



Article

A Study of Leadership Innovation in Stunting Prevention and Handling in Simeulue, Aceh Province, Indonesia

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Abstract: Aceh Province is one of the provinces in Indonesia with a high prevalence of stunting. Simeuleue Regency is ranked as the 2nd (two) highest out of 23 regencies/cities in Aceh Province and is assigned to the yellow zone. Simeulue Regency is designated as one of the national stunting locations of 360 regencies/cities in Indonesia. Commitment from the local government is needed to ensure the success of Indonesia being free from stunting. Therefore, this study aims to analyze the leadership innovations of the Simeulue local government in stunting prevention and identify factors that influence both internally and externally. The research method uses a qualitative approach through observation, interviews and relevant literature studies. The result of this research is that the regional leadership acts as a policy maker, coordinating and communicating with various related parties, implementing empowerment, monitoring, and evaluation. The innovations carried out by the Simeulue local government are the formation of a Stunting Management Team involving multi-sectors, the formation of village cadres, Stunting Consultations, and KPM Guidance. Factors that influence internally: personal awareness of the duties and responsibilities of leaders, strong commitment, clear division of tasks, good communication between actors. External factors: There is a shared commitment from various sectors as well as the support from the central government, and positive reception.

Keywords: leadership; innovation; stunting and handling; Simeuleu regency; Aceh province.



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1. Introduction

Stunting is one of the health problems in children caused by malnutrition (Chirande et al., 2015; Scheffler et al., 2020; Tiwari et al., 2014), where there is a failure to thrive in toddlers due to chronic malnutrition, especially in the first 1000 days of life (HPH), from the fetus to the age of 2 years (Scheffler et al., 2020). Malnutrition can lead to non-optimal physical growth of children, metabolic disorders and impaired intelligence (Cortés-Albornoz et al., 2021; Marques et al., 2015; Salgueiro et al., 2002). Provision of nutrients that are not in accordance with nutritional needs for a long time in stunting means the minimum amount of nutrients in each nutrient needed by everyone, according to the Indonesian Ministry of Health which is determined based on age, gender, weight, and height. Stunting can also have an impact on motor and verbal development, degenerative diseases, morbidity and even death (Yadika, Berawi & Nasution, 2019).

Stunting is caused by multi-dimensional factors and is not only caused by poor nutrition experienced by both pregnant women and children under five. Surveys from the World Bank and the Ministry of Health stated that most pregnant women and children under the age of two do not have access to adequate basic services. Child development is also very dependent on access to specific and sensitive nutrition interventions, especially during the 1,000 HPK (Ruel et al., 2013; Wachs et al., 2014).

Lack of knowledge of mothers about health and nutrition before and during pregnancy where 60% of children aged 0-6 months do not get exclusive breastfeeding, poor parenting practices, children's attendance to posyandu has decreased by 64% (Sutarto, Diana Mayasari, 2018) Stunting is one of the health problems in the world, in 2017 there were 150.8 million children under five in the world experiencing stunting, 55% from Asia and 39% from Africa. This encourages the world to make stunting the main focus of handling nutrition improvement by 2025(Sutarto, Diana Mayasari, 2018) . Based on the Basic Health Research in 2018, there were 8 million children under five in Indonesia experiencing stunting. A total of 228 districts/cities have stunting prevalence above 40% (very high). 190 districts/cities have stunting prevalence between 30-40%, this percentage is still relatively high (TP2AK, 2019). Aceh Province itself is one of the provinces with a high prevalence of stunting, which is 37.3% below East Nusa Tenggara (NTT) and West Sulawesi. In 2018, Aceh Province had the highest percentage of very short and short toddlers aged 0-23 months, namely 6.7% (TP2AK, 2019). Simeulue Regency is ranked as the 2nd (two) highest out of 23 regencies/cities in Aceh Province and is assigned to the yellow zone.

Based on the Decree of the Simeulue Regent Number 050/492 of 2020 concerning Determination of the Integrated Stunting Reduction Intervention Locus in Simeulue Regency, that Simeulue Regency is designated as one of the national stunting loci. The Government of Indonesia through the 2018-2024 Stranas Stunting program has mapped out financing to support stunting prevention programs, namely from Village Funds (APBDesa), Regency/City APBD, Special Allocation Funds (DAK), Provincial APBD, Ministry/Agency budgets (APBN), and other legitimate income. Of course, financial support is needed in the implementation of stunting management activities in the regions. Then the main target in the stunting prevention acceleration program is 1,000 HPK in households, while the Family Hope Program (PKH) and Non-Cash Food Assistance (BPNT) target the poor, who are not necessarily the families of 1000 HPK. The 1000 HPK families have become the government's focus and attention in preventing and handling stunting, because everything starts from the family sphere.

The causes of stunting are so complex because the causes are not only due to nutritional factors but also due to poor family economic factors, unstable income, poverty so that they are unable to provide adequate nutritional intake for both pregnant women and infants and toddlers in the family. Based on data from the Aceh Province BPS in September 2018 that the number of poor people in Aceh reached 15.97%, and Aceh became the poorest province in Sumatra. Of course, this is also a concern for the Aceh Regional Government to encourage the improvement of the community's economy with various programs and assistance.

If you look at the facts that have occurred regarding stunting with the acquisition of a high percentage rate in Aceh, of course, this is a task for the Aceh regional government to be able to overcome this problem. Commitment from the local government is needed to ensure the success of the area free from stunting. This commitment is certainly built starting from regional leaders to the leaders of the smallest units in the community. Leadership is an important part in the success of all programs and activities related to stunting prevention. Leadership is the main milestone, because from this leadership regional leaders regulate, assign tasks, responsibilities, motivate, direct, supervise and evaluate the course of every policy, program and activity carried out by local governments. Leadership is the main thing in achieving the goals of an organization, as Hasibuan said that leadership is a way for leaders to influence the behavior of subordinates to want to work together and work productively to achieve organizational goals. (Hasibuan, 2000). This influence is able to invite all regional sectors, not only the government, but also the regional leadership is able to embrace other sectors, from educational institutions, private companies, community institutions, and every family to get involved in the prevention and management of stunting in the region.

The figure of a leader in an organization becomes very strategic, because it is in the position of a leader that this organization can progress or stagnate or even retreat. The leader becomes an inspiring figure and can influence his subordinates to do what he wants. So that each of these leaders has their own style, has a different way to advance the organization. Regional leadership in handling stunting in the Aceh area, especially in Simeulue is not only carried out by the Regent as the top leader of the Simeulue area, but is also followed by related agencies such as Bappeda, Health Office, Public Works Office, Education Office, Social Service, BKKBN Office, Puskesmas, and other related agencies and the Gampong Government in Simeulue.

The central government made Simeulue one of the regencies in Indonesia that became a national priority and this was welcomed by the Simeulue government, which was then followed by the steps taken by the Regent along with his ranks and all institutions to work hard in dealing with stunting. The hard work paid off, where Simeulue district was awarded as the District with the 2nd Best Performance in Stunting Prevention in Aceh. This is a motivation for other regions and for Simeulue to continue to increase its efforts to reduce stunting so that it can realize a Stunting Free Simeulue in 2024. Based on the above, it is the reason for researchers to analyze the innovations of leadership of the

Simeulue local government in stunting prevention and identify the factors that lead to stunting. factors that influence regional leadership innovation both internally and externally.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Leadership

Howard H. Hyot also stated that leadership is an art to influence human behavior and to guide people (Kartono, 1998). This understanding was clarified again by Soedarmayanti that leadership is the art of influencing and exploiting others by means of obedience, trust, honor in order to achieve the common goal of empowering the community. (Safitri & Rahaju, 2015). Schein in Asep Suryana's leadership module (Suryana, 2016) views that leadership as the ability to step outside the culture means someone who always initiates the process of change and is more adaptive. Key elements in leadership itself consist of leaders-followers, people, influence, change and goals to be achieved. Therefore, we can understand that leadership can be understood broadly not only by one's ability, but rather to the process in the form of interactions that occur within it. Leadership is abstract, which is produced by humans in the process of their interaction with the environment (Suryana, 2016).

Leadership is an important component in achieving organizational goals. Leadership is an attempt to direct others to achieve certain goals (Syarifudin, 2004). This does not mean that everyone who influences others for a purpose is called a leader. Leadership is also about coping with change (Robbins, 1994). Leadership emphasizes more on communication, motivating and encouraging subordinates to act optimally for a purpose (Yudiatmaja, 2013). Even leadership can be interpreted as a process to influence others to be able to understand and agree what must be done as well as how to do it, including the process of facilitating individual or group efforts in meeting common goals. The leadership principles include nine principles, namely continuous improvement, openness, promoting openness, creating work teams, providing the right working relationship process, developing personal discipline, providing information to employees, and giving authority to each employee.

2.1.1. Leadership Function

According to Nawawi (1993), leadership has several functions such as an instructive function, consultative function, participation function, delegation function, and control function

- a. Instructive function: direct function and one-way communication between leadership and staff regarding the implementation of decisions;
- b. Consultative function: direct function and two-way communication between the leader and the person he leads, limited consultative only with certain people who have various information materials they need in making decisions;
- c. Participatory functions: direct functions, two-way communication and in the form of implementing effective relationships between leaders and staff in accordance with their respective positions and main tasks;
- d. Delegation function: the function of giving authority to make or determine decisions whether with the approval of the leadership or not;
- e. Control function: one-way communication and can be carried out through guidance, direction, coordination and supervision.

2.1.2. Leadership Style

There are two types of leadership style, namely participation and delegation leadership style. The participation leadership provides ideas to his followers and facilitates decision making to his followers. This leadership style provides space for employees to be more involved in every work of the organization, employees are given responsibility, and are also involved in the decision-making process. Meanwhile, the delegation leadership style, the leader gives responsibility and decision-making and implementation of activities to his followers. Employees are given the flexibility to make decisions on their own duties and here the leader tends to listen more to evaluate performance so that it seems to provide loose supervision

2.1.3. Leadership Theory

Situational leadership approaches focus on the phenomenon of leadership in a unique situation. The premise of this approach is that different situations require different leadership styles. From this point of view, to be effective leaders must be able to adapt their style to the demands of changing situations. The situational leadership approach emphasizes that leadership consists of a direction dimension and a support dimension. Each dimension must be applied appropriately considering the evolving situation. In order to determine what a situation requires; leaders must evaluate their employees and assess how competent and committed workers are to the given job. The behavior of a leader based on this theory has a tendency towards two things, namely; The first is called Consideration, namely the tendency

of a leader to describe close relationships with subordinates, such as: defending subordinates, providing input to subordinates and being willing to consult with subordinates, and second; The second is called the Initiation Structure, namely the tendency of a leader to impose limits on subordinates (Bryman et al., 1996).

One of the leadership theories, namely situational theory, which was initiated by Hershey and Blanchard in Hidayat said that "A person's leadership style is a pattern of behavior shown by a person when influencing the activities of others as perceived by the other person". This means that the effectiveness of leadership is strongly influenced by the level of abilities such as maturity and readiness of subordinates to accept or reject the leader. So, it can be said that the situational leadership style is the leadership style of the leader to guide, direct, implement, and encourage subordinates to achieve goals and use all existing abilities optimally by combining and adapting to the situation that occurs.

The above statement is also supported by the understanding of Fielder (Safitri & Rahaju, 2015) that leadership needs to use different approaches when dealing with different situations as well as for the effective achievement of organizational goals. In addition, according to him, the intelligence of a leader in reading situations that occur in his organization is the key to the success of a leadership. The following are situational factors from Fielder, namely:

- a. Boss-employee relationship - There is trust between the leadership and employees, respect and admiration of employees to the leadership. This relationship is a form of response and participation from followers to their leaders.
- b. Task structure - Tasks carried out in a structured manner or not, providing clear and firm procedures. In this structure, there are assignment arrangements, coordination of task execution, direction or guidance from the leader to his followers which is illustrated by the task structure and stated in a formal written regulation.
- c. Position of authority - The position of this leader's authority is based on formal authority, meaning that there are applicable rules that regulate the boundaries of the leader's authority in an organization.

2.2. Innovation

Albury and Mulgan said that an innovation can be said to be successful if the creation and implementation of new processes, products, services and methods can produce effective and efficient quality improvements (Lolita Deby Mahendra Putri, 2018). Meanwhile, according to Evert M. Rogers, innovation is an idea, idea, practice or object/object that is realized and accepted as something new by a person or group for adoption. The existence of this organizational innovation is expected to respond to environmental complexities, especially in intense competition and create sources for competitive advantage. This can be achieved through 1) the introduction of new technologies, 2) the application of new products and services, 3) the contribution of new markets, 4) the introduction of new forms of organization. Innovation means the use of new policy design methods and strategies as well as a new standard operating system for the public sector to solve public problems.

Thus, according to Bertucci & Alberti (2003), Innovation in governance and public administration is a creative, effective and unique answer to solve new problems or as new answers to old problems. There are 3 types of innovation according to the United Nation Development Program, namely institutional innovation, namely renewal of existing institutions or new formations, organizational innovation that focuses more on organizational management, and third is process innovation, namely quality improvement, and conceptual innovation, namely the introduction of new forms of government. Innovations carried out by the government of course require a separate strategy in order to achieve the goal. These strategies include the government providing public services, involving the community, establishing cooperation with various sectors and utilizing technology (Brown, 2005; Ndou, 2004). In the handling of stunting, innovation is needed in order to accelerate the reduction of regional stunting so that Stunting Free can be realized immediately.

3. Materials and Methods

This study is designed using the descriptive qualitative approach, where the data collection in a natural setting, using natural methods, and carried out by people or researchers who are naturally interested. Researchers conduct theoretical studies based on a review of books, articles, journals, and other documentation both printed and online that support the focus of the problems raised in this study. The data analysis technique used in this research is data collection, then data reduction, data presentation, verification and conclusion. Between the presentation of data and drawing conclusions, there is an ongoing data analysis activity. Then from the analysis explained in the form of words to describe the facts that exist in order to provide an explanation of the essence of the answers to research questions.

4. Results and Discussions

4.1. Implementation for Preventing and Handling Stunting Program in Simeulue

Simeulue Regency has become a national priority in the prevention and management of stunting. The Simeulue Regency Government responded to this by compiling the initial step, namely by issuing the Simeulue Regional

Regulation Number 13 of 2019 regarding the implementation of 8 convergences to accelerate the prevention and handling of stunting. However, the challenges in implementing this convergence also vary, such as the lack of optimal socialization of the stunting prevalence program in Simeulue, so that many do not fully understand the stunting prevention program. Information that was obtained late, the discontinuity of information on socialization of the staff who came during the socialization, as well as the difficult demographic conditions of the region were one of the causes for certain areas to delay the delivery of information related to the stunting prevention and handling program in Simeulue Regency.

In the success of stunting prevention for children under five in Simeulue Regency, the Simeulue Regency government and all stakeholders build cross-sectoral coordination involving several local government agencies such as Bappeda for the formulation of stunting policies and budgets in Simeulue Regency, Public Works Agency for the manufacture of facilities and infrastructure for stunting prevention in Simeulue Regency. community, cleaning services and other related agencies. Simeulue Regency is the second highest stunting district in Aceh province after Subulussalam city. Achievements achieved in 2020. Where Simeulue Regency was crowned as the Regency with the II best stunting prevention and handling performance at the Aceh Province level. And another one holds the title as the most replicative district in the prevention and handling of stunting in Aceh Province.

Governor Regulation Number 14 of 2019 concerning Integrated Stunting Prevention and Handling in Aceh serves as the basis and reference for Daeah Simeulue in formulating regional policies derived from provincial policies. Through the Simeulue Regent's Regulation Number 13 of 2019 concerning the prevention and handling of integrated stunting in the regions, it further clarifies the main tasks and functions of the district in the handling of stunting. Policies that have been prepared by the government will certainly be meaningless if they are not supported by other aspects such as budget, provision of facilities and human resources who have the ability and competence in achieving suppression of regional stunting rates.

Central government support, especially the budget, is very much needed for local governments in implementing various stunting intervention programs. Local government innovations to continue to oversee the stunting program greatly determine the success of government programs in stunting eradication. This innovation needs to be appreciated by the Central Government in the form of awards and rewards. Synergy between government institutions and the private sector as well as the community must continue to be improved, because stunting management programs will never succeed if there is no synergy between parties. parties to be faster. Coordination of data and information with the central government, especially the Ministry of Health, is very important and needs to be improved (Sujai, 2020) the use of special allocation funds can be focused on solving the stunting problem in Simeulue Regency. Bappeda is responsible for discussing the strategic planning of stunting policies and budgets at the Simeulue Health Office. This is done to make Simeulue Regency free of stunting by 2022. The implementation of these 8 actions is stated in the Simeulue Regent Regulation No. 48 of 2020 which is divided into 3 groups of actions.

4.1.1. Planning and budgeting

This planning and budgeting are an action that is carried out at the initial stage of the activity, namely analyzing the situation of the stunting prevention and handling program (action 1), then preparing an activity plan (action 2), and conducting a stunting consultation. At this stage, the leadership plays a role in efforts to coordinate and regulate planning, starting from mapping the spread of stunting, then preparing program recommendations and management improvements, as well as recommendations for coordination needed by each OPD. After that, the preparation of the budget from the Musrenbangdes and the budget to the relevant regional government organizations (OPD), which were then discussed together in a "stunting discussion" with the aim of conveying budget planning, declaring joint commitments among the parties, agreeing on an integrated stunting reduction activity plan and building public commitment. This stunting consultation activity was carried out at the beginning of the stage by inviting several parties such as the Simeulue Regent, DPRK Chair, DPRK Commission D, Simeulue PKK Mobilization Team, Head of Bappeda, Heads of Service, Basic Social Service Experts, Regency PKH Coordinator, PKBI, UNICEF Facilitator and social media elements. Actions 1 to 3 show that the role of regional leadership is dominant in dealing with stunting. When leadership is committed to dealing with stunting, this will be reflected in every program and activity that will be planned every year. This commitment is not just a recommendation but is poured into a memorandum of commitment signed by all Regents, Village heads, OPD leaders, DPRD representatives, representatives of the non-government sector, and community.

4.1.2. Community and Village Empowerment

Next, the leadership that moves the community and villages to participate in the prevention and handling of stunting in Simeulue Regency is also an important thing, considering that the smallest government structure is in the village. So, the village is also part of the regional leadership who has an important part in the planning process such as the village development planning meeting to the evaluation stage. At the implementation stage of this action in the village, of course, the government is in the spotlight to encourage it, to be motivated to create stunting handling innovations from

the village in Simeulue district. This second group of actions was carried out with two actions, namely the preparation of the Regent's regulation on village authority (action 4) and character building for Human Development (KPM) (action 5).

KPM is a village community selected through village deliberations to assist the government in facilitating the community for planning and implementation and overseeing development activities in all villages in Simeulue Regency. The purpose of the development of KPM is to ensure that the mobility of KPM in all villages in Simeulue Regency goes well and that the performance of KPM can be optimal according to their duties and roles. Determination of tasks and KPM in implementing the integration of prevention and reduction of stunting cases at the village level.

4.1.3. Monitoring and Evaluation

The implementation of the stunting prevention and handling program is carried out by the Simeulue Regency government. Based on the 8 action policies, the stunting prevalence program has become an obligation for every city and district to carry out regular monitoring to see whether there is a decrease or increase in the stunting rate in each sub-district and village. The monitoring carried out includes data on the prevalence and number of stunting cases per village, intervention coverage at the district/city level, intervention coverage data per village, and the results of the Mapping of Conditions for Stunting Distribution and Intervention Coverage. The results from these monitors are used for evaluation, not only as input for local district and city governments, but also as input for the central government to develop further policies to realize stunting-free Indonesia. Moreover, Simeulue Regency is a national priority district for stunting management, so the Simeulue Regency government also carries out monitoring and evaluation. The implementation of this monitoring and evaluation is contained in 8 actions, namely the Annual Performance Review which contains an assessment carried out by the district or city government on the implementation of stunting prevention and control programs and activities consisting of the preparation of Plan and Realization matrix, problem/solution/constraint matrix, and matrix custom update.

Evaluation of stunting handling in Simeulue is carried out when the government carries out stunting consultations every year. This is done by discussing and discussing stunting-related programs and activities that have been carried out by each agency that attended the stunting consultation. However, in its implementation, the Regional Government faces several obstacles so that the implementation cannot be optimal. This is due to several things such as the lack of clear operational guidelines, technical guidelines and SOPs in implementing the program so that this has an impact on the mechanism for implementing activities in the field, the absence of an integrated database provision so that local governments must also strive to collect and update data related to stunting. this. In addition, communication between sectors and local government organizations (OPD) sometimes takes time, so information cannot be conveyed quickly and clearly to be understood.

4.2. Program Achievements

Simeulue Regency received the 2nd Best Performance award in Aceh related to stunting and the Most Replicative Regency in 2020. The award obtained is an indication that the Simeulue district government is committed to carrying out all stunting prevention programs and activities. All efforts made are assessed by the central government and their performance is considered good so that they deserve to be named the Most Replicative District. The local government collects and publishes stunting data and acceleration programs that have been carried out regularly and uses the data as a basis for making program improvements, as well as formulating policies for behavior change campaigns and interpersonal communication to accelerate stunting prevention through technical services, collect and publish stunting data and accelerated programs that have been carried out regularly and use the data as a basis for making program improvements, as well as formulate policies for behavior change campaigns and interpersonal communication to accelerate stunting prevention through technical services.

In addition to the above, the Simeulue district government has also made efforts to always improve the capabilities of the Human Development Cadre (KPM) in each village. The mobilization of KPM in all villages in Simeulue Regency is going well and the performance of KPM can be optimal according to their duties and roles. Determination of tasks and KPM in implementing the integration of prevention and reduction of stunting cases at the village level, has been determined by decree of human development cadres in each village. Then the operational budget support for human development cadres (KPM) is also given to each village so that it can facilitate all KPM activities. KPMs are given training and socialization related to the e-HDW (Human Development Worker) application. The application is an android-based mobile application as a work tool for Human Development Cadres (KPM). Finally, increasing the role of villages in implementing the acceleration of stunting prevention convergence at the village level. In the stunting meeting which is always held at the beginning of this year, all village heads are invited to provide food for the continuation of the stunting program in order to realize a stunting-free Simeulue.

5. Conclusions

The existence of leadership in the implementation of organizational activities is an absolute thing, because the leader is like the captain who determines the direction of the ship. Therefore, the handling and prevention of stunting in the Simeulue area requires regional leadership commitment and innovation in its prevention efforts. Unusual efforts through this leadership innovation can accelerate the achievement of successful stunting prevention and management to reduce stunting rates in the Simeulue area. The influencing factors will of course color the course of every activity related to efforts to deal with regional stunting. Obstacles can be a challenge that must be faced, so that situational and democratic leadership involving various sectors is not only top-down but also bottom-up so that coordination can be created that is compact and integrated with one another. The Simeuleu local government needs to continue to improve its innovation by strengthening collaboration with stakeholders related to stunting handling.

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