

Rural Extreme Poverty: Governance and Alleviation Efforts

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Abstract

Extreme poverty in villages is caused by many factors and is complex, so it requires comprehensive mitigation. This article intends to explain the complexity of extreme poverty in villages and provide solutions to overcome it. This research uses descriptive research methods with a qualitative approach. The research results show that the background of poor community groups in villages is based on age, level of education, physical condition, capital ownership, livelihood, and number of dependents in the family. Meanwhile, factors that cause extreme poverty in villages include capital ownership, quality of human resources, culture and social networks, opportunity and opportunity, and access to power. Solutions for overcoming extreme poverty in villages should be carried out based on comprehensive, multi-aspected, and sustainable community empowerment efforts so that they will not only create economic productivity but also community resilience and independence to obtain a prosperous and quality life.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Development policies specifically for villages are carried out by every government regime in power [1]. However, it is a paradox that the number of village development programs implemented by the government is inversely proportional to the large number of villages that are still underdeveloped [2]. At least, based on the 2018 village potential data collection, it was recorded that 13,232 villages were still underdeveloped [3]. The large number of villages that still have the status of underdeveloped villages is exacerbated by the number of poor rural people, which as of 2019, was recorded at 11.74 million people, compared to urban areas, the amount of poverty in rural areas is much greater [4].

Underdeveloped village development and poverty are like two sides of an interrelated coin. The failure of development in villages is a reflection of the government's inability to improve the welfare of its people so that villages become reservoirs of poverty. On the other hand, the large number of poor people is an obstacle to village development. This relationship ultimately resembles a vicious circle of poverty or what Mosley & Verschoor (2005) call "the vicious circle of poverty" [5].

This premise is difficult to answer, it is like asking whether the egg or the chicken came first. Many studies examining village problems have not fully understood the root causes of poverty in villages. Research results from Maifizar (2016) reveal that poverty factors in rural areas are caused by remote access to economic resources, failure to empower the community, and excessive dependence on the government. Santika, Balaka, & Rumbia (2016) stated that poverty factors in rural areas are caused by low education and abilities, limited production (economic) facilities in rural areas, and low work ethic. Adhi, Ardana,

& Maduriana (2016) revealed that the factors causing poverty are related to culture, such as the habit of begging, laziness, giving up easily, and surrendering to fate. Meanwhile, Setiobudi (2019) revealed that rural poverty is caused by injustice and inequality such as inequality in services and the provision of basic community rights.

These various opinions produce different points of view regarding the factors that cause poverty in villages and provide answers to the complexity of poverty problems in villages. This is coupled with the measurement of poverty which is carried out differently by each party, both by the government and by institutions outside the government, resulting in a different picture of poverty.

Government institutions such as the Central Statistics Agency measure poverty using a formula for meeting basic needs (basic needs approach) where poverty is defined as the inability to fulfill basic needs [10], while the National Family Planning Coordinating Agency (BKKBN) measures poverty from the family welfare aspect and family demographic characteristics [11].

Institutions outside the government such as the World Bank measure poverty using indicators of people's purchasing power, while the United Nations (UN), through the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) measures poverty based on human resource development or also called the Human Development Report (HDR). Even though poverty measures vary, based on Warr's opinion (dalam Nurjihadi & Dharmawan, 2016) which states that a person can be categorized as poor even though it is based on just one indicator, Indonesian citizens are still categorized as poor if they are unable to meet their needs adequately, worthy.

The diversity of opinions regarding the factors causing poverty in villages and the size of poverty has implications for the lack of unified understanding from various parties regarding the picture of poverty itself so that in the policy context various poverty reduction policies will be found which are based on the understanding of each institution.

Various policies for overcoming rural poverty that have been implemented since the New Order era until now include: Presidential Instruction on Disadvantaged Villages (IDT), Welfare Assistance Program for the Poor, Infrastructure Development Program for Disadvantaged Villages (P3DT), Work Intensive Program, Community Empowerment Program (PNPM), Farming Business Credit Program (KUT), Family Hope Program (PKH) and many more [13], [14]. These various programs have brought economic improvements to some rural communities. However, it was unable to reduce rural poverty rates significantly.

According to Huraerah (2013), the failure of various poverty alleviation programs is caused by: First, they still focus on economic aspects alone, whereas in reality poverty is multidimensional. Second, there is a tendency towards curative or helpful motives rather than actions to increase productivity. Third, poor people should be placed as subjects rather than as objects. Fourth, the government positions itself as a ruler rather than a facilitator.

Extreme poverty is a condition where a person is unable to meet their basic needs. These basic needs include food, clean water, proper sanitation, health, shelter, education, and access to information. A person is said to experience extreme poverty if the cost of daily living needs is equivalent to USD 1.9 PPP (Purchasing Power Parity). Based on this understanding, extreme poverty is a condition that needs to be overcome and is part of the poverty problem in the village [16], [17].

One of the reasons for the government's mistakes in implementing poverty reduction programs in villages is the perspective used by the government which views rural poverty as part of national poverty without looking at the empirical characteristics that exist in villages. Therefore, an approach is needed that looks at overcoming rural poverty from the perspective of the village itself. This is based on several reasons, namely: First, the

complexity of poverty in villages is different from the complexity of poverty in urban areas, so looking at poverty in villages must be based on the problems that exist in the village itself. Second, the locality of culture and customs in the village is possible to influence poverty in the village; therefore the rural social network formed from village culture must be a measurement of rural poverty. Third, the village as a legal community unit must always be involved in every policy that is directly related to rural life, including overcoming rural poverty.

It is hoped that by addressing rural poverty from a village perspective, apart from being able to interpret the problem of rural poverty correctly by the empirical conditions in the village, it is also hoped that it will be able to produce appropriate policy instruments for overcoming rural extreme poverty. So efforts to examine rural extreme poverty from a village perspective must continue to be developed. From the description above, this article is intended to explore the complexity of extreme poverty problems in villages seen from a village perspective. It will describe rural poverty problems starting from village social structure to the implementation of village development along with the obstacles that contribute to rural poverty. In this way, it is hoped that alternative solutions will emerge in overcoming rural extreme poverty based on a village perspective.

2. RESEARCH METHODS

This research uses descriptive research methods with a qualitative approach. This is intended to describe in detail and comprehensively extreme rural poverty which includes the empirical conditions of rural poverty up to the factors causing rural poverty. This understanding is in line with that expressed by Moleong who stated that descriptive research is intended as an effort to explain a social phenomenon in the form of a description of words rather than explaining using statistical figures [18].

Data sources were obtained through primary data through research in villages in Sumedang Regency and secondary data, namely in the form of books, journals, statutory regulations, and other sources that are considered to be related and relevant to research that addresses the problem of rural poverty. The existing primary data and secondary data are processed through check, re-check, and cross-check [19] between one reference and another to produce a description of rural poverty that is correct by empirical conditions in the field.

3. RESEARCH RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The description and analysis of extreme poverty in this article is divided into 3 (three) main parts, namely: First, a study of poor communities in villages. Second, a study of the factors causing extreme poverty in villages. Third, a study of efforts to overcome extreme poverty in villages. The three studies can be explained in detail as follows:

3.1. The Poverty in the Village

The poor people in rural areas are generally a group of people who cannot access economic activities both in the rural environment and outside the rural, so from an economic aspect, poor people in rural areas are less productive and have low incomes. Empirically, the background of poor people in rural areas can be explained in table 1 below:

Tabel 1.
Background of the Rural Poor

Aspect	Background
Age	1. Productive Age

	2. Unproductive age
Education Level	1. Not attending school 2. Graduated from elementary school 3. Graduated from high school
Physical Conditions	1. Physically Disabled Persons 2. Disease sufferers 3. Healthy Physical Condition
Capital Ownership	1. Do not have business capital 2. Do not own land/land
Employment Sector	1. Informal Sector in the Village 2. Informal Sector in the City
Family Dependents	1. Have few family members 2. Have many family members

(Source: Researcher Analysis, 2024.)

Based on Table 1 above, the grouping of poor people in rural areas is not only based on one particular grouping aspect. There may be people with several limitations at once, for example, elementary school graduates with many family dependents. When viewed from the type of work, poor community groups in rural areas will depend on the existing village typology, such as agricultural villages, coastal villages, industrial villages, tourist villages, etc. The poor groups in agricultural villages are those who do not own agricultural land; members of these communities generally work as agricultural laborers or work in other non-formal sectors, such as construction workers who work seasonally. Poor people in industrial villages are those who do not have access to industrial capital or have limited qualifications to work in the industrial sector. These poor community members usually work as tertiary support workers such as retail traders or shopkeepers, motorcycle taxi drivers, laundry workers, or other similar jobs.

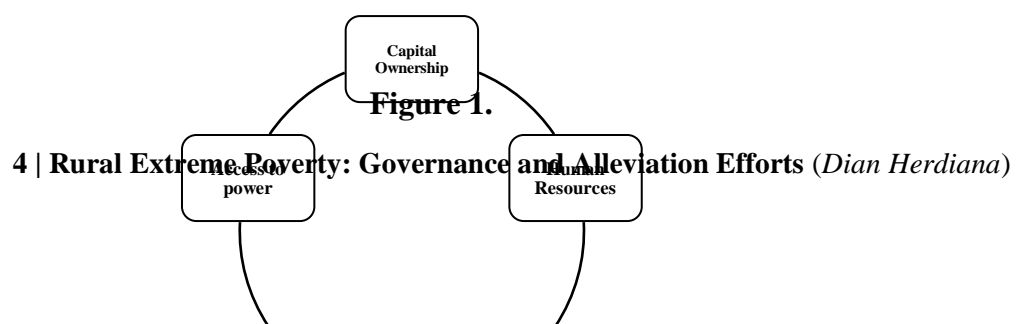
The diversity of backgrounds and livelihoods of poor rural communities with different typologies essentially shows the complexity of the character of poor rural communities. So the diversity of poor community groups in rural areas requires the government to plan poverty reduction policy instruments based on this diversity.

This reality no longer makes it possible for the government to view poverty equally for poor rural and urban communities. In this way, existing poverty alleviation policies in villages must be seen from a village perspective as well, and this is ultimately expected to be a driving force for the success of poverty alleviation in villages.

The consequence of having a poverty reduction policy from a village perspective is that the policy is no longer prepared by the government alone but requires the involvement of local stakeholders in the village, starting from the village head and traditional/village leaders to representatives of the poor. This policy was prepared based on a common understanding between the stakeholders regarding the complexity of poverty problems in the village which resulted in efforts or encouragement to eradicate poverty as a joint effort to improve the quality of life in the village.

3.2. Factors Causing Extreme Poverty in Villages

Various factors contribute to rural extreme poverty, these factors are complex and interrelated with one another, giving rise to a cycle of rural poverty; this can be seen in Figure 1 below:



Rural Extreme Poverty Network (Source: Researcher Analysis, 2024.)

A. Capital Ownership

Capital ownership in a rural context is the main basis for someone to carry out economic activities to earn income. Having a lot of capital has the opportunity to gain prosperity, whereas having no capital will make it difficult to get a job and have the opportunity to become poor in rural areas. In the context of the rural environment, capital is divided into 2 (two) types: direct and indirect.

Direct capital is a person's ownership of economic or business resources, such as agricultural land, business premises, money, and so on. Meanwhile, indirect capital is the environment or external factors encouraging someone to own direct capital, such as potential natural resources and fertile rice fields.

Indirect capital factors contribute to the functioning of a person's direct capital ownership, for example, a rural environment that has infertile land and does not allow it to be used as agricultural land or plantations will result in the economic non-functioning of the land for its owner and the surrounding community. Because of this, it will not provide income to land owners or provide employment opportunities for the community as agricultural workers or plantation workers.

In practice, indirect capital contributes greatly to poverty in rural areas. There are many results of studies such as those conducted by Zakiah & Idrus (2017) regarding the use of springs in Ponggok Village as a village tourist attraction or studies conducted by Hermawan, (2016) regarding the use of the village environment, which is home to ancient volcanoes as a tourist attraction that shows that ownership of natural resources owned by a village can become capital for village development and, at the same time, open up employment opportunities for its people. On the other hand, the lack of natural resources the village owns makes it difficult for the village to develop and leaves only a few job opportunities for the community [22], [23].

Worsening environmental conditions on the carrying capacity of the community's economy are also included in indirect capital, which is a factor causing rural poverty. The existence of agricultural land that is no longer fertile or natural damage such as that caused by land conversion or natural disasters impacts indirect capital in rural areas, reducing the number of jobs and further increasing the number of poverty.

The social capital that exists in villages is also included in indirect capital which is also a factor causing rural poverty. The dysfunction of the Association of Farmer Groups (Gapoktan), Village-Owned Enterprises (BUMDes), Village Cooperatives and even Family Welfare Empowerment Associations (PKK) results in the loss of community access to economic resources that apart from resulting in minimal employment opportunities, it also eliminates community access to economic resources. obtain capital to carry out economic activities [24].

B. Human Resources

Resources are a factor that causes rural poverty because the low quality of human resources is directly proportional to low productivity, which has implications for low-income earned [25]. However, human resources in the village context are not only defined by the village community but also include the resources of the village government apparatus because the village is a legal community unit that adheres to the local community system [26] in the administration of its life between the community and the village government. creating synergistic cooperation. On this basis, the human

resources that influence rural poverty consist of the community and village government officials.

Many studies have revealed that village communities face low-quality human resources caused by various factors including a low level of education, minimal soft skills, no longer productive age, low level of health, and number of family dependents. Lots. These various factors influence rural poverty [27], [28], [29].

Community members with the limitations mentioned above have difficulty finding formal sector jobs both in urban and rural environments. So community members only get jobs in the informal sector, such as agricultural laborers and construction workers, which, judging by the type of work, are temporary and only needed at certain times. This condition has direct implications for low income-while costs for daily living must still be met. This inability to fulfill their daily needs causes people to be grouped into poor communities [30].

Village government officials are part of the human resources contributing to rural poverty. Good human resources, whether seen from the aspects of education, training, or capacity in carrying out government duties, will help encourage productivity, which ultimately contributes to and encourages improvements in the conditions and welfare of society.

Visionary village government officials will be able to create various poverty reduction programs at the village level and be able to mobilize the community to get involved and make a success of various development programs that have been prepared by the village government which will ultimately increase the economy and community income in direct proportion to reducing the number of poverty. On the other hand, in various studies regarding underdeveloped villages that have many poor people, it can be seen that these villages have low-quality village government apparatus resources [31], [32].

C. Culture and Social Networks

A village is a community unit that has a good social network. The existence of a culture of cooperation, togetherness, a high sense of respect, and empathy are cultural values that are highly upheld by village communities [33]. The cultural values that exist in the rural environment also shape existing social networks. Linked to the context of poverty, village communities have social networks that can help community members survive even in poor conditions based on their respective customs or culture. In the context of fulfilling basic needs, such as in villages in West Java, the term "beas perelek" is known, namely one glass of rice collected from people who can afford it every night through "post kamling" activities. The collected rice will then be distributed to poor people who need it [34].

Various other forms of social networks that develop in villages with many variations are ultimately able to form social resilience for poor communities so that even though according to the poverty measure determined by the government, there are people who are categorized as citizens with severe poverty because they have no income and live in poverty. The situation is worrying, but the residents of this community can survive because of help from other village communities. Strong social networks like this can help poor rural residents survive. So there is very little news about poor rural residents dying of hunger.

Along with the development of villages and the influx of culture from outside, the cultural values that form social resilience networks in rural areas begin to fade or even disappear completely. Rural communities are faced with poverty without any assistance from other community members; this is because the culture of helping each other,

respecting each other, and helping others is no longer a social network that all community members uphold. The loss of these social networks implies that it creates vulnerability and helplessness among poor people to ask for help from social networks that previously supported their daily needs.

D. Opportunities

The infrastructure development and modernization that occurs in villages is essentially to encourage the ease of economic activity in the rural environment and to stem the urbanization that has occurred so far where many village people have moved and settled in urban areas [35], [36]. This will create employment opportunities, which are expected to generate productivity and provide a source of income for village communities.

The empirical fact is that infrastructure development, one of which has provided easy access/mobility between villages and cities, has become a means for village communities to earn a living in urban areas, both in the formal and informal sectors. The implication is that apart from the lack of quality of resources needed to develop villages, it also results in the lack of employment opportunities in villages because the production sector is centered in urban areas.

This condition results in minimal opportunities for rural communities who still live in villages to look for work in their villages. People who have good qualities, such as high education, will look for work in the city, while people who have limited quality will try to find work in rural areas even though the work is informal and temporary. With the minimal opportunities available in the village, the community's opportunities to improve their economic life are also minimal. This condition is one of the factors causing poverty in the village.

The centralization of the economy in urban areas also has an impact on reducing opportunities for rural communities to obtain good services, such as education services and health services. The community is faced with the limited services available in the village. This condition reduces people's opportunities to have a good quality of life as obtained by people in urban areas, so it is not surprising that people in rural areas have problems with low-quality education and low-quality health. Communities in villages will ultimately have much lower quality resources than communities in urban areas, resulting in far fewer opportunities to obtain work and a better livelihood. This condition is also a factor causing poverty in rural areas.

E. Access to Power

Various rural extreme poverty reduction programs are essentially aimed at poor communities. However, in many cases, the various assistance provided, especially in the form of direct assistance (cash transfer), is received by people whose economic conditions are much better than those who are poor [37]. This happens because poor people do not have access to power [38]. Poor people do not have the power (political power) to be able to channel their demands and aspirations to the authorities so that their problems in life can be heard and followed up as part of the rural poverty reduction program.

The power structure in the village places the village head as the center of power both in the context of administering government and in implementing village development [39]. So that various policy instruments aimed at solving problems in the village become part of the Village Head's authority [40]. The position of the village head becomes even greater when viewed from the perspective of the social structure of the village community which adheres to a paternalistic system that places the village

head in the highest position compared to other communities. Village heads in a social context like this must be respected and respected by the community. In this way, the position of the village head becomes strategic and strong, which is legalized both in terms of statutory regulations as the highest leader of the village government and socially as a community figure [41].

The situation mentioned above requires poor people in rural areas to have good relations with the Village Head. That way, poor people will have a channel of power to encourage the Village Head to make poor people part of the target group in the rural poverty reduction program.

In practice, in many villages, a close relationship with the Village Head will have many benefits for the poor, especially in the context of the current implementation of village government, where the village government is given full authority in implementing village development. Thus, various poverty reduction programs, ranging from target groups to the number of Assistance, will be determined with the approval of the village head.

Poor people who do not have close ties to authority, in this case, the Village Head, will make it difficult to obtain poverty reduction programs. For example, in a village infrastructure development program with a labor-intensive approach that requires poor people to be involved as workers, the village head will look for community members who are categorized as poor and who are considered capable. In conditions like this, the subjective closeness of poor residents to the Village Head may determine the involvement of poor communities in village development [41].

3.3. Poverty Alleviation Efforts in Villages

Various policy instruments have been implemented by the government in its efforts to overcome extreme poverty in villages. However, many policies are considered to have failed and have not had a significant impact either on the poor as a target group or on the welfare conditions of the village as a whole [42]. On this basis, efforts to overcome poverty in the village in the future must reflect on these failures. The efforts made by the government take into account the following matters:

First, the government must develop elements and measures of rural extreme poverty that are separate from elements and measures of poverty nationally or globally. This is based on the understanding that although poverty conditions between cities and villages are interpreted the same, namely the inability of the community to fulfill their daily needs [43] The structure of extreme poverty in rural areas has different characteristics and problems compared to poverty in urban areas. In this way, the extreme poverty perspective presented can reflect the empirical conditions that exist in villages in a real way, which will make it easier for the government to develop various poverty reduction policy instruments specifically for rural communities.

Second, optimizing the role of village governments in overcoming extreme poverty, especially in the current context where village governments are given the authority to carry out development independently at the local level [44] Thus, poverty alleviation policies will be repositioned from what was initially a form of government power present in the village as a local effort by the village government to improve the welfare of its residents. In this way, poverty reduction policies will be seen from the perspective of addressing problems that occur in village communities based on joint initiatives between the village government and the community.

Third, positioning the extreme poverty reduction program as a comprehensive, multi-aspect, and sustainable community empowerment effort compared to poverty reduction programs, which are economically oriented, charitable, and unsustainable.

Policies for dealing with extreme poverty in villages so far have tended to provide compensation (caritative) which has purely economic value [45]. On the one hand, this assistance can help poor people, but it has no impact on the community's independence efforts to obtain a decent livelihood and also creates dependence on the government.

In the future, the government must avoid policies for dealing with extreme poverty in villages. On the other hand, programs that provide creative stimulus and space for poor people to empower themselves based on their existing potential must continue to be encouraged. Apart from improving the survival of the poor, this will also create long-lasting productivity and impact not only the economic sector of the community but also other sectors in the village.

Fourth, efforts to overcome extreme poverty in villages through development are not only understood as efforts to equally distribute infrastructure development [46], so that physically villages and cities will look the same. But it must also be understood as an effort to create conducive conditions for rural communities by ensuring equitable economic redistribution between cities and villages. Creating a balance between cities and villages will create equal opportunities for economic productivity that can improve the welfare of rural communities.

4. CONCLUSION

Extreme poverty in rural areas is a consequence of the development that has been implemented. In the process, community members become poor groups due to various factors, including capital ownership, quality of human resources, culture, and social networks, opportunity, and access to power. Due to these factors, poor people do not have access to economic resources. Meanwhile, poor community groups in villages are based on age group, level of education, physical condition, capital ownership, livelihood, and number of dependents in the family.

The government's efforts to overcome extreme poverty in villages can no longer be uniform nationally, considering that it has its problems and characteristics, so efforts to overcome extreme poverty must be seen from a village perspective. In this way, overcoming extreme poverty is carried out based on comprehensive, multi-aspected, and sustainable community empowerment efforts so that it will not only create economic productivity but is also expected to be able to create resilience and independence for poor people in rural areas so that they can get a decent income and achieve a prosperous and quality life.

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