



## **POLICY TO ACCELERATE HANDLING AND PREVENTION OF STUNTING IN PAKPAK BHARAT REGENCY**

**Ti Aisyah<sup>1</sup>, Lidia Burunea<sup>2</sup>, Syamsuddin<sup>3</sup>, Aiyub<sup>4</sup>, Ahmad Yani<sup>5</sup>, Muhammad Hasyem<sup>6</sup>**

<sup>1,2,3,4,5,6</sup> Administration Public, Faculty Knowledge Social And Knowledge Politics University  
Malikussaleh Lhokseumawe, Aceh

tiaisyah@unimal.ac.id, lidiabanurea16@gmail.com, syamsyuddin@unimal.ac.id,

Drs.aiyub@unimal.ac.id, ahmadyani@unimal.ac.id. mhasyem@unimal.ac.id

### **Abstract**

*The policy for accelerating and handling stunting in West Pakpak Regency is a priority policy that must be implemented optimally considering the still high number of stunting in the Regency, even though the government has established policies and programs to accelerate the prevention and handling of stunting with the aim of reducing the number of stunting. Stunting remains a serious problem with long-term impacts on the quality of human resources, making its handling a priority in public health development. The purpose of this study is to analyze how the policy for accelerating the prevention and handling of stunting is implemented in Pakpak Bharat Regency and the factors that hinder its success. This study uses a descriptive qualitative approach, with data collection techniques through observation, interviews, and documentation. Data analysis techniques use an interactive model through the stages of data collection, data reduction, data presentation, and drawing conclusions. The results show that the policy for accelerating the prevention and handling of stunting in the Pakpak Bharat region has established several prevention and handling program activities, including the provision of supplementary feeding (PMT), vitamin A provision, and counseling. However, their implementation has not been optimal. Both counseling activities, vitamin A provision, and PMT distribution have not been implemented properly to the target community. Several factors that hinder the implementation of the program policy include low parental knowledge, weak networks, and limited access to health services, communication facilities, less supportive socio-economic and political conditions. In addition, the distribution of supplementary food for stunted children is not yet effective, so the nutritional value is low. Children are not receiving optimal support. Difficult road access to remote villages is also a major obstacle in distributing aid and implementing programs. Therefore, evaluation and improvement are needed. implementation of policies to accelerate prevention and handling of stunting.*

**Keywords:** Implementation, policy, stunting

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\* Corresponding author : Ti Aisyah

Address : Purwokerto, Indonesia

Email : tiaisyah@unimal.ac.id

Phone : 082362950728

## INTRODUCTION

Public policy is the government's goals or objectives. Edward III and Sharkansky explained that state policy can be clearly defined in legislation. They also stated that public policy is the programs and actions undertaken by the government (Syahruddin, 2019).

According to Pressman in Syahruddin (2018), implementation is a process of interaction for the formulation of goals and actions that have been adjusted to achieve them. Syahruddin also explains that implementation according to Lester and Steward is a process as well as a result. Policy implementation can be considered a very political process and the implementation of program activities is an effort to achieve the goals of the program itself, Jones (in Arif Rohman 2009: 101-102) states that program implementation is one component in a policy, program implementation is an authorized effort to achieve goals. According to Yulianto (2015) policy implementation is an important aspect of the entire policy process. New policies can be implemented if the goals and objectives that were originally general have been detailed, the program has been designed and also a number of funds have been allocated to realize these goals.

Providing good nutrition to children from an early age is the most important first step towards healthy and intelligent children in Indonesia. Essentially, the primary cause of malnutrition is economic issues, characterized by low purchasing power, which leads to low food availability at the household level, resulting in low nutritional intake. Furthermore, poor childcare practices, poor environmental sanitation, a lack of clean water sources, and limited access to welfare services contribute to the problem.

Given that the causes of malnutrition are multifactorial, addressing this problem requires a multisectoral approach. In other words, preventing malnutrition is not solely the responsibility of the health sector; prevention and management efforts by both the health sector and external sectors can be collaboratively implemented to prevent stunting.

Stunting affects the social and economic life of the community, and has affected environmental conditions since the fetus is in the womb due to insufficient protein intake during pregnancy. Protein deficiency also affects the fetus. As stated by Hardiansyah (1990), one of the main nutritional

problems is protein energy deficiency, which can affect the child's growth and development process. Lack of energy and protein during the old period can result in delayed growth of toddlers. Researchers found that in North Sumatra province, there are five districts or cities that are the focus of stunting prevention, and one of them, Pakpak Bharat Regency, has a high stunting rate. The following five regions had the highest stunting rates in 2023.

Table 1. Stunting Conditions In North Sumatra

Regency/City	Status	Number of stunting	Percentage
Mandailing Natal	Red zone	1618	47.7%
Padang Lawas	Red zone	1091	42.0%
Pakpak Bharat	Red zone	912	40.8%
South Nias	Red zone	367	36.7%
North Nias	Red zone	344	34.4%

Source : tribunmedan 2023

Based on the table above, it shows that Pakpak Bharat Regency, which is still in the red zone, still has a high stunting rate, with 912 stunted children, exceeding the limit that requires serious food.

In this regard, the government has targeted reducing stunting prevalence to 14 percent by 2024. Presidential Regulation (Perpres) Number 72 of 2021 concerning the Acceleration of Stunting Reduction is the regulation governing stunting management in Indonesia. This Presidential Regulation replaces Presidential Regulation Number 42 of 2013 concerning the National Movement to Accelerate Nutrition Improvement. To achieve this target, the government is making various efforts, such as: through the supplementary feeding program (PMT), National campaigns and behavioral changes, Convergence of central, regional and village programs, Food and nutrition security, Monitoring and evaluation.

The stunting prevention policy that has been prepared by the Pakpak Bharat government team is outlined in Pakpak Bharat Regent Regulation Number 46 of 2022 on the Role of Village Government in Preventing and Handling Stunting, in the Pakpak Bharat region. As the Pakpak Bharat government has implemented measures to accelerate stunting reduction, key

actions must be taken by local governments to ensure that the planned intervention activities for stunting prevention and reduction are implemented in an integrated manner by regional apparatus organizations (OPDs) responsible for services with sectors, non-governmental organizations, and the community. This will also strengthen the commitment of regional leaders to efforts to accelerate stunting reduction and build public commitment to integrated stunting reduction activities in districts/cities.

Table 1. stunting prevention activity program in Pakpak Bharat district

No	Stunting prevention activity program
1	Providing supplementary food (PMT)
2	Giving vitamin A
3	Exclusive breastfeeding counseling
4	Nutritional food counseling

Source : *Regent Regulation No. 46 of 2022*

Several issues that have contributed to the stunting prevention program policy in Pakpak Bharat Regency being less than successful include the lack of facilities and infrastructure to support the program, which makes it difficult for the community to access it. This is evident in the lack of village vehicles and health facilities at each integrated health post (Posyandu), the lack of public awareness of the importance of addressing stunting, and the lack of public understanding of health. Government assistance and monitoring have been suboptimal due to a lack of collaboration and assessment during the stunting prevention program development process. This is evident in the lack of oversight and evaluation from relevant parties.

Based on the phenomenon of high stunting rates in Pakpak Bharat Regency, the relevant government implemented a policy aimed at reducing the very high stunting rate. However, at the time of its implementation, it was still slow and not optimal. This can be seen from the still high stunting rate in Pakpak Bharat Regency even though the policy issued has been in place for quite a long time but has not produced satisfactory results. Thus, the author is interested in examining this phenomenon, because the purpose of this study is to determine how the implementation of the program to accelerate the handling and prevention of stunting in Pakpak Bharat Regency.

## METHOD

### Location Study

The research location is a place where scientific research is conducted, the research location is determined by the researcher based on consideration of existing phenomena. The research was conducted in Pakpak Bharat Regency, North Sumatra Province. The reason the researcher chose the research location in Pakpak Bharat Regency was because of the existing phenomenon, namely being an area with high stunting cases in North Sumatra Province so that the researcher was interested in conducting research to determine the causes of this phenomenon. Therefore, the author took the title Implementation of Stunting Prevention Program Policy in Pakpak Bharat Regency.

### Research Approach

Researchers use descriptive qualitative research methods that aim to describe the meaning of existing data or phenomena by showing evidence in the field. Analyze events directly in the field by understanding the process of social interaction. Qualitative research according to Moleong (2010) is a research method that produces analytical procedures that do not use statistical analysis procedures. Aims to understand the phenomena experienced by research subjects. Examining matters related to the behavior, attitudes, perceptions, events and actions and motivations of research subjects. According to Ratnaningtyas, qualitative research aims to explain and analyze phenomena, events, social dynamics, attitudes, beliefs, and perceptions of a person or group towards something. Muhammad Zuhri explains that descriptive qualitative research is used by authors to provide more meaning to data in the field. ban .

### Technique Collection Data

Data collection techniques are step Which The most strategic method in research, because the main objective of the research is to obtain accurate data. The data collection techniques used in this study are as follows: 1. Observation. This data collection technique is a technique needed in qualitative research to understand the facts and events regarding the study being studied by the researcher. Direct observation is a process in which the researcher directly observes various events, attitudes, and behaviors being observed. In fact, Marshall and Rosman in Bandur (2014:93) stated that this

activity is termed field notes, namely detailed, concrete descriptions, and without the researcher's judgment of the researched, including the actions and interactions found by the researcher in the data collection process. 2. In-depth Interviews Interviews are conducted to obtain concrete data in the field about the researched matter. 3. Documentation Documentation is a method of collecting data from several secondary data sources, such as media (online and offline), research reports, laws and regulations or policies related to the focus of the research.

#### Data Analysis Techniques

Data analysis in a study is important so that the collected data can produce answers to the problems. The data analysis technique in this study uses an interactive model (Heberman in Sugiono: 2014) whose process is carried out in several stages: starting from data collection, data reduction, data display and conclusion drawing/verification.

1. Data Collection The data collected is in the form of words, not numbers. As previously explained regarding data collection techniques, the data is collected through observation, interviews, and documentation. 2. Data Reduction

According to Sugiono, the data obtained from the field is quite extensive, and therefore needs to be recorded in detail and carefully. Therefore, data analysis through data reduction is necessary. Data reduction is achieved by summarizing, selecting the main points, focusing on important points, and searching for themes and patterns. The data used in this study were taken from interviews.

3. Data Presentation (Data Display) In qualitative research, data presentation can be done in the form of brief descriptions, charts, relationships between categories, and the like. By displaying data, it will be easier to understand what is happening. Data presentation is also intended to make it easier for researchers to see the overall picture of the research. 4. Conclusion Drawing (Conclusion Drawing/Verification) In qualitative data analysis, the third is conclusion drawing and verification. Conclusions in qualitative research may be able to answer the problem formulation formulated at the beginning, but may also not, because the problem and problem formulation in qualitative research are still temporary and will develop after the research is in the field. In other words, every conclusion

#### Implementation of the Stunting Prevention Program Policy in Pakpak Bharat Regency

The following is the implementation of program policies carried out by the Pakpak Bharat Regency government, namely:

##### 1. Supplemental Food Provision (TMT)

Efforts to prevent stunting rates in Salak District are carried out through Pakpak Bharat Regent Regulation No. 46 of 2022. The government's role in preventing and handling stunting in Pakpak Bharat Regency, therefore efforts are made by providing additional food in the form of eggs, milk, green beans, red beans to children who fall into the stunting category which is carried out every month.

The handover was carried out directly at the Salak village office by the Village Head, Oppung Banurea, along with village staff, village midwives, and Posyadu cadres. His direction to the village was to remember that the PMT program is only a stimulus from the government, but parents must continue to work hard to provide good nutrition for their children at an early age and also pay attention to a clean and healthy environment through clean and healthy living behaviors. Collaboration between all stakeholders in accelerating the decline in stunting rates in Salak District is highly expected to be realized in real action. To find out how the program is running in reducing stunting, interviews were conducted as explained by Mrs. Rani Boangmanalu. Parents of children with stunting for this program are implemented in accordance with the Regent's regulation program, which is to provide additional food in the form of eggs, milk, green beans, and pudding. The community admitted that they had difficulty meeting their daily food needs, even though they were grateful for things like salted fish and other household needs, but because there was assistance from the Pakpak Bharat Regent's Program, they felt greatly helped. They hope this program can continue.

##### 2. Giving vitamin A

Providing vitamin A to children is a government effort to address nutritional issues. Children who are deficient in vitamin A are susceptible to various diseases and infections. Providing vitamin A, which contains various essential substances, will fulfill the nutritional needs of the body, especially children. If children do not have adequate nutritional intake, they are at risk of stunting. Implementation is a crucial step in implementing a policy that influences the

achievement of goals or the success of solving a public problem. A policy must be implemented to determine the results and impact of its objectives. Vitamin A provision is carried out monthly. The procedure for handling stunting involves first conducting outreach and providing an understanding of the importance of vitamin A for toddlers in the community. During data collection, children with stunting are provided with supplementary food and vitamins. In addition to limited human resources, unequal access, especially in remote areas, also hinders the implementation of stunting reduction policies in Pakpak Bharat Regency.

### 3. Exclusive Breastfeeding Counseling

The exclusive breastfeeding program is a program that allows babies to only breastfeed, without providing other food or drink. Activities to implement reporting on the exclusive breastfeeding program are carried out in the form of village suggestions or socialization activities during the integrated health service post (Posyandu) activities carried out every month. To ensure the results of the program, As a Posyandu cadre, every month goes to the field to provide counseling on Exclusive Breastfeeding to the community. In addition , it is also responsible for providing PMT (Supplementary Food Provision) to toddlers who experience stunting. We also conduct data collection on children suffering from stunting, with the aim of providing them with vitamins and additional foods such as eggs and bread.

### 4. Nutritional Food Counseling

This balanced nutrition counseling activity for children is aimed at mothers to help them understand the importance of a balanced diet for their children. This activity was held due to the lack of understanding regarding the importance of a balanced diet for children. This activity provides examples of nutritious food preparation, which is conducted monthly at Posyandu (Integrated Service Posts) in villages, delivered directly by the Village Midwife. The efforts made by the Community Health Center in overcoming the problem of stunting are by providing monthly socialization to the community about the dangers of stunting. The Community Health Center also provides additional food assistance in the form of bread and eggs. However, the efforts made by the Community Health Center have not produced significant results due to the lack of parental awareness regarding nutritious food, economic

conditions are also one of the obstacles The policy of reducing stunting in Pakpak Bharat Regency has not been implemented properly and is not optimal. Because people have difficulty accessing nutritious food and most only rely on food from gardens. Inadequate infrastructure such as damaged road access is the cause of the high rate of stunting, especially in villages with difficult access and this is evidenced by the high number of stunting cases in villages with difficult access such as Sibongkaras Village and Kuta Tinggi Village. With this, in the case of stunting cannot only be addressed by the Health Office or Community Health Center alone but requires cooperation between organizations. as explained by Ibuk Rayawati Sinamo Parents of children with stunting that the program of providing nutritious food such as eggs, bread, and green beans is very helpful in easing their burden, especially for underprivileged families. Furthermore, the guidance provided at the integrated health post (Posyandu) regarding stunting prevention was very helpful. They hope this assistance will continue and be expanded to support their well-being.

## RESULT AND DISCUSSION

### Barriers to the Implementation of Stunting Prevention Programs in Pakpak Bharat Regency

#### 1. Low economic status of the community

Based on field findings, the program implemented by the Pakpak Bharat district government has not been properly targeted, where the assistance provided is not only consumed by children with stunting but also consumed by the family. This is due to the low economic status of the community, which makes it unable to meet children's nutritional needs and even to meet daily needs must rely on income from their fields, this is one of the main obstacles in the program's implementation. Explained by several village midwives, the program's objectives have not been fully achieved. Especially in remote villages. Many communities still lack sufficient attention to providing nutritious food for their children, especially with limited human resources. The Community Health Center (Puskesmas) is making efforts to achieve its targets . The program provides supplemental food assistance to stunted children, including a monthly carton of eggs, bread, green beans, and vitamins. However, this assistance has not yet fully reached its intended audience. Significant changes occur because

stunted children receive only one meal a month. This is due to low human resources and the economic situation of the community. This is one of the government's tasks, not only focusing on addressing stunting through providing additional food but also providing economic assistance or striving to improve the economy by utilizing existing potential. A healthy economy will provide sufficient space for the community to obtain nutritious food. Based on these results, the goal of the stunting prevention program has not yet achieved an optimal level of success. This is evidenced by the still high stunting rate, the government must pay more attention to important aspects of the causes. stunting, especially economic conditions and social conditions.

## 2. Regional conditions

Regional conditions or remote areas are one of the obstacles in the implementation, especially remote villages because the highest stunting rate is found in remote villages, so communication access is very difficult for remote villages because network access is also difficult. Interviews revealed that although village midwives have attempted to educate the community about the importance of Integrated Health Posts (Posyandu), many mothers still lack understanding of its benefits. This leads to their inactivity in participating in Posyandu activities. Posyandu is crucial not only for immunizations but also for monitoring child development and providing education on the importance of nutritious food to support healthy child growth and development. This lack of community awareness is a major obstacle to maximizing the program's benefits.

## 3. Low parental knowledge

Lack of understanding of mothers regarding providing good nutritional patterns for their children so that children's nutrition is poor. unmet needs and inadequate economic conditions make it difficult for people to obtain nutritious food. Based on results from several informants the that the main obstacle in addressing nutritional problems in children is the lack of parental awareness of the importance of providing proper nutrition, especially in consuming nutritious foods such as vegetables. In addition, **Low** economic status is a major obstacle, with families struggling to provide nutritious food for their children due to financial constraints. This often leads to children lacking the nutrients needed to support optimal growth and development. It can be concluded that communities with limited economic resources report difficulty meeting their children's optimal

nutritional needs. Although they occasionally provide nutritious foods such as fruit or pudding, this only occurs when they have additional income from their fields. However, when income decreases or during an economic crisis, they are forced to consume only what is available. This indicates that limited economic status is a major factor affecting families' ability to provide their children with healthy food.

## CONCLUSION

1. The implementation of the stunting prevention program carried out in Pakpak Bharat Regency, namely the provision of Vitamin A, exclusive breastfeeding counseling, and nutritious food counseling has been carried out in accordance with the Pakpak Bharat Regent's regulations which are carried out once a month. Supplementary food or PMT is also provided once a month, the aim of which is to improve the nutritional status of children and to meet their nutritional needs, but the objectives of the PMT program have not been achieved optimally and the impact is not yet significant.ma
2. Obstacles to the implementation of the Stunting Prevention Program in Pakpak Bharat Regency include the low economic status of the community, which prevents them from meeting their children's nutritional needs, even relying on income from their fields to meet their daily needs. Furthermore, difficult-to-reach areas, such as remote villages, also hinder information dissemination, and poor network access prevents comprehensive health service information from reaching the community. Furthermore, parents' limited knowledge of parenting, nutrition, and child health exacerbates children's nutritional needs.

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