still in a condition unable to escape the trap of poverty, underdevelopment, and need help to be more empowered in independence, self-reliance, participation, and democratization.

From some of the opinions above, the empowerment budget can be defined as the process of preparing plans or collecting various data and information on the provision of power in the form of opportunities, knowledge, expertise, and materials, so as to make the powerless have power. (power full) or help increase the ability, capacity, and confidence of clients (society) so that they have the power/strength to overcome the problems they face in order to achieve a better life, so that they can determine the future according to their wishes.

## **III. Research Methods**

### **3.1 Research Approach**

The approach used in this study uses a descriptive qualitative approach, which is a research that is included in the type of qualitative research. According to (Moleong 2006), qualitative research is research that intends to understand phenomena about what is experienced by research subjects such as behavior, perceptions, motivations, actions, etc. holistically, and by means of descriptions in the form of words and language, in a context. Natural specialization and by utilizing various natural methods. In other words, descriptive research, researchers want to describe a certain symptom (phenomenon) or trait, not to find or explain the relationship between variables, (Sanjaya 2013).

The descriptive method was chosen because the research carried out was related to ongoing events and with regard to current conditions. The concept of qualitative research actually refers to and emphasizes the process, and means that it is not rigorously researched or measurable (if it can be measured), in terms of quality, quantity, intensity or frequency. The object of qualitative research is all aspects of human life, namely humans and things that are influenced by humans. Qualitative research is inductive in nature, because it starts from individual/specific data, to formulate general conclusions.

### 3.2 Research Focus

To get good research results from a very broad study, it is necessary to establish a research focus. The research focus has two objectives, firstly, by setting the research focus, it means limiting the extent of the study, thereby determining the research site more focused. Second, determining the focus will streamline the information received.

When researchers are in the field, they will get various information and data, however, not all of the information and data is relevant to the research focus, so some of the information and data must be ignored because they do not contribute anything to the research results that will be obtained. The research focus will direct a researcher towards the research objectives that have been previously set, so determining the focus in research is considered very important.

### 3.3 Research Time and Place

The location of the research was carried out in Aceh Utara Regency. The research was conducted over a period of one year from January to December 2017.

### 3.4 Research Informants

To obtain information on the determination of informants used is a purposive technique, namely determining in advance the informants or sources to be interviewed related to the problems studied.

The reason the researcher uses purposive is to take samples objectively, assuming that the informants taken are representative for the researcher, so that data collection directly on the data source can be done proportionally for the accuracy of the research. In addition, the data used in this study is homogeneous data which means that the data used in this study are the same so that the informants interviewed are quite part and can represent the answers to the interview questions in this study.

### 3.5 Collection Method

Data collection techniques are the most important step in research, because the main purpose of research is to obtain data. According to Sugiyono (2007 when viewed in terms of data collection methods or techniques, data collection techniques can be carried out by observation, interviews, questionnaires and documentation. However, in this study the data collection techniques carried out by researchers were through three methods, namely:

#### 1. Observation

Observation aims to observe the subject and object of research, so that researchers can understand the actual conditions. Observation is non-participatory, that is, the researcher is outside the system being observed.

#### 2. Interview

Esterberg in (Sugiyono 2007) defines an interview as a meeting of two or more people to exchange information and ideas through question and answer, so that meaning can be constructed in a topic. With interviews, researchers will find out more in-depth things about informants in interpreting situations and phenomena that occur, where this cannot be found through observation.

#### 3. Documentation

Documents are records of events that have passed. Documents can be in the form of writing, pictures, or someone's monumental works (Sugiyono, 2007). Research results from observations or interviews will be more credible if they are supported by the relevant documents.

### **3.6 Research Process**

#### **a. The Process of Entering the Research Site**

Before entering the research location to obtain data, at this stage the researcher first introduces himself and asks permission from those who are considered responsible for the research topic to be studied and other informants involved in the field to be studied.

#### **b. While at the Research Location (Getting Along)**

In this case, the researcher tries to make a personal and intimate relationship with the research subject, seeks information and various complete data sources and tries to capture the meaning of the various information received and the observed phenomena. Therefore, the researcher tried as wisely as possible so as not to offend the informants formally or informally.

#### **c. Pedata Collection**

At this stage, the researcher carried out the data collection process that had been determined based on the research focus.

### **3.7 Data Analysis Technique**

Processing and analyzing data using descriptive analysis which was conducted to identify policies for empowering the poor in Aceh Utara District. PeDescriptive research is research based on qualitative data from status, circumstances, attitudes, relationships or thinking systems of a problem that is the object of research.

To analyze this data using qualitative data analysis techniques, because the data obtained is a collection of information. The data analysis process begins by examining all available data from various sources, namely through observation, interviews, and documentation. Data analysis in qualitative research is carried out at the time of data collection, after completion of data collection within a certain period. At the time of the interview, the researcher had analyzed the answers from the informants. If the interviewee's answers after being analyzed feel unsatisfactory, the researcher will continue the question again, to a certain stage so that the data is saturated.

### **3.8 Data Validity Technique**

Data validity is an important concept that is updated from the concept of validity (validity) over reliability (reliability). The degree of trustworthiness or correctness of an assessment will be determined by what standards are used.

## **IV. Discussion**

### **4.1 Aceh Utara District Overview**

Aceh Utara Regency is a lowland with an average height of + 125 meters above sea level. In 1999, Aceh Utara Regency, which consists of 26 sub-districts, was expanded to 30 sub-districts by adding four new sub-districts based on PP of the Republic of Indonesia Number 44 of 1999. Along with the expansion of the new sub-district, Aceh Utara had to give up almost a third of its territory to become a new district, namely Bireuen Regency based on Law number 48 of 1999. Its territory includes the former area of the Assistant District Head in Bireuen.

Then in October 2001, three sub-districts in the Aceh Utara region, namely Banda Sakti District, Muara Dua District, and Blang Mangat District were made Lhokseumawe City, thus the administrative area of Aceh Utara Regency became 27 sub-districts with a total of 852 villages.

## 4.2 Overview of Poverty in Aceh Utara District

The empirical facts the researchers found in the field, especially in Lapang District and in almost all salt-producing areas in Aceh Utara District, showed that salt farmers had not been able to get out of the classic problem, namely poverty. Generally they are poor people with low incomes and with low educational qualifications. Their houses generally have clapboard walls and some woven bamboo, rough cement floors, and dull tin roofs and even sago palm leaves. This situation also emphasizes the fact why generally workers as salt farmers do not want to be passed on to their children.

Many factors are the main causes of this poverty problem, which can be in the form of cultural poverty and structural poverty. Cultural poverty can be caused by lifestyle, behavior and culture adopted by the community in an area. Researchers do not see cultural poverty as the main cause of salt farmers in Lapang District being poor.

The tendency that occurs is that poverty is caused by government policies that are not completely in favor of farmers along with efforts to meet their needs. In the implementation of government politics in the regions, it is not possible to only prioritize one aspect (economics) but it is important to pay attention to other aspects, namely environmental sustainability so that the implementation of green government is very important in supporting environmental sustainability in the political process of government in the regions (Dama, 2021). The Government of the Republic of Indonesia was formed to protect the whole of the Indonesian people (Angelia, 2020). The social system and structure that is built is not in favor of efforts to get them out of poverty. The policies referred to are both at the national, regional and local levels. At the national level, farmers have little hope through the PUGaR program, but this program is relatively new and not all farmer groups get equal rights. Farmers who have met certain requirements who can reach this program, many farmers are not reached by various policies made by the government from the top level to stakeholders at the lowest level, namely village policy.

Poverty in coastal communities can be understood the main cause is the low human resources (HR). This study tries to summarize how this description of poverty occurs in traditional salt-producing villages. From the results of the researcher's initial study, it was found that several types of businesses supported the economy of the people in salt-producing villages in Aceh Utara and their current conditions.

For salt farmers, most of them work on salt land owned by others, not privately owned with a profit-sharing system. For now, the salt production capital spent sometimes does not match the results obtained. The capital spent to buy raw materials is greater, moreover to get quality salt seeds, they must be imported from outside the region. The unfocused marketing system is also a problem for salt farmers. Usually, the target market is Aceh Utara, but because it has to be sold at uncompetitive prices, the demand for Kuala Cangkois salt has decreased.

## 4.3 Causes of Poverty in Aceh Utara

The cause of poverty in Aceh Utara is also inseparable from the long history of political and social conflicts that lasted from the early 1970s until the peace agreement between the Republic of Indonesia and the Gerakan Aceh Merdeka (GAM) in 2005. The number of people killed, the conflict also has a broad impact on the economic access of the residents.

Through some interview data that the researchers collected from various research informants, mainly the coastal communities, that the community had not completely forgotten the conflict events that had occurred, whether they were direct or indirect victims. When FGDs were conducted in several villages, narratives about conflicts were always present. Society considers conflict as an important historical event that cannot be forgotten.

## V. Conclusion

The existence of the traditional salt industry in Aceh Utara has an important contribution to poverty alleviation and empowerment of coastal communities in Aceh and particularly in Aceh Utara. The traditional salt industry sector is located in four sub-districts (Dewantara, Seunedoen, Lapang and Syamtalira Bayu). At least this sector can minimize food dependence in Aceh against neighboring areas of North Sumatra, even their production is also a buffer for salt needs in several other districts such as Aceh Timur, Kuala Simpang and Lhokseumawe City.

These four sub-districts are also able to accommodate 227 active workers and revive other service sectors, such as fuel transportation services (firewood), distributors (muge) to bring them to market. Of the total workforce, on average five to seven other members come from family members, such as wives, children and siblings. Thus, more than a thousand people are involved in this traditional salt production rent. What's interesting about the workforce in this sector is that more than 70% of the workers are women.

However, the large contribution of traditional salt farming in the dialectic of development and empowerment of coastal communities does not get priority, whether carried out by village, provincial or national governments. The People's Salt Business Program (hereinafter referred to as PUGaR) which was pioneered by the Ministry of Marine Affairs and Fisheries is like an "oasis" in the middle of the desert. PUGaR which has the hope of increasing the dignity of traditional salt farmers nationally, by improving their standard of living, economy, and human resources. But in its implementation it does not place salt farmers as parties who benefit widely and evenly.

The PUGaR system also does not see the existence of women as part of the traditional salt production system. Meanwhile, in the concept of empowering salt farmers through the PUGaR program, women do not have a strategic place like the traditional salt production system by boiling. Empowerment systems based on community (based community development) tend to place men as superior and women as inferior. Male domination in this empowerment system is manifested in the form of organizational structure, work mechanisms and work culture that is built into the organization and work practices.

Policies related to salt farmers as an effort to empower them must look at these two aspects, namely local values and the existence of women. If there are no modifications to the existing policies, it will have an impact on rejection as is the case today where salt farmers remain with the production pattern with the boiled system or are successful, but women remain marginalized in the traditional salt production system.

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