



Implementation of Non-Cash Food Assistance (BPNT) in Rantau Utara Region, Labuhanbatu

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Abstract

Non-cash food assistance (BPNT) is public policy that aims to eradicate poverty. It is delivered electronically through bank account (e-cash). However, problems occur when people who live above poverty line are receiving this type of assistance. As an addition, some beneficiaries cannot withdraw their monthly assistance because it was not distributed to their saving account. Objective of this study is to run analysis on implementation of non-cash food assistance (BPNT) using Marilee S Grindle Theory in Rantau Utara Region, Labuhan Batu. This study is categorized as descriptive qualitative study and the data are both primary and secondary data. The data collection techniques were interview, observation and documentation. Data analysis comprised of data reduction, data display and conclusion. The findings showed BPNT has not been implemented successfully yet in Rantau Utara Region. Some of the obstacles were lack of information of BPNT, lack of government supervision, and lacking compliance of BPNT implementor.

Keywords: Marille S Grindle Implementation; BPNT

Introduction

Food assistance, distributing rice to families living below poverty line, is one of the public programs that aims to minimize number of poverty. Central government has decided to change the term used for this food assistance from 'Raskin' to 'Rastra' as currently it focuses on increasing quality of this program, for instance paying a close attention to quality and quantity of rice being distributed, its distribution time, and its beneficiaries. Government is criticized due to poor quality of the rice. Currently, social assistance and subsidy are distributed through saving account (e-cash) for a more effective control and supervision and minimizing any violence. Thus, in 2017, Rastra (food assistance) was transformed into non-cash food assistance (BPNT).

Objectives of BPNT are to increase effectiveness and efficiency, distribute BNPT to rightful beneficiaries, and promote financial inclusion. To support implementation of BPNT, President of the Republic of Indonesia has issued Presidential Decree of 2017 number 63 on Distribution of Non-Cash Social Assistance. BPNT was launched to replace Rastra (Program Beras Sejahtera), rice distribution for people living below poverty line.

Based on the Presidential Decree, starting from 2017, social assistance has to be distributed in the form of e-cash. It is expected that shift from food subsidy (Rastra) to social assistance (BPNT) improves not only effectiveness and beneficiaries of BNPT, but also to promote financial inclusion. As an addition, BNPT allows its beneficiaries to select types of food suitable for their need. Furthermore, beneficiaries can choose when they spend their e-cash and accumulate assets (saving money). As a conclusion, it is expected that BPNT improves welfare and buying power of beneficiaries through a wider access to financial service (Pedoman BPNT, 2017).

In 2017, beneficiaries of BPNT, which is later referred to as Keluarga Penerima Manfaat (KPM), are family whose income is 25% the lowest of that in area where BPNT is implemented. Each KPM receives 110,000 rupiahs/ month. KPM cannot withdraw this money; instead they should exchange it with rice or egg in e-warong. When KPM decides not to spend their e-cash, it is accumulated in their saving account (Kharismawati, 2018).

BPNT was first established in Labuhan Batu on October 2018. There were some issues after its first launching, for example those living above poverty line are receiving BPNT, non-compliance beneficiaries, beneficiaries did not receive their BNPT and thus, cannot spend it in e-warong, wrong PIN (Personal Identification Number), and violation of BNPT by e-warong agents.

Literature Review

Public policy is government decision-making, a strategy to achieve goals of a country. It is a strategy to send early population into transitional phase prior to transforming it into expected population (Nugroho 2008). According to Thomas R. Dye, public policy is whatever governments choose to do or not to do. It means public policy is established by public institution, instead of private institution and it is associated to strategy government opted to do or not to do (Winarno, 2012).

Implementation refers to efforts to achieve a set of goal in a decision-making. It attempts to transform the decision-making into operational patterns and make both minor and major changes (Mulyadi, 2018). Content and context implementation affect implementation of policy. Its underlying idea is policy transformation is the requirement of policy implementation (Mulyadi, 2018). Its success is measured based on implementability of that policy. Framework of Merilee S. Grindle theory is seen based on content and context implementation. Content refers to interest affected by policy, benefit of policy, expected degree of change, policy maker, implementer, and resource., while context implementation consists of authority, interests, actor's strategy, characteristics of institution and authority, and compliance and responsiveness. Grindle model is unique due to its comprehensive understanding toward context implementation, particularly implementor, target, potential conflict between actor, and conditions where resource may be needed. Successful implementation, according to Merilee S. Gerindle, depends upon content and context implementation, resource, infrastructure, and comprehension toward policy.

Poverty refers to a condition where individual or family lives in a lower standard of living compared to the general standard of living and as the result, the individual or family cannot afford some goods or service. It has direct influence toward health, morale, and self-worth (Suliswanto, 2010).

BPNT refers to monthly food assistance distributed by the government to KPM in the form of e-cash and KPM spends it to buy food in E-warong, grocery store working together with bank responsible for distributing e-cash (MoSA, 2017). BNPT is a program where government provides non-cash assistance in the form of e-card and beneficiaries will use this card to buy groceries (Junaidi, 2017).

E-warong refers to agent, grocery store or other parties working together with bank responsible for distributing BNPT where KPM spend their food assistance. Some examples of E-warong are MSME, cooperative, traditional market, grocery store, shop, E-Warong KUBE, Warung desa, Rumah Pangan Kita (RPK), Agen Laku Pandai, and Agen Layanan Keuangan Digital (LKD), digital financial assistance agent (Pedoman umum BPNT, 2017). E-warong sells quality food and daily needs with affordable price. It grants KPM access to nutritious food (Marhadi, 2017).

Methodology

This study was descriptive study with qualitative approach. It is selected as it portrays facts and provides data in a systematic, factual and accurate manner. Objective of this study was to provide information on implementation of BPNT through e-warung in Rantau Utara region, Labuhanbatu. Its setting was Rantau Utara region, Labuhanbatu, North Sumatera. This area was selected as the setting of this study since Rantau Utara is the capital of Labuhanbatu, it is the most populous city in Labuhan Batu, and it has the highest number of KPM among the cities in Labuhan Batu.

Informants consisted key and supporting informants. The key informants, individuals who have core information, were stakeholder/ policy maker and implementers of BPNT, such as Head of Poverty Eradication, Department of Social Affairs of Labuhan batu, Coordinator of Social Affair Staff (TKS) of Labuhan Batu, TKS of Rantau Utara region and owners of e-warung. The supporting informant was KPM, BPNT beneficiaries. The data collection techniques were observation, interview, and documentation and the data analysis techniques were data reduction, data display, and conclusion.

Findings

Implementation of Non-Cash Food Assistance (BPNT) in Rantau Utara Region

This study focuses on implementation of BPNT in Rantau Utara. Implementation refers to target government established with BPNT. The data were obtained based on observation, interview, documentation and literature review on implementation of BPNT in Rantau Utara region based on several indicators of Marilee S Grindle model. The indicators were as follows:

Content

Policy refers to regulation established by government to solve issues existing in the society by involving interests of particular institution or organizations or certain institution or organization in its implementation. Interests, in this context, is target of a policy, such as members of society. The following section discusses important indicators in its implementation. Policy or public assistance aims to increase quality of living in the society, for example:

Interest influenced by Policy

The target of BPNT is members of community, particularly KPM. BPNT aims to ease financial burden of and provide nutritious food for KPM. In other words, the targets of BPNT in Rantau Utara,

Labuhan Batu are family who lives below poverty line. BPNT enables government distribute food assistance to those in need directly.

Benefit

Implementation of public policy, namely program, regulation or legislation as its legal basis should bring positive changes toward society. Public policy is efforts government take to improve welfare of the public and solve social issues. As an example, BPNT aims to provide nutritious food for KPM allowing them to spend their income for other important spending.

As an addition, BPNT improves food among its beneficiaries, KPM. Based on the informants, BPNT has been implemented successfully in Rantau Utara. BPNT provides nutritious food for KPM, allows effective distribution of social assistance, and improves economic growth, particularly MSMEs.

Expected Degree of Change

Policy implementation has always been associated with a set of goals. Degrees of change to achieve in and after implementation of BPNT are to improve nutrition in regional area, and effective and timely distribution of social assistance. Implementation of BPNT in Rantau Utara has achieved its goals. The program improves economic condition in Rantau Utara, provides food for those living below poverty level, and encourage growth of local economics, more particularly for MSMEs.

Decision-making

Decision-making is closely associated to stakeholders, which means stakeholders should use existing regulation prior to making every decision that affects implementation of each program. Decision-making plays pivotal role in determining whether program implementation succeed or not. According to Thomas R.Dye in Budi Winarno (2012:20)'s book, public policy is whatever governments choose to do or not to do.

In this section, the researchers would explain two types of decision-making, decision-making involving more than one institutions and decision-making related to implementation of BPNT. The later type involves numerous institutions, starting from sub-regional and regional government, Department of Social Affairs, Food Assistance Distribution Agency Coordinator in provincial and central government level.

Program Implementation

Program implementation is a pivotal part of policy implementation as it refers to strategy to achieve a set of estimated goals. Implementor are individuals responsible for carrying out a program. As an addition, program implementor is responsible for evaluating how far a program has been implemented or not. Implementors of BPNT in Rantau Utara are SIKS-NG operator, Head of Sub-region and Region, TKS in regional and city/ municipality level, Department of Social Affairs, and Food Assistance Distribution Agency Coordinator in provincial and central government level.

Resources

Resource is central to implementation of a program. It supports and has positive influence toward program implementation. Skillful human resource guarantees effective and efficient program implementation. In other words, program implementation depends heavily on quality human resources.

Program coordinator should carefully pick out program implementor. He should pick skillful and motivated individuals who have good attitude. As an addition, implementors should have thorough understanding on program they are involved in. Based on the informants, human resources involved in implementation of BPNT are skilled and motivated individuals, and thus, the program runs well.

Context Implementation

Authority, Interests and Strategy of Actors

Program implementation also depends upon how much authority, interests and strategy that actors apply in policy implementation. It is expected that authority and interests support program implementation. As part of implementation, strategy helps program implementors achieving goals of program they are carrying out.

Based on the interviews, strategies carried out by BNPT implementor are evaluating KPM candidates' data more than once, uploading the data into an Integrated Database (BDT) known as waiting list. After some updates, making a list of beneficiaries who passed away, were relocated or have been categorized as financially stable, BNPT implementors will announce which candidates are granted food assistance.

Characteristics of Ruling Institution and Regime

Program or policy implementation depends heavily on characteristics or roles of the policy implementors. Stakeholders's characteristics refers to task and functions of each institution and implementors responsible for policy implementation.

Policy Implementer's Compliance and Response

It is expected that target group active participation in public policy implementation as it influences policy implementation. Basically, objective of government program is to improve welfare of the public, and thus, it is expected that government and public can work together in a collaborative manner. Besides working as partners, public can also evaluate government performance so that government can review its performance and make needed adjustment or improvement.

In general, those living in Rantau Utara have good attitude towards BNPT. In general, SIKS-NG as program implementors, KPM and e-warong owners carry out their functions based on the Standard Operating Procedures (SOP). Unfortunately, some others are violating the SOP.

Discussions

Implementation of BPNT in Rantau Utara Region, Labuhanbatu has begun since October, 2018. Based on Merilee S. Grindle's approach, there are 2 variables affecting public policy implementation, namely public policy implementation can be measured based on its outcomes, whether or not goals of the aforementioned policy implementation can be achieved. It has two indicators; the first is its process, evaluating whether or not policy implementation has met its procedures. The second is impact of policy implementation toward individual or groups and its degree of change. Based on this explanation, implementation of BPNT in Rantau Utara supports Merilee S. Grindle's theory.

Despite of some challenges, the implementation has met guideline established by Food Assistance Distribution Agency Coordinator. BPNT has brought significant influences toward its beneficiaries who live in Rantau Utara. It provides nutritious food for the KPM and eases their financial burden. In short, BPNT improves the KPM's economic condition. Those living in Rantau Utara responses the program very well and hope that more people receive the food assistance.

Successful policy implementation also depends on implementability of the policy itself, which consists of:

1. Content of Policy, involving:

a. Interest

Policy implementation involves various interests and to which extent the interests influence policy implementation. Interests, in this context, is target of a policy, such as members of society in Rantau Utara region or KPM. Objectives of BPNT are to ease financial burden of the KPM and provide nutritious food for the KPM.

b. Benefit

This point shows and explains that policy or program implementation should bring positive impact toward society. Positive advantages of implementation of BPNT in Rantau Utara region, namely provides nutritious food for KPM, allows effective distribution of social assistance, and improves economic growth, particularly MSMEs or e-warong owners.

c. Expected Degree of Change

Each policy has a target and this point explains to which extent policy implementation can bring changes to the society. Through BPNT, government of Rantau Utara aims to bring significant change toward society KPM, while the society members want to improve their financial condition. The expected degrees of change from implementation of BPNT in Rantau Utara are improved financial situation, fulfilment of nutritious food for those living below poverty level, and rapid growth of economy for MSMEs.

d. Decision-making Position

Decision-making is central in policy or program implementation, and thus, position of decision-making position in policy implementation should be defined clearly. In this context, decision-making involves both central and regional government, namely SIKS-NG operator, Head of Sub-region and Region, TKS in regional and city/ municipality level, Department of Social Affairs, and Food Assistance Distribution Agency Coordinator in provincial and central government level.

- e. **Program Implementor**
Policy or program implementation depends on quality policy implementors. The implementors of BPNT are SIKS-NG operator, Head of Sub-region and Region, TKS in regional and city/municipality level, Department of Social Affairs, and Food Assistance Distribution Agency Coordinator in provincial and central government level.
 - f. **Resource**
Resource is central to successful implementation of public policy/ program. Implementation of BPNT in Rantau Utara has utilized available resources very well, for example financial resources, facilities and human resources (BPNT implementor). Prior to being hired, Social Affair Staffs (TKS) underwent selection. The program implementors are skillful and understand the BPNT well and thus, they are able to run the program smoothly.
2. **Context of Policy, involving:**
- a. **Authority, Interests and Strategy of Actors**
Policy implementation should take into consideration authority, interest and strategies that actors apply. Otherwise, program implementation may not run as smoothly as expected. In Rantau Utara, government of Rantau Utara is granted authority to distribute BPNT to its beneficiaries. After some updates, making a list of beneficiaries who passed away, were relocated or have been categorized as financially stable, BNPT implementors will announce which candidates are granted food assistance. Objective of the strategies is to make sure BNPT is distributed to all families in Rantau Utara who live below poverty line.
 - b. **Characteristics of Ruling Institution and Regime**
Context where a program or policy is implemented affects success of the program/ policy Stakeholders's characteristics refers to task and functions of each institution and implementors responsible for policy implementation.
 - c. **Policy Implementer's Compliance and Response**
Another factor central to program or policy implementation is compliance and response of its implementors. Based on the informants, compliance of BPNT implementors in Rantau Utara is pretty low. Some SIKS-NG operators and e-warong owners decided to ignore the Standard Operating Procedures in carrying out their roles during the program implementation.

Problems in Implementation of BPNT in Rantau Utara Region

Some issues arising in Implementation of BPNT in Rantau Utara region are:

1. **Lacking information on BPNT among KPM.** Very few beneficiaries are familiar with this food assistance. Unfortunately, they did not search for more information about the program. Furthermore, government of Rantau Utara did not spread information about BPNT well enough. Majority of the beneficiaries have yet to understand the food assistance distribution mechanism. Some of them forgot their ATM PIN and as the result, could not make any transaction. Worse, the EDC (Electronic Data Capture) machine did not work well and consequently, some transactions were not recorded. Instead of solving this issue, one of the e-warong owners decided to sweep this issue under the rug. Many times, due to the lack of information, KPM did not realize that they had suffer some losses;

2. Lack of government supervision. Due to poor government supervision, some families in Rantau Utara who live under the poverty line did not receive BPNT. Kepling, individual responsible for implementation of BPNT in an area, decided to distribute the food assistance to their family members, relatives or friends instead of those who deserves it the most. This will cause jealousy. Kepling should follow Standard Operating Procedures of BPNT and use monthly income to select the program beneficiaries.
3. Lack of compliance toward program implementor, such as e-warong owners, Kepling and SIKS-NG operators. Many implementors did not pay close attention to the guidelines or Standard Operating Procedures of BPNT. This will disrupt implementation of BPNT in Rantau Utara.

Conclusion

Based on Marilee S. Grindle model, in terms of content of policy which comprises of interest, benefit, degree of expected change, decision-making, program implementor, and resources, non-cash food assistance program (BPNT) in Rantau Utara has been implemented. The implementation has followed both BPNT guidelines and SOP. However, discussing context of policy, some implementers did not follow the Standard Operating Procedures while carrying out their tasks. Furthermore, based on the informants, lacking knowledge on BPNT, lacking supervision from the government, and lacking compliance of the program implementors are some problems encountered in implementation of BPNT in the area.

Recommendation

Government should conduct a careful supervision toward implementation of BPNT in Rantau Utara in order to make sure that the food assistance is distributed in timely manner. As an addition, government should also give penalty to BPNT implementors who do not follow the Standard Operating Procedures while performing their duties.

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