



POLICY ENTREPRENEURSHIP AND HANDLING STUNTING IN NUSA TENGGARA TIMUR PROVINCE

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ABSTRACT

This article examines the policy entrepreneurship for handling Stunting in the province of Nusa Tenggara Timur, which is the area that contributes to the highest prevalence of stunting rates in Indonesia. A study on the policy entrepreneurship for handling stunting asks what the main strategy is to reduce the prevalence of stunting. The method used in this research is a qualitative research method, which feature data on stunting handling policy documents. The research results show that the policy entrepreneurship strategy consists of; agenda setting, policy formation and implementation. The research recommendation is that it is necessary to evaluate policies in handling stunting.

Keywords: a) Policy Entrepreneurship, b) Agenda setting, c) Policy formation, d) Implementation, Stunting.

1. INTRODUCTION

Stunting in the province of Nusa Tenggara Timur (NTT) is a major problem faced by the government, considering that the prevalence rate of stunting is still quite high, namely in 2023 the figure will be 15.2% or around 63,804 children (https://lestari.kompas.com/read/2023/11/21/090000386/angka-stunting-di-ntt-turun-signifikan-dalam-5-tahun-terakhir?lgn_method=google&google_btn=onetap). The efforts made by the government to reduce the number of Stunting in NTT are quite significant because the prevalence rate in 2020 fell to 24.5%. The average decline over the past 3 years is around 3.4%. However, the main problem in efforts to deal with stunting is the phenomenon of fluctuations in the prevalence rate of stunting in the province of NTT.

The policy of reducing prevalence rates has been approved by various policy actors through various efforts, namely since the evaluation of the stunting phenomenon to the formulation of policies at various levels and institutions. Reducing stunting has been included as a national development target and is stated in the National Medium-Term Development Plan (RPJMN) 2020-2025 and the National Action Plan for Sustainable Development Goals (TPB) 2020-2025. The policy of handling stunting is carried out with a multi-sectoral approach through the integration of various national, regional, and community programs. The handling is a priority program that must be included in the regional government work plan.

Various institutions have also been involved to achieve the goal of reducing stunting in NTT province, including: Health Service, Agriculture and Food Security Service, Marine Affairs and Fisheries Service, Public Works and Public Housing Service, Education Service, BKKBN, Women's Empowerment and Child Protection Service, Social Service and so on. This institution has its own duties and functions. For example, the Health Service has the following functions; ;

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(a) coaching in improving the nutritional status of the community; (b) coaching in improving the nutritional knowledge of the community; (c) coaching in preventing stunting; (d) improving Nutrition Surveillance; (e) strengthening nutritional supplementation interventions for pregnant women and toddlers; (f) providing additional food for pregnant women with Chronic Energy Deficiency (KEK); (g) providing additional food for toddlers with malnutrition.

Support for the integrated implementation of stunting reduction interventions in districts/cities, a guideline book has been prepared as a guide for districts/cities in implementing 8 integrated actions that will strengthen the effectiveness of stunting reduction interventions starting from planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation. Policy actors try to formulate, implement and evaluate various policies so that the prevalence of Stunting can be reduced. The efforts made by these actors are part of the policy changes on handling stunting.

Various efforts to reduce the prevalence of stunting show how policy entrepreneurs are trying to make significant changes to the policies of the NTT provincial government. They are innovative actors who invest resources, time, expertise and money (Mintron et al 2014). Policy entrepreneurs (PEs) have long been considered as agents of public policy change. As agents of change, they carry out the functions of forming policy issues, setting agendas, advocating, and even implementing and evaluating a policy. PEs theory is associated with the theory of the policy process that encourages entrepreneurs to work towards achieving policy goals, they have the intentionality, tenacity, and sensitivity to opportunistic behavior to achieve success in the form of influencing or, sometimes, hindering change (Arnol, 2022). Their function is very crucial in the process of policy making and implementation.

The strategies carried out by policy entrepreneurs in realizing policy changes on stunting in the province of NTT, in the study only 3 main strategies were found, namely; (a) forming partnerships between organizations and across sectors; (b) determining the main problems causing stunting, and (c) carrying out strategic planning. The problem of stunting is a complex problem, solving the problem cannot only be done by one institution, but must involve various institutions and be cross-sectoral, at least at the level of government institutions in the NTT province involving 13 government agencies. Not only that, handling stunting really needs the participation of the community and private institutions. The handling strategy involving various agencies and across sectors is very useful because it produces synergy to achieve policy goals. For example, the duties and functions of the Health Service are greatly supported by other services, the Social Service, for example, provides food assistance for beneficiaries, the Agriculture and Food Security Service with the Independent Food Area program, and/or the Development Planning Agency through budget coordination for handling stunting.

The causes of stunting vary, from poverty, wrong parenting patterns, to limited infrastructure. In the context of NTT province, the causes of stunting are diverse, according to the report of the NTT provincial stunting prevalence reduction acceleration team (<https://nttpembaruan.id/pemprov-ntt-gelar-rakor-percepatan-penurunan-stunting-2/>), the causes of stunting are; Malnutrition, Parenting and Eating Patterns of Children under two years old



(Baduta), Poor Sanitation, Access to Water, Clean and Healthy Living Behavior, Food Insecurity. The problem of stunting for policy entrepreneurs is interesting to study and then raise in the agenda setting. One of the agenda setting formulations is the formulation of specific and sensitive convergence improvement policies in Provincial and District Government Institutions throughout NTT. Specific interventions are interventions aimed at addressing the direct causes of stunting such as; providing additional food, improving sanitation, access to health services. Meanwhile, sensitive interventions are aimed at the indirect causes underlying nutritional problems (food security, access to health services, environmental health, parenting patterns, etc). In addition, sensitive interventions are related to policies in various sectors, such as agriculture, education, infrastructure, social protection, women's empowerment and so on.

Entrepreneurship Concept

The term entrepreneurship was originally a vocabulary used in the business field that had an equivalent to the word professionalism (Stevenson, 2006). Entrepreneurship according to Cantillon (1959) is an individual who uses judgment in facing uncertainty in a business that involves exchange to gain profit. In principle, an entrepreneur is a person who has an entrepreneurial spirit, who has freedom and independence, likes to innovate and has high adaptation to achieve something useful. This concept then became a familiar concept in the public sector, used as a word that is equivalent to the understanding of public entrepreneurial behavior so that it has more meaning as an innovator (Hebert and Link, 2012). Although various perspectives and disciplines have adopted it, including public policy, entrepreneurial activity has existed since civilization, long before the term first appeared in literature (Dahl, 1961).

The concept of policy entrepreneurship emphasizes the role of institutions in understanding policy change, in addition the concept of PEs provides an alternative view of the policy-making process. Thus, theoretically, policy entrepreneurs focus on commitment to policy solutions, multidimensional strategies used to promote solutions, and attributes and skills that support the process of policy making and implementation. Policy entrepreneurs have a strategic role in efforts to transform policy ideas into policy innovations. The roles they play have an impact and can address public problems such as stunting.

Mintron (2019) stated that policy entrepreneurs do various things, namely defining problems, building teams, building networks, leading by example, and using methods to improve the change process, they always try to achieve goals through careful interpretation and description of the situation being analyzed. Policy entrepreneurs play a role in interpreting public issues because they have the capacity and expertise to understand various aspects of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats that are present in society. Policy entrepreneurs are actors who take advantage of opportunities to influence policy outcomes, this happens because of their capacity to promote their existence, they can also achieve it without sacrificing many resources. Cohen and Aviram (2021) further stated that the advantages of policy entrepreneurs are that they not only prioritize personal interests in the organization but also strive to create new insights



through innovative ideas and strategies. Policy entrepreneurs are key actors who use innovative ideas and non-traditional strategies to drive policy outcomes.

A characteristic often found in policy entrepreneurs is that they are strong-willed in using their own resources—time, energy, reputation, and sometimes money—in the hope of gaining future benefits. Related to the characteristics of policy entrepreneurs, Kingdon (1984) built a model that connects problems, policies and politics, so that it can explain policy outcomes. It is in this position that the important role of policy entrepreneurs is seen (Cohen, 2021). PE literature has focused on strategy (Aviram et al, 2019), however, this literature is incomplete because it analyzes the context related to the case. Mintrom and Norman (2009) found that successful PEs combines several important aspects of the policy process, namely; (a) the social acumen of the social problem being studied, (b) defining the problem, (c) building a team, and (d) leading by example.

The Meaning of Stunting

The Stunting, or commonly called dwarfism, among children remains a major health problem that has not been resolved. Based on the results of research conducted by experts, it is known that child stunting is caused by socio-economic factors of the family, maternal nutritional intake during pregnancy, diseases suffered by the baby, and lack of nutritional intake in the baby. Toddlers who experience stunting in the future have the potential to experience difficulties in achieving optimal physical and cognitive development. Shonkoff and Phillips (2000) stated that Stunting has biological implications for brain development and neurological function resulting in cognitive impairment. Stunting in children often occurs in children under the age of five. Physically, stunting in children is characterized by a length or height that is below minus two standard deviations compared to children of the same age (WHO Multicentre Growth Reference Study Group, 2006).

The prevalence rate of stunting will have many implications if a solution is not provided immediately, so the government views stunting as a serious problem for national development, especially in the health sector. Various efforts to prevent stunting have been and will be carried out and are a national priority in the health development program, includes poverty alleviation policies, policies to improve public health and nutrition services, equalizing education services, policies to improve accessibility to habitable housing and settlements, and policies to improve the governance of basic services (Ministry of Health of the Republic of Indonesia, 2014).

The handling the problem of stunting is also part of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), namely goal 2 "Zero Hunger" which has been adopted by the government. SDGs focus on the principle that no one is left behind in development efforts, and ensure there is no discrimination. Particular attention is paid to poor community groups (Directorate of Public Health and Nutrition, Bappenas, 2018).

The problem of stunting is a national problem and if it is not addressed, it will impact the quality of human resources in the future, and the demographic bonus for the Indonesian nation



cannot be enjoyed. According to Dewey and Begum (2011) children are the future generation of hope. Their growth potential can be achieved if they are cared for in a healthy environment and their caregivers follow recommended health, nutrition, and care practices.

The Stunting Handling Policy

Indonesia's national development plan for the medium term for the 2020-2024 period prioritizes the development of quality and competitive human resources to support development in the cultural sector. Through quality and competitive human resources, characterized by indicators such as; healthy, intelligent, adaptive, innovative, skilled and characterful. With the situation of the prevalence rate which is still high (30%) it is impossible for a quality human resource profile to be achieved.

As the main pillar in achieving quality Indonesian human resources within the framework of the vision of a golden Indonesia in 2045, policies are needed to overcome various obstacles to achieving quality human resources.

In relation to improving the quality of human resources, the problem of stunting is an important issue that must be resolved because it has an impact on human health and productivity, both in the short and long term. Concern over the still high stunting rate has led the government to issue Presidential Regulation Number 72 of 2021 concerning Accelerating the Reduction of Stunting Rates. This Presidential Regulation is a strategy consisting of 5 pillars to reduce stunting rates which mandate the preparation of a national action plan, work mechanism, and monitoring and evaluation mechanism. In addition, this policy also serves as a guideline for the regional government of East Nusa Tenggara (NTT) province in accelerating the reduction of stunting in NTT province. The five pillars in question include the pillars of; leadership commitment; communication; convergence intervention; food security and; strengthening and developing information systems, research, and innovation.

Meanwhile, in the regions, the responsibility for handling stunting lies with the Governor and Regent/Mayor, who technically delegate their responsibility to the Deputy Governor and Deputy Regent/Deputy Mayor. In order to bring the coordination and convergence services for accelerating stunting reduction in districts/cities closer to villages/sub-districts, sub-district TPPSs are formed, coordinated by the sub-district head. More specifically, the Sub-district TPPS is tasked with providing assistance and supervision of the planning and utilization of village funds and the allocation of village funds.

At the village/sub-district level, responsibility lies with the Village Head with technical implementation carried out by the village/sub-district TPPS which is coordinated by the Head of the PKK task force. The implementation of the village/sub-district TPPS is focused on data operations, mobilization and family assistance. The village TPPS directly coordinates services and assistance to targets for accelerating stunting reduction carried out by the Family Assistance Team.



2. RESEARCH RESULTS & DISCUSSION

Policy Entrepreneurship and Agenda Setting Stage

Agenda setting is one of the important stages in the process of forming public policy. At the agenda stage, a series of issues are discussed that are considered important at a certain time by policy makers and those involved in this stage are those who have influence on the decision-making process (Kingdon, 1984). Agenda setting is the result of policy recommendations made by policy analysts. The material presented on the agenda is material from public opinion that is always raised by various interest groups and the media. Agenda activities are further discussions about public issues that are questioned by various interest groups to produce policy choices. The policy choices taken are the best choices according to the version of policy makers. Thus, the agenda is the process of framing policy issues in the form of potential strategies and instruments that shape policy development in the next stage of the policy cycle. Public issues set in agenda setting activities are essentially an acknowledgement of the problem itself.

The policy for handling stunting problems in the NTT province is a struggle of various activities that began since the emergence of many stunting cases throughout the NTT province. Furthermore, the case is considered a serious problem in the health sector. Many parties are involved in raising the problem of stunting, namely various interest groups, academics, researchers, and policy entrepreneurs, who also play an active role is the mass media, which always makes stunting cases a headline. Policy entrepreneurs in legislative and executive institutions are greatly assisted by the role of the media and interest groups who always question the problem of stunting. The agenda-setting stage of a serious public problem is an important stage of public problem-solving efforts, and at this stage it also has an impact and determines whether policy proposals can be adopted. At this agenda-setting stage, policy entrepreneurs strive to dedicate their time and energy to securing future policy outputs, so they are considered to play a major role in helping to set the policy agenda and catalyze policy change (Anderson et al 2019).

At the strategic agenda stage for handling stunting, the policy makers are determining the main problem of stunting, determining policy options, and which actors are responsible for handling it. This strategy is in line with the view Zahariandis (2016) that (a) agenda setting helps us understand social values at the moment of the problem; b) allows us to see potential gaps between government and societal priorities; c) studying the agenda makes visible the winners and losers in the political game, revealing the priorities of different social groups; d) broadens our understanding of policy choices, decisions and options; and, finally, e) studying the agenda allows us to see a wide range of actors and institutions, sometimes beyond those formally defined. Policy Entrepreneurship works in formulating problems, building teams, building networks, leading by example, and exploring ways to improve the change process (Mintrom, 2019). The complexity of the agenda process illustrates that Policy entrepreneurs are often able to advance their goals through careful interpretation and depiction of the current situation. They have the capital base to convince other policymakers. Such actions, widely interpreted as



problem solving, are always political in nature. They involve gathering new evidence and making new arguments, all with the aim of changing political alignments and, therefore, changing the status quo (Mintrom et al, 2014).

Thus, if we refer to various expert views on the role of policy entrepreneurs in the process of setting the agenda for handling stunting, then these policy entrepreneurs have been able to define the situation of the stunting problem and are able to argue persuasively in explaining various related aspects. The problem of stunting is a complex problem because it is not merely a health problem but also involves the problem of poverty and the availability of infrastructure in the community. Therefore, it really needs the role of Policy Entrepreneurship to see the problem comprehensively. According to Duit and Galaz (2008) policy Entrepreneurship is collaborative based on networks for complex problems, on the grounds that the diversity of stakeholders can facilitate agreement at least on the nature of a problem.

Nearly three decades later, the literature on complex adaptive systems attempts to theorize and understand the complexities and challenges of contemporary societies and policies and governance issues (Peter, 2015). Policy Entrepreneurship in the agenda setting stage of stunting handling policies has generated ideas, framed problems, disseminated information strategically, used demonstration projects to demonstrate the feasibility of policies, developed relationships with people in the bureaucracy and policy influencers outside the government, sought support from elected officials, lobbied, sought media attention, and conducted policy evaluations (Roberts and King (1991). In policy making related to the problem of stunting, the key is to find a solution, which is preceded by problem framing, which is an important strategy for agenda setting. Problems must be framed not only in a political context for political audiences but also in a cultural context (Beland, 2005).

The agenda setting for handling stunting has succeeded in formulating various policy proposals, including: (a) nutritious action, with joint breakfast activities, provision of iron tablets; (c) Healthy pregnant women, with pregnancy check-up activities, provision of additional food; (c) active integrated health posts, with activities, cadre training, provision of additional food; (d) cadre jamboree, with activities, skilled cadre competitions, integrated health post competitions; and (e) preventing stunting, with activities, education in various media, seminars, counseling, and so on.

Based on the context of agenda setting, it is known that the solutions provided by PEs to the problem of stunting can be narrated well, so that policy choices can be rationally accounted for. Policy narratives are strategic stories consisting of backgrounds, characters, storylines, morals and formulations designed for the public good (Petridou, 2014). Policy entrepreneurs provide their ability to solve problems that really affect the public (Shanahan et al., 2014). In addition, PEs can also utilize the policy narrative framework by involving research results and various empirical treatments on the problem of stunting (McBeth and Shanahan, 2004).



Policy Entrepreneurship and the Policy Formation Stage

Policy formation is carried out after going through a tough agenda setting and full of discussions and lobbying between various parties to determine policy choices. The next stage after the agenda is policy formulation. In the policy-making process, various problems, proposals, and demands that have been discussed in the agenda setting are transformed into government programs. At this stage, policy objectives are formulated in more detail so that they form various activity programs and end up being policy adoption.

Policy experts argue that at the policy formulation stage, the activities carried out by actors are to identify and develop a number of alternative policy proposals. Policy formulation is an earlier stage than the decision-making stage. Schattschneider (1960) stated that the definition of alternatives is a conflict choice, and conflict choices allocate power. The policy formulation stage has the flexibility to accept various policy proposal inputs, because actors have guidance from the problems and objectives that have been made, so that there is a heated debate about the policies to be adopted. In addition, the dynamics of decision making occur because policy makers have rational techniques and tools.

Based on the description of the policy formation process, in reality in the context of forming policies for handling stunting, various policies have been formulated, namely; (a) formation of a team to accelerate the reduction of stunting prevalence rates; (b) acceleration of stunting reduction in regional government work plans; (c) tagging of specific, sensitive and coordinative intervention budgets and; (d) alignment of planning and budgeting between institutions

Policy formulation is carried out with a multi-sector and multi-party approach, this is done to integrate specific and sensitive interventions in an integrated manner that is timely and on target, so collaboration is within the framework of implementing accelerating stunting reduction at the provincial level. Multi-sector and multi-party collaboration, including collaboration between government, private sector, universities, civil society, and media. Cooperation between sectors and between various parties is important, considering the development planning system and government system that has been very decentralized down to the village level. This coordination must be carried out from the planning phase to the evaluation of the implementation results at the level of assistance for families at risk of stunting.

Various non-governmental organizations are also involved in the stunting prevalence reduction acceleration action plan, they view stunting as a common problem. Active participation of the non-government sector is carried out both directly and indirectly to the target group. Participation of universities is carried out through the Tridharma of higher education, especially in the field of research and community service. In addition, participation of civil society and the media is carried out according to the duties and functions of each existing institution. According to the theory that collaboration is essential to realize public policy synergy. Collaborative governance is increasingly needed in various sectors and is considered promising to address major sustainability challenges (Beyers et al, 2022). Collaborative governance as demonstrated



in handling stunting is governance that is participatory in nature and demonstrates a decision-making structure that involves all policy stakeholders.

Policy Entrepreneurship and Policy Implementation Stage

The policy implementation stage is the stage of the policy process that is between policy formulation and evaluation. This stage is very important for understanding what actually happens after the program is formulated (Zhang et al, 2021). Implementation is increasingly complicated because it is influenced by various factors. Policy entrepreneurs also operate in the implementation arena, they are policy implementers who translate policies into their implementation. They are usually called street level bureaucrats (SLB). Bureaucrats who implement public policies are then called street-level policy entrepreneurs. The main advantage of SLBs acting as entrepreneurs lies in their familiarity with the field and their ability to identify social needs and opportunities for action (Lavee & Cohen, 2019). Policy entrepreneurs in the implementation arena play a role, making policies more consistent with the local context and creating space for local innovation (Cohen and Klenk, 2020).

The approaches taken in the implementation stage include; integrated nutrition intervention approach, multisector approach; multistakeholder approach, and family-based risk approach. Through this approach, it is hoped that it can be a guide in real action to accelerate the reduction of stunting rates so that it has an impact on the government and beneficiaries. In relation to the implementation of this approach, policy entrepreneurs have implemented the programs that have been set out in the policy decisions. This intervention aims to ensure adequate nutrition for pregnant women and children and reduce risk factors for infection. In addition, a sensitive nutrition intervention program is also implemented, namely a type of intervention that indirectly affects the incidence of stunting.

3. CONCLUSION

Stunting is a shared problem, not only a problem faced by the government, but a problem faced by all levels of society, therefore it is necessary for all parties to participate in overcoming the problem of stunting, so that a generation can be created that has brilliant quality human resources both in terms of physical and intelligence. However, it is the government's main task to make policies on preventing and handling stunting problems. This is the urgency of the war of policy entrepreneurs in handling stunting problems in the province of East Nusa Tenggara.

Policy entrepreneurs trying to formulate, implement and evaluate the problem of stunting, the result is that there has been a significant decline and approaching the target set by the central government, namely 12% stunting prevalence rate in 2023. Based on research, it is also known that there are challenges faced by policy entrepreneurs in achieving specific indicators which include; toddlers who are weighed at integrated health posts (Posyandu), babies aged 0-6 months receiving exclusive breastfeeding, children aged 6-23 months receiving complementary foods (MP ASI), malnourished toddlers receive treatment, adolescent girls receive iron tablets, adolescent girls receive anemia screening, pregnant women with chronic energy deficiency



(KEK) receive additional recovery food, coverage of families implementing clean and healthy living behavior (PHBS), coverage of families stopping open defecation (Stop BABS).

The formulation and implementation of the stunting prevalence reduction program carried out by policy entrepreneurs, experienced various obstacles, of course this is a challenge for them so that policy changes can be realized. The efforts made by policy entrepreneurs can be understood that they carry out their functions well in the policy process. Mintrom and Norman (2009) argue that policy entrepreneurs have been able to take advantage of the moment to encourage major changes. The actions they have taken must be recognized because these actions require creativity, energy, and political skills.

Policy entrepreneurship can be recognized by their efforts to drive significant policy change. Their motivations may vary, but their goal is to drive change, their actions must follow a certain pattern. Roberts and King (1991), suggest that there are four elements that are important for policy entrepreneurship, namely: demonstrating social acumen, defining problems, building teams, and leading by example.

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