



Effectiveness of Extreme Poverty Alleviation Implementation in Meranti Islands Regency

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Abstract

Poverty alleviation is a key global agenda for 2030. This action plan was agreed upon by 189 countries in the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). A problem that has emerged across all countries is the ineffectiveness of policies implemented in poverty alleviation programs. The extreme poverty target of zero percent in the 2024 government policy has not yet been achieved, according to data from the Indonesian Central Bureau of Statistics (BPS), there are still 0.29 percent of the population in extreme poverty. Phenomena found in poverty alleviation include the distribution of financial assistance and basic needs that are not on target and different poverty data between related stakeholders. This paper aims to examine the extent to which policies and programs in poverty alleviation. In this paper, the author uses the concept proposed by S.P. Siagian regarding effectiveness. The measuring tools for the success of a policy or program are objectives, strategies, infrastructure, analysis, formulation, planning, and supervision. This research was conducted in the Meranti Islands Regency because the Regency in Riau Province still has a population of extreme poverty. The research method uses a systematic literature review by collecting previous research data, both primary and secondary.

Key Words : Effectiveness, Poverty alleviation, extreme poverty, policies and programs

Introduction

Poverty alleviation is one of the most fundamental and universal development challenges, for both developing and developed countries. At the global level, Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) formulated by the United Nations are the main framework to address these issues. SDG aims to ending poverty in the year of 2030 with a strategy that includes eradicating extreme poverty, reducing poverty in various dimensions, and developing an inclusive social protection system

Empirically, despite progress, global challenges remain significant. A UN report states that in 2018 By 2025 more than 800 million people will still be living in extreme poverty, which shows that progress, although real, is still not enough to achieve the eradication of extreme poverty by the 2030 target without accelerating joint efforts by member countries.

Extreme poverty is a significant development challenge in Indonesia, despite declining rates in recent decades. According to official data from the Central Statistics Agency (BPS), the extreme poverty rate in Indonesia has been reduced to 0.85 percent by March 2025, or equivalent 2.38 million people of the total national population, a decrease compared to the previous period. This decline indicates positive progress in poverty alleviation efforts, measured not only as general poverty but also in its extreme forms (BPS, 2025).

In scientific literature, extreme poverty is often associated with the ability of individuals or households to meet basic daily needs, including food, clean water, health, and education, which, if not met, indicate very low welfare conditions (Nurpahdi et al., 2025). The study confirms that although various policy programs have been developed by the central and regional governments, implementation and the target achievements in the field still face various structural obstacles.

Various quantitative studies have demonstrated the relationship between extreme poverty, inequality, and economic growth in Indonesia. Lestari et al. (2023) found that extreme poverty is strongly correlated with economic inequality at the provincial level, although its impact on national economic growth is relatively small. This indicates that eradicating extreme poverty must also consider aspects of income distribution and equitable economic access.

The Indonesian government is targeting the elimination of extreme poverty (0 percent) by 2024, official data shows that extreme poverty has not yet fully reached zero. According to the Central Statistics Agency (BPS), the national extreme poverty rate in March 2024 was recorded at 1.26 percent, or the equivalent of approximately 3.56 million people who still live below the minimum standard of basic needs. This figure then fell to 0.85 percent in March 2025, showing a downward trend but has not yet reached the 0 percent target.

On the other hand, several government policies, including in Presidential Instruction No. 8 of 2025 concerning Optimization of Implementation of Poverty Alleviation and Elimination of Extreme Poverty, has pushed BPS to release extreme poverty data separately from general poverty figures as a commitment to poverty alleviation. Meanwhile, at the level regency, Empirical data shows significant differences between regions. Meranti Islands Regency in Riau Province is known as one of the regions with the highest percentage of monetary poverty in the province in 2024, amounting to around 23.15 percent of the total population. Although specific data on the percentage of poverty extreme in Meranti for 2024 is not officially published in monetary statistics, a number of studies and acceleration task force data place the Meranti Islands Regency as one of the priority locations for the program P3KE (Accelerating the Elimination of Extreme Poverty) because of the high proportion of

families classified in the lowest decile (very poor families) which reaches tens of percent of the total population.

This data illustrates that although the government's target is to eradicate extreme poverty, in reality extreme poverty still exists both at the national and regional levels, particularly in regions with challenging geographic and economic characteristics like the Meranti Islands. This underscores the need for more focused and locally contextualized policy strategies to address structural barriers to extreme poverty alleviation.

Regionally, extreme poverty conditions have varying characteristics across regions. Meranti Islands Regency in Riau Province has a relatively high poverty rate of around 23.15 percent of the total population in 2024, making it one of the areas with the highest poverty rates in the province (Katadata, 2024). Furthermore, TNP2K data shows the distribution of the population in the extreme poverty category in several sub-districts, such as Tebingtinggi, Rangsang Pesisir, and Pulau Merbau, which are the focus of intervention by local and central governments.

A literature review by Ebriyani & Oktaviani (2025) stated that social policies such as the Family Hope Program (PKH), infrastructure development, and access to education and health services are effective strategies for reducing poverty in Indonesia, although improved coordination and targeting accuracy are needed to effectively target the extreme poor, especially in remote areas. In the context of the Meranti Islands, geographical challenges and limited access are important factors hindering the effectiveness of poverty alleviation programs, so a cross-sectoral approach and policy adaptation based on local data are urgently needed.

Thus, this study emphasizes the importance of evaluating the effectiveness of extreme poverty alleviation policies through a review of scientific literature and empirical data at both national and local levels, particularly to understand the successes and obstacles associated with government interventions in efforts to achieve more inclusive well-being.

Library Review

Effectiveness

Effectiveness is a concept used to measure the level of success of an organization, program, or policy in achieving its stated goals. According to Peter F. Drucker (1967), effectiveness is the ability to do the right things, emphasizing the achievement of organizational goals. This concept distinguishes effectiveness from efficiency, where efficiency focuses more on the optimal use of resources. Furthermore, Richard L. Daft (2010) explains that organizational effectiveness refers to the extent to which an organization is able to realize its stated goals through the utilization of available resources. Thus, effectiveness is not only related to the final result, but also the alignment between goals and the realization of achievements. According to James L. Gibson et al. (2012), effectiveness is the achievement of mutually agreed-upon goals through a structured management process. This perspective emphasizes the importance of coordination and integration within the organizational system.

In the study of public administration and management, there are several approaches to measuring effectiveness.

1. Goal Attainment Approach

This approach assesses effectiveness based on the extent to which organizational goals are achieved. According to Etzioni (1964), an organization is considered effective if it is able to realize its formally formulated goals.

2. System Approach

The systems approach views organizations as open systems interacting with the environment. Daniel Katz and Robert L. Kahn (1978) stated that effectiveness is measured by an organization's ability to maintain survival through adaptation to the environment.

3. Strategic Constituencies Approach

This approach assesses effectiveness based on the satisfaction of stakeholders within the organization. Richard M. Steers (1985) explains that an organization is considered effective if it is able to meet the demands of strategic groups that influence the organization's sustainability.

Some general indicators of program or public policy effectiveness include: 1) Target accuracy. 2) Goal achievement. 3) Timeliness. 3) Benefits or impact (outcome/impact). 4) Program sustainability.

According to William N. Dunn (2018), the effectiveness of public policy is measured by the extent to which the policy is able to solve public problems according to the stated objectives. In the context of Indonesian public administration, Mardiasmo (2018) stated that effectiveness is related to the government's success in achieving public service targets in accordance with predetermined planning and performance standards.

In public policy studies, effectiveness is a key indicator in policy evaluation. Policy evaluation aims to assess whether a program has achieved its intended goals and had a significant impact on society. According to Michael Hill and Peter Hupe (2002), the effectiveness of policy implementation is influenced by communication factors, resources, implementer disposition, and bureaucratic structure. Thus, effectiveness is determined not only by policy design but also by the quality of implementation on the ground.

Poverty

Poverty is a condition where an individual or household is unable to meet basic needs, both food and non-food. This definition emphasizes economic capacity as the primary indicator. Meanwhile, Amartya Sen (1999) views poverty not only as a lack of income, but also as capability deprivation, namely the inability to live a meaningful life. This approach broadens the meaning of poverty to be multidimensional. According to the Central Bureau of Statistics, poverty in Indonesia is measured using the basic needs approach, namely the inability to meet food needs equivalent to 2,100 calories per capita per day as well as non-food needs such as housing, education, and health.

Poverty Alleviation Approach

1. Growth Approach

This approach emphasizes that high economic growth will create jobs and increase people's incomes, thereby reducing poverty. Simon Kuznets (1955), through his Kuznets curve hypothesis, stated that in the early stages of development, inequality increases, but in the long term it will decrease with economic growth. However, economic growth does not always automatically reduce poverty if it is not accompanied by fair income distribution.

2. Basic Needs Approach

This approach emphasizes meeting the minimum needs of the poor through government intervention, such as providing education, health services, and food subsidies. According to the International Labour Organization (1976), meeting basic needs is a primary strategy for directly improving the welfare of the poor.

3. Empowerment Approach

The empowerment approach focuses on increasing the capacity of poor communities to become economically and socially independent. Robert Chambers (1995) emphasized the importance of community participation in the development process as the key to successful poverty alleviation.

In Indonesia, poverty alleviation policies are implemented through various social protection and economic empowerment programs. Programs such as cash social assistance, food subsidies, and the Family Hope Program are part of the national poverty alleviation strategy. The Ministry of Social Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia (2023) explains that poverty alleviation interventions are carried out through an integrated program convergence approach between the central and regional governments. Furthermore, the Ministry of National Development Planning (2022) emphasizes the importance of eliminating extreme poverty through strategies to increase income, reduce expenditure burdens, and reduce pockets of poverty.

The success of poverty alleviation can be measured through several indicators, including: 1) Reduction in poverty and extreme poverty rates. 2) Reduction in the poverty depth and severity index. 3) Increased access to education and health services. 4) Increased income and employment opportunities.

According to the United Nations Development Programme (2023), sustainable poverty alleviation requires a multidimensional approach that includes economic, social and environmental aspects.

Extreme Poverty

Extreme poverty is the most severe form of poverty, characterized by the inability of an individual or household to meet the minimum basic needs for survival. According to the World Bank (2023), extreme poverty is defined as a condition where a person lives on less than USD 2.15 per day (Purchasing Power Parity/PPP 2017). From a multidimensional perspective, Amartya Sen (1999) explains that extreme poverty is not only related to low income, but also limited access to education, health, decent work, and social participation. Thus, extreme poverty reflects a broader deprivation of capabilities.

Extreme poverty is caused by various structural and cultural factors. According to the United Nations Development Programme (2023), the main factors causing extreme poverty include low quality human resources, limited access to basic services, unequal income distribution, and vulnerability to economic shocks and disasters. Structurally, development inequality between regions and limited productive employment opportunities also exacerbate conditions of extreme poverty. Jeffrey D. Sachs (2005) stated that countries or regions caught in a "poverty trap" experience difficulty escaping poverty due to low investment, limited infrastructure, and stagnant productivity.

Extreme Poverty Eradication Approach

1. Social Protection Approach

This approach emphasizes providing direct assistance to the extreme poor through social assistance programs, subsidies, and social security. The World Bank (2022) emphasizes that an adaptive social protection system can protect vulnerable groups from economic shocks.

2. Economic Empowerment Approach

This approach aims to increase the economic capacity and independence of poor communities through skills training, access to capital, and job creation. Robert Chambers (1995) emphasized the importance of active community participation in the development process to ensure the sustainability of poverty alleviation programs.

3. Multidimensional Approach

A multidimensional approach views extreme poverty as a complex issue requiring cross-sector intervention. The United Nations, through its Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) agenda, targets the eradication of extreme poverty as Goal 1 (No Poverty), encompassing economic, social, and environmental aspects.

Measuring extreme poverty can be done through:

1. International poverty line (USD 2.15 PPP per day)
2. Poverty Depth Index (P1)
3. Poverty Severity Index (P2)
4. Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI)

According to the Oxford Poverty and Human Development Initiative (2023), the Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI) measures deprivation across health, education, and living standards to provide a more comprehensive picture of extreme poverty.

Method

This study uses a systematic literature review (SLR) approach to comprehensively assess the effectiveness of extreme poverty alleviation implementation. This method aims to systematically and transparently identify, evaluate, and synthesize previous research findings (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). This literature review was chosen because it provides a conceptual map, research trends, and research gaps in extreme poverty alleviation studies. The research design follows the systematic review stages, which include: 1) Formulation of research questions. 2) Identification and literature search. 3) Selection and screening of articles. 4) Data extraction. 5) Analysis and synthesis of findings

This stage refers to the systematic review procedures described by Snyder (2019) and Kitchenham (2004). The main questions in this study are: 1) How effective is the implementation of extreme poverty alleviation programs based on empirical findings? 2) What factors influence the success or failure of these policy implementations? 3) What intervention models are most effective in reducing extreme poverty?

Literature searches were conducted through scientific databases, including: Google Scholar, Scopus, Web of Science, National Journal Portal (SINTA), Official publications from the World Bank, Statistical publications from the Central Statistics Agency.

The keywords used include: "extreme poverty alleviation," "social protection effectiveness," "conditional cash transfer," "poverty reduction policy," and "extreme poverty in Indonesia." The publication year range reviewed was 2015–2025 to ensure the relevance and recency of the data.

Inclusion criteria:

1. Empirical research articles (quantitative/qualitative/mixed methods)
2. International and national policy reports
3. Publications in Indonesian and English
4. Focus on the effectiveness or evaluation of poverty alleviation programs
5. Opinion articles without empirical data
6. Publication outside the specified timeframe
7. Articles irrelevant to extreme poverty

The selection process was carried out through the stages of identification, screening, eligibility, and inclusion as recommended in the PRISMA model (Page et al., 2021). The analysis was conducted using a multivariate approach. **thematic analysis** to identify major patterns in the literature (Miles et al., 2014). The stages of analysis include:

1. Coding of the main findings of each article
2. Grouping by theme (e.g.: targeting accuracy, economic impact, program sustainability)
3. Narrative synthesis to draw comprehensive conclusions
4. In addition, a descriptive analysis was conducted on publication trends and research methods used.

To maintain the quality of the study, this research applies:

1. Transparency in the article selection process
2. Complete documentation of literature sources
3. Triangulation of sources (international journals, policy reports, and official statistical data)

This approach aims to increase the credibility and accuracy of the literature synthesis (Snyder, 2019). The effectiveness of extreme poverty alleviation implementation is analyzed based on three key public policy indicators (Dunn, 2018):

1. Targeting accuracy
2. Impact on reducing extreme poverty (policy outcome)
3. Sustainability and economic empowerment (sustainability)

This framework also considers the capability approach which emphasizes improving the quality of life as an indicator of successful poverty alleviation.

Results and Discussion

Eradicating extreme poverty is a crucial focus of social and economic development, both globally and nationally. According to the World Bank, extreme poverty is defined as a condition where a person lives below a very low daily income threshold, namely less than USD 2.15 per day (World Bank, 2022). In Indonesia, efforts to eradicate extreme poverty are also a government priority through various integrated policies (Central Bureau of Statistics, 2023). Extreme poverty is a multidimensional issue related not only to low income but also to limited access to education, health, adequate housing, sanitation, and social protection. Globally, the agenda for eliminating extreme poverty is a primary objective of the United Nations through the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly Goal 1 (No Poverty).

In Indonesia, eradicating extreme poverty is a national development priority, as outlined in the policy to accelerate the eradication of extreme poverty to zero percent. According to data from the Central Statistics Agency (BPS), extreme poverty is measured using an expenditure approach below the extreme poverty line, aligned with World Bank standards.

This policy emphasizes integrated interventions through social protection, economic empowerment, and increased access to basic services.

This literature review aims to analyze the effectiveness of extreme poverty alleviation programs based on academic literature and recent policy reports. The effectiveness of these programs is the focus of academic research because it relates to their real impact on the well-being of the extremely poor. Research on extreme poverty generally uses two main approaches: 1) a monetary approach, which views extreme poverty based on income or consumption measures (World Bank, 2022); 2) a multidimensional approach, which encompasses aspects of health, education, and access to basic services (Alkire & Santos, 2010).

According to Sen (1999), poverty is not only seen in terms of economic deprivation, but also in terms of a person's limited capabilities (abilities) to live a decent life. This capability approach forms the basis for more holistic, multidimensional measurements. In public policy studies, the effectiveness of a program is measured through three main dimensions (Bardach, 2012): 1) Targeting accuracy the extent to which the program reaches the right target group. 2) Real impact (outcome impact) program contribution to changes in socio-economic conditions. 3) Sustainability the program's ability to generate long-term benefits.

These three aspects are important in assessing whether extreme poverty alleviation is effective. Indonesia has implemented various programs to reduce extreme poverty, including: 1) Family Hope Program (PKH) PKH is a conditional social assistance program aimed at poor households, focusing on children's health and education (Ministry of Social Affairs, 2021). 2) Non-Cash Food Assistance (NCFA) BPNT provides food assistance to poor households to improve nutritional intake (Ministry of Social Affairs, 2021). 3) Community Economic Empowerment In the form of skills training and micro-business capital assistance to increase the income of poor people.

Several studies have shown that integrating social assistance and economic empowerment increases the effectiveness of poverty alleviation (Suryahadi et al., 2020). Literature studies have shown that the use of Integrated Social Welfare Data (DTKS) helps improve the accuracy of beneficiary identification (World Bank, 2020). However, field evaluations have revealed obstacles such as outdated data and targeting errors.

According to Hidayat & Arifin (2019), more valid measuring tools and a regular updating system are needed to ensure that aid is truly targeted. Several empirical studies have shown a significant reduction in extreme poverty rates in areas affected by social assistance programs (BPS, 2023; Suryahadi et al., 2020). The program's effectiveness is particularly evident in the context of mitigating the economic impact on poor families.

However, the long-term impact on community economic independence remains a matter of debate in the literature, as some programs are considered more consumptive than productive (Lee & Kim, 2021). Sustainability is a crucial issue, as programs not integrated with economic empowerment strategies have the potential to create dependency. Smith (2018) emphasized the need to strengthen local social and economic capital to structurally address extreme poverty. Some key challenges identified in the literature include: 1) Coordination between government agencies which is less effective (Hidayat & Arifin, 2019). 2) Regional inequality in program implementation, especially in remote areas (BPS, 2023). 3) Slow data updates, causing the recipients of aid to not be in accordance with actual conditions.

Based on the literature review, it can be concluded that the extreme poverty alleviation program in Indonesia has shown short-term positive impacts in reducing extreme poverty through social protection. Target accuracy and data updating is the key to effective program

implementation. Integration between social assistance and economic empowerment is needed to increase long-term effectiveness. Program effectiveness is measured not only by reducing statistical figures, but also by improving the quality of life and capabilities of beneficiaries.

Normatively, effectiveness can be measured based on goal attainment. In this context, the government is targeting the elimination of extreme poverty to near zero percent. Based on national data trends, the policies implemented demonstrate progressive progress toward this target. This approach is in line with the theory of organizational effectiveness put forward by Richard M. Steers (1985), which emphasizes that effectiveness is measured by the extent to which predetermined goals can be realized.

When analyzed using Amartya Sen's (1999) capability approach, the effectiveness of extreme poverty alleviation is measured not only by increased income but also by expanding access to education, health, and economic opportunities. Social protection programs in Indonesia have improved access to education and health for poor households, but the challenge of sustaining a productive economy remains.

The World Bank (2022) emphasizes that long-term success in eliminating extreme poverty requires structural transformation, including the creation of productive jobs and strengthening adaptive social protection systems.

The multidimensional approach developed by the Oxford Poverty and Human Development Initiative (2023) demonstrates that poverty is not solely related to income, but also to deprivation in education, health, and living standards. Therefore, policy effectiveness must be measured through a combination of monetary and non-monetary indicators.

Overall, the research results show that the implementation of extreme poverty alleviation in Indonesia is classified as **quite effective** in quantitatively reducing poverty rates. However, substantive effectiveness in creating sustainable economic independence still requires strengthening aspects of empowerment and productive job creation.

Meranti Islands Regency is an archipelago in Riau Province characterized by coastal areas and limited infrastructure access. According to data from the Central Statistics Agency (2024), the poverty rate in this region remains above the provincial average, with poverty concentrated in rural areas and remote islands. Extreme poverty is identified based on a basic needs approach and the lowest decile of household welfare. The extreme poor generally work in traditional fisheries, small-scale agriculture, and low-productivity informal employment.

The implementation of extreme poverty alleviation in Meranti Islands Regency refers to the national policy formulated by the Ministry of National Development Planning (2022) through the National Strategy for Accelerating the Eradication of Extreme Poverty. Programs implemented in the region include:

1. Reducing the burden of expenses, through social assistance (PKH, BPNT/basic necessities, BLT).
2. Increasing income, through empowering MSMEs, providing fishing gear, and supporting micro-enterprises.
3. Improving access to basic services, such as increasing access to health, education, and village infrastructure.

Integrating beneficiary data using the Integrated Social Welfare Data (DTKS) aims to improve program targeting accuracy. Based on the approach goal attainment Effectiveness is measured by the extent to which policy objectives are achieved. Referring to Richard M. Steers' (1985) theory of organizational effectiveness, a program is considered effective if it is able to realize its stated objectives.

In the context of Meranti Islands Regency, the extreme poverty alleviation program has shown positive results, including a reduction in the number of extremely poor households and an increase in social assistance coverage. This demonstrates that, administratively and statistically, the policy is quite effective.

When analyzed using Amartya Sen's (1999) capability approach, effectiveness is measured not only by poverty reduction but also by increasing people's ability to live a decent life. In the Meranti Islands Regency, although social assistance has reduced expenditures, long-term economic capacity development remains limited. Dependence on the primary sector (fisheries and traditional agriculture) and low economic diversification are key challenges to creating sustainable economic independence.

According to the World Bank (2022), island and remote areas require a more adaptive policy approach based on strengthening local economies to ensure sustainable extreme poverty alleviation. The multidimensional approach, as developed by the Oxford Poverty and Human Development Initiative (2023), emphasizes that poverty encompasses dimensions of education, health, and living standards. In the Meranti Islands Regency, improvements in access to basic services have been made, but disparities between regions remain evident, particularly in remote villages.

Conclusion

Based on the results of the analysis of the implementation of policies and programs for alleviating extreme poverty in the Meranti Islands Regency, it can be concluded that the level of effectiveness is in the category of quite effective but not yet optimal in terms of structure and sustainability.

First, in terms of goal attainment, the implementation of programs aligned with the National Strategy for Accelerating the Eradication of Extreme Poverty has contributed to a reduction in the number of extremely poor households. Data published by the Central Statistics Agency (BPS) shows a downward trend in poverty rates, although Meranti Islands Regency remains among the areas with relatively high poverty rates in Riau Province due to its island-like nature and limited economic access.

Second, regional policy implementation has followed the direction of the Ministry of National Development Planning through a program convergence approach, namely reducing expenditure burdens (social assistance and subsidies), increasing revenues (empowering MSMEs, the fisheries and agriculture sectors), and reducing regionally-based pockets of poverty. Synergy between the central and regional governments is a crucial factor in supporting program effectiveness.

However, there are several factors that hinder maximum effectiveness, including:

1. Limited transportation infrastructure and connectivity between islands.
2. Dependence on low-productivity primary economic sectors.
4. Vulnerability to commodity price fluctuations and coastal geographic conditions.
5. The challenge of accuracy and updating of social assistance beneficiary data.

When analyzed using Amartya Sen's capability perspective, the alleviation of extreme poverty in the Meranti Islands Regency has not fully increased the community's capabilities in the long term, especially in the aspects of economic diversification and improving the quality of human resources.

Thus, it can be emphasized that the implementation of extreme poverty alleviation in the Meranti Islands Regency is effective in reducing poverty rates administratively and statistically, but still requires strengthening in the aspects of sustainable economic empowerment, development of island regional infrastructure, and improving the quality of education and health in order to achieve comprehensive and sustainable community economic independence.

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