

The Realignment of Subsidized Rice (Rastra) Policy into Non-Cash Food Assistance (BPNT) in Kalisat Sub-District of Jember District

Faiqoh Nurul Hikmah

SMKS Sunan Giri Pakusari Distric, Jember Regency

faiqohbilkis@gmail.com

Anastasia Murdiyastuti

University of Jember

anastasia.fisip@unej.ac.id

Abstract

Rastra is one of the social aids organized by Indonesian government to help the poor reduce their burden on the household. However, in 2017 the government amended this polic, called Non-cash food Assistance (BPNT). This new policy was operative based on 5 benchmarks of the alteration in attitudes and the behavior of the public and members of the bureaucracy, the alteration in leadership style, the efficiency of using sources, and the reduction of legalistic approaches. This research was commenced in November 2018 and aimed to analyze the transformation of *Rastra* Policy into BPNT, especially in Kalisat village, Jember district. The author revealed that this change had aimed to manage the stock of rice and the price because the government shared the aids once a month. The research data was taken from Kalisat village administration office which received the *Rastra* and each *e-Warung* organized by BPNT. The present study employed quantitative method. The author argued that, as the endeavour for poverty reduction, this policy needed improvement related to the target, the timing, the quality of the aids, and *e-Warung* readiness. The author contends that this realignment should be done based on the readiness of each infrastructur.

Keywords : Realignment, Implementation, Policy, *Rastra*, BPNT

I. INTRODUCTION

One of the social food assistance programs organized by the government is *Raskin* (Poor Rice) or *Rastra* (Prosperous Rice) and BPNT. The government of Kalisat village experienced various obstacles. This program actually aims to help the beneficiaries (KPM) in order to support their living. According to the Head of the Kalisat village, Mr. Sudi Raharjo, Kalisat is the most extensive area among 11 other villages with a comprehensive territory of 6.011 km² and is found to be the most populated area in the region with 12.032 people (BPS Source, 2019 and Observation Results, November 2019).

The purpose of this study is to investigate the reform of rice distribution policy to the poor, wherein *Rastra* has turned into BPNT since 2017. The present study began in November 2018 by conducting *Rastra* research. To date, the program has turned into BPNT. This program was carried out because of the existence of community groups living below the poverty line especially those in the Kalisat village.

The reform is expected to surmount the problems identified in the previous *Rastra* system. The government takes the initiative to hold existing rice stocks. This rice stock is initially managed through OPK (Specific Market Operations) to control high rice prices, which subsequently transforms into *Raskin* (Poor Rice) program. Later on it develops into the so called *Rastra* (Prosperous Rice). Usually the government distributes the rice once a month for the poor.

The subsidized rice program for the poor is part of the national food security system, which is implemented in a series of efforts to achieve food independence and sovereignty. Food is a human right that is protected by the 1945 Constitution. The primary food source in Indonesia is rice. Most of Indonesia's population consumes rice, so rice constitutes substantially strategic national commodity.

Government policy has changed from *Raskin* to *Rastra*, and this has taken another form known as Non-Cash Food Assistance (BPNT). The quality of *Raskin* and *Rastra* rice is the same, commonly characterized by broken rice, poor small, low hygiene due to fleas. To contrast, the rice in the BPNT program is much better with premium quality, guaranteed to have such poor qualities aforementioned.

The government's desire to provide better food assistance programs led to the establishment of the Ministry of Social Affairs Republic of Indonesia Regulation No. 25 of 2016 concerning Aid for the Development of Business Facilities through e-*Warung* (electronic stall) in article 1 paragraph 1 as follows:

“Direct initiative is compulsory upon assisting the poor. This attempt is integrated and sustainable under government management. Regional government and public hold the liberty to meet every individual’s basic needs as stipulated by government’s policy, program and pertinent facilities.” (Surya Kharismawati, n.d).

Based on the ministerial regulation above, any aid program takes the form of the Non-Cash Food Assistance (BPNT) to improve the previous program. BPNT is food social assistance in the form of non-cash from the government which is given to beneficiary families every month through an electronic account mechanism. The aid only means to support the purchase of food at food vendors or e-*Warung* in collaboration with banks.

It is appropriate that changes (bureaucratic reform) can excel management (public services) to be faster, simpler, easier, and more compliant with the public needs. This is a demand of the community because it is inseparable from progress and change in the community, especially in assessing the quality of every work carried out by the government. To meet the public needs, inevitably the government adapts to public ever-growing desires and demands. However, this reform has yet to instantly overcome the weaknesses in the aid distribution, nor has it achieved the initial goal of the program. This issue foregrounds the setting of the present study. It deals with the following research title *The Realignment of Subsidized Rice (Rastra) Policy into Non-Cash Food Assistance (BPNT) in Kalisat Sub-District of Jember District*.

Based on the description above, the formulation of the problem to be investigated is *How was the realignment of subsidized rice (Rastra) policy into Non-Cash Food Assistance (BPNT) in Kalisat Sub-District of Jember District carried out?*

II. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The present study first commenced with field observation in November 2018, during which *Rastra* was still operative. Later, the program under investigation was turned into BPNT. This program was carried out because the community in the research site lived below the poverty line. The following data provide demographic information of the social, economic, and political background of the community.

Table 2.1 The Population in Each Hamlet in Kalisat Village or in 2017

No	Hamlet	Number of People			Number of Families	Number of Poor Families	Percentage of Poverty
		Male	Female	Total			
1.	Krajan 1	1396	1590	2986	788	506	64%
2.	Krajan 2	1507	1431	2938	650	415	63%
3.	Utara 1	631	908	1539	595	490	80%
4.	Utara 2	1346	1424	2770	530	487	85%
5.	Tengah	683	765	1448	417	398	95%
6.	Barat	997	1100	2097	511	409	80%
Total		6560	7218	13778	3496	2705	77%

Source: Government of Kalisat Village

From the table above, the number of poor families is different in each hamlet. As for the hamlet, such as in Krajan 1 village, the number of poor families is 506 with the poverty rate of 64%. Krajan 2 is found to have 415 poor families with poverty rate reaching 63%. Utara 1 has 490 poor families, indicated by poverty rate of 80%. Utara 2 has 487 poor families, with the poverty rate found at 85%. Tengah region has 398 poor families with poverty rate reaching 95%. Barat region has 409 poor household with poverty rate of 80%. The total number of poor families of all hamlets is 2.705 households with an overall poverty rate of 77%. The data clearly indicates starking poverty rate of over 50% from the entire village.

Table 1.2 Population Growth in Kalisat Village

Sex	Year				Average growth (%)
	2014	2015	2016	2017	
Male	6405	6488	6513	6.560	0,02
Female	7015	7161	7180	7218	0,1
Total	13.420	13.649	13.693	13.778	0,33

Source: Government of Kalisat Village

From the table above, there were 6.405 men and 7.015 women in 2014, which constitutes a population of 13.420 people. In 2015 there were 6.488 men and 7.161 women, comprising a population of 13649 people. In 2016 there were 6.513 men and 7.180 women, with a total population of 13.693. In 2017 6.560 men and 7.218 were recorded, which resulted in a total population of 1.3778. From 2014 to 2017 the average growth of men was 0.02%, while women were found to grow at rate of 0.1%. The total

growth rate involving men and women was 0.33%. The research data has concluded that the birthrate of women is greater than men.

The data above revealed interesting facts associated with *Rastra* and BPNT in Kalisat village. The phenomena surrounding *Rastra*, that is similar quality of rice and distribution, unravels the following findings.

First, every RTS (targeted family) based on Bulog implementation is supposed to receive 15 kg, but in fact they are only given 5 kg each. (Observation Results, October 24th 2018).

Second, the price of rice and added transportation per semester can be different from the previous price as it can either rise or fall. (Observation Results, October 25th 2018).

Third, there has been the lack of willingness of officers to listen to complaints or suggestions from customers regarding shortcomings in the current distribution services. (Observation Results, September 20th 2018)

Fourth, the program has yet to maintain its objective because usually RTS who have improved their prosperity are still considered eligible for receiving the assistance. Also, no aid is granted when beneficiaries pass away or move to another region. What seems to exacerbate the issue is that those living under poverty line may not receive support at all (Observation Results, November 2nd 2018).

Fifth, RTS feel disappointed because every 3 months the rice prices differ, both in rice price and in transportation costs. The usual price is Rp. 1600/kg including the delivery cost. Sometimes it changes between Rp. 1,000 and Rp. 2000, and sometimes Rp. 3.000 (Observation Results, November 5th 2018)

Sixth, the officers have yet to be ready in providing services, as revealed by the the researchers. During the study, there were often only two officers, namely the village secretary and the head of the RT or RW. These agents were responsible to assist 2.074 poor families and 1.054 households, in collaboration with the head of each village (Observation Results, November 7th 2018)

Seventh, huge number of village heads, such as that in Krajan II, has no awareness of their officers' slow response in distributing *Rastra*. This as a result has serious impact on customer disappointment. This was echoed by one of the RTS in Krajan II. He also reported that the rice was sometimes still left at the home of hamlet head (Observation Results, November 12th 2018)

Eighth, the findings clearly reveal that the public are not treated as the way they should be. The researchers have found a lack of hospitality and integrity of the involved officers in serving the recipients of *Rastra*. This is the main reason why many have voiced their disappointment toward the chief at several RWs in Krajan II. (Observation Results, November 12th 2018)

Ninth, the availability of physical office facilities to store and distribute *Rastra* is not yet sufficient. At present, the service is only provided in front of the village office. The rice is piled in front of the village office yard. It is feared that rain will cause damage on the rice before it is received by the RTS (Observation Results, November 12th 2018)

Tenth, there is no service equipment in distributing *Rastra*. For example, the only transportation employed to deliver the rice from the village office to the recipients' houses is pedicab or *bentor* (Observation Results, November 12th 2018).

Eleventh, the amount of rice received by each *Rastra* beneficiary is inaccurate. This results from the inaccurate amount of rice distributed to the village office. This amount does not meet the required amount of the total beneficiaries in the village. The study reports that, out of 2.705 beneficiaries, only 1.054 beneficiaries receive the rice. (Observation Results, November 12th 2018)

Twelfth, distribution should be done on every 10th day each month. However, in October and November 2018 this rice was not distributed, thus causing delays and questions among recipients. It was not until December 24th that this new rice aid was distributed (Observation Results, November 12th 2018).

In Glagahwero village of Kalisat district, there are irregularities including broken rice, transportation cost irregularities, and the absence of socialization concerning the distribution of *Rastra* every month. It is even almost impossible to predict the scheduled arrival of *Rastra* distribution. In addition, there is lack of special transportation for distributing *Rastra* (Observation Results, November 20th 2018).

It appears that the issue concerning the distribution of *Rastra* in Jember Bulog Office will never be resolved if the community does not participate in monitoring and evaluating the whole distribution. Basically, a number of community representative groups can be involved to oversee the distribution of *Rastra*, such as students, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), youth organizations, village representatives, and board members from respective regions.

III. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

A. Conclusion

The distribution of *Raskin* at the Kalisat Village Office can be seen from the relationship of government cooperation from high to low levels which has not been well coordinated. It is not fast enough to update data on Target Households, both those who have died, moved, and are not eligible for *Raskin* because they are able to meet their basic needs. There is no specific room for *Raskin* distribution service or any relevant access to information on subsidized rice services.

The distribution of BPNT in Kalisat Village has not been well coordinated. There has been no updated data on the number of beneficiaries, where it may change due to death, residential change, or economic status change. In addition, there is no special room for BPNT distribution services

B. Recommendation

1. Distribution officers are required to be more assertive in dealing with people who can sustain their lives economically.

2. The cost to gain *Rastra* in each village is supposed to be different. This denotes a public complaint because every month the cost always changes throughout the year.
3. Coordinations across institutions have to be more organized because information on whether or not rice procurement comes is only coordinated by the village secretary and directly coordinated to the head of each hamlet as well as the local neighborhood, rather than under direct control of beneficiaries. The fundamental issue is the absence of room for complaints concerning *Raskin* distribution, such as customer services via telephone.
4. It is important that staffs be given training and guidelines on how to provide good service. It is unfair for the beneficiaries to receive 5 kg or 6 Kg rice when they instead deserve 15 Kg. The entire assistance must be shared equally with all beneficiaries in the village.
5. Government needs to scaffold public awareness of the boundaries in distributing *Rastra*. There have been polemic and conflict in the society where people who can manage their daily needs still receive *Rastra*.

For the governments, the following concerns need to be addressed for better service and fairness.

1. The need for staff understanding of good service guidelines because in the field researchers ask that no service guidelines are known by the implementor. Although the service is considered fairly satisfactory.
2. Extending the data collection duration for a minimum of six months to one year. This is because those identified as KPMs are sometimes changed due to death, moving, and increased prosperity.
3. There need to be more focused attempts on increasing public awareness on who actually deserve receiving BPNT. The present study reveals that those who eventually become prosper can no longer receive BPNT. As a corollary, this causes polemic and conflict in the community. What is more, there need to be a clear poverty category from the social service or regents in tandem with health services from the city-level government. The only recommendations were only voiced by the policy implementers in the field, including the chiefs in each village, hamlet, and neighborhood.

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