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Author : Muhammad Nur Fadly Akbar, and Irsad  
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# Policy Analysis of Community Empowerment for Poverty Alleviation in Batu Bara Regency

Muhammad Nur Fadly Akbar, Irsad

*Department of Development Economics, Faculty of Economics and Business, Universitas Sumatera Utara, Medan 20155, Indonesia*

mhdnurfadlyakbar@gmail.com, irsadhusin@yahoo.co.id

## Abstract

This study aims to analyze the poverty conditions of beneficiary families before and after receiving the Family Hope Program (PKH), identify the types of assistance provided through PKH, and examine the driving and inhibiting factors of PKH implementation in Batu Bara Regency. This research employs a mixed-method approach (qualitative and quantitative) using primary data obtained through field research and interviews with PKH beneficiaries. Data analysis was conducted using the Paired T-test with the assistance of SPSS software. The sampling technique used was proportional random sampling with a total population of 100 people from 4 districts in Batu Bara Regency. The results show that the poverty conditions of PKH beneficiary families have a significant impact on poverty alleviation efforts, with a significance value of 0.001 ( $< 0.005$ ). The form of assistance in the PKH program in Batu Bara Regency is direct cash assistance. The driving factor for PKH's success in Batu Bara Regency is the government's commitment to providing direct assistance to underprivileged families. However, the inhibiting factors include the lack of community participation in the program and the low level of public literacy.

**Keywords:** Poverty; PKH; Social Assistance; Driving Factors; Inhibiting Factors

## 1. Introduction

Poverty remains one of the most pressing social issues that continues to attract the attention of both the government and society. Efforts to alleviate poverty require not only financial assistance but also a more holistic approach through community empowerment programs. The Family Hope Program (Program Keluarga Harapan/PKH) is one of the key policies implemented by the Indonesian government to improve the well-being of low-income families through a conditional cash transfer scheme. This program aims to enhance poor families' access to education and healthcare services, while also promoting economic self-reliance.

The following data presents the number and percentage of people living in poverty in North Sumatra from 2015 to 2023:

Table 1.1 Data Presents The Number And Percentage Of People Living In Poverty In North Sumatra From 2015 To 2023

Year	Number of Poor Population (thousands)	Percentage of Poor Population
2015	50,37	12,61
2016	49,42	12,24
2017	50,91	12,48
2018	51,78	12,57
2019	50,46	12,14
2020	49,78	11,88
2021	52,59	12,38
2022	49,39	11,53
2023	49,18	11,38

Source: Central Statistics Agency of Batu Bara Regency, 2024

Batu Bara Regency is one of the areas in North Sumatra Province that still faces a relatively high level of poverty. Based on data from the Central Statistics Agency (BPS) in 2023, the number of poor people in Batu Bara Regency reached 49.18 thousand people, with a percentage of 11.38%. Although this figure shows a downward trend from previous years, there is still a significant gap between the expected welfare standards and the socio-economic conditions of the people in the area. The implementation of PKH in Batu Bara Regency has been going on since 2012 and continues to develop. Based on the latest data, there are more than



13,000 beneficiary families (KPM) spread across various sub-districts. The form of assistance provided is in the form of cash transfers that are conditional on compliance with education and health provisions. However the effectiveness of this program is still a debate, especially related to its impact on changes in the economic conditions of beneficiaries and the obstacles faced in its implementation.

This study aims to analyze changes in the economic conditions of beneficiary families before and after receiving PKH assistance, identify the forms of assistance provided through this program, and examine the driving and inhibiting factors in its implementation. By using a mixed-methods approach (qualitative and quantitative), this study is expected to provide a more comprehensive picture of the effectiveness of community empowerment policies in poverty alleviation in Batu Bara Regency.

## 2. Literature Review

### 2.1 Community Empowerment

Empowerment comes from the word "power," which means strength or ability, and is a process to improve the ability of people to be more independent, either through their own efforts or the help of others. This process includes improving people's knowledge, attitudes, and skills. Empowerment aims to create an atmosphere that supports the potential of the community (facilitation), increases access to resources (empowerment), and provides protection so that weak groups are not further left behind. The main principle is to build community independence and capacity in a sustainable manner [1].

The Indonesian government has implemented various village development programs, including agricultural development, rural industrialization, integrated community development, and growth center strategies. These initiatives are intended to increase productivity, improve quality of life, and strengthen the relationship between rural and urban areas [2].

The success of empowerment programs is influenced by several factors: policy communication, availability of resources, and the attitude of implementers toward the policy [3]. Inhibiting factors include the inappropriate distribution of aid, limited community knowledge, lack of competence, and errors in location selection [4]. Addressing these issues is essential to ensure that empowerment programs truly foster an independent society that does not depend on external assistance.

### 2.2 Poverty

Poverty is a major problem in developing countries, characterized by the inability of individuals to meet basic needs such as food, clothing, shelter, education, and health [5]. Poverty is also an important indicator in assessing the success of the development of a region [6]. BPS defines poverty as the inability to meet basic needs, both food and non-food, based on the poverty line. Meanwhile, Bappenas sees it as an inability to maintain a decent life.

In a Keynesian view, government spending, particularly on social programs and infrastructure, can be a solution to reducing poverty and promoting economic growth. The types of poverty can be divided into 3 categories including: [7].

- a. Absolute: income below the poverty line.
- b. Relative: poor compared to the surrounding environmental conditions.
- c. Cultural: caused by mindsets and cultures, such as laziness, consumerism, and dependence on help.

Some of the factors that cause poverty include: high population growth rate, unemployment, low education, natural disasters, and uneven income distribution [8]. BPS uses two approaches to measure poverty: the *Head Count Index* and the concept of ability to meet basic needs. The poverty line consists of food needs (2,100 kcal/day) and non-food (housing, education, health). Based on Presidential Regulation No. 15 of 2010, poverty alleviation efforts are divided into three clusters:

- a. Cluster I: social assistance such as PKH, BPJS, RASKIN.
- b. Cluster II: community empowerment through PNPM Mandiri.
- c. Cluster III: support for micro businesses such as People's Business Credit (KUR).

These programs show the government's commitment to overcoming poverty through protection, empowerment, and access to capital approaches.

### 2.3 Program Keluarga Harapan

The Family Hope Program (PKH) has been a conditional social assistance for Very Poor Households (RTSM) since 2007. This assistance is in the form of Conditional Cash Transfers (CCT), which have proven to be effective in overcoming chronic poverty. Based on Permenperin No. 1 of 2018, Beneficiary Families (KPM) are entitled to cash assistance, assistance, access to basic services, and complementary assistance.

PKH includes three main components:

- a. Health: pregnant women, children aged 0–6 years.
- b. Education: children of elementary school to high school age (6–21 years old).
- c. Social Welfare: the elderly (60+) and people with severe disabilities.

The maximum assistance is given to 4 family members and distributed through bank accounts. The purpose of providing PKH includes:

- a. Improving access to education, health, and social welfare.

- b. Reduce the burden and increase the income of poor families.
- c. Encourage behavior change and KPM independence.
- d. Breaking the chains of poverty and introducing formal financial services.

The rights and obligations of beneficiaries of the Family Hope Program (PKH) are as follows:

- a. Health: Children 0–6 years old are required to be fully immunized, have regular nutrition monitoring, and participation in PAUD when available.
- b. Education: Children must attend at least 85% of school. If the child works or drops out of school, the data is submitted to the relevant agency for social intervention.

The amount of the value of beneficiaries of the Family Hope Program (PKH) can be seen in the following table:

Table 2.1 Amount of Assistance for Family Hope Program (PKH) Recipients

No	Types of Auxiliary Components	Nominal Assistance/Year
1	Assistance for pregnant and lactating women	Rp.2.400.000
2	Early childhood assistance	Rp.2.400.000
3	Assistance for Elementary Education Participants/equivalent	Rp.900.000
4	Assistance for junior high school education participants/equivalent	Rp.1.500.000
5	Assistance for high school education participants/equivalent	Rp.2.400.000
6	Assistance for people with disabilities	Rp.2.400.000
7	Assistance for seniors 60+	Rp.2.400.000

Source: pkh.kemensos.go.id, 2024

#### 2.4 Community Welfare

Welfare, according to KBBI is a safe, secure, and prosperous condition that is free from danger, poverty, ignorance, and fear [9] Society itself is defined as a group of people with the same culture, and consists of elements that are systematically interrelated [10] The welfare of the community is reflected in the fulfillment of basic needs such as decent housing, clothing, food, education, and health, both physically and spiritually. The goal of welfare is to help individuals and communities meet needs, adapt to social changes, and improve economic and social conditions through cooperation.

### 3. Research Method

This study is a comparative study, namely comparing the implementation of the Family Hope Program (PKH) on poverty conditions before and after receiving assistance. The comparative method compares the values of one or more independent variables in two or more different groups or times [11]. The location of the research was conducted in Batu Bara Regency, in accordance with the title of the research, which focuses on the analysis of community empowerment policies through PKH in the region. The population in this study is 7,101 PKH beneficiaries from 4 sub-districts, with the most recipients: Lima Puluh, Medang Deras, Talawi, and Tanjung Tiram [12]. The sample was taken using the Slovin formula with a margin of error of 10%, 98.61, which was rounded up to 100 respondents [13]. Each sub-district is represented by 25 people who have received PKH for more than 3 years, selected at random. Data collection techniques include direct observation of events, interviews with informants, documentation from written and visual sources, and questionnaires in the form of written questions to respondents [14].

This study uses descriptive analysis to describe the driving factors, inhibitions, and forms of the PKH program [15], as well as the Paired T-Test test to determine the difference in economic conditions before and after receiving PKH, with  $H_0$  accepted if  $\text{sig} > 0.05$  and  $H_1$  if  $\text{sig} < 0.05$  [16]. The stages of data analysis, according to Miles & Huberman, include data reduction to filter and simplify the data, the presentation of data in a structured manner through narratives, tables, or diagrams, and the drawing of conclusions that are made continuously and confirmed during the study [17].

### 4. Results and Discussion

The Paired T-Test analysis evaluates the effect of the Family Hope Program (PKH) on poverty-related aspects before and after the program implementation in Batu Bara Regency. The results are presented in Table 4.1 below:

Table 4.1 Different Test Results

Category	Mean	N	t	Sig(2-tailed)
Significant Economic Hardship before PKH	1.38	100	-42.034	.001
Significant Economic Difficulties after PKH	4.69	100		
Health before PKH	1.63	100	-40.855	.001
Health after PKH	4.73	100		
Proper education before PKH	1.31	100	-41.773	.001
Proper education after PKH	4.73	100		
Basic needs before PKH	1.27	100	-42.766	.001
Basic needs after PKH	4.56	100		

Category	Mean	N	t	Sig(2-tailed)
Community participation before PKH	1.53	100	-37.041	.001
Community participation after PKH	4.64	100		
Family consumption before PKH	1.48	100	-36.101	.001
Family consumption after PKH	4.58	100		

Source: Processed By Researcher, 2024

All variables show a Sig. (2-tailed) value of .001 ( $< 0.05$ ), indicating a statistically significant difference before and after the implementation of PKH. Specifically:

1. Health: There is a significant improvement in access to healthcare facilities and services after receiving PKH assistance.
2. Education: PKH funds significantly contribute to improved educational outcomes and schooling duration for beneficiary families.
3. Basic Needs: The program significantly aids families in meeting essential needs such as food, clothing, and shelter.
4. Community Participation: Participation in economic and social activities increased after receiving PKH support.
5. Household Consumption: Beneficiary households experienced a significant increase in their consumption levels post-PKH.

These findings suggest that PKH effectively alleviates multiple dimensions of poverty and improves overall household welfare in Batu Bara Regency. Hypothesis testing was carried out through a differential test (Paired T-Test) on family conditions before and after receiving the Family Hope Program (PKH).

Table 4.2 Hypothesis Test Results with Paired t-test

Category	Mean	N	t	Sig (2- tailed)
Poverty before PKH Poverty after PKH	-19.330	100	-60.817	.001

Source: Processed By Researcher, 2024

The test results showed a significance value of  $0.001 < 0.05$ , so  $H_a$  was accepted and  $H_0$  was rejected. This means that there are significant differences in poverty conditions before and after receiving PKH. This program has been proven to contribute to reducing the poverty rate in Batu Bara Regency. Based on the results of the questionnaire to 100 respondents, it is known that the form of PKH assistance is in the form of Education Assistance and Health Services which are distributed through Direct Cash Assistance (BLT). All respondents stated that they knew this form of assistance. The results of the study show that the government's commitment and the size of the budget are the main factors driving the effectiveness of the Family Hope Program. This was obtained from the choice of the most answers in the questionnaire that was distributed. The main factors inhibiting this program are low community participation and low literacy levels, which have an impact on the effectiveness of PKH implementation in the field.

## 5. Conclusions

Based on the results of the research that has been conducted, it can be concluded that government policies through the Family Hope Program (PKH) have a significant and positive influence on the poverty conditions of beneficiary families, both before and after receiving assistance. This program has proven to be able to alleviate the problem of poverty that occurs in Batu Bara Regency. The forms of assistance provided through PKH in the area include education assistance and health services, which are distributed in the form of direct cash assistance and basic food packages. The success of this program is driven by a strong commitment from the government in providing direct assistance to underprivileged families, and supported by the large budget allocated. However, the implementation of the program still faces several obstacles, especially related to low community participation and the low level of literacy among beneficiary

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