

THE SHADOW OF STUNTING THREATS TO DEVELOPMENT: Highlights Of Intervention And Prevention From A Human Rights Perspective

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ABSTRACT

Human rights are increasingly being used in the health sector, particularly in the context of stunting, a prevalent issue in Tasikmalaya City, an area in the eastern Priangan region. The threat of stunting impacts not only physical health but also the quality of future human resources. This research aims to analyze the role of the Tasikmalaya City government in protecting human rights in the health sector, particularly in handling and preventing stunting. The research uses a qualitative and descriptive analysis to evaluate existing programs' availability, assessment, acceptability, and quality. The results show that stunting hinders individual children's growth and has a long-lasting impact on development. The Tasikmalaya City government has tried to address stunting, but implementing these programs is still not optimal. Complex problems such as budgeting, socialization of stunting knowledge, and collaborative cooperation between cross-sectors require more comprehensive efforts.

Keywords: Human rights; health policy; stunting; Tasikmalaya city

ABSTRAK

Hak Asasi Manusia (HAM) semakin banyak digunakan di sektor kesehatan, khususnya dalam konteks stunting, sebuah isu yang banyak terjadi di Kota Tasikmalaya, sebuah daerah di wilayah Priangan Timur. Ancaman stunting tidak hanya berdampak pada kesehatan fisik, tetapi juga pada kualitas sumber daya manusia di masa depan. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis peran pemerintah Kota Tasikmalaya dalam melindungi hak asasi manusia di bidang kesehatan, khususnya dalam penanganan dan pencegahan stunting. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif dengan metode analisis deskriptif untuk mengevaluasi ketersediaan, penilaian, akseptabilitas, dan kualitas program yang ada. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa stunting tidak hanya menghambat pertumbuhan anak secara individu, tetapi juga memiliki dampak jangka panjang terhadap pembangunan. Pemerintah Kota Tasikmalaya telah melakukan upaya untuk mengatasi stunting, namun pelaksanaan program-program tersebut masih belum optimal. Permasalahan yang kompleks seperti penganggaran, sosialisasi pengetahuan tentang stunting, dan kerja sama kolaboratif antar lintas sektor membutuhkan upaya yang lebih komprehensif.

Kata Kunci: HAM; kebijakan kesehatan; stunting; kota Tasikmalaya

BACKGROUND

Human rights have become an essential framework in describing the prerequisites for health than other frameworks or conceptual models because there is a belief that if a society has its human rights fulfilled and protected, it leads to a healthy society, physically, mentally, and socially. While there has been skepticism about the framework being too individualistic in addressing health, it has proven over time that countries that have adopted human rights have seen benefits to public health (Bustreo et al., 2013). Today, even human rights must continue to be shaped as a core foundation for global activism, legal regulations, and national politics (Ely Yamin, 2020).

This research aims to analyze the issue of stunting through a human rights framework. Human rights is a label designed to point to natural rights. (Scruton, 2007). Various interventions have been carried out by the government, both central and regional, to reduce the stunting rate. However, there are still challenges and obstacles to realizing this goal. Henceforth, researchers will evaluate the effectiveness of various existing programs using human rights principles. The state, as an actor in charge of fulfilling and protecting the rights of its citizens, at least has obligations on several things, such as the obligation of action and obligation of result evaluation, which is part of assessing the roles and responsibilities of each stakeholder responsible for fulfilling human rights, especially in handling stunting issues.

However, result orientation is not the only determinant, as the steps taken are part of fulfilling this task. As a country with diverse cultural groups, the practice of human rights cannot be done uniformly. (Juwana, 2021). The fulfillment of health rights should be done by targeting vulnerable groups. According to Komnas HAM, the condition of women's health in Indonesia is still far from the standards stipulated in the Ecosob Convention standards, so it is categorized as a vulnerable group. (Josua Limbong & Al, 2020). Human rights and health have a close relationship and influence each other. Health rights violation is considered a human rights violation, and vice versa. Thus, ensuring the fulfillment of public health rights will be the initial capital for achieving prosperity. However, in developing countries, the recognition of the right to health as an individual right is still difficult to accept. Aside from the fact that it requires investment that is not cheap, there are also several factors outside of health that reach far in determining the health of the individual.s (Perwira, 2014).

In principle, related to stunting eradication, each region is encouraged to innovate in running its program while still referring to the thematic stunting tagging set by the central government. After power is distributed through decentralization, local governments have the authority to manage and be responsible for improving the quality of health services. In the context of health, this law gives the central and local governments roles in the functions of regulation, supervision, and development and guidance of health development. Local governments have greater responsibility in planning and implementing health development. On the other hand, the central government will focus on aspects of development that have strategic value, both at the central and regional levels.

In the government's efforts to overcome stunting through specific policies, it is also important to establish national and regional strategies as institutions for program coordination and control (Usman & Astria Paramashanti, 2020). This provision aligns with the spirit of the ECOSOB convention that Indonesia has ratified. Paying attention to Article 12 states that the state must recognize everyone's right to enjoy the highest standard of physical and spiritual health. Suppose this human rights-based approach is appropriately adopted. In that case, the government will utilize the maximum available resources with a clear priority agenda for those disadvantaged or unable to access their health rights (WHO, 2023). However, it is important to note that health-related policy-making must first examine the customs and norms of the local community because each country will take different health policy realizations (Purwaningrum et al., 2020)

Among 514 districts and cities spread across Indonesia, there are 133 which are cities/districts identified as stunting hotspots spread across four significant islands: Sumatra, Java, Sulawesi, and Bali West Nusa Tenggara Islands. (Sipahutar et al., 2022). One of the cities with the highest poverty rate in West Java in 2021, Tasikmalaya City, is facing the problem of high stunting prevalence. Tasikmalaya City is in the fifth highest position in West Java based on electronic data and Community-Based Nutrition Reporting (E-PPGBM) and has yellow status (968,148 stunting toddlers). Meanwhile, according to the results of the SSGI nutritional status analysis released in 2022, Tasikmalaya city is ranked ninth largest in West Java with a prevalence rate of 22.4% (Kemenkes, 2022). This condition is a concern considering that Tasikmalaya City is the center of trade and business in eastern Priangan.

The stunting rate in Tasikmalaya City is above the West Java stunting average of 20.2%. Tasikmalaya City became the focus city for integrated stunting reduction intervention in 2022 (MPPN, 2021). Thus, Tasikmalaya City is one of the cities targeted to achieve a 14% reduction in stunting by 2024. The Tasikmalaya City government's key performance indicators include poverty reduction, stunting, unemployment, waste management, and inflation control. These KPIs are the focus of the city government's development. The 2020-2024 National Medium-Term Development Plan (RPJMN) sets stunting as one of the national priority issues. So far, the Tasikmalaya City government has made various efforts in the form of specific and sensitive nutrition interventions supported by supporting regulations for stunting prevention, but it has not been optimal. Although it is echoed that it requires multi-stakeholder synergy, research conducted by Trijuliana states that the most dominant party in reducing stunting rates is health workers from the Tasikmalaya City Health Office (Trijuliana et al., 2020).

Various factors that trigger stunting, such as parental income level, parenting methods applied by mothers, knowledge level, time gap between child births, utilization of health services, and household sanitation conditions, contribute to stunting in Indonesia. (Atamou et al., 2023). Mothers and children living in rural areas have a higher potential for stunting than those living in urban areas. (Ayu et al., 2023). The danger of stunting is currently not only threatening the poor but can also occur in communities with affluent or

middle-class strata. (Scheffler & Hermanussen, 2022). In addition, food insecurity itself is associated with stunting, especially in rural areas. (Masitoh et al., 2022)

The government has taken various intervention measures intending to reduce the prevalence of stunting. However, these national policies have not been fully implemented down to the lowest level of local government. Local political dynamics contribute to this factor (Marhaeni et al., 2022). One study conducted by the Global Alliance for Improved Nutrition (GAIN) in collaboration with the Indonesian Directorate of Community Nutrition highlighted that community factors are one of the determining elements in the context of child stunting, which is in line with the concept described by WHO. These community elements include aspects of political economy, health and health care, education, society and culture, agriculture and food systems, and water, sanitation, and the environment in this process (Beal et al., 2018)

The acceleration of the stunting eradication program has spent much of the budget but has not been optimally beneficial. Even among specific communities, the term stunting is still a foreign vocabulary, making it a problem that is difficult to detect (Saputri & Tumangger, 2019). Implementing various stunting prevention programs has not been optimal due to obstacles from outside and within the health sector. (Zaleha, siti, 2022). Thus, regulations and policies to alleviate stunting must collaborate with other non-health sectors. (Suhada Latifa, 2018). This is important, considering that the target of stunting must be precise. The effectiveness of stunting eradication programs must also be designed according to group characteristics, depending on which circles the stunting sufferers come from and the factors that cause stunting. (Widyaningsih et al., 2022)

The significance of this research is that it will unravel how the fulfillment of human rights is carried out by Tasikmalaya City by looking at policy innovations to reduce stunting. According to the WHO health agency, a human rights-based approach to health provides clear principles for establishing and evaluating health policies and service delivery, targeting discriminatory practices and inequitable power relations at the core of inequitable health conditions. Therefore, in implementing various rights, strategic policies and health programs must be designed so all people can enjoy the right to health, including evaluating policies to accelerate stunting.

In implementing a human rights-based approach, health policy strategies and programs must be explicitly designed to increase the enjoyment of the right to health for all people by prioritizing marginalized or disadvantaged communities. When referring to Article 12 of the ESCR Convention as reported by the WHO, the principle of health must have at least four core components of health rights, including availability, affordability, acceptability, and quality. (WHO, 2023). This research concerns the human rights-based approach WHO conceptualizes if the human development process is normatively based on international human rights standards and operationally directed to promote and protect human rights.

Theodore H Macdonald, through his works that focus on reflecting on health rights with a human rights perspective, believes that the main problems of health are not bacteria or viruses, wars or natural disasters, but poverty. Therefore, McDonald's believes it is important

for everyone to have an acceptable standard of basic health care. He criticized international institutions such as the United Nations for not taking access to primary health care seriously. Guided by the commitments of international conventions, Theodore saw that human rights could be a standard for measuring government performance over time. By focusing on WHO-defined human rights fulfillment principles such as participation, transparency, accountability, and non-discrimination, Theodore believed that human rights provide an overall framework where decisions are made on national and local priorities (Macdonald, 2018).

Furthermore, this research adopts how to translate the elements of a human rights-based approach using basic questions to efficiently map the fulfillment of human rights in accelerating the stunting eradication in Tasikmalaya City. The five key elements are PANEL, an acronym for participation, accountability, non-discrimination and equality, empowerment, and linkages to the legal human rights frameworks. The assessment for this human rights assessment was adopted from a practical guide to help facilitators conduct participatory workshops organized by CCIC, Equitas, and Coady International Institute. These are the International Center for Human Rights Education and provide concrete and practical tools to integrate a Human Rights-based approach to Development. (CCIC & Coady, 2014).

Based on international human rights instruments and official documents published by international human rights institutions, this article will describe the fulfillment of human rights by the local government in handling the stunting of infants and toddlers in Tasikmalaya City. It includes examining which program interventions are conducted to fulfill the four human rights components.

METHOD

This research aims to find out the issues that become problems. In this case, the research focuses on the efforts made by the local government to deal with the problem of stunting in Tasikmalaya City using a human rights perspective. Data collection was conducted using in-depth interviews with resource persons consisting of various government and non-government stakeholders. In addition, researchers also invited parents of stunted children to the focus group discussion (FGD) forum. Researchers chose this method to enrich the information. In addition, researchers conducted secondary data searches in the form of documentation studies in journal articles, official government reports, and other similar reports according to relevance related to the topic being studied by researchers. Data analysis uses Miles and Huberman, wherein the first stage, data reduction, is carried out, namely the activities of researchers collecting the necessary data and selecting the principal things. The next step is to display the data in the form of narrative text and analyze it using relevant theories. The final step is drawing conclusions based on presenting and analyzing the theories and concepts used.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION**Urgency of Stunting Eradication**

According to the World Health Organization (WHO), stunting is a growth and development disorder in children caused by chronic malnutrition and repeated infections, which can be recognized by a child's height or body length that is below standard. This stunting problem can not only threaten the health of children. However, it will also impact the future of children who experience developmental obstacles both cognitively (brain power ability) and motorically (physical ability/movement). According to a member of the House of Representatives, Nurhayati Effendi, the Tasikmalaya City government needs to work harder to reduce the stunting prevalence rate because the stunting prevalence in Tasikmalaya City has not decreased. There are serious problems, such as differences in data in the field, which shows that synergy between institutions has not been well-established (Pratomo, 2024)

As a concrete step to make this human development successful, the Tasikmalaya City government has made various efforts, including compiling thematic stunting as one of the Thematic Performance indicators and other thematic indicators such as thematic waste management, thematic poverty, etc. To realize this, the Tasikmalaya City government invites the collaboration of various parties, such as academics, business entities, media, and specific communities. The program integration includes various aspects, such as improving nutrition for pregnant and lactating mothers, providing additional food, monitoring growth, and improving access to clean water and sanitation. This program integration uses a holistic approach and involves various related sectors.

In these efforts, the government and all of Tasikmalaya City stakeholders have carried out various activities that emphasize the community to be free from the threat of stunting cases. In essence, the right to health security is not only the full responsibility of the government, but all levels should also participate in eradicating and emphasizing various activities so that stunting prevention can be resolved. As for regulation, the Tasikmalaya City government has issued a policy in Tasikmalaya Mayor Regulation 12 of 2022 concerning Amendments to Tasikmalaya Mayor Regulation 42 of 2021 concerning Acceleration of Stunting Reduction in Tasikmalaya City. Article 9, paragraph 3, describes the formation of the region's Acceleration of Stunting Reduction (PPS) team. In addition, the law that regulates the government's guarantee to provide health services is also in Perwalkot Tasikmalaya No. 15 of 2021 concerning the health of mothers, newborns, and children under five in Tasikmalaya City. Law is the starting point that guarantees the protection of human rights and identifies which parties are obliged to carry out these obligations. Without clear regulations, the human right to health, as enshrined in international conventions, will only make sense. (Nampewo et al., 2022)

The high prevalence of stunting in a country is evidence of the failure of the state because it is considered to ignore what is the right of the child. For this reason, a specific legal regulation is needed to overcome stunting as proof of fulfilling the country's responsibility to protect children's human rights (Hartotok et al., 2021). The Tasikmalaya City Government is trying to overcome the stunting problem by making regulations and allocating an adequate

budget to implement the program. The programs that are implemented next must have high urgency and have a positive impact on improving the nutrition and health of children in Tasikmalaya City.

Principles of Human Rights Fulfillment

In order to fulfill the right to health for residents of Tasikmalaya City who are free from the threat of stunting, several indicators are used, namely the existence of affordable health services for all levels. This is per the Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights (ESCR) references. Its implementation must be based on several principles. Using the principles of the human rights approach in the issue of stunting is important because this approach places humans at the center of every policy and intervention. In addition, by referring to human rights principles, the focus of attention will be more targeted at vulnerable and marginalized groups. This will ensure that policies will not be misdirected. This approach will encourage the government, in this case, the local government of Tasikmalaya City, to allocate sufficient resources and formulate effective policies.

Table 1. Elements of Human Rights Fulfillment Principles in Handling Stunting in Tasikmalaya City

Principle Elements	Agenda of Activities	Description
Availability	DAMASKUS (Agenda Supplementary feeding Activity)	Making healthy food in public kitchens for stunted children. It has not yet been fully executed due to cost constraints.
	One ASN One Stunting	Each ASN becomes a foster father for stunted children and provides aid by providing eggs and milk.
	'Bageur Application'	Data collection application for stunting aid distributors to be right on target
Assessing	Cadre or <i>posyandu</i> team assistance	Cadres assist families in identifying risk factors for stunting, information services, communication, and education to prevent the risk of stunting.
Acceptability	Mentoring is done with a gender perspective.	This includes the quality, culture, and respectability of the services provided.
Quality	Quality control according to CPOB rules (Good Manufacturing Practices and pharmaceutical standards.	PMT (Supplementary Feeding) is a liquid that consists of special milk for stunted children and has been certified by the Ministry of Health.

Source: Analyzed by Researcher, 2024

By paying attention to the four principles of fulfilling human rights, it can be seen that the fulfillment of physical and mental health standards can be achieved by individual cooperation with the state in specific actions, especially in overcoming stunting. The seriousness of implementing the UN International Covenant on ESCOB (ICESRC) is also in line with what Macdonald asserts if the human rights framework must be made a national

and local priority agenda. The city government has implemented other available programs. For example, one ASN stunting program is claimed to have succeeded in reducing the stunting rate by 845 children. Of course, this figure is still far from ideal and needs more work because the One ASN One Stunting program is not without obstacles in the field.

In addition, health policy and program making, as emphasized by WHO, must meet human rights standards and principles and effectively empower citizens as rights holders to demand their health rights. The suboptimal reduction in stunting prevalence in Tasikmalaya City shows that many things need to be addressed. Stunting is related to nutrition and gender equality, education levels, parenting, clean water, and sanitation, which must be seen holistically. Fair interventions can help break the poverty chain if this human rights approach is implemented. Children who grow up healthy have great potential in terms of work productivity. Findings from a study conducted by Brigitte Sarah et al. indicate that stunting can cause potential economic losses in the billions due to reduced productivity. (Renyonet et al., 2016).

Table 2. Implementation of a Human-Based Approach to Stunting Eradication in Tasikmalaya City

Element of HRBA	Questions to address (examples)	ANALYSIS
Direct Links to Human Rights	The first step is identifying affected human rights, determining which ones are targeted by the stunting eradication project, and checking which international treaties have been ratified.	In this case, stunting eradication is part of the SDGs, a document referenced in world negotiations. Indonesia has ratified equal health protection through Regulation Number 11 of 2005 concerning the ratification of the ESRC. Minister of Health Regulation Number 23 of 2014 on 100 Priority Districts/Cities for Stunting Intervention Presidential Regulation Number 72 of 2021 on the Acceleration of Stunting Reduction Tasikmalaya Mayor Regulation Number 12 of 2022 on the Amendment of Tasikmalaya Mayor Regulation 42 of 2021 on the Acceleration of Stunting Reduction in Tasikmalaya City.
Participation	Determining who participates in the stunting eradication process and how? Participation also addresses what decisions are chosen by the communities involved.	Implementing the stunting reduction convergence involves the participation of all parties, both from the community and the government. Other stakeholders participating in the implementation of stunting reduction are the PKK team, human development cadres, <i>posyandu</i> , NGOs, the private sector, media, and academics.
Accountability	It determines who is responsible for stunting eradication and to whom. In addition, this section determines who the rights holders and duty bearers are in stunting reduction efforts.	In this case, the targets are malnourished toddlers, malnourished adolescents, pregnant women, and infants up to 2 years old. The stunting intervention uses convergence action as a framework by involving the roles of the central government, provincial government, municipalities, and villages.

		The primary duty bearer is the executive held by the Stunting Reduction Acceleration Team with support from the Legislative and Judiciary. Each stakeholder holds a role in their duties. For instance, Primary Stakeholders include the Provincial Government, Regency Government, and Municipalities; Key stakeholders include Regency SKPD, Village Government, and Human development cadres and Posyandu; Secondary stakeholders include NGOs, the private sector, media, and academics.
Non-discrimination	Determine which groups are marginalized and vulnerable, who to include, and how to include these vulnerable groups.	The most significant risk of stunting stalks is vulnerable women. Women's physique increases the risk of stunting, such as early child marriage, low education, physical thinness or chronic malnutrition, or pregnant women who are malnourished.
Empowerment	Determining who will be empowered and how the process will take place.	Women are the most vulnerable party. Empowerment is not only about physical health interventions but also about building women's capacity.

(Source: Researcher, 2024)

In light of this, international human rights law can play an important role in guiding governments struggling to protect the health of their citizens, especially the most vulnerable, including in responding to food and nutrition insecurity. (Ayala & Meier, 2017). Moreover, efforts to eradicate these problems use a good gender paradigm because health is not just a zero-sum game for the human rights framework. There is a fundamental need, which, in this case, is a mother, as a woman who is expected to have a healthy life with her intrinsic values. (Kinshella et al., 2020).

Challenges of Human Rights Stunting Fulfillment in the Future

The issue of stunting has become a significant focus that has received important attention from the Tasikmalaya City government. It is also based on the many stunting cases that occur in Indonesia. However, there are still obstacles and challenges in alleviating stunting and fulfilling human rights and general technical terms. There is no absolute separation between the context of fulfilling human rights in the issue of stunting and alleviating stunting in the evaluation of work programs. Suppose every program is carried out using human rights principles. In that case, the program inevitably has high urgency and a positive impact on the nutritional health of children in Tasikmalaya City. One example is the fulfillment of the right to food and the right to an adequate standard of living for poor and vulnerable families.

Accelerating efforts to alleviate poverty and improve food security will go hand in hand with the stunting eradication program. By guaranteeing the right to a decent standard of living, there will be equitable development and economic distribution, which will be directly proportional to improving nutritional status. In economics and budgeting, the challenge of accelerating this stunting program can be seen from the lack of budget funds. The DAMASKUS agenda alone requires a budget of around 700-800 million. One of the

program agendas launched is the community kitchen program for Stunting Children (Damascus), which requires a large enough budget that it cannot be realized. The complicated budgeting process is considered a role, so the Damascus program cannot operate.

To overcome this, the Tasikmalaya City government seeks collaborative cooperation through a Penta helix mechanism where other parties can contribute. So far, other parties, such as Darut Tauhid and Baznas, have been invited to collaborate. The obligation to fulfill the right to health requires the state to lead. However, sometimes, health threats are not only activities within political boundaries. Thus, the commitment to protect health must go beyond state borders. (Muyskens, 2021). When the state, as the primary obligation holder, cannot meet this minimum standard, this obligation spreads to other bodies, such as humanitarian organizations and NGOs. In this case, stunting eradication cooperation is carried out with the collaboration of the private sector and other charities.

Fulfillment of other rights, for example, in terms of health services without discrimination. Of course, this does not work alone because one of the causes of stunting is the lack of community access to health services, especially in rural and remote areas. It is not easy to overcome the limitations of infrastructure and health facilities and bring competent and qualified health workers evenly to all corners. Thus, to create ideal conditions for stunting freedom, it is necessary to focus on the fulfillment of human rights in all fields, not just focusing on rights in the health sector alone. In other fields, for example, by guaranteeing ECOSOB rights in education, a woman will know the importance of avoiding early marriage.

Women with higher education are more likely to receive education during pregnancy and fulfill nutrition during pregnancy and breastfeeding. Furthermore, ensuring gender equality in political rights, for example, women will have access to decision-making in the family, which can affect stunting prevention. A gender paradigm is needed because health is not just a zero-sum game for the human rights framework. There is a fundamental need for a mother who is expected to have a healthy life with her interests and values. (Kinshella et al., 2020)

Another challenge to the smooth running of the stunting eradication program is the accuracy of data collection, which is still not well integrated. Data synchronization is not uniform because each OPD has its own data claims. Collaboration, which is the key, has not been optimized. This happens because sectoral egos constrain coordination between institutions. Stunting eradication requires multi-sector collaborative cooperation because stunting prevention in terms of regulations and policy frameworks is quite good, but implementing activities has not been optimized. Regional policies related to this collaboration need to be carried out with the involvement of all parties, especially other elements such as the community, private sector, and academics, and are binding. (Suhada Latifa, 2018)

CONCLUSION

Protecting and fulfilling human rights, especially in the health sector, including freedom from the threat of stunting, is a government obligation that must be fulfilled and protected. In the corridor of human rights law, the state is the leading actor responsible for

fulfilling human rights, while the community is the rights holder. As an urban city with a high record of stunting cases, Tasikmalaya City has made some innovations to guarantee human rights. The decrease in stunting rates through several innovation programs has statistically shown improvement but has not yet reached the ideal target.

Overcoming stunting is a challenge that requires a holistic approach between fulfilling human rights and implementing program interventions. Several obstacles must be overcome, such as the lack of budget, lack of collaborative cooperation, and the development of knowledge related to stunting so that the community can receive it well. This indicates the complex problems in fulfilling basic human rights such as the right to a decent life, access to health, education, etc. However, considering that multi-factors cause stunting, solving stunting requires comprehensive efforts involving various sectors. Although the results are not optimal, result orientation is not the determining indicator. The steps and efforts taken by Tasikmalaya City are part of fulfilling the country's obligations as stated in international conventions.

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