

EVALUATING GOVERNMENT INFRASTRUCTURE GRANT IN RURAL AREA, A CASE OF BSPS PROGRAM IN KABUPATEN MADIUN

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Abstract

In the previous administration period, infrastructure development was a primary focus, with various large-scale projects spread across Indonesia. One of the programs aimed at low-income communities is the Self-Help Housing Stimulant Assistance Program (BSPS), which aims to improve the quality of housing to make it more livable and healthy. Madiun Regency was one of the recipients of this program in 2024. This paper analyzes the impact of the BSPS program from the perspective of regional development and smart infrastructure. Three main aspects are examined after one year of implementation: the economic, health, and social impacts on the community. A survey was conducted in February 2025 in Gemarang District, Madiun Regency, involving 30 aid recipients. This research uses a qualitative case study method, with data obtained through in-depth interviews. The results show that BSPS has not had a important impact on the economic condition of the community, as the majority of recipients still have low incomes and work as farmer. However, in terms of health, the program has helped improve access to clean water and a healthier environment. Socially, recipients reported an increased sense of safety and comfort, as the repaired houses were more durable and no longer leaked during the rainy season. Therefore, BSPS can be viewed as part of a sustainable development strategy. To maximize its benefits, the program needs to be integrated with economic empowerment efforts in order to create more inclusive and sustainable regional development.

Keywords: BSPS, Government policy, Housing assistance program, Low-Income Communities.

INTRODUCTION

Poverty remains one of the main issues faced by all countries and is considered a fundamental problem (Yacoub, 2018). This is due to its direct connection to the fulfillment of basic needs such as food, clothing, and shelter. The issue of poverty is not only related to the low income of the people but also affects their limited access to basic needs such as education, health, food, and housing. One of the easiest ways to identify the presence of poverty is by observing the living conditions of the local population. The problems and impacts are not only economic but also affect access to education, health, and quality of life, making poverty alleviation a crucial focus in national development for any country (Setiyani, M. H., & Kristiyanto, S, 2023).

The definition of poverty varies greatly and depends on each country. The definition of poverty adopted by developed countries certainly differs from the one used by developing countries. However, in general, poverty can be interpreted as the inability of a person to survive in a normal manner (Adawiyah, 2020). Alcock (2022) emphasizes that poverty has a broader definition than merely the inability of a person to meet their basic needs. The inability of an individual to develop themselves through proper education and the inability to access basic health services are also included in the definition of poverty.

Poverty is not always caused by economic factors. Several cases show that local cultural values and how individuals live their lives can also influence and even create poverty itself (Chamber, 2006). This statement emphasizes that poverty is not a problem that can be solved with one or two policies alone. Solving poverty requires integrated policies from the central government, relevant ministries, local governments, and the communities that are the main target of poverty alleviation. Without good cooperation among these parties, poverty eradication will be in vain.

The existence of poverty can be observed through several indicators. The easiest way to detect poverty is by looking at a person's expenditure. However, some recent approaches show that social conditions, environment, and ease of access are also close proxies of poverty (Nabawi, 2020). Therefore, the housing conditions of a community can also reflect whether a person is poor or not. Housing conditions that do not meet proper standards can worsen health, reduce comfort, and decrease the productivity of the residents.

This is reinforced by Todaro (2016), who stated that economic development is not only about increasing per capita income but also about improving human quality of life, which includes addressing other classical economic issues such as unemployment, poverty, and the improvement of basic living facilities. Sen (1999) provides a broader perspective on welfare. Welfare should not be measured solely by income but also by an individual's ability to live a life they value and the opportunities they have to achieve it.

Data released by the Central Statistics Agency (Badan Pusat Statistik/BPS) shows that in 2023, the poverty rate in Indonesia reached 9.36%. Although poverty in Indonesia tends to decline, this does not mean that the problem of poverty will resolve itself. Meanwhile, Madiun Regency recorded a poverty rate of 10.63%, which is higher than the national average. In 2024, there are more than 8,000 housing units still categorized as uninhabitable, including inadequate building conditions, lack of proper sanitation access, and limited basic infrastructure. To address this issue, the Ministry of Public Works and Public Housing (PUPR) initiated the Self-Help Housing Stimulus Assistance Program (BSPS). BSPS is a form of government assistance aimed at low-income communities with the objective of encouraging active community participation in improving the quality of housing or constructing new homes, including the provision of infrastructure and supporting public utilities. In addition to providing decent housing, BSPS also plays a role in empowering the community to be actively involved in the development process.

Therefore, the BSPS program in Madiun Regency has become one of the key instruments in efforts to improve the quality of life of the local population. Nevertheless, the effectiveness of this program in reducing poverty in Madiun Regency remains a subject of discussion and study. The BSPS program has been implemented in the region over the past several years, but its effectiveness and impact on the community still require deeper analysis. This research is important to determine the extent to which the BSPS program can address housing problems while also providing economic, social, and health impacts for its beneficiaries.

METHODS

This study employs a qualitative approach using a case study method. Bogdan and Taylor (in Moleong, 2014) state that the qualitative approach is a research procedure that produces descriptive data in the form of written or spoken words from respondents and observable behavior, with the aim of understanding the background and individuals comprehensively. The research location is in Madiun Regency. Primary data was collected through interviews with program beneficiaries and program implementers. Meanwhile, secondary data was obtained from various official documents and accountability reports from Field Facilitator Personnel.

Data analysis was conducted through the stages of data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing. To ensure the validity of the data, triangulation was used. Sugiyono (2017) explains that triangulation is a data validation technique that uses elements outside of the main data as verification or comparison tools. The purpose is to increase the credibility of the research results. This study employed three forms of triangulation: triangulation of place, data, and time; source triangulation; and technique (data) and time triangulation.

The focus of this study is to examine the economic, health, and social impacts of the Self-Help Housing Stimulus Assistance Program (BSPS) in Gemarang Sub-district, Madiun Regency. In this study, the researcher used a snowball sampling method to determine informants, where informants were gradually selected based on recommendations from previous informants. Through this method, the researcher could systematically expand the network of informants, thereby obtaining rich and relevant data for analysis.

In this study, the population does not refer to the entire statistical object but to all individuals or parties who have knowledge or experience related to the phenomenon under study. The population in this study consists of all parties involved in or possessing knowledge regarding the implementation of the BSPS Program in Madiun Regency.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

The assistance program from the central government through the Ministry of Public Works and Public Housing (PUPR), namely the Self-Help Housing Stimulus Assistance Program (BSPS), has been received by beneficiaries in Madiun Regency. Specifically, there are 30 recipients of the assistance located in Gemarang Sub-district, Madiun Regency. The construction of the houses has been completed and is being utilized as intended. The BSPS program has received a very positive response from the beneficiary community. Recipients of the BSPS program expressed great joy and gratitude to the government for the assistance that helped them obtain decent housing.

Although the BSPS program has been warmly welcomed by the community, its implementation still faces challenges in terms of equitable distribution of aid recipients. One of the main obstacles is the quota limitations set by the central and regional governments. This results in not all low-income residents who are actually eligible being able to receive the assistance. This can be seen in Gemarang Sub-district, for example,

where only 30 recipients received the aid, even though many residents still live in inadequate housing conditions. The Field Facilitator Team (TFL) in Madiun Regency, under the direction of the District Coordinator (SM) as the lead facilitator, stated that...

“Kuota penerima bantuan yang dialokasikan dari Kementerian PUPR terbatas adanya, sehingga Keterbatasan ini menimbulkan dilema sosial tersendiri, karena di satu sisi program ini berhasil membantu sebagian masyarakat, namun di sisi lain masih menyisakan kelompok rentan yang belum tersentuh bantuan serupa. Oleh karena itu, perlunya penguatan alokasi program agar cakupan penerima dapat lebih luas dan merata di masa mendatang.” (*wawancara Rabu, 12 Februari 2025*).

The statement from the Field Facilitator Team (TFL) of Madiun Regency highlighted that the limited number of BSPS aid quotas poses not only an administrative challenge but also has implications for social conditions on the ground. When assistance is provided only to a portion of eligible residents while others in equally dire need remain unreached, it creates potential for social tension or a sense of injustice within the community. Therefore, a review of the allocation system is necessary to ensure that in the future, more underprivileged families can be reached more equitably. In this way, the existence of the program will not only offer physical benefits in the form of decent housing but also help strengthen social trust and equitable welfare among residents.

The head and the facilitators conducted outreach activities to inform beneficiary communities that this program originates from the Central Government and is distributed through the Ministry of Public Works and Public Housing (PUPR). The implementers or policy actors play a significant role in executing the program. Each of them carries specific duties and responsibilities. BSPS implementers are also expected to understand and carry out their roles responsibly and effectively. The implementation of BSPS in Madiun Regency, under the supervision of Mr. Eric Susanto as the Head of the TFL in Madiun Regency, stated that...

"BSPS ini kan program dari pusat, lalu ke provinsi, diprovinsi diserahkan ke daerah atau kota masing-masing. Jadi pelaksana di Kabupaten Madiun dari Dinas disebut Tim Teknis dan ada juga TFL atau Tenaga Fasilitator Lapangan yang berperan penting, seleksi TFL juga dilakukan pihak provinsi langsung"pun Program Bantuan BSPS sudah tersalur di daerah Kecamatan Gemarang sudah diterima oleh masyarakat berpenghasilan rendah akan tetapi semua masyarakat yang berpenghasilan rendah tidak semua menerima bantuan. Hal ini dikarenakan Program BSPS ini mempunyai kuota yang diterima oleh Pemerintah Setempat” (*wawancara Rabu, 12 Februari 2025*).

Although the program is limited in scope, it serves not only as a form of government assistance but also as a platform for community collaboration. This is evident from the active involvement of beneficiaries in the construction process. The recipients participated directly from the initial to the final stages, including preparing the land, selecting builders, choosing construction materials, mixing materials, and even painting the house until its completion.

“Nalika njupuk keputusan, kulo dijak melu rembugan, klebu milih toko bangunan kanggo njupuk sing dibutuhke” (*wawancara dengan ibu NRS pada 12 Februari 2025*).

“Selama pelaksanaan BSPS di desa kami, didalam pengambilank keputusan kami sering dilibatkan di dalamnya kami mengikuti apa Keputusan yang telah di buat dengan kesepakatan Bersama oleh kami penerima bantuan” (*wawancara ibu SSI pada 12 Februari 2025*).

This statement indicates that the beneficiary community has been involved since the early stages of the program's implementation. Every decision made throughout the process was preceded by discussions with the local community. Such active participation from the outset was based on the understanding that the renovated houses would ultimately be inhabited by the beneficiaries themselves. This level of involvement reflects the strong communal spirit of *gotong royong* that remains deeply rooted in the lives of the people in Gemarang District. The statement made by Mrs. NRS is supported by the remarks of Mrs. MDNA, as follows:

“Sakabeh saran ing keputusan, kabeh anggota sing mutuske tansah di dukung dening fasilitatore”

An interview with Mrs. MDNA conducted on February 12, 2025, revealed the following:

“Dalam pengambilan keputusan saya rasa apapun yang telah kami putuskan sesuai dengan apa tujuan bersama”.

The success of the BSPS program in Madiun Regency is not solely determined by the allocation of aid but is also heavily influenced by the performance of policy implementers at the regional level. Field Facilitator Officers (Tenaga Fasilitator Lapangan/TFL) play a crucial role as technical advisors to aid recipients, starting from the socialization process to the supervision of house construction. TFL members ensure that the assistance is received and utilized according to the regulations. Meanwhile, the Technical Team from the local Public Works Office is responsible for administrative and technical coordination with both provincial and central governments. The collaboration established among the central, provincial, and local

governments illustrates that inter-agency synergy is a key factor in the successful implementation of the program. Without proper coordination, the program risks encountering obstacles in both distribution and utilization.

Although community involvement in the implementation of the BSPS program is relatively visible, several obstacles still limit optimal participation. Some residents are hesitant to engage due to a lack of technical skills in housing construction. Others are constrained by their daily work commitments, such as being farm laborers or informal workers, which leaves them with insufficient time to participate directly. Additionally, limited understanding of the program's mechanisms and objectives also hinders involvement. Some residents still perceive the construction process as entirely the responsibility of the implementers and the government, leading to the assumption that their participation is not crucial. This indicates the need for enhanced outreach and facilitation efforts to raise awareness and foster a stronger sense of ownership of the assistance provided.

"Penghambat saya dalam bantuan ini salah satunya adalah kekurangan swadaya yang menyebabkan rumah yang diperbaiki tidak sesuai dengan apa yang saya harapkan".

According to the interview with Mr. SAT, it was stated that...

"Penghambatnya menurut saya adalah kurangnya partisipasi masyarakat dalam pelaksanaan sehingga proses pelaksanaan cukup lama dan kurangnya swadaya yang diberikan pemerintah"

Based on the findings, it can be concluded that a key barrier to community participation lies in the limited self-initiative among some BSPS recipients, largely due to the fact that the majority are employed as agricultural laborers. "The following is an excerpt from an interview with Mr. SYT, a beneficiary of the BSPS program:"

"Saiki nek udan wes ora wedi maneh, omahku wes kuat. Wingi-wengi nek udan kuwatir bocor, saiki atape wes apik. Ati dadi tentrem." Nek masalah ekonomi, yo isih podo wae. Rejeki ya mung saka kerja tani utawa buruh. Tapi omah apik yo wis nyukupi, sing penting urip luwih aman."

Based on the response from the interviewee, Mr. SYT, it can be concluded that the assistance was very well received by the beneficiaries, and the program was implemented successfully until the construction of the houses was completed. The beneficiaries have experienced improvements in their well-being, as evidenced by the sense of comfort and security during the rainy season, with no more roof leaks. However, in terms of economic impact, the beneficiaries have not yet felt any significant change. This is further supported by the response of a BSPS beneficiary, Mrs. JMN, as follows.

"Kulo matur nuwun sangat ngeh mas, wes di bantu, saiki omah wis kuat, dindingé ora ambruk koyok mbiyen. Lampu cahya bisa nerangé kabeh ruangan. jedding resik, ora mambu. Tapi nek soal golek dhuwit, yo tetep wae. Isih koyo mbiyen. Panen yo tetap ae sakmono mas"

This is further supported by the response of a BSPS beneficiary, Mrs. JMT, as follows.

"Syukur alhamdulillah, niki dalem kula sampun langkung layak. Dereng bocor malih, saget sare langkung tenang. Mboten kados rumiyin, saben udan mesti kuwatir. Mung menika, saking babagan ekonomi, dereng krasa wonten owah-owahan"

Interview with Mrs. KRT

"Omah apik, atape ora bocor. Tapi ekonomié yo isih mbiyen. Ora tambah dodolan, ora ana gawean anyar."

Based on the informants' perceptions, the BSPS program has brought significant improvements to the physical condition of their homes. The beneficiaries now feel much better compared to their previous living conditions. The house structures are sturdier, lighting is more optimal, and sanitation facilities are more proper. Socially, the beneficiaries expressed gratitude and relief for the assistance they received. They feel more confident and comfortable living in a more decent home of their own, without fear during heavy rain. However, in terms of economic well-being, the residents have not yet felt any significant change. The informants stated that their income remains the same as before, with no noticeable improvement.

Behind the gratitude for having a sturdier and more decent home, the beneficiaries still face the reality that their economic conditions remain unchanged. One of the beneficiaries, let's call them SRT, expressed that...

"Keadaan ekonomi ne yo durung owah mas. Saiki omahku emang wis apik, tapi penghasilanku tetep wae saka buruh tani. Nek panen apik yo syukur, nek ora yo pas-pasan. Omah apik ora langsung nggawa perubahan nang penghasilan. Kabeh tetep kudu kerja keras kaya biasane."

His condition illustrates that although housing has become more decent, economic well-being has not yet been fully achieved. This serves as a reminder that infrastructure assistance should ideally be complemented by economic interventions in order to create long-term impacts on the lives of the beneficiaries.

This is further supported by the following interview results, which show that while the BSPS program has led to improvements in the physical condition of housing, its impact on the economic aspects of the beneficiaries' lives is still not strongly felt. An informant, identified as JTN, stated:

"Nek soal ekonomi, yo isih koyo biasane mas. Aku isih buruh tani, penghasilane yo mung sakmone wae. Ora nambah, ora owah. Bantuan omah kuwi ora ngefek nang penghasilan. Rejeki yo tetep saka nggarap sawah utawa kerja serabutan. Dadi yo urip isih angel, mung omah wae sing luwih apik."

As conveyed by the informant, their activities remain dependent on previous types of work such as farm laborers, farmers, and informal jobs. These field findings indicate that the program has not yet had a direct impact on improving the economic welfare of the beneficiaries. In other words, the program has been more effective in terms of improving the physical condition of housing, but it has not yet addressed productive economic aspects..

Based on a series of interviews conducted with the beneficiaries of the BSPS program in Gemarang District, Madiun Regency, it can be concluded that the program has brought significant changes to the lives of the community, particularly in terms of the physical condition of their housing. Houses that were previously uninhabitable have now become comfortable, safe, and healthy living spaces. This has had a positive impact on the beneficiaries' well-being, as they no longer feel anxious during rainy weather and feel more confident in carrying out their daily lives.

Socially, the beneficiaries expressed gratitude and satisfaction for the assistance provided, and they understood that this program is a form of attention from the central government toward low-income communities. Public trust in the government has also increased, especially due to the active roles of field implementers such as the Field Facilitator Team (TFL) and the Technical Team. However, from an economic perspective, the findings show that the program has yet to impact the improvement of beneficiaries' economic well-being. Most recipients continue to rely on their previous occupations, such as farming, whose income remains unstable and insufficient to significantly improve their standard of living. This indicates that while housing assistance has brought notable improvements to physical living conditions and social welfare, it is still inadequate without being accompanied by concrete economic support.

A more integrative and multisectoral approach is needed in implementing similar programs. Physical assistance such as housing should be accompanied by economic empowerment initiatives, skills training, or access to better employment opportunities so that communities can truly escape conditions of social and economic vulnerability. To improve the effectiveness and long-term impact of the BSPS program, several key aspects should be addressed by the government moving forward.

First, there is a need to increase the number of beneficiaries, especially in regions with high levels of housing need, such as Madiun Regency. In doing so, the program can reach a broader segment of low-income communities living in uninhabitable conditions, rather than benefiting only a limited group. Second, the government should consider integrating the BSPS program with economic empowerment schemes, such as vocational training or entrepreneurship programs for beneficiaries. This is essential so that improvements in housing quality are accompanied by enhancements in household economic capacity, enabling families to achieve comprehensive and sustainable welfare. Third, it is crucial to strengthen the quality of monitoring and evaluation of the program, both in terms of construction quality and the accuracy of beneficiary selection. Periodic and data-based evaluations will help ensure that the assistance is well-targeted and reduce the risk of misallocation or errors in recipient identification. With synergy between increased quotas, economic support, and strict oversight, the BSPS program is expected to have a greater impact on improving community welfare in the future.

Conclusion

Based on the findings from the evaluation of the Self-Help Housing Stimulant Assistance Program (BSPS) in Madiun Regency, the following conclusions can be drawn:

1. The implementation of the BSPS program in Madiun Regency has had varying impacts on beneficiary communities. From an economic perspective, the program has not yet brought significant improvements, as most beneficiaries remain employed as agricultural laborers with low income levels.
2. However, in terms of health and social conditions, the program has shown positive outcomes, such as improved access to clean water, healthier and more habitable living environments, better lighting, and a greater sense of safety and comfort due to improved housing conditions.

Therefore, the BSPS program can be considered part of a broader effort toward sustainable development. Nevertheless, future implementation should be integrated with economic empowerment initiatives to ensure more extensive and long-lasting benefits for the targeted communities.

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