

## Slum Area Management in Asahan Regency

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### ABSTRACT

This research aims to examine the management of slum areas in Asahan Regency. The study uses a qualitative approach supported by quantitative data to gain a deeper understanding of slum area management in Asahan Regency. The reliability of the data obtained will be compared through triangulation techniques, ensuring the consistency of findings from various sources and data collection methods. The researcher will conduct member checking by confirming with several respondents to ensure that the interpretation of the interview results aligns with the respondents' intentions. The results show that active community involvement in the planning and implementation of management programs is crucial to creating a sense of ownership and responsibility. The development and improvement of basic infrastructure, such as roads, drainage systems, and clean water supply, have had a positive impact on the health and well-being of the community. Economic empowerment programs targeting the residents of slum areas have proven to be an important solution for improving welfare. Despite various challenges, limited resources remain one of the biggest obstacles in slum area management. Overall, slum area management in Asahan Regency requires a comprehensive and sustainable approach, involving all stakeholders.

## **INTRODUCTION**

The development of urban areas in Indonesia, including Asahan Regency, has experienced rapid growth in recent decades. Economic growth and rapid urbanization are often accompanied by an increase in the population migrating to large cities in hopes of finding a better life. However, this phenomenon is not always followed by adequate spatial planning and infrastructure, which ultimately leads to the emergence of slum areas. Slum areas are one of the serious problems faced by local governments, including in Asahan Regency. According to data from the Public Works and Spatial Planning Office of Asahan Regency, about 10% of the urban area in Asahan is classified as slum. Slum areas are characterized by uninhabitable living conditions, such as poor sanitation, limited access to clean water, inadequate drainage, and high population density. These issues directly impact public health, welfare, and environmental sustainability.

Efforts to improve slum areas in Asahan Regency have become a priority for the local government, in line with the national 100-0-100 program, which aims to achieve 100% access to drinking water, 0% slum areas, and 100% access to proper sanitation throughout Indonesia. On the other hand, the challenges in addressing slum areas are very complex, involving various aspects such as economic, social, and legal issues related to land legality and housing rights. Therefore, a comprehensive approach involving various stakeholders, including the government, the community, and the private sector, is needed to address this issue sustainably. The program to improve slum areas in Asahan Regency also aims to enhance the quality of life of the people living in these areas. The improvement includes upgrading basic infrastructure, increasing access to essential services, and empowering the local community to actively participate in the planning process. Often, the community is seen merely as a beneficiary, but in reality, they play a crucial role in the success of slum improvement through active participation at every stage of development.

Asahan Regency, North Sumatra Province, has issued Regional Regulation (Perda) Number 1 of 2022 on the Prevention and Improvement of Quality in Slum Housing and Settlements. Several strategies can be implemented to address slum settlements, including: restoration, rejuvenation, resettlement, land consolidation, and social and economic programs to support sustainable urban development. Out of 98.16 hectares, Asahan Regency contributes 25.15 hectares of slum area to the national total of 38,431 hectares. The 25.15 hectares of slum areas in Asahan are located in five urban villages: Tegal Sari, Tebing Kisaran, Kisaran Barat, Kisaran Baru, and Sendang Sari. In an effort to reduce the slum area in Asahan Regency through infrastructure activities, which cover 7 slum indicators—buildings, roads, drainage, drinking water, sanitation, waste management, and fire protection—there has been a reduction of 32.96 hectares of slum area in Asahan from 2017 to 2018. The total budget for the collaboration to address slums in Asahan Regency from 2023-2024, sourced from the APBN (National Budget) and APBD (Regional Budget), amounts to IDR 55,417,434,800 (APBN: IDR 3,225,000,000 and APBD: IDR 52,192,434,000).

The improvement of slum areas in urban regions faces several challenges in its implementation, one of which is related to the understanding of standards for suitable settlements, both in terms of physical and social aspects. One of the social aspects identified by the Social and Economic Research Center for Housing (Research Team, 2010) is the suboptimal role and capacity of institutions and management from both the local government and the community regarding slum improvement programs. The communication between the local government and the community is not well-established in terms of structure and function. The concepts and implementation strategies of the programs from each relevant agency and the private sector regarding slum improvement are unclear. Presidential Regulation No. 2 of 2015 on the 2015-2019 National Medium-Term Development Plan mandates urban area development and improvement through the management of environmental quality in settlements, which includes improving the quality of slum settlements, preventing the growth of new slum areas, and ensuring sustainable livelihoods. Therefore, as one of the steps to achieve the goals of the 2015-2019 National Medium-Term Development Plan, which includes having slum-free cities by 2019, the Directorate General of Human Settlements initiated the creation of a collaborative platform through the "Slum-Free City" (KOTAKU) Program. The KOTAKU Program supports local governments as the main actors in slum settlement management, particularly through the revitalization of the role of the Community Empowerment Agency (BKM).

The collaborative platform aimed at reducing slum areas in Asahan Regency through infrastructure activities, covering 7 established slum indicators (buildings, roads, drainage, drinking water, sanitation, waste management, and fire protection), succeeded in reducing slum areas in Asahan by 32.96 hectares from 2013-2014. In addressing slum areas in Asahan, the local government of Asahan is assisted by the KOTAKU Program, which provides direct community support in the slum areas. The Housing and Settlement Area Office will launch a program named GEBRAK (Gerakan Berantas Kumuh or "Movement to Eradicate Slums"). This program will focus on a more structured approach to slum management by involving all relevant government agencies and the community in Asahan. This program also aims to create a model area for slum management, which will serve as a benchmark for improving slum areas in other regions of Asahan. It is expected that the GEBRAK program will lead to higher-quality and more structured slum management, involving all stakeholders, thus accelerating slum alleviation efforts in Asahan.

To transform neglected areas into child-friendly public spaces and create places for community interaction, the Asahan Regency Government, through the Housing and Settlement Area Office, has launched the "Gerakan Berantas Kumuh" (GEBRAK) program with a pilot project called "Kampung Gebrak" (Gebrak Village), which focuses on child-friendly environments. The goal is to raise awareness about the importance of a well-organized, non-slum environment and to increase community concern for managing slum areas so that the environment is well-maintained and beautiful. The GEBRAK program is a collaboration between the local government through the APBD (Regional

Budget), the provincial government through the APBD (Provincial Budget), the central government through the APBN (National Budget), third parties through CSR (Corporate Social Responsibility) funds, and the community through self-help contributions, both material and labor. One of the efforts to create green open spaces as public areas is the creation of "Kampung Gebrak," aimed at fostering a sense of responsibility and initiating change in the management of slum settlements. The Kampung Gebrak area is also expected to be a place for the community to gather and interact, with facilities for children's play areas.

The Gebrak Village Program is one of the implementations of the vision and mission of the Asahan Regency Government, "to realize a healthy Asahan," by transforming previously slum areas into clean and cool neighborhoods. The program's leader hopes that the residents of Mutiara Village can maintain and oversee the cleanliness and beauty of Gebrak Village, as well as teach children the importance of keeping the surrounding environment clean.

## **THEORETICAL REVIEW**

### ***Definition of Slum Areas***

A slum area refers to a residential area with an inadequate living environment, typically characterized by high population density, poor infrastructure, and insufficient basic services. Several experts have provided definitions of slum areas as follows: UN-Habitat (2013) defines slum areas as urban areas experiencing limited access to clean water, proper sanitation, inadequate building quality, high density, and insecure land tenure. According to UN-Habitat, the inhabitants of slum areas are usually low-income groups marginalized from formal urban planning. Ward (2016) explains that slums are not only physical problems but also social issues. Poverty, social inequality, and limited access to public resources are key factors in the creation of slum areas. According to Ward, addressing slum areas must involve sustainable solutions in social, economic, and environmental aspects.

### ***Slum Area Development***

Slum area development is the process of improving the physical, social, and economic environments in slum areas with the goal of enhancing the quality of life for residents. Doxiadis (2018), an urban planning expert, explains that the development of slum areas is not limited to physical aspects such as infrastructure improvement, but also includes sustainable social and economic dimensions. In Indonesia, the development of slum areas is regulated by various government regulations, including Law No. 1 of 2011 on Housing and Settlements. This law requires the government to provide adequate housing for all citizens, including the development and improvement of slum areas. A national program focusing on slum area alleviation is the "Slum-Free City Program" (KOTAKU), which is an initiative by the Indonesian government aiming for 0% slum areas by 2030. According to the Ministry of Public Works and Public Housing (2020), this program adopts a participatory approach and community empowerment in slum area development, emphasizing improvements in basic infrastructure such as sanitation, clean water, and local roads.

### *Factors Determining the Success of Slum Area Development*

According to Katz (2019), there are several factors that determine the success of slum area development programs: Community Participation: The community must be actively involved in all stages of slum area development, from planning to implementation. This participation is essential to create a sense of ownership and responsibility for the results of the development. Coordination Among Stakeholders: The success of slum area development relies on good coordination between the government, community, and private sector. Each party must have a clear role in the development process. Policy and Regulatory Support: Slum area development requires strong policy support from the government, including adequate budget allocation and regulations that support infrastructure and environmental improvements in slum areas.

### **METHODOLOGY**

This study uses a qualitative approach supported by quantitative data to gain a deeper understanding of the management of slum areas in Asahan Regency. The qualitative approach is used to explore the perceptions, experiences, and involvement of the community and stakeholders in the process of managing slum areas (Moleong, 2020 in Rahmadani et al, 2023; Nuraini et al, 2023b). Meanwhile, quantitative data such as demographic data, physical environmental conditions, and slum area statistics will be used to complement the analysis. According to Creswell (2014), the qualitative approach is well-suited for research aimed at understanding the social context, community experiences, and processes occurring within a phenomenon. This approach will help identify the factors that influence the success or challenges in managing slum areas in Asahan Regency.

In this research, several data collection techniques will be used to gather comprehensive information, including: Field Observation. The field observation technique is used to directly observe the physical condition of slum areas, including infrastructure, environment, and available public facilities (Nuraini, 2017; Wardhani et al, 2024). Observations will be conducted using an observation guide that covers various aspects such as building quality, sanitation access, local roads, clean water, and drainage systems (Akbar et al, 2023; Aris et al, 2024; Hartini et al, 2023). In-depth Interviews In-depth interviews will be conducted with residents living in slum areas and relevant stakeholders, such as government officials and village authorities (Harmoko, et al, 2024). The interviews will be semi-structured, with a pre-prepared set of questions but allowing space for more in-depth responses (Pane, et al, 2022; Rahmadani et al, 2023)

To maintain the validity and reliability of the data, this study will apply several steps: Construct Validity Interview guides and questionnaires will be developed based on relevant theories and concepts and will be pre-tested on several respondents before being officially used in the study (Rejeki et al, 2024; Wardani et al, 2024). Data Reliability The data obtained will be compared using triangulation techniques, which ensure the consistency of findings between various sources and data collection methods Member Checking (Rangkuti et al,

2023). The researcher will confirm the interpretation of interview results with several respondents to ensure that the findings align with the respondents' intended meanings.

## RESULTS AND DISSCUSION

### *Current Condition of Slum Areas in Asahan Regency*

Currently, the condition of slum areas in Asahan Regency has seen significant improvement. According to the latest data, the size of slum areas in Asahan has decreased from 98.19 hectares to 65.23 hectares following various revitalization efforts. Slum areas are spread across 16 sub-districts, particularly in Kisaran Barat and Kisaran Timur, including in Tegal Sari, Tebing Kisaran, Kisaran Baru, and Sendang Sari. The reduction of slum areas was carried out through the "KOTAKU" (City Without Slums) program, which collaborates with the local government to improve infrastructure such as roads, drainage, drinking water, sanitation, and waste management systems. Ongoing efforts continue, including the launch of the "GEBRAK" (Movement to Eradicate Slums) program, which aims to eradicate slum areas comprehensively by involving all stakeholders in Asahan.



**Figure 1. Gebrak Village Program**



**Figure 2. Administrative Map of Asahan Regency**



The arrangement of slum areas in Bunut Barat Village, as in many other regions, involves several important steps to improve the environmental conditions and quality of life for the community. Below are some of the slum areas in Asahan Regency that serve as the focus of the researcher's study.



Figure 3. Map of Problem Indicators in Priority Area 1, Bunut Barat Village



Figure 4. Map of Problem Indicators in Priority Area 1, Bunut Village

Priority Area 1 in Bunut Barat Village is typically designated based on certain criteria, such as population density, infrastructure conditions, and the urgent needs of the community. In the context of slum area management.

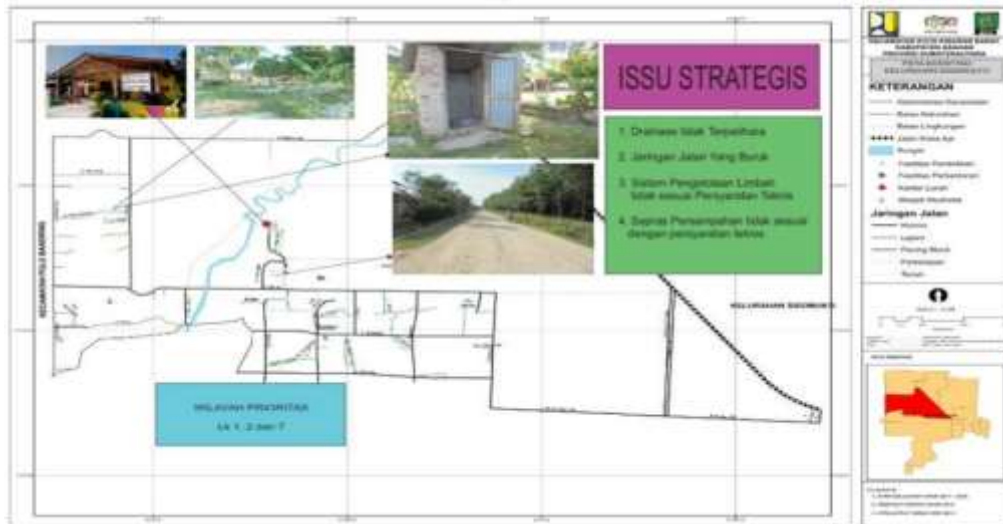


Figure 5 Map of Problem Indicators in Priority Area 1, Dadimulyo Village

Priority Area 1 in Dadimulyo Village may face various issues similar to those found in other slum areas. Here are some common problems frequently encountered in this priority area: Many homes are uninhabitable, with structural problems, poor ventilation, and inadequate sanitation. Damaged roads, poorly functioning drainage systems, and a lack of public facilities such as parks, playgrounds, and places of worship. The absence of an effective waste management system, leading to the accumulation of garbage in residential areas. Difficulty in obtaining decent jobs, which impacts the economic welfare of the community.



Figure 6. Map of Problem Indicators in Priority Area 1, Kisaran Barat Village



### ***Factors Contributing to the Emergence of Slum Areas in Asahan Regency***

The emergence of slum areas in Asahan Regency, as in many other regions, can be caused by various factors. Here are some common contributing factors:

1. **Rapid Population Growth:** The rapid increase in population can lead to higher demand for housing. Many people seek accommodation in less suitable areas, contributing to the formation of slum areas.
2. **Urban Migration:** Many people move from rural areas to cities in search of jobs and economic opportunities. This migration is often not accompanied by adequate infrastructure and basic services.
3. **Limited Access to Land:** The limited availability of land for housing development often forces people to live in unsuitable areas, such as riverbanks or flood-prone areas.
4. **Economic Conditions:** High poverty levels and a lack of job opportunities make it difficult for people to build or improve their homes, trapping them in slum conditions.
5. **Ineffective Urban Planning Policies:** Poor urban planning and unclear management policies can result in irregular development and the formation of slum areas.
6. **Lack of Infrastructure and Basic Services:** Limited infrastructure, such as roads, drainage systems, clean water, and sanitation, can worsen the conditions of slum areas.
7. **Community Habits:** Poor waste disposal habits and a lack of awareness about the importance of a clean environment can lead to waste accumulation and environmental pollution.
8. **Natural Disasters:** Areas prone to natural disasters, such as floods or landslides, may experience damage that leads to the emergence of slum areas when people are forced to return to unsuitable living conditions.
9. **Limited Government Resources:** Limited funding and resources for addressing slum issues can hinder efforts to improve these areas.

Addressing slum issues requires a holistic and sustainable approach involving communities, governments, and other stakeholders.

**Strategies for Slum Area Improvement Implemented by the Asahan Regency Local Government.**

The Asahan Regency local government has implemented various strategies for slum area improvement. Some of the common strategies include:

1. **Mapping and Assessment of Areas:** Conducting mapping and assessments of slum areas to identify problems, living conditions, and community needs. This serves as a basis for proper planning and decision-making.
2. **Infrastructure Provision Programs:** Building and improving basic infrastructure such as roads, drainage systems, and access to clean water. The aim is to improve accessibility and environmental quality.
3. **Housing Rehabilitation:** Rehabilitating uninhabitable houses by providing assistance or home improvement programs. This can include renovation, the provision of building materials, or financial aid for repairs.

4. **Environmental Management:** Implementing effective waste management programs and creating green open spaces. This includes educating the community about the importance of maintaining a clean environment and proper waste management.
5. **Community Empowerment:** Involving the community in the planning and implementation process. This can be done through skill training, outreach programs, and discussion forums to increase community participation.
6. **Collaboration with Institutions and Organizations:** Collaborating with non-governmental organizations (NGOs), the private sector, and international agencies to gain technical and financial support for slum area improvement programs.
7. **Social and Economic Programs:** Developing programs to support the economic well-being of the community, such as job training, small business development, and access to financing.
8. **Monitoring and Evaluation:** Conducting regular monitoring and evaluation to assess the progress and impact of slum area improvement programs. This helps in refining and adjusting strategies when necessary.
9. **Strengthening Policies and Regulations:** Strengthening policies and regulations related to slum area improvement, including land use, construction, and environmental protection regulations.

With these strategies, the local government of Asahan Regency strives to improve the quality of life for residents in slum areas and create a better and more sustainable environment.

#### ***How community participation in the slum area restructuring process***

Community participation in the slum area restructuring process in Asahan Regency is crucial for the success of the implemented programs. There are several ways and forms of community participation in this process. Involvement in Planning includes holding forums or discussions at the community level to listen to the aspirations, needs, and problems faced by the community. This ensures that the restructuring programs align with the desires and needs of the community. Conducting outreach to educate the community about the importance of slum area restructuring and how they can get involved in the process. Involvement in Program Implementation involves employing local community members in infrastructure development projects, such as road repairs and the creation of public facilities. This not only provides job opportunities but also strengthens the community's sense of ownership over the project. Organizing gotong royong activities (community self-help efforts) for cleaning the environment, improving public facilities, or planting trees, which can raise awareness and concern for the environment. Economic Empowerment includes organizing skill training programs for the community so they can take advantage of economic opportunities in slum areas. These programs are often tailored to local needs and business potential. Providing support to the community in the form of capital, market access, or small and micro-business coaching allows them to contribute to the local economy. Monitoring and Evaluation involves inviting the community to engage in

monitoring the implementation of the slum restructuring program so they can provide feedback on its progress and effectiveness. Holding joint evaluations to assess the impact of the implemented programs and discuss necessary improvements. Building Community Networks includes forming community groups or local organizations to represent the process of restructuring. These groups can act as intermediaries between the community and the government. Collaborating with NGOs can help enhance the community's capacity for participation and policy advocacy. Raising Environmental Awareness includes holding campaigns to increase public awareness of the importance of maintaining cleanliness and a healthy environment. Providing environmental education for children and teenagers in slum areas helps them understand the importance of preserving and caring for the environment. Utilizing information technology to facilitate communication between the community and the government in the restructuring process, such as through online complaints, environmental condition reports, or discussion platforms. By involving the community in various aspects of slum area restructuring, it is hoped that a sense of ownership, responsibility, and sustainability will be created regarding the changes made. This active participation greatly contributes to the success of the programs and the improvement of quality of life in slum areas.

#### ***Challenges in slum area restructuring in Asahan Regency and their solutions***

Slum area restructuring in Asahan Regency faces various complex challenges. Some of the main challenges and possible solutions are as follows: Limited Resources due to a limited budget for restructuring programs and infrastructure. One solution is to seek alternative funding sources through partnerships with NGOs, the private sector, and international donor agencies. Optimizing government funds by prioritizing high-impact programs is also essential. Low Community Participation due to a lack of awareness and involvement in the restructuring process. Solutions include continuous education and outreach to raise community awareness about the importance of their role. A participatory approach in planning ensures that the community feels ownership of the programs. Poor Physical Conditions such as damaged infrastructure and inadequate living conditions. One solution is conducting comprehensive infrastructure condition mapping to plan appropriate improvements. Prioritizing the development of basic infrastructure that directly impacts quality of life, such as roads, drainage systems, and clean water supply, is critical. Unplanned Development where rapid growth without proper planning can lead to further slum expansion. The solution is to enforce clear and firm spatial planning policies and regulations that prevent unplanned construction. Educating both the community and developers about the importance of sustainable development is also crucial. Social and Economic Problems such as high poverty levels and unemployment exacerbating slum conditions. Solutions include establishing economic empowerment programs that provide skill training and access to capital for the community. Facilitating the development of micro and small businesses as

alternative income sources is also beneficial. Natural Disaster Risks as many slum areas are located in disaster-prone areas, such as flood zones. Solutions include conducting risk studies and analyses to plan for safer development. Building proper drainage systems and green open spaces for disaster mitigation is important. Policy Uncertainty due to frequent policy changes disrupting the continuity of programs. The solution is to build continuous dialogue between the government, the community, and other stakeholders to ensure policy consistency. Creating forums or networks can serve as discussion platforms. Lack of Data and Information as there is limited accurate data on slum area conditions. Regular surveys and mapping can be conducted to gather necessary data. Using information technology to facilitate data access for all involved parties is also helpful.

Although slum area restructuring in Asahan Regency faces many challenges, with the right approach and collaboration between the government, community, and various stakeholders, these challenges can be overcome. Sustainable and participatory strategies will greatly help create positive change and improve the quality of life in slum areas.

## **CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

Slum area restructuring in Asahan Regency is an essential effort to improve the quality of life and create a more livable environment for the community. Through various programs and strategies that have been implemented, the local government strives to address various challenges, such as limited resources, poor infrastructure conditions, and low community participation. The Importance of Community Participation: Active involvement of the community in the planning and implementation processes is crucial to creating a sense of ownership and responsibility. Education and outreach efforts are key to raising community awareness of the importance of slum area improvement. The development and improvement of basic infrastructure, such as roads, drainage systems, and clean water supply, have had a positive impact on the health and welfare of the community. Therefore, investment in infrastructure must continue to be enhanced while considering local needs.

Economic empowerment programs targeting the slum area community are vital solutions for improving welfare. Through skill training and support for micro-enterprises, the community can have opportunities to increase income and quality of life. Despite various challenges, the limited resources remain one of the biggest barriers in slum area restructuring. Therefore, it is important to establish partnerships with various parties, including NGOs, the private sector, and international donor agencies, to gain the necessary technical and financial support.

Overall, slum area restructuring in Asahan Regency requires a comprehensive and sustainable approach involving all stakeholders. By doing so, it is hoped that a better, healthier, and more sustainable area can be created for the community. Success in slum area restructuring will not only have a positive impact on the environment but will also improve the overall quality of life and welfare of the community.

## FURTHER STUDY

Future research could focus on strategies to enhance community participation, assess the long-term impacts of infrastructure investments on welfare, and identify scalable economic empowerment models for slum communities. Additionally, studies on partnerships with NGOs, the private sector, and international donors could address resource challenges, while comparative analyses of successful restructuring efforts elsewhere may provide insights for sustainable development in Asahan Regency.

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