

Research Article

Determinants of Stunting Handling Policies in Enggano Subdistrict, North Bengkulu Regency

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Abstract.

Stunting remains a priority public health issue in North Bengkulu Regency, which has been designated as a stunting reduction intervention locus under the Decree of the Minister of PPN / Bappenas No. 10 / M.PPN / HK / 02/2021, with a prevalence of 22.8%. However, Enggano Sub-district, an outer island region, has remarkably reduced its stunting rate to just 0.29%, owing to a combination of interrelated success factors. This study aims to identify the key determinants behind the effective stunting management policies in Enggano Sub-district. A qualitative research approach was used, with data collected through observation, interviews, and documentation. Data analysis followed five stages: data organization, reading and recording, coding, describing and compiling, and interpreting and reporting findings. The results highlight that the success in addressing stunting in Enggano is driven by strong cross-sectoral cooperation, including the leadership of the sub-district head coordinating stakeholders, the active role of the *puskesmas* in policy implementation, and the commitment of village governments in executing programs. Additional contributing factors include regular monitoring of child growth, nutrition education for pregnant women, and the distribution of supplementary food to at-risk children. Community engagement and effective coordination among stakeholders further strengthen the success of stunting prevention efforts in the sub-district.

Keywords: stunting, policy, success in handling stunting

1. INTRODUCTION

The government's role in dealing with the problem of stunting is vital, starting from the central government to local governments. The government has a role as a director, as a regulator, and as an implementer. As a director, the government determines, implements, monitors and coordinates the various parties involved in the implementation of accelerating stunting reduction. As a regulator, the government prepares policies as

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guidelines for implementing accelerated stunting reduction so that all stakeholders can provide quality and valuable services. In contrast, as an implementer, the government must provide quality and valuable services in implementing accelerated stunting reduction [1]. For this reason, the government must work together and support each other to handle stunting as a whole.

Stunting is a health problem caused by multi-dimensional factors that require cross-sectoral cooperation [2]. Stunting is not only caused by malnutrition, maternal health during pregnancy or complementary feeding that is not by nutritional standards. The problem of stunting can be influenced by economic, social and educational factors [3][4]. Internal and external factors also cause stunting. Internal factors of stunting problems are caused by maternal nutrition during pregnancy, lack of nutritional intake in infants, and babies born with underweight. External factors are caused by poor sanitation, untreated drinking water, low maternal education and lack of cooperation between sectors[5][6][7]. Meanwhile, according to Presidential Regulation Number 72 of 2021 concerning the Acceleration of Stunting in Article 1, paragraph 1 reads, “Stunting is a disorder of child growth and development due to chronic malnutrition and repeated infections, characterized by length or height below the standards set by the minister who organizes government affairs in the health sector.” It can be concluded that stunting is a growth and development disorder in children caused by internal and external factors.

Research on stunting cases is considered for several reasons. According to UNICEF and WHO data, Indonesia’s stunting prevalence rate ranks 27th highest out of 154 countries that have stunting data, making Indonesia 5th among countries in Asia. [8].

Furthermore, the prevalence of stunting in Indonesia has decreased from 2013 to 2023. However, the prevalence of stunting in Indonesia in 2023 is still relatively high at 21.5%. Therefore, to achieve the stunting prevalence target of 14% by 2024, the stunting prevalence must be reduced by 7.6% in the last year. [9].

North Bengkulu Regency became a regency that was included in the stunting reduction intervention locus based on the Decree of the Minister of National Development Planning / Head of the National Development Planning Agency Number KEP.10 / M.PPN / HK / 02/2021 concerning the Determination of the Expansion of Regency / City Locations for the Focus of Stunting Reduction Intervention in 2022 so that the problem of stunting in North Bengkulu Regency became a priority problem. According to SSGI, in 2022, the North Bengkulu Regency will be in 3rd place with the highest stunting prevalence in Bengkulu Province at 22.8%.

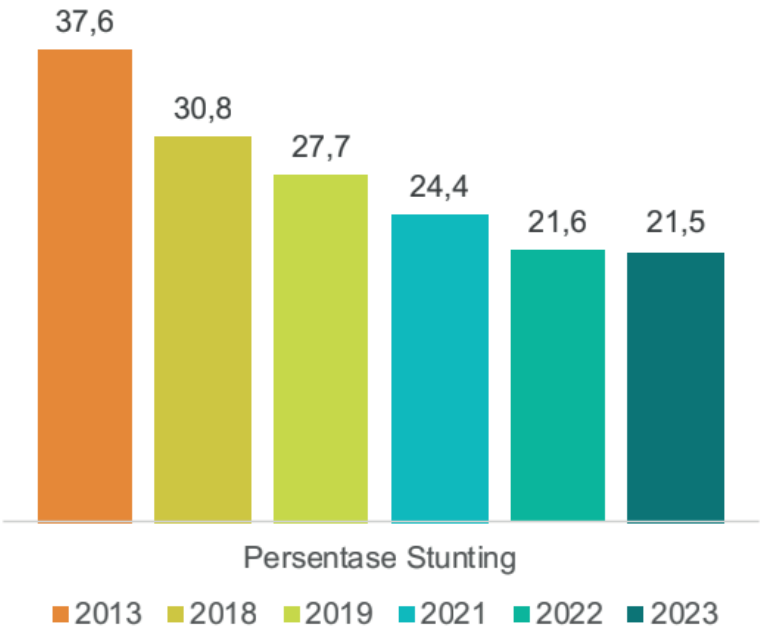


Figure 1: Trends in Stunting in Toddlers 2013-2023.

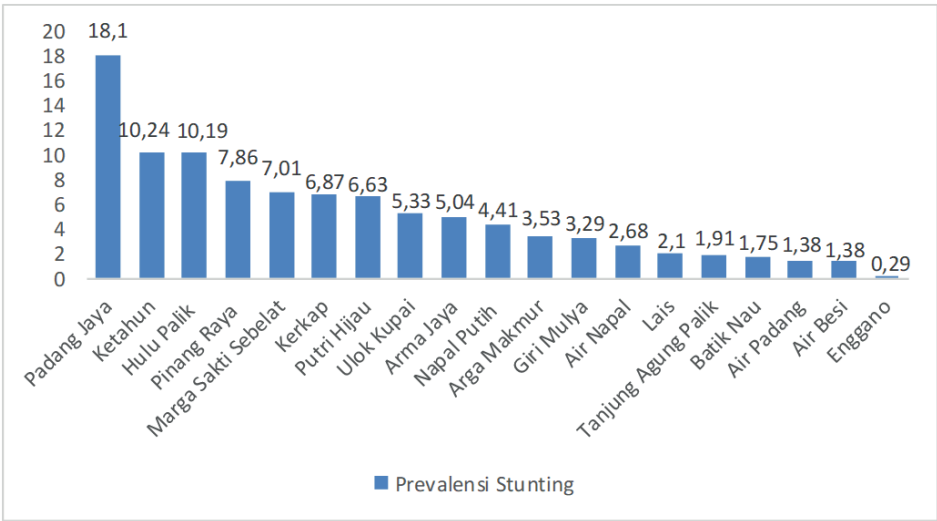


Figure 2: Prevalence of Stunting by Sub-district in North Bengkulu Regency in 2023.

Based on the Stunting Zone Massive Information System of North Bengkulu Regency/Si Amazing, the three sub-districts with the highest stunting prevalence are Padang Jaya sub-district at 18.1%, Ketahun sub-district at 10.24%, Hulu Palik sub-district at 7.86%. Meanwhile, the three sub-districts with the lowest stunting prevalence were Air Padang, Air Besi at 1.38%, and Enggano sub-district at 0.29%. Enggano sub-district, the outermost island in North Bengkulu Regency, has the lowest stunting prevalence. However, handling stunting in the Enggano sub-district remains a significant concern.

The results of handling stunting in the Enggano District can be analyzed using Grindle's 1980 policy implementation theory [10], which emphasizes the importance of two main variables: the policy's content and the implementation context. These variables include aspects of interests affected by the policy, the types of benefits received, the extent of the desired changes, and whether the resources used are adequate.

This research focuses on the determinants of stunting policy in the Enggano Sub-district using Grindle's 1980 policy implementation theory approach [10]. It provides a more in-depth view of how the local context, cross-sector interventions, and synergies of various parties affect the success of stunting management policies. This research will provide information on the key factors contributing to the success of stunting reduction in the Enggano sub-district.

2. THEORETICAL STUDY

This research will explain the determinants of stunting handling policies by applying Grindle's 1980 policy implementation theory [10]. Its uniqueness is the success of handling stunting in areas with special geographical characteristics, such as remote areas.

1. Content of Policy: This research examines how the interests affected by the policy, the types of benefits received, and the resources used in the Enggano Sub-district differ from other areas, especially in the context of stunting handling programs.
2. Context of Implementation: the power of interests and strategies of the actors involved, compliance and responsiveness.

3. METHODS

Penelitian ini menggunakan metode kualitatif. Penelitian kualitatif yang dimaksudkan untuk mempelajari dan This research uses qualitative methods. Qualitative research is intended to study and understand the meaning of several individuals or groups of people with related social problems [11].

The research location is in the Enggano Sub-district, which has the lowest prevalence of stunting in North Bengkulu Regency. It will be carried out from September 2024 until completion.

The key person in this study is the Head of the Enggano Sub-district Health Center (Informant I), followed by an interview with a nutritionist (Informant II) and representatives from the sub-district (Informant III).

Data collection techniques used observation, interviews, and documentation. Interviews were conducted with each informant.

Data analysis techniques use the process of data collection and data analysis simultaneously [11]. The stages carried out are

1. Data organization:

Data from interviews, observations, and documents were organized into appropriate categories involving transcribing interviews or coding documents.

2. Reading and Note-Taking:

I was reading through the data thoroughly to gain an in-depth understanding of the information collected.

3. Coding Data:

It identifies themes, patterns, or categories in the data by marking the parts relevant to the research questions.

4. Describing and Organizing Themes:

We are developing a detailed description of the phenomenon under study and grouping similar codes into more prominent themes.

5. Interpreting and Reporting Findings:

Develop an interpretation of the data and compile a research report. The researcher seeks meaning from the data by relating it to relevant theories or literature and considering its implications for the context under study.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Enggano Sub-district is a sub-district located in North Bengkulu Regency, an outer island with limited access to health services, a lack of human resources, and low resistance from health workers [12]. However, the Enggano Sub-district successfully handles stunting[13]. Based on research by Firda et al. (2022), the success of handling stunting is influenced by gradual monitoring, nutrition counseling, stunting education, vaccination, and supplementary feeding [14].

In this study, the success of stunting handling is seen from the determination of stunting handling policies, referred to as the determining factor of an action to prevent and overcome stunting. Therefore, the determination of the success of the stunting handling policy in Enggano District is seen from several aspects, namely:

4.1. Content of Policy

1) Interests affected by the policy

In this context, the importance of considering various interests that can affect the implementation of policies is emphasized. (Grindle 1980) states that policies must be viewed in the context of social, political and economic societal changes. Policy implementation always involves various interests, and it is essential to understand the extent to which these interests influence the implementer.

A policy's success is highly dependent on its interests. A policy will receive broad support from its target group if it represents its interests and vice versa [15].

Berdasarkan hasil dari wawancara dengan ketiga informan

Based on the results of interviews with the three informants

"Coordination is carried out with the sub-district and village parties and other parties, then a meeting is held, namely once a month a mini local work meeting to discuss handling stunting in the Enggano sub-district and the puskesmas as a material provider about stunting" (informant I).

"Coordination is carried out such as conducting meetings to discuss stunting to cross-sectors such as TNI / POLRI, sub-district heads, posyandu cadres, teachers, village heads." (informant II)

"It is the planning of Enggano Sub-district which for the past year in handling stunting has been the focus by conducting socialization/direct action through health facilities such as puskesmas, and related parties carried out in every village in Enggano Sub-district so that in 2024 the decrease in the prevalence of stunting in Enggano Sub-district is a joint form that has been done. The programs carried out are the puskesmas working with the villages in Enggano Sub-district." (informant III)

The results of these interviews show that the interests affected by the policy involve various parties, including the government, the community, and the health sector. Based on the interviews, the stunting policy involves intensive coordination between the puskesmas, sub-district, village, and related institutions such as the TNI, POLRI, and

posyandu cadres. Socialization programs are routinely conducted across sectors, with monthly meetings to discuss stunting progress. This policy shows multi-sector involvement, where various actors work together to reduce the prevalence of stunting.

2) Type of benefits received

Benefits received are the positive results of an activity, action or program. In other words, they reflect the positive impact of a particular effort. In the context of stunting, these benefits can be measured through tangible changes in children’s health and well-being, such as increased height and weight, improved cognitive abilities, and reduced stunting rates.

Based on the interview results

“The impact is that it can reduce the stunting rate in the Enggano sub-district, and with the education about stunting, it greatly affects parenting.” (informant I)

“The positive impact is seen in the development, especially on the health of early childhood and productive age in Enggano Subdistrict, experiencing a balance of health nutrition and awareness of the community environment for maintaining health early.” (informant III)

The main benefits generated are decreased stunting rates and increased public awareness of the importance of maintaining children’s health from an early age. The positive impact is seen in the balance of nutrition and health in early childhood. With nutrition education, changes in parenting patterns in the community began to occur, which had a direct impact on reducing the prevalence of stunting.

TABLE 1: Number of Stunted children in Enggano sub district.

The Year 2024	
Month	Number of <i>stunted</i> children
January	2
February	3
March	3
April	9
May	4
June	8
July	6
August	8
September	4

Based on the table above in this study, the number of stunted children in each month experiences instability. This can be seen from the increase and decrease in the number of stunted children. There was an increase in the number of stunting cases in April from 3 children in March to 9 children in April. In June, there were four children in May and eight children, but this decreased in the following months until it reached the lowest number in September, decreasing from 8 children in August to 4 children in September. In recent months, efforts to tackle stunting in the Enggano sub-district have shown positive results.

3) Resources used

The resources used are any assets, materials, labor, or other elements that are required and applied to carry out an activity or achieve a specific goal. In this context, the resources used include human resources, budgets, and facilities.

Based on the interview results:

“The implementers of the stunting handling program are the sub-district head, PL KB officers, posyandu cadres, village heads, and health promotion officers. The facilities handling stunting are needed when conducting posyandu, scales, and measuring instruments.” (informant I)

“Implementers in the stunting handling program, including the core team, are five people consisting of doctors, nurses, nutritionists, and health promotion. Human resources handling stunting are sufficient and have been running according to their respective roles.” (informant II)

“Implementation of the health party in the Enggano target. Facilities in stunting services have not been fulfilled in dealing with stunting problems, such as health service posts have not been fulfilled, and some are still far from the community.” (informant III)

The human resources involved in handling stunting in the Enggano sub-district include various cross-sector actors. The workforce involved includes Camat, PL KB (Family Planning Program) officers, posyandu cadres, village heads, environmental health officers, and health promotion officers. The core team responsible for implementing the program consists of five people: doctors, nurses, nutritionists, and health promotion officers. Based on interviews with informants, the existing human resources are adequate and have performed their duties well.

Facilities for handling stunting in the Enggano sub-district include scales, measuring instruments to monitor children's growth, and health service posts. However, according to interviews, these facilities need to be entirely adequate. Most facilities, significantly

health service posts, have yet to be optimally fulfilled, and some still need to be far from community access, resulting in limitations in providing quality health services.

4.2. Context of Implementation

1) Power, Interests and Strategies of Actors Involved

The power interests and strategies of the actors involved refer to the dynamics that arise in a context or situation involving various parties or actors. These concepts are intertwined and can provide an in-depth understanding of how decisions are made, interactions occur, and impacts are achieved in a given context.

Power is the authority or authority possessed by certain actors (e.g., government, institutions, or organizations) to regulate and implement policies. In the context of handling stunting, actors such as the central government, local governments, and puskesmas have the power to formulate policies, allocate budgets, and determine the steps that must be taken to overcome the problem of stunting.

Based on the interview results:

“The source of funding for stunting is from the state budget, PL KB funds, and village head funds” (informant I).

“Stunting funds come from the Health Operational Assistance Fund” (informant II)

“The first source of stunting funding is through the Enggano sub-district community health center service and one of the village programs for receiving village funds according to the budget presentation in implementation” (informant III).

Several vital actors are handling stunting in the Enggano Sub-district, namely the sub-district government, puskesmas, village government, and the community. Each actor has its own power and interests that support each other to ensure the success of the program. They have the authority to design policies and allocate resources for program implementation, such as budget allocations from various sources, including the APBN, Village Fund, and Health Operational Assistance Fund (BOK), used to fund stunting handling programs.

Interests refer to the goals or benefits the actors want to achieve. Each actor involved in the stunting handling program has their interests.

“The role in implementing stunting handling is that the sub-district acts as a protector or advisor, then the village acts as a mobilizer and the puskesmas acts as a monitor” (informant I).

In the interview, it was seen that the sub-district and village governments are interested in improving the health and welfare of the community. In contrast, the puskesmas is interested in providing quality health services and reducing stunting rates and is responsible for community education and monitoring programs such as posyandu and counseling on stunting.

Strategies refer to the means or approaches these actors use to achieve their goals. These strategies can include resource allocation arrangements, the implementation of specific programs, or socialization campaigns aimed at raising public awareness about the importance of nutrition and health. In handling stunting, this strategy can involve educating pregnant women and toddlers, providing additional food, and closely monitoring the implementation of posyandu.

“The strategies carried out are by carrying out posyandu once a month in each village in the Enggano sub-district, providing additional food to toddlers, conducting counseling, conducting home visits to children diagnosed with stunting and providing education to their mothers, conducting adolescent posyandu which is held every three months and the puskesmas also visits schools twice a year, monitoring households that have proper latrines” (informant I).

The strategy used in handling stunting involves various approaches, such as providing supplementary food, counseling on nutrition to pregnant women and toddlers, and home visits to monitor the condition of children at risk of stunting. These strategies are designed to reach all levels of society, especially those living in remote areas. One of the key strategies implemented is the implementation of monthly posyandu in each village, as well as home visits by health workers. This enables continuous monitoring of the health of children under five and pregnant women in Enggano.

2) Compliance and Responsiveness

Grindle (1980) reveals that the implementer must be responsive and remain consistent to achieve the policy's goals. Compliance refers to the behavior of the implementer by the standards, procedures, and rules set by the policy. It refers to how the community or policy targets follow the rules or guidelines set out in the policy.

Based on the above, it can be seen that community compliance is essential when handling stunting.

1) Pregnant women conduct four check-ups during pregnancy:

TABLE 2: *Stunting Programs.*

Indicators	Total	%
Pregnant women have 4 check-ups during pregnancy	43 people	52%
Pregnant women receive and take FE pills for 90 days	43 people	51,36%
Birth mothers receive postpartum check-up services 3 times	46 people	58%
Pregnant women attend nutrition counseling at least 4 times	All pregnant women are registered	
Pregnant women receive monthly home visits	9 people	
Posyandu for children under five	290 toddlers	
Households have proper latrines		85%

Out of 43 pregnant women, only 52% or about half, conducted check-ups according to the rules (4 times during pregnancy). This shows that quite a few mothers still need to comply with this health check-up rule.

2) Pregnant women received and took FE Pills for 90 days:

51.36% of pregnant women took FE Pills (iron supplements) for 90 days. This shows that about half of the pregnant women are compliant, but the others are still not following this recommendation properly.

3) Birth mothers received three postpartum check-up services:

About 58% of mothers who have given birth have their health checked thrice after delivery. Although the majority of mothers follow this rule, there are still some who still need to comply.

4) Nutrition counseling:

All pregnant women attended nutrition counseling at least four times. This is an excellent example of compliance, as 100% of mothers followed the recommendations regarding this counseling.

5) Posyandu for children under five:

A total of 290 under-fives attended the posyandu. This also shows that mothers in the area are compliant in bringing their children for regular health checks.

6) Households with proper latrines:

85% of households in the area have proper latrines, which means the majority comply with sanitation and environmental health rules.

Overall, community compliance with several health programs in the Enggano sub-district is quite good. However, there is still room for improvement, especially regarding antenatal check-ups and supplement use. The government and related parties need to continue to improve education and facilitate access to services so that more people comply with these health programs.

Responsiveness describes how quickly and well people react to implemented policies. This includes the actions they take (such as joining the posyandu program) and how they respond to socialization and counseling provided by the government or health workers. Good responsiveness indicates that the community is responding positively to the policy, while low responsiveness could indicate resistance or a lack of understanding of the importance of the policy.

Community responsiveness in accepting and responding to the stunting program in the Enggano sub-district is generally reasonable. The community actively participates in health checks for pregnant women, supplementary feeding, and weighing children under five at the posyandu. This reflects that most of the community receives the handling of stunting, and they respond positively to the efforts made by the puskesmas and village government.

“The community response is good, as seen from the programs that have been running; it’s just that there are some mothers who do not accept that their children are declared stunted so that in the following month, the mother does not bring her child to the posyandu but the puskesmas continues to provide guidance, counseling to the mother and her child is given additional food.” (informant I).

Although the program is generally well-received by the community, there are some challenges, such as mothers who feel reluctant to bring their children to the posyandu after their children are declared stunted. Despite the difficulties in participation, the puskesmas continues to provide ongoing education to overcome this resistance and encourage the community to be more active in the program.

5. CONCLUSION

The determination of the stunting handling policy in Enggano Sub-district states that the success of handling stunting in this area is strongly influenced by several key factors. Referring to Grindle’s (1980) policy implementation theory, the two main aspects that determine success are the content of policy and the context of implementation.

1. Content of Policy:

Interests that are affected: Intensive coordination involving various sectors (government, puskesmas, TNI, Polri, posyandu cadres, teachers, and village heads) has proven important in overcoming stunting.

Types of benefits: The decrease in stunting rates and increased public awareness of children's health show the positive results of the implemented policy.

Resources used: Adequate human resources and health facilities, although limited, are able to support policy implementation.

2. Context of Implementation:

Power, interests, and strategies of actors: Cross-sectoral roles and support from various actors, including funds from the APBN, Village Fund, and BOK, strengthen policy effectiveness.

Community compliance and responsiveness: Although there are challenges in terms of compliance of some mothers in joining the posyandu program, overall the community shows good participation in the stunting response program.

In general, these policy determinations show that cross-sectoral cooperation, good coordination, and a strong understanding of community interests are instrumental in reducing the prevalence of stunting in Enggano sub-district.

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