

Article

Implementation of the Nutrition Improvement Program for Toddlers in Sungai Pandan District, Hulu Sungai Utara Regency (Case Study in Murung Asam Village, Tambalang Kecil and Rantau Karau Hilir)

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Abstract: Some people do not understand about the provision of appropriate nutrition for toddlers, lack of cadre abilities, lack of participation of mothers under five in posyandu activities, inadequate facilities and infrastructure. Based on the above, this study aims to determine the implementation of nutrition improvement programs for toddlers in Sungai Pandan District, Hulu Sungai Utara Regency (Case Study in Murung Asam Village, Tambalang Kecil and Rantau Karau Hilir) and the factors that influence implementation. This research uses qualitative research methods and qualitative descriptive types. Data collection techniques used are interviews, observation and documentation. Sources of data were taken through purposive sampling with a total of 18 people. After the data is collected then it is analyzed by techniques including data reduction, data presentation and verification or drawing conclusions. The results showed that the implementation of nutrition improvement programs for children under five in Sungai Pandan District, Hulu Sungai Utara Regency in Murung Asam, Tambalang Kecil and Rantau Karau Hilir Villages was not optimal. Viewed from the environmental aspect on indicators of social environment, cultural environment, and involvement of program recipients. The resource aspect includes indicators of human resources, facilities, and funds. Then the aspects of the characteristics and capabilities of implementing agents on the capability indicators. As for what is optimal, it is seen from the aspect of inter-organizational relations on indicators of coordination, and cooperation between agencies. Then the aspects of the characteristics and abilities of implementing agents on indicators of bureaucratic structure and relations to the target group. The influencing factors, the driving factor, are proper and good coordination and communication from officers, appropriate operational standards, good cooperation from officers, and good relations between officers and target groups. The inhibiting factors are lack of education and knowledge from the community, lack of participation of mothers under five in attending posyandu activities, the number of cadres is still lacking, budget funds are still lacking, facilities are not complete and lack of training for cadres. Suggestions put forward in this study are for the manager to optimize the budget, increase the number of cadres, complete facilities and conduct training for cadres, for officers to provide repeated socialization about nutrition education, and for posyandu cadres to visit children's homes to provide counseling or early counseling several times a month to the community in order to increase awareness of participating in posyandu activities regularly and following directions from implementing officer.

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1. Introduction

The nutritional status of toddlers is one of the important indicators in assessing the quality of public health and the success of human resource development [1]. The toddler years are the golden age that determine physical growth, cognitive development, and the quality of a person's health in the future [2]. Therefore, balanced nutrition during this period becomes a key factor in supporting optimal child growth and development [3]. However, various nutritional issues still pose challenges in Indonesia, especially in rural areas [4]. These issues are not only related to health aspects but are also influenced by social, economic, educational factors, and community behavior in meeting children's nutritional needs [5].

The Indonesian government has established various policies in an effort to improve the nutritional status of the community, one of which is thru Law Number 36 of 2009 on Health and Minister of Health Regulation Number 23 of 2014 on Nutritional Improvement Efforts [6], [7]. These policies emphasize that nutritional improvement efforts are carried out thru increased access to nutritional information, the provision of nutritious food, the enhancement of healthcare service quality, and the strengthening of community awareness of nutrition [8]. The implementation of nutritional improvement programs is carried out in an integrated manner thru community health centers, integrated health posts, health cadres, village governments, and community participation to reduce the prevalence of malnutrition and stunting in toddlers [9].

Although various programs have been implemented, field execution still faces various obstacles [10]. Observation results in the villages of Murung Asam, Tambalang Kecil, and Rantau Karau Hilir, Sungai Pandan District, Hulu Sungai Utara Regency, show that in the past two years, cases of toddlers with malnutrition status are still found. Several identified issues include the low level of community knowledge regarding the provision of balanced nutrition to toddlers, the limited ability of posyandu cadres to provide education and services, the low participation of some toddler mothers in posyandu activities, and the inadequacy of facilities and infrastructure such as weighing scales and measuring tools [11]. These conditions indicate that the implementation of the nutrition improvement program has not yet been fully effective.

The success of implementing a policy program is not only determined by the availability of regulations but is also influenced by various factors that support its execution [12]. According to Cheema and Rondinelli [13], policy implementation is influenced by environmental conditions, inter-organizational relationships, resource availability, as well as the characteristics and capabilities of the implementing agents. These four factors become important components in assessing the success of the implementation of the toddler nutrition improvement program because they are directly related to inter-agency coordination, the competence of the implementers, community support, and the availability of healthcare facilities [14], [15].

Several previous studies have shown that the implementation of nutrition improvement programs still faces various obstacles. Hernawati's research found that the implementation of the toddler nutrition improvement program has not been optimal due to weak communication, limited human resources, lack of budget support, and suboptimal task execution by health workers [11]. The results of the research indicate that the success of the nutrition improvement program requires synergy between the government, healthcare workers, posyandu cadres, and active community participation [16].

Based on these conditions, this study aims to analyze the implementation of the Toddler Nutrition Improvement Program in Sungai Pandan District, Hulu Sungai Utara Regency, with case studies in Murung Asam, Tambalang Kecil, and Rantau Karau Hilir Villages. The analysis focuses on four dimensions of implementation according to Cheema and Rondinelli, namely environmental conditions, inter-organizational relationships, resources, and the characteristics and capabilities of implementing agents [17]. In addition, this research also identifies the factors that influence program implementation as a basis

for formulating recommendations to improve the effectiveness of the toddler nutrition improvement program at the regional level [18]. Thus, the research results are expected to contribute to the development of public administration science, particularly in the field of public health policy implementation, while also providing input for local governments to improve the quality of toddler nutrition improvement program implementation [19].

2. Methodology

This research uses a qualitative approach with a descriptive research type, aimed at obtaining an in-depth understanding of the implementation of the Nutrition Improvement Program for Toddlers in Sungai Pandan District, Hulu Sungai Utara Regency. The qualitative approach was chosen because it can comprehensively describe phenomena based on real conditions in the field thru direct interaction between researchers and informants [20]. The research was conducted in three villages, namely Murung Asam Village, Tambalang Kecil Village, and Rantau Karau Hilir Village, which are within the working area of the Alabio Health Center, Sungai Pandan District, Hulu Sungai Utara Regency.

The data sources in this research consist of primary and secondary data [21]. Primary data were obtained directly thru field observations and in-depth interviews with informants involved in the implementation of the nutrition improvement program, such as health workers, posyandu cadres, village officials, and communities with toddlers. Meanwhile, secondary data were obtained from various supporting documents, such as health center activity reports, posyandu data, government regulations, scientific literature, and other documents related to the implementation of the nutrition improvement program for toddlers.

Data collection was carried out thru three main techniques, namely observation, in-depth interviews, and documentation. Observation is used to obtain a direct picture of the implementation of the nutrition improvement program in the field, while in-depth interviews are conducted with informants to gather information about the program's implementation, the obstacles faced, and the factors influencing policy implementation. Documentation is used as a complement to strengthen the data obtained from observations and interviews thru various official documents and relevant archives.

Data analysis is conducted interactively using an analysis model consisting of three stages: data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing. Data reduction is carried out by selecting, focusing, and simplifying the information obtained during the research. Next, the data is presented in the form of a systematic narrative, making the interpretation process easier. The final stage involves drawing conclusions thru a repeated verification process until valid and accountable research findings are obtained.

To ensure the validity of the data, the research applies credibility tests thru several techniques, namely prolonged observation, triangulation, negative case analysis, and member check. Triangulation is conducted by comparing information obtained from various sources and data collection techniques, while member check is performed by reconfirming the interview results with informants to ensure that the data obtained corresponds to the actual conditions. With the application of these procedures, the research results are expected to have a high level of validity and credibility, thereby providing an accurate depiction of the implementation of the Nutrition Improvement Program for Toddlers in Sungai Pandan District, Hulu Sungai Utara Regency.

3. Results and Discussion

The research results show that the implementation of the Nutritional Improvement Program for Toddlers in Sungai Pandan District, Hulu Sungai Utara Regency, which includes Murung Asam, Tambalang Kecil, and Rantau Karau Hilir Villages, has not been optimally executed. The analysis using the Cheema and Rondinelli policy implementation

theory, which includes environmental conditions, inter-organizational relationships, resources, as well as the characteristics and capabilities of implementing agents, shows that there are still several aspects that require improvement in order for the program's objectives to be maximally achieved.

In terms of environmental conditions, the implementation of the program has not been optimal due to the low level of education in the community and the strong belief in traditional culture and myths. These conditions have led to a portion of the community, particularly mothers with toddlers, not yet understanding the importance of balanced nutrition and the benefits of posyandu activities. This lack of understanding is reflected in the still-existing mothers of toddlers who do not regularly attend posyandu activities, resulting in the growth monitoring and nutritional status of toddlers not being conducted continuously. These findings indicate that the social and cultural conditions of the community still pose a challenge to the successful implementation of the program.

In terms of inter-organizational relationships, the implementation of the program has been going well. Coordination between the UPT Puskesmas Alabio, village government, posyandu cadres, and health workers occurs regularly before the implementation of posyandu activities or other nutrition improvement programs. The cooperation established between the agencies supports the smooth implementation of the program, allowing various nutrition service activities to be carried out according to the duties and functions of each party.

Meanwhile, in terms of resources, the implementation of the program still faces various limitations. From the human resources aspect, the number of posyandu cadres in several villages is still insufficient, so services cannot be provided optimally, especially when some cadres are unable to attend. In addition, budget constraints also impact the provision of program support facilities, such as medical equipment and supplementary food, which have not yet fully met the expected standards. These conditions indicate that resource limitations are one of the factors hindering the effectiveness of the nutrition improvement program implementation.

The aspects of characteristics and capabilities of the implementing agents also show suboptimal results. The ability of posyandu cadres to educate the community is still limited because counseling is generally only conducted during posyandu activities. However, cadres are expected to provide continuous support and education to families with toddlers outside of the posyandu schedule. On the other hand, the bureaucratic structure and the relationship between health workers and the target groups have been functioning according to the applicable procedures. The execution of duties has adhered to the established operational standards, allowing for effective coordination of services to the community.

This research also identifies the factors that influence the implementation of the Toddler Nutrition Improvement Program, both inhibiting and supporting factors. The main inhibiting factors stem from the social and cultural environment of the community. The low level of education and knowledge among the community regarding the importance of toddler nutrition causes some members of the community to still have difficulty accepting the information provided by health workers. In addition, the belief in myths and traditional practices in child-rearing is still quite strong, which affects the implementation of nutritional patterns in accordance with health workers' recommendations.

The next inhibiting factor is the low participation of some mothers of toddlers in posyandu activities. The busyness of managing household chores and personal reasons cause some mothers not to attend posyandu activities regularly, resulting in less optimal monitoring of toddler growth. Another obstacle is the limited number of posyandu cadres, the minimal program budget, and the lack of training provided to the cadres, which means their technical skills and knowledge in providing nutritional education still need to be improved.

On the other hand, the research found several factors that support the successful implementation of the program. The relationship of coordination and cooperation between agencies is the main driving factor in the implementation of the nutrition improvement program. All health workers, posyandu cadres, and village government officials regularly coordinate before the implementation of activities so that the program can run according to plan. In addition, the existence of clear standard operating procedures (SOP) serves as a guideline for all implementers in carrying out their duties. A good relationship between health workers and the community also supports the smooth delivery of information and the implementation of nutrition services to the target groups.

Overall, the research results indicate that the implementation of the Toddler Nutrition Improvement Program in Sungai Pandan District has been carried out, but its effectiveness is still influenced by limited resources, low community participation, and the suboptimal capacity of posyandu cadres. Therefore, it is necessary to strengthen education for the community, enhance the competence of cadres thru continuous training, increase human resources and supporting facilities, as well as strengthen cross-sectoral coordination so that the program's goal of improving toddler nutritional status can be achieved more effectively and sustainably.

4. Conclusion

Conclusion, This research shows that the implementation of the Toddler Nutrition Improvement Program in Sungai Pandan District, Hulu Sungai Utara Regency, particularly in Murung Asam, Tambalang Kecil, and Rantau Karau Hilir Villages, has not been optimal. Based on the policy implementation theory of Cheema and Rondinelli, the main obstacles still lie in the social and cultural environment of the community, the low involvement of program recipients, limited human resources, inadequate facilities and budget support, as well as the need to improve the capabilities of posyandu cadres. On the other hand, inter-organizational relationships have shown good implementation thru cross-sector coordination, a clear bureaucratic structure, and harmonious relationships between program implementers and target groups.

Factors influencing program implementation consist of inhibiting factors and supporting factors. Inhibiting factors include the low level of education and knowledge among the community regarding the importance of fulfilling toddler nutrition, the strong persistence of traditional culture and beliefs, low participation of toddler mothers in posyandu activities, the limited number of cadres, the suboptimal facilities and program budget, and the need for improvement in cadre capabilities. Meanwhile, the supporting factors for program implementation include effective coordination and cooperation between agencies, the existence of standard operating procedures as implementation guidelines, and good relationships between health workers, posyandu cadres, village government, and the community.

Suggestion, The improvement in the effectiveness of the Toddler Nutrition Improvement Program requires strengthening education and socialization to the community on an ongoing basis, not only thru posyandu activities but also thru home visits and direct counseling to toddler families. Local governments and program managers need to enhance the capacity of cadres thru continuous training, increase the number of cadres according to regional needs, equip posyandu facilities and infrastructure, and strengthen budget support so that the program can be implemented more optimally. In addition, the community is expected to actively participate in every posyandu activity and to raise awareness of the importance of fulfilling toddler nutrition as an investment in creating a healthy, smart, and quality generation.

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