

## POVERTY ALLEVIATION THROUGH THE FAMILY HOPE PROGRAM

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### ABSTRACT

**Research Objective** – This study aims to examine the implementation of the Family Hope Program (PKH) in poverty alleviation in Parekaju Village, Ponrang District, Luwu Regency.

**Method** – This study employs a qualitative descriptive approach and data analysis techniques, including data condensation, data presentation, and conclusion drawing.

**Research Findings** – The inaccuracy of PKH targeting is caused by outdated recipient data, low community participation in verification, and technological limitations in the distribution process.

**Theory and Practical Implications** - This study enriches social policy theory by emphasizing the importance of data validity and community involvement in ensuring the accuracy of social assistance targeting. From a policy perspective, the findings recommend periodic data updates, community involvement in recipient verification, and the integration of technology to enhance the transparency and accuracy of PKH distribution.

**Novelty** - This study reveals that the inaccuracy of PKH targeting in Parekaju Village is due to weak selection and data updating, as well as a lack of coordination among stakeholders. The proposed solutions include community-based verification and the use of technology to improve the accuracy of aid distribution.

## INTRODUCTION

Social assistance programs (Bansos) serve as the government's primary instrument in addressing poverty and improving public welfare in Indonesia. Over the past decades, various programs have been launched to combat poverty, one of which is the Family Hope Program (PKH). PKH is a conditional cash transfer program designed to enhance human capital quality by providing access to education and healthcare for low-income families. However, the effectiveness of PKH implementation across different regions remains a subject of debate, particularly regarding the accuracy of beneficiary targeting and its impact on poverty alleviation.

Previous studies indicate that social assistance programs like PKH contribute positively to improving access to education and healthcare for vulnerable groups (Santoso & Wijayanti, 2020). However, several studies also highlight challenges in PKH implementation, such as discrepancies between beneficiary data and actual economic conditions, leading to mistargeted assistance (Rahmawati et al., 2021). Furthermore, research by Prasetyo (2019) emphasizes that the success of PKH heavily depends on the quality of mentoring and monitoring conducted by local governments. Nevertheless, a research gap remains regarding the long-term impact of PKH implementation on the economic independence of low-income families.

Additionally, most studies on PKH have focused on aspects of distribution and short-term effectiveness (Lestari, 2022). Research examining how PKH contributes to shaping the mindset and economic behavior of beneficiary families remains limited. Therefore, a more in-depth analysis is needed to determine the extent to which the program not only provides temporary assistance but

also fosters economic independence among impoverished communities. A case study approach at the village level can offer new insights into the contextual implementation of PKH.

The novelty of this research lies in its focus on the implementation of PKH in Parekaju Village, Ponrang District, Luwu Regency, emphasizing the accuracy of beneficiary targeting and its impact on the economic independence of low-income families. Unlike previous studies that primarily examined the effectiveness of aid distribution, this study will explore the factors contributing to data discrepancies and how the program supports long-term welfare improvement.

The objective of this research is to analyze the implementation of the Family Hope Program in Parekaju Village, Ponrang District, Luwu Regency, with a focus on beneficiary targeting accuracy, distribution effectiveness, and its impact on community welfare. This study will also identify challenges in program execution and provide policy recommendations to enhance PKH effectiveness. The limitations of this research include the restricted geographical scope and potential limitations in accessing detailed beneficiary data.

## **METHOD**

This study employs a descriptive qualitative approach. According to Denzin and Lincoln (2018), qualitative research seeks to interpret phenomena within their natural context by utilizing various established qualitative research methods. This approach enables researchers to gain an in-depth understanding of participants' experiences and perspectives. Bogdan and Taylor (1998) define qualitative methods as procedures that generate descriptive data in the form of written or spoken words from observed individuals. This approach is chosen as it aligns with the research objective, which is to explore the implementation of the Family Hope Program (PKH) in poverty alleviation in Parekaju Village. Previous studies employing similar methods, such as those by Creswell (2014) and Yin (2018), have demonstrated that qualitative methods are effective in understanding social dynamics and the impact of public policies at the local level, particularly in the context of social assistance programs.

Data collection in this study is conducted through three primary techniques: observation, interviews, and documentation. Observation involves direct monitoring of PKH implementation in Parekaju Village, documenting the aid distribution process, and analyzing interactions between beneficiaries and program stakeholders. This technique follows Patton's (2015) observation model, which emphasizes the importance of direct engagement in the research environment to obtain accurate data. Interviews are conducted with key informants, including PKH facilitators, PKH leaders, village officials, and beneficiaries, to gather their perspectives on the program's effectiveness. The interview technique follows a semi-structured approach, as described by Kvale and Brinkmann (2009), allowing the interviewer to explore emerging issues during the interview process. Additionally, documentation is used to collect supporting data from various sources, such as official reports, photographs, and policy documents related to PKH. The use of documentation aligns with Yin's (2018) recommendations in qualitative case studies, emphasizing the importance of data triangulation to enhance research validity.

Data analysis in this study follows the three stages outlined by Miles, Huberman, and Saldana (2014): data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing. Data condensation involves simplifying and selecting relevant information from interviews, observations, and documentation. Data display is presented in descriptive narratives, tables, and diagrams to clarify research findings, following the data visualization principles described by Creswell and Poth (2018). The final stage, conclusion drawing, involves further analyzing findings to interpret the meaning of the collected data. Miles et al. (2014) emphasize that conclusions in qualitative research are provisional and must be continuously verified through ongoing data collection to ensure the validity of the findings.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

Parekaju Village, located in Ponrang District, Luwu Regency, is the site for the implementation of the Family Hope Program (PKH), which began in 2019 and is currently running with a relatively good success rate. There are four categories of impoverished family members eligible to receive

PKH assistance: pregnant women, families with toddlers, school-aged children, and persons with disabilities. PKH beneficiaries are not limited to poor households but also include underprivileged households and the elderly. Based on Law of the Republic of Indonesia Number 11 of 2009 concerning Social Welfare, this assistance aims to fulfill basic needs such as food, clothing, shelter, education, and healthcare.

Meanwhile, the term "poor" refers to individuals who have attempted to meet their basic needs but, due to limited skills, expertise, or experience, do not earn enough income to do so. Poor and destitute households can qualify as PKH beneficiaries if they include a pregnant woman, a toddler, a school-aged child, a person with disabilities, or an elderly member. This is further reinforced by interviews with PKH administrators, who stated:

"PKH assistance recipients are not only poor households but also destitute households that meet specific criteria, such as having a pregnant woman, a toddler, a school-aged child, a person with disabilities, or an elderly member. If a household is classified as poor but does not meet any of these criteria, they are not entitled to receive PKH assistance."

The role of PKH facilitators and leaders is crucial in implementing this program, as they are the first to identify eligible beneficiaries and directly interact with poor households (RTM), particularly in Parekaju Village. As the closest PKH implementers to the community, facilitators and leaders fulfill their primary duties by holding regular meetings every one or two months before the disbursement of assistance. These meetings are usually conducted at the Parekaju Village Office or the PKH leader's residence. The purpose of these meetings is to discuss the welfare progress of beneficiary families (KPM) after receiving assistance and to monitor the utilization of aid.

PKH Implementation in Parekaju Village. According to the Head of Parekaju Village, only some residents receive PKH assistance, while others receive Non-Cash Food Assistance (BPNT). However, field findings indicate that the determination of PKH beneficiaries in Parekaju Village does not fully align with the criteria set by the central government for Poor Households (RTM). Lin (initial), one of the PKH Beneficiary Families (KPM), stated that there are still PKH recipients who own decent homes and large rice fields, while some genuinely underprivileged residents do not receive PKH assistance.

In PKH implementation, it was found that some participants who should be categorized as prosperous families continue to receive education and health subsidies meant for poor or underprivileged families. Conversely, there are still eligible residents who are not included in the recipient list. This has led to disparities and inaccuracies in PKH aid distribution. The PKH program in Parekaju Village has not yet been fully effective, as there are still very poor communities that need assistance but have not received it. Additionally, the data used to determine aid recipients largely relies on outdated records, disadvantaging those who should qualify but are not registered as PKH beneficiaries.

Determination of Beneficiary Households. According to Lin (initial), who is also a PKH facilitator, this program was first implemented in Parekaju Village in 2019 through the Social Affairs Office. By 2023, the number of beneficiaries had increased to 98 families. The initial data collected from the village was then selected and forwarded to the central government. Subsequently, the Social Affairs Office, together with program facilitators, verified the data to ensure the socio-economic conditions of the potential beneficiaries.

Alf (initial), a PKH facilitator in Parekaju Village, explained that aid distribution is conducted through the KKS card, which can be used at nearby agents every two months. For those without a KKS card, assistance is disbursed via the post office every three months. The verification process ultimately determined that 98 families in Parekaju Village were eligible for PKH benefits.

Initial Meetings and Program Socialization. According to the SIKS-NG Operator of Parekaju Village, before the implementation of the PKH program, socialization efforts were conducted to provide the community with an understanding of the program. However, the socialization was only held once and was not followed up by the government. This aligns with statements from PKH facilitators, who noted that socialization efforts had been conducted since the program's inception. NE (initial), PKH Leader of Salu Tangga Hamlet, stated that after socialization, an initial meeting was held between facilitators and prospective beneficiaries. This meeting provided information about

PKH's concept and objectives, eligibility requirements, and the aid disbursement process. Alf (initial) explained that after the beneficiary names were sent from the central government in the form of invitations, the village authorities urged eligible residents to gather. During the meeting, participants were given guidance on the program's objectives and their obligations as PKH participants.

**Challenges in PKH Implementation.** Based on interviews, several challenges were identified in the implementation of the PKH program in Parekaju Village, including: 1) **Infrastructure Constraints.** The program relies primarily on an online system; however, internet access in the village is often slow. Additionally, poor communication between the village and central government leads to discrepancies between submitted and received data. 2) **Social Challenges.** PKH facilitators revealed that some community members believe that all government assistance programs should be available to everyone, which can lead to social conflicts and requires effective management.

In the implementation of the PKH program, its results have not yet met the expectations of the community. Mrs. Nurhaeni, a PKH recipient, mentioned that she only knew the assistance could be used for her child's education expenses but was not well-informed about other aspects of the program. She also explained that recipients with a KKS card could withdraw funds from designated agents using card swipes, while those without a card had to collect aid at the post office. While PKH assistance helps meet daily needs, the amount received is still insufficient to cover all educational expenses. Additionally, aid distribution is often delayed by more than three months. Most beneficiaries feel that the program has not been fully optimized due to ongoing issues related to target accuracy and delayed disbursement.

On the other hand, the PKH program also benefits elderly recipients. Mrs. Maria, a PKH elderly beneficiary since 2021, stated that the assistance significantly helps meet her basic needs and even serves as additional capital for small-scale businesses. Interviews with various aid recipients suggest that although PKH alleviates economic burdens, its implementation still faces challenges, particularly in target accuracy and timely disbursement.

**Environmental Conditions in PKH Implementation.** Environmental condition indicators in PKH implementation include policy targeting and execution. In Parekaju Village, PKH policy targeting has not been entirely accurate. This program is intended for extremely poor households (RTSM), yet some recipients who are relatively well-off still receive aid. This issue needs to be addressed by PKH implementers to ensure that assistance reaches the genuinely impoverished community members who are the primary target of the program.

Conversely, there are still impoverished residents in Parekaju Village who have not received PKH assistance. This disparity has led to dissatisfaction among residents, especially those who feel more deserving but are not accommodated in the program. The changes experienced by PKH beneficiaries after receiving assistance have been significant, particularly in alleviating economic burdens. As stated by Ntg (initial):

"Previously, education expenses were a heavy burden for us. However, with PKH assistance, this burden has gradually been reduced. We use this aid to help cover school costs, such as purchasing stationery, uniforms, or other school necessities."

Theoretical support and previous studies reinforce this statement. According to Sen (1999), social assistance programs like PKH can enhance the capabilities of poor communities, particularly in education and healthcare. Furthermore, Hastuti (2015) found that PKH plays a role in improving access to education for children from poor families by reducing school-related financial burdens.

## CONCLUSION

The implementation of the Family Hope Program (PKH) in Parekaju Village faces major challenges in accurately targeting beneficiaries. Although PKH aims to assist extremely poor households (RTSM), some well-off families still receive aid, while certain impoverished households remain unaccommodated. This disparity has led to dissatisfaction among residents and highlights the need for further evaluation of the beneficiary selection mechanism. The impact of PKH on genuinely needy beneficiary families (KPM) is quite significant, particularly in alleviating the economic burden of families, especially in the education sector. However, the limited interaction between

implementing organizations—such as the Social Service Office, banks, schools, and post offices—and aid recipients indicates a need for improved coordination and transparency in program implementation.

Additionally, human resource factors and the characteristics of implementing institutions also influence the effectiveness of PKH in Parekaju Village. PKH facilitators, PKH coordinators, and village staff have carried out their duties according to procedures, including data validation, education verification, and KPM information updates. However, the main obstacle lies in the inaccuracy of recipient data due to a lack of regular updates. While aid distribution is conducted on time, it is not yet fully on target. Therefore, a stricter selection mechanism and more effective data updating strategies are needed to ensure that PKH truly benefits the impoverished communities it is intended to support.

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