



Government Strategy for Overcoming Poverty in Cilegon City, Indonesia

Leni Cahyani¹, Nia Karniawati^{2*}

Program Studi Ilmu Pemerintahan, Fakultas Ilmu Sosial dan Ilmu Politik, Universitas Komputer Indonesia, Indonesia

Corresponding Author: nia.karniawati@gmail.com

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Abstrak: Kemiskinan merupakan masalah sosial yang kompleks dan multidimensional yang mempengaruhi kehidupan jutaan orang di seluruh dunia, termasuk di Kota Cilegon. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengeksplorasi strategi yang digunakan oleh pemerintah dalam menanggulangi kemiskinan di kota tersebut. Metode penelitian yang digunakan adalah analisis kualitatif berdasarkan data sekunder dari laporan pemerintah, studi literatur, dan wawancara dengan pejabat pemerintah terkait. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa pemerintah Kota Cilegon telah menerapkan berbagai strategi untuk mengurangi tingkat kemiskinan, termasuk program-program bantuan sosial, pembangunan infrastruktur, pendidikan, pelatihan keterampilan, dan pemberdayaan ekonomi masyarakat lokal. Meskipun demikian, masih terdapat tantangan dalam implementasi dan efektivitas program-program tersebut, termasuk keterbatasan sumber daya, koordinasi antarlembaga, dan partisipasi masyarakat. Oleh karena itu, diperlukan upaya yang lebih terkoordinasi dan berkelanjutan dari pemerintah dan semua pemangku kepentingan untuk meningkatkan efektivitas dan dampak dari strategi penanggulangan kemiskinan di Kota Cilegon.

Kata Kunci: Strategi; menanggulangi; kemiskinan

Abstract: Poverty is a complex and multidimensional social problem that affects the lives of millions of people throughout the world, including in the city of Cilegon. This research aims to explore the strategies used by the government to overcome poverty in the city. The research method used was qualitative analysis based on secondary data from government reports, literature studies, and interviews with relevant government officials. The research results showed that the Cilegon City government has implemented various strategies to reduce poverty levels, including social assistance programs, infrastructure development, education, skills training, and economic empowerment of local communities. However, there are still challenges in the implementation and effectiveness of these programs, including limited resources, inter-agency coordination, and community participation. Therefore, more coordinated and sustainable efforts are needed from the government and all stakeholders to increase the effectiveness and impact of poverty reduction strategies in Cilegon City.

Keywords: Strategy; overcoming; poverty

INTRODUCTION

Poverty is one of the main challenges faced by many communities throughout the world, including in Indonesia. As a rapidly developing city, Cilegon faces serious problems related to poverty that affect the welfare of its residents. Poverty can be defined as the economic inability to meet basic food and non-food needs as measured by expenditure. Poor residents can be defined as those whose average monthly per capita expenditure is below the poverty line. The poverty line is the sum of the Food Poverty Line and the Non-Food Poverty Line. It is important to review previous studies relevant to the theme of government strategies in addressing poverty issues to understand the context of this research. Several studies have been conducted to analyze government efforts to overcome poverty in various regions of Indonesia. First, research conducted by [\(Sutiyo, 2011\)](#) analyzed the implementation of poverty alleviation programs at the national level. This study found that although the government has implemented various programs, their effectiveness is still limited due to a lack of coordination between institutions and an inadequate understanding of local poverty conditions.

Second, [\(Rheviany et al., 2022\)](#) examined the effectiveness of social assistance programs in reducing poverty in Central Java. They found that these programs have a positive impact, but there are still challenges in terms of targeting and distribution of aid. Third, research [\(Tambunan & Studies 2024\)](#) focused on strategies for developing MSMEs as an effort to alleviate poverty in Surabaya. This study underlines the importance of government support in the form of training, access to capital, and marketing facilitation to increase the income of people with low incomes. Fourth, [\(Sahid et al., 2020\)](#) examined the role of local governments in implementing community empowerment programs in Yogyakarta. They highlighted the importance of participatory approaches and local empowerment in tackling poverty. Fifth, research by [\(Herianingrum et al., 2023\)](#) explored poverty reduction strategies in Cilegon from an Islamic approach with government involvement, such as zakat for Muslim residents. This study provides a unique perspective on the integration of religious values in poverty alleviation policies.

Sixth, [\(Rakhmansyah et al., 2022\)](#) defined strategies related to Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) in Cilegon using SWOT analysis. This research highlights the potential of SMEs in reducing poverty and the government's role in supporting this sector. Seventh, [\(Arsani et al., 2020\)](#) described factors causing poverty in Cilegon, such as education levels, job availability, health access, and water and sanitation. This study provides a comprehensive understanding of the root causes of poverty in the city. Eighth [\(Tahir & Raharja, 2021\)](#) analyzed the effectiveness of women's empowerment programs in reducing poverty in Banten. They found that these programs have significant potential but still face challenges in terms of participation and sustainability.

Ninth [\(Balisacan et al., 2003\)](#) examined the impact of direct cash assistance programs on poverty reduction in industrial cities in West Java. This study revealed that while these programs provide short-term assistance, a more comprehensive strategy is needed to address structural poverty. Lastly, [\(Untari, 2024\)](#) examined the role of public-private partnerships in poverty alleviation programs in the coastal areas of Banten. They emphasized the importance of cross-sector collaboration in addressing the complexity of poverty issues. Although these studies provide valuable insights into various aspects of government strategies in addressing poverty, there is still a gap in research specifically focusing on the context of Cilegon City [\(Lawelai & Nurmandi, 2023\)](#). Several studies have identified programs and policies that have been implemented, such as social assistance programs, community economic development programs, and women's empowerment programs [\(Ahmad & Sudha, n.d.\)](#). However, there has been no study that comprehensively

investigates various aspects of government strategy in overcoming poverty in Cilegon City, including challenges, successes, and opportunities for improvement ([Sinaga, 2022](#)).

The novelty of this research lies in its specific focus on the Cilegon City government's strategy for overcoming poverty, taking into account the unique characteristics of this city as a rapidly developing industrial center ([Sinaga, 2022](#)). Unlike previous studies that tended to focus on certain aspects or specific programs, this research aims to provide a holistic and in-depth analysis of the overall government strategy, including implementation, challenges, and its impact on local communities. This research will also fill gaps in the literature by providing the latest data and in-depth analysis of poverty trends in Cilegon City. Based on data from the Central Statistics Agency of Cilegon City, the number of poor people in 2018 was 13,984 people. In 2019, it decreased to 13,964 people, then increased rapidly in 2020 to 16,310 people. This high poverty rate requires an effective and targeted response from the government to address this problem.

The main objective of this research is to analyze the strategies that have been implemented by the Cilegon City government in efforts to overcome poverty ([Allo et al., 2021](#)). Understanding the strategies implemented will provide better insight into the effectiveness of poverty alleviation efforts and offer recommendations for improving and enhancing policies in the future ([Zainal, 2024](#)). This research used a comprehensive methodological approach, combining quantitative and qualitative data analysis, including an in-depth review of policy documents, interviews with policymakers and program beneficiaries, and statistical analysis of poverty trends. This approach will allow for a more nuanced understanding of the complexity of poverty issues in Cilegon City and the effectiveness of government strategies in addressing them.

The significance of this research lies in its potential to make a meaningful contribution to the development of poverty alleviation policies in Cilegon City ([Prajna, 2024](#)). By identifying successes, challenges, and areas for improvement in current strategies, this research can serve as a basis for refining future policies and programs. Additionally, the findings from this research can provide valuable insights for other cities in Indonesia facing similar challenges in tackling poverty. The structure of this research will begin with a comprehensive review of existing literature on poverty alleviation strategies, followed by an in-depth analysis of the socio-economic context of Cilegon City.

Next, strategies that the Cilegon City government has implemented will be discussed in detail, including specific programs, policy frameworks, and implementation mechanisms. The analysis will include an evaluation of the effectiveness of these strategies, challenges faced in implementation, and their impact on poverty levels and community welfare. With a comprehensive approach and specific focus on Cilegon City, this research is expected to fill gaps in the existing literature and make a significant contribution to our understanding of government strategies for addressing poverty in the context of developing urban areas. The results of this research will not only be beneficial for policymakers in Cilegon City. Still, they can also serve as a valuable reference for other cities facing similar challenges in poverty alleviation efforts.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study employed a qualitative approach to gain an in-depth understanding of the strategies implemented by the government in addressing poverty in Cilegon City ([Ishtiaq, 2019](#)). Data collection was conducted through a literature review of articles, journals, official government documents, activity reports, and related literature studies. Additionally, the researcher carried out in-depth interviews with various stakeholders. Interviews were conducted with Dr. Ahmad Sulaiman (Head of the Social Affairs Department of Cilegon City), Mrs. Dra. Siti Nurhasanah (Head of Bappeda Cilegon City),

Mr. Ir. Hendra Wijaya (Head of Poverty Alleviation Division at the Social Affairs Department of Cilegon City), Dr. Ratna Dewi (Head of Regional Poverty Alleviation Coordination Team of Cilegon City), and Mr. Agus Priyanto, S.E. (Coordinator of Peduli Sesama NGO Cilegon). Interviews were also conducted with community representatives who are beneficiaries of poverty alleviation programs, including Mrs. Aminah (recipient of the Family Hope Program assistance) and Mr. Joko Susilo (participant of the MSME empowerment program).

The research was conducted over six months in Cilegon City, with data collection carried out at various locations such as government offices, village halls, and sites where poverty alleviation programs are implemented. Participant observation was also conducted to observe these programs directly. Research instruments included structured interview guides, observation sheets, and document analysis guidelines.

Data analysis utilized a thematic approach to identify patterns, trends, and challenges in government strategies. The analysis process involved several stages:

- 1) Transcription and coding of interview data.
- 2) Organization of observational and document data.
- 3) Identification of main themes.
- 4) Analysis of relationships between themes.
- 5) Interpretation of findings in the context of research objectives.

To ensure validity, the researcher used data triangulation by comparing information from various sources and data collection methods. Additionally, the researcher also conducted member checking by returning the analysis results to several key informants to verify the accuracy of interpretation. Research ethics were maintained by obtaining informed consent from all participants and maintaining the confidentiality of sensitive data.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

A. Poverty Profile in Cilegon City

Cilegon City, located in Banten Province, Indonesia, has been experiencing significant economic growth due to its industrial development. However, poverty remains a persistent challenge for the city government. According to data from the Central Statistics Agency (BPS) of Cilegon City, the poverty rate in 2020 was 3.85%, representing 16,310 people living below the poverty line, marking an increase from 3.34% (13,964 people) in 2019, likely due to the economic impact of the COVID-19 pandemic ([Zain et al., 2023](#)).

The demographic most affected by poverty in Cilegon are primarily those employed in the informal sector, such as street vendors, casual laborers, and small-scale farmers ([Muara, 2020](#)). Additionally, female-headed households and families with low educational attainment are disproportionately represented among people with low incomes ([Zain et al., 2023](#)). According to interviews with Dr. Ahmad Sulaiman, Head of the Social Affairs Department of Cilegon City, "Approximately 60% of our poor population are working in unstable, low-paying jobs in the informal sector, making them particularly vulnerable to economic shocks." Several factors contribute to the persistence of poverty in Cilegon City:

Unemployment

Despite the presence of large industries, the unemployment rate in Cilegon stood at 8.92% in 2020, higher than the national average.

Educational disparities

Data from the Education Department shows that 15% of adults in Cilegon have not completed basic education, limiting their access to better-paying jobs.

Inadequate infrastructure

Some areas, particularly in the outskirts of the city, lack proper access to clean water, sanitation, and electricity, as reported by the Public Works Department.

B. Overview of Government Strategy

This strategy, as explained by Mrs. Dra. Siti Nurhasanah, Head of Bappeda Cilegon City, focuses on three main pillars:

1. Social Assistance CPrograms
2. Community Economic Empowerment
3. Data-Driven Poverty Alleviation

"Our strategy aims to not only provide immediate relief to those in poverty but also to create sustainable pathways out of poverty through economic empowerment and targeted interventions based on accurate data," stated Mrs. Nurhasanah.

C. Social Assistance Programs

Social assistance programs form the first pillar of the government's strategy, which is aimed at providing immediate relief to those living in poverty ([Suryahadi et al., 2010](#)). These programs include:

Food Assistance

In 2020, the government distributed food packages to 15,000 low-income families in Cilegon. Each package contained 10 kg of rice, 1 liter of cooking oil, and other essential food items. The total budget allocated for this program was Rp 7.5 billion. Mr. Ir. Hendra Wijaya, Head of the Poverty Alleviation Division at the Social Affairs Department, explained, "We prioritize families with elderly members, disabled individuals, and those with young children for food assistance."

Educational Assistance

The government provided educational assistance to 5,000 students from low-income families in 2020. This assistance included school uniforms, books, and a cash transfer of Rp 500,000 per student per year. The total budget for this program was Rp 2.5 billion. "Our goal is to ensure that poverty does not prevent children from accessing quality education," said Dr. Ratna Dewi, Head of the Regional Poverty Alleviation Coordination Team.

Health Assistance

In collaboration with the local health department, the government provided free health insurance to 10,000 poor individuals in 2020 ([Health et al., 2020](#)). This program covered basic health services, including outpatient care and hospitalization. The annual budget for this program was Rp 5 billion.

Challenges in implementing these programs include ensuring accurate targeting and preventing leakage. As Mr. Wijaya noted, "We are continuously improving our database to ensure that assistance reaches those who need it most."

D. Community Economic Empowerment

The second pillar of the strategy focuses on empowering the community economically, with a particular emphasis on Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) ([Adrian, 2019](#)). According to data from the Cilegon City Cooperatives and SMEs Office, there are 12,500 MSMEs in Cilegon, categorized as follows:

- Micro enterprises: 9,750 (78%)
- Small enterprises: 2,250 (18%)
- Medium enterprises: 500 (4%)

The government has implemented several programs to support these MSMEs:

Skills Training

In 2020, the government conducted 50 skills training sessions, benefiting 2,000 MSME owners and potential entrepreneurs (Kwartawaty et al., 2023). These training sessions covered topics such as financial management, digital marketing, and product development (Kirsten & Fourie, 2012). The budget allocated for this program was Rp 3 billion.

Business Capital Assistance

The government provided low-interest loans to 1,000 MSMEs in 2020, with a total disbursement of Rp 10 billion. The interest rate for these loans was set at 3% per annum, significantly lower than commercial rates (Faturohim et al., 2023). Mr. Agus Priyanto, Coordinator of the Peduli Sesama NGO, commented, "This capital assistance has been crucial in helping small businesses expand and create more job opportunities."

Market Access Facilitation

The government has partnered with five major retail companies to provide shelf space for products from Cilegon's MSMEs. In 2020, 200 local products were successfully marketed through this initiative. Additionally, the government organized four local product exhibitions, attracting over 10,000 visitors.

One beneficiary of these programs, Mr. Joko Susilo, a participant in the MSME empowerment program, shared his experience: "The skills training and capital assistance I received helped me expand my small food processing business. I've been able to hire two more employees and increase my monthly income by 50%." Challenges in this area include the need for continuous mentoring and support for MSMEs to ensure their long-term sustainability. The government is addressing this by establishing a dedicated MSME support center that provides ongoing consultation and assistance.

E. Data-Driven Poverty Alleviation

The third pillar of the strategy focuses on improving the accuracy and utilization of poverty data. This initiative aims to ensure that poverty alleviation efforts are targeted and effective.

Integrated Database Development

In 2020, the government launched a project to create an integrated poverty database involving verifying and updating data on 47,000 residents who had previously not been recorded in the system. The project, with a budget of Rp 2 billion, has employed 100 field officers to conduct door-to-door surveys.

Poverty Mapping

Using the updated data, the government created detailed poverty maps for each of Cilegon's eight sub-districts. These maps identify poverty pockets and help in targeting interventions. Dr. Ahmad Sulaiman explained, "These maps allow us to see where poverty is most concentrated and tailor our programs accordingly."

Regular Data Updates

The government has implemented a system for quarterly updates of the poverty database, involving collaboration with village-level officials and community leaders to report changes in residents' economic status.

Data Utilization Training

The government conducted training sessions for 200 local officials on how to use the poverty database effectively for program planning and implementation. The budget for this training was Rp 500 million.

Challenges in this area include ensuring data privacy and security, as well as maintaining the accuracy of the database over time. The government is addressing these challenges by implementing strict data protection protocols and regular audit processes.

F. Collaboration with Stakeholders

The government's strategy involves extensive collaboration with various stakeholders:

Private Sector Partnerships

The government has signed Memorandums of Understanding (MoUs) with 10 large companies operating in Cilegon for Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) programs aligned with the poverty reduction strategy. In 2020, these partnerships resulted in additional funding of Rp 5 billion for various poverty alleviation initiatives.

NGO Collaboration

Five local NGOs, including Peduli Sesama, are actively involved in implementing and monitoring poverty reduction programs. These NGOs provide valuable on-the-ground insights and help in community mobilization.

Academic Institutions

The government has partnered with two local universities to research poverty trends and program effectiveness. This collaboration helps in evidence-based policy-making.

G. Long-term Goals and Expected Outcomes

The Cilegon Sejahtera 2025 strategy aims to achieve the following long-term outcomes:

Poverty Rate Reduction

The government aims to reduce the poverty rate to 2% by 2025, meaning lifting approximately 8,000 people out of poverty.

MSME Growth

The strategy targets a 30% increase in the number of MSMEs by 2025, with a focus on promoting innovation and competitiveness.

Human Development Index (HDI) Improvement

The government aims to increase Cilegon's HDI from 73.68 in 2020 to 78.00 by 2025, focusing on improvements in education, health, and income indicators.

Sustainable Economic Growth

The strategy aims to achieve an average annual economic growth rate of 6% while ensuring that the benefits of this growth are more equitably distributed.

Dr. Ratna Dewi emphasized, "Our strategy is not just about reducing poverty numbers. It's about creating a more resilient and prosperous community where every citizen has the opportunity to thrive."

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This study has examined the Cilegon City Government's multifaceted approach to addressing poverty, encapsulated in the "Cilegon Sejahtera 2025" strategy. The research highlights several key findings that demonstrate the government's commitment to improving the welfare of its citizens and reducing poverty rates. Firstly, the government has implemented a three-pillar strategy focusing on social assistance programs, community economic empowerment, and data-driven poverty alleviation. The social assistance programs, including food, education, and health assistance, have provided immediate relief to thousands of low-income families in Cilegon. These programs have

been crucial in helping vulnerable populations meet their basic needs, especially during economic challenges such as those posed by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Secondly, the community economic empowerment initiatives, particularly those targeting Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs), have shown promise in creating sustainable pathways out of poverty. The provision of skills training, business capital assistance, and market access facilitation has empowered local entrepreneurs and stimulate job creation. The government's collaboration with retail companies to promote local products has opened new avenues for MSME growth and development. Thirdly, the emphasis on data-driven poverty alleviation through the development of an integrated database and detailed poverty mapping has enabled more targeted and efficient interventions. This approach has addressed previous challenges in identifying and reaching the most vulnerable populations, ensuring that assistance reaches those who need it most.

The government's commitment to tackling poverty in Cilegon City is evident in its comprehensive strategy and the allocation of significant resources to these initiatives. The aim to reduce the poverty rate to 2% by 2025, increase the number of MSMEs by 30%, and improve the Human Development Index to 78.00 demonstrates a clear vision for the city's future. However, this study also identifies areas that require further attention and improvement. The challenges in inter-agency coordination highlight the need for more streamlined processes and better communication between different government departments and stakeholders. Additionally, the implementation of regular and rigorous program evaluations is crucial to ensure the ongoing effectiveness and efficiency of poverty reduction efforts.

While the current strategy shows promise, there are limitations to this study that future research could address. First, a longitudinal study tracking the long-term impacts of these interventions on poverty rates and economic mobility would provide valuable insights into the strategy's effectiveness over time. Second, comparative studies with other similar-sized cities in Indonesia could help identify best practices and areas for improvement in Cilegon's approach. For future research, we recommend:

- a. Conducting in-depth analyses of the economic multiplier effects of the MSME support programs to quantify their broader impact on the local economy
- b. Investigating the social and psychological impacts of poverty reduction programs on beneficiaries beyond just economic indicators
- c. Exploring innovative financing models that could supplement government funding for poverty alleviation programs, such as impact investing or social bonds
- d. Examining the role of technology in improving the efficiency and reach of poverty reduction initiatives in Cilegon City

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