



The Significance of the Role of Village Government as the Frontline of Stunting Management Towards the Golden Indonesia 2045

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ABSTRACT

Stunting is one of the challenges in public health that requires effective intervention from the village government. The purpose of this study is to determine the role of the Kramatsampang Village government in preventing and handling stunting and the obstacles faced in its implementation. The theoretical framework used is Mintzberg's role theory, which consists of three role categories: (1) Interpersonal Role, (2) Informational Role, and (3) Decision-Making Role. The descriptive qualitative method was applied in this study with data collection techniques in the form of interviews, observations, and documentation studies. Data analysis was conducted through three stages, namely Data Reduction (Simplification), Data Presentation, and Conclusion Drawing. The results showed that the Kramatsampang Village Government has played an optimal role in supervising health and nutrition programs, although there are obstacles such as cultural influences and low public awareness of environmental hygiene and the importance of balanced nutrition. Overall, the Kramatsampang Village Government has shown a significant role in dealing with stunting, but more effective strategies are still needed in improving information affordability, community participation, and optimizing resources to support the sustainability of the stunting prevention program.

INTRODUCTION

Improving the quality of human resources is one of the main concerns in the development of a country and is not only centered on infrastructure aspects. Human development, in accordance with the mandate of the 1945 Constitution, aims to improve people's welfare by strengthening cultural and intellectual foundations. One of the main challenges in human development in Indonesia is the problem of stunting (Dela Pusfita et al., 2024).

Stunting is a condition in which a child's growth is inhibited and caused by a lack of nutrients in the body with a short period of time, especially during the first 1,000 days of life (HPK). This problem starts when the baby is still in the womb and is more prominent when the child reaches the age of two (Sugianto, 2021). The issue of stunting is considered a serious threat to the development of the quality of human resources in Indonesia and can affect the nation's competitiveness. The impact of this condition is not only seen in children's stunted physical growth (such as short height), but also affects brain development. This in turn impacts learning progress, academic achievement, and productivity and creativity as children enter the productive age phase (Bachruddin et al., 2022).

The next generation is expected to develop into healthy, intelligent, creative, and productive individuals. However, if children experience chronic malnutrition from an early age, they are at risk of stunting or stunted growth. Stunting in toddlers is an indication of growth failure that has a serious impact on the quality of human resources in the future. Over the long term, stunting can reduce a person's cognitive capacity, as the networks and functions of the nerves and cells in the brain are permanently disrupted. Furthermore, this malnutrition can increase the risk of non-communicable diseases (Retnaning Muji Lestari1, 2024). Stunting has more serious consequences for women, as it can hinder growth and increase the risk of death during childbirth (Haris & Indrawati, 2023). If Indonesia aims to achieve the vision of Indonesia's Golden Target 2045, the issue of stunting must be a top priority, as the quality of healthy and outstanding human resources is the foundation for achieving long-term development goals.

The Indonesian government has prioritized stunting reduction programs since 2018. Over a four-year period, stunting prevalence was reduced by 9.2%, from 30.2% in 2018 to 21.6% in 2022. This success has saved approximately 2.6 million children from stunting. The Head of BKKBN, Hasto Wardoyo, estimates that by the end of 2023, the stunting rate could drop to 17.8%, with a target of reaching 14% by 2024 (Ferdiana Yanuar et al., 2024).

The handling of stunting in Kramatsampang Village shows a decrease in the number of cases based on data collected over the past three years. This data was obtained from the results of infant weigh-ins at the Posyandu, conducted every February to August each year. In 2021, out of 80 infants weighed, 7 children were identified as stunted. In 2022, out of 83 infants weighed, the number of children experiencing stunting increased to 23. However, in 2023, this number decreased, with only 16 children classified as stunted out of 103 infants weighed. This decline continued in 2024, where out of 116 babies weighed, only 9 children were classified as stunted. This data shows that the stunting prevention efforts

carried out by the Kramatsampang Village Government have yielded significant results year after year.

In the future, the Village Government aims to reduce the number of stunting cases to below 9, and even hopes to eliminate stunting cases in the village entirely. This aspiration aligns with Kramatsampang Village's vision to create a healthy, intelligent, and nutritionally sound quality of life for children, in order to produce an outstanding generation for the future.

The success of a village is greatly influenced by the health of its residents, economic stability, the availability and utilization of natural resources, and the quality of human resources. In this day and age, the presence of residents who are physically and mentally healthy and intelligent is very important in supporting development in villages. Therefore, health is considered crucial and requires attention from the outset (Wahyuni, 2023). Preventing stunting is one of the government's top priorities at present. This effort aims to ensure that Indonesia's young generation can grow and develop optimally, both physically, emotionally, and socially. As a result, Indonesian children will be ready for the learning process, possess innovation, and have competitiveness on the international stage (Bachruddin et al., 2022).

Addressing stunting is one of the main focuses of National Development as outlined in the National Action Plan on Nutrition and Food Security. Based on the Village Law, efforts to address stunting have been established as a priority for citizens by providing villages with the opportunity to design various initiatives tailored to local needs through the management of the Village Revenue and Expenditure Budget (APBDes). The legal basis supporting this is strengthened by the issuance of Ministerial Regulation No. This is further legalised by the Ministerial Regulation No. 19 of 2017 concerning the order of the priority of Village Funds Usage. According to this regulation in Chapter III Article 7 it is stated that work activities regarding community empowerment, among others are carried out to facilitate management systems of primary social services, mainly education, health, and the newly emerging matter, i.e. enrichment of women's roles as well as child protection. Village government plays an important role in increasing community knowledge of a healthy lifestyle, nutritional balance, and the importance of routine health checks for the early detection and prevention of stunting in children (Haria et al., 2023). Regarding the health sector, Law No. 6 of 2014 gives authority to the village government in managing development and community empowerment. The village administration has authority to spend an appropriated budget on a variety of stunting-prevention programs, which may include improvements in maternal nutrition, provision of supplemental food for toddlers and nutrition education and counselling in the community. With good budget laws application, the village will have better chance to help reduce stunting and improving quality of human resources. (RIDWAN TELAUMBANUA, 2024)..

Policy implementation refers to the execution of regulatory decisions that have been formulated and approved in advance. These policies are created to offer solutions to existing problems in life, especially those related to the dynamics within society (Mahendra Bharoto, 2021). Villages play a major role in

national development, given that the majority of Indonesia's population lives in rural areas. This condition makes villages a significant resource in maintaining national stability. Additionally, villages have a strategic position in national development, serving as a foundation for identifying issues faced by the community and designing and realizing national goals at the local level (Irna, 2021).

One area facing stunting issues is Kramatsampang Village, located in Brebes Regency. This area has sufficient natural resources to support the nutritional needs of its community. This issue is critical because the health of the village community plays a significant role in supporting sustainable regional development. Despite numerous initiatives by village officials, the stunting rate in Kramatsampang has not yet met the reduction target. This is due to various gaps, such as low awareness of healthy lifestyles and a lack of understanding among the community about the importance of balanced nutrition. These gaps are the primary focus of the research to identify more effective strategies for addressing the stunting problem in the village.

Kramatsampang Village has approximately 116 children under two years of age (infants) and toddlers, divided into two health posts: Posyandu Mawar and Posyandu Melati. Out of these two health posts, there are approximately 9 children experiencing stunting. The village government faces this as a challenge in dealing with stunting. Nor has the goal been fully attained, as some infants and toddlers continue to have BW below the red line and length short in relation to age. Several factors causing high LEA of Kramatsampang Village, there is community's low culture of the importance of health and clean and healthy life, and low concern of parents about healthy children care and children health control regularly, especially for families with weak economy. Unfavorable family conditions for social and economic reasons is also associated with the problem. Economically challenged communities often face challenges to ensure a balanced nutrition and in the end the health of its children are affected.

The Kramatsampang Village Government must have a more effective and long-term program that can solve the stunting problems; one of the programs was by increasing the active posyandu in the village. Posyandu, as a health center for the community, focuses on toddlers and pregnant women, and could be a medium for the regular checking of children's and pregnant women's nutritional status. Activities conducted in posyandu can be an alternative means of nutrition education and other fundamental health services. Engagement with the community, particularly mothers and baby caregivers' family members, on the implementation of the program is essential. These are the responsibilities of the Kramatsampang Village Government worked by the head of Kramatsampang village and are preferred to carry out, either his functions and authorities in establishing a health environment for the society.

Based on the pre-review explanation, the focus of this research is on the main problems on the role of Kramatsampang Village Government in tackling stunting, which is about the programs carried out to reduce stunting rate and also the constraints in implementing the program. This study aims to scrutinize the Role of Kramatsampang Village Government that contribute towards the

toughness overcoming the stunting and recognize the strategy to the barriers. Furthermore, this study will analyze the programs that have been conducted by the village government, measure the effect of the programs in decreasing stunting, and examine any external factors that become obstacles to the program in term of human resources, culture, and community knowledge-level. The results of this study are expected to have strategic advice on improving the effectiveness of stunting prevention in Kramatsampang Village.

The research gap summarized above comes from a study conducted by Asiva Noor Rachmayani in 2021 entitled "The Role of the Village Government in Handling Stunting in Kontumere Village, Kabawo District, Muna Regency, Southeast Sulawesi Province." (Peran Pemerintah Desa dalam Penanganan Stunting di Desa Kontumere Kecamatan Kabawo Kabupaten Muna Provinsi Sulawesi Tenggara) The study showed differences in the variables used. The theories used were also different. The theory used in our research is Mintzberg's Role Theory as cited in Miftah Thoha (2019), while the previous study employed the New Public Service (NPS) theory by Denhardt & Denhardt. Additionally, the research locations were different. Our study was conducted in Kramatsampang Village, Kersana Subdistrict, Brebes Regency, Central Java Province, while the previous study was conducted in Kontumere Village, Kabawo Subdistrict, Muna Regency, Southeast Sulawesi Province.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Role

The definition of role according to Soerjono Soekanto is a dimension that is derived from a person's status. When an individual exercises their rights and obligations, they are actually performing a certain role (Soekanto, 2002). On the other hand, according to Sarbin T.R. and Allen V.L. (2002), a role is a series of structured behaviors that emerge in response to specific circumstances, where individuals are influenced by other actors they encounter in the process.

In the context of government, roles are crucial in the implementation of public policies and services to the community. Village governments, which function as the frontline of local government administration, have the obligation to manage and implement policies aimed at improving community welfare, including efforts to address stunting.

In this regard, Mintzberg's Role Theory in Miftah Thoha 2019 can clarify the various roles performed by village government officials. Mintzberg divides roles into three main categories: Interpersonal Role (roles related to interpersonal relationships), Informational Role (roles related to information), and Decisional Role (roles related to decision-making). These three categories of roles can be observed in how village governments establish health information communication and make strategic decisions in stunting prevention programs.

Village Government

The government can be understood as a group of individuals responsible for managing power, exercising leadership, and coordinating between government and community development through the institutions where they

operate. According to Syafi'ie (2019) in Sihombing (2022), etymologically, the term "government" comes from the word "to govern," which means to carry out commands, thus involving two parties: those who have the power to govern and those who are obliged to obey those commands. With the addition of the suffix "-an," the term "government" refers to the process, method, or affairs carried out by the body that has the authority to govern.

Government, in a broader sense, encompasses all activities carried out by the state with the aim of promoting the welfare of society and fulfilling the interests of the state itself. Therefore, government is not only understood as an institution that performs executive functions, but also includes other tasks that encompass the legislative and judicial branches.

In the villages, village government is very important in the welfare of the village society which includes stunting prevention and handling. Research conducted by Asiva Noor Rachmayani (2021) with the title of "The Role of the Village Government in the Prevention of Stunting in Kontumere Village, Muna Regency, Province of Southeast Sulawesi" revealed that the stunting prevention programs and interventions carried out by the village government were still considered not effective yet. This can be attributed to a number of major barriers, including the powerful role of local traditions and beliefs that shape the nutrition of pregnant women and children, the relatively high levels of early marriage coupled with low levels of education, and the lack of education on the importance of environmental sanitation. In this research, the author suggests more relevant exposure and better utilization as well as the increase in broader of socialization, improved collaboration and cooperation of village, posyandu, and health workers with the community.

Stunting

Stunting is a condition in which toddlers experience growth retardation due to chronic malnutrition during the first 1,000 days of their lives. According to Presidential Regulation No. 72 of 2021, stunting is defined as a disruption in a child's growth and development caused by prolonged malnutrition and recurrent infections, characterized by height below the standards set by the minister responsible for health. Generally, this growth disorder is evident from a child's height being lower or shorter (dwarfism) than the standard for their age. This condition is a serious issue that occurs when an individual does not receive adequate nutrition over an extended period.

A study conducted by Bachruddin et al. (2022) titled "Communication Strategies for Stunting Prevention Through the National Population and Family Planning Agency (BKKBN) Program in Gunung Jati Subdistrict, Cirebon Regency" found that the communication strategies implemented by BKKBN in stunting prevention have not been effective or maximized. This is due to budget constraints, a lack of appropriate technology tools (ATTG), and a shortage of field staff assigned directly to the community.

Indonesia's Golden Target for 2045

The Indonesia's Golden Target 2045 vision marks a hundred years of independence, which was formulated in 2019 after a two-year drafting process.

One of the main focuses of this vision is human resource development and mastery of science and technology, with an emphasis on improving the health and quality of life of the community in 2045. It is estimated that Indonesia's population will reach 324 million, making it the sixth most populous country in the world. This vision can be realized through hard work, innovation, and industrialization breakthroughs that not only focus on downstreaming but also promote the use of renewable raw materials. Additionally, industrialization will be directed toward creating labor-intensive industries and industries based on technology and innovation, such as aerospace, defense, and biotechnology, which are expected to generate world-class patents for Indonesia, thereby increasing the industrial sector's contribution to GDP to 30 percent. Industrialization will also focus on sustainable crop resilience. (Indra Kusuma, 2023)

The Indonesia's Golden Target 2045 vision is Indonesia's aspiration at the age of 100 years of independence to become a sovereign, advanced, and sustainable nation. By 2045, Indonesia's population is projected to reach 324 million, making it the sixth most populous country in the world. Indonesia is also predicted to experience a demographic bonus, where 70 percent of the population will be in the productive age group (15-64 years), while 30 percent will be under 14 years and over 65 years old during the period 2020-2045. A generation that is smart and ready to embrace change from an early age will contribute to realizing Indonesia's dream of becoming the golden generation of 2045.

METHODOLOGY

This study uses a qualitative approach. The choice of this approach is based on the researcher's desire to explore data and facts in depth and in a focused manner. Therefore, in the data collection process, the researcher used interview guidelines that allowed for improvisation and development during the interview. Informants in this study were selected based on their relevance to the title and objectives of the study, namely the Role of the Kramatsampang Village Government in Handling Stunting. Thus, the main informants were the village government, while the Health Office served as supporting informants. Furthermore, data analysis was carried out through several stages, namely data collection, data reduction, data analysis, and drawing conclusions. To ensure data validity, the researcher applied validity testing through triangulation, which in this case involved collecting data from various informant sources to ensure the validity of the data obtained. The research location was in Kramatsampang Village, Kersana Subdistrict, Brebes Regency, as well as at the Brebes Regency Health Office. Kramatsampang Village was chosen because it still faces stunting issues, while the Health Office plays an important role in supporting health programs in the village.

Data collection techniques consist of two types: primary data and secondary data. Primary data refers to information obtained directly during field research, through interview recordings and observations conducted in the context of conversations that are not always directly related to the main

questions. Meanwhile, secondary data refers to information collected by individuals or institutions in the form of publications, reports, documents, and other books related to the research. The data analysis process was carried out in three stages: data reduction (simplification), data visualization (presentation), and verification, which included drawing conclusions.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Stunting is a public health issue that requires serious attention, especially at the village level. This problem does not only impede children in terms of physical characteristics, including height not corresponding to age, but also affects their cognitive development and long-term health. The Kramatsampang Village Government makes stunting a priority invillage development, covering early childhood education, health services, and community empowerment. The stunting handling program had been running since 2021 in Kramatsampang Village. This is to decrease the stunted incidence with the shared responsibilities of village government, posyandu cadres, health workers and the society.

To overcome this problem the Kramatsampang Village Government carried out several programs on stunting, such as:

Development Program

1. Latrine construction or toilets: This programme is intended to enhance community access to good sanitation facilities as a means of minimising the prevalence of diseases emanating from a dirty and unhealthy environment.
2. Renovation and building of uninhabited houses the condition of housing has a significant effect on the health of the population in general and on that of children who are highly susceptible to different diseases. Thus, with this, the village government continues to repair and build houses that are decent, safe, and clean.
3. Provision of access to clean water for the community: with sufficient access to clean water, the risk of disease due to consumption of contaminated water can be minimized, thus supporting overall health and preventing nutritional problems that can lead to stunting.

Health Program

Supplementary feeding (PMT): this program is designed to prevent and overcome stunting by providing nutritious intake for stunted children and pregnant women with Chronic Energy Deficiency (CED). PMT for stunted children plays a role in meeting nutritional needs to support optimal growth, while for pregnant women with CED, this program helps prevent the birth of low-birthweight babies, thus reducing the risk of stunting from the womb.

Training Program for Posyandu (Community Health Post) Cadres

1. Workshop on KMS (Kartu Menuju Sehat) filing KMS is growth and development monitoring tools. The training is intended to strengthen the cadres' understanding and ability to fill in the KMS correctly in order to

produce valid data that can be used to support action for children under 5 years old at risk of stunting.

2. Measure a baby, measure a child training: Strengthening cadres' capacity to measure a child with accuracy to identify those risking stunting.

To gain an understanding of the role of the village government in handling stunting, this research applies the role theory of Mintzberg, in Miftah Thoha (2019) which divides the role into three categories, i.e. Interpersonal Role, Information Role, and Decisional Role.

Interpersonal Role

Role is function associated with interpersonal activities of persons in an organization or community. Interpersonal roles are involved in creating a form of communication among the organizational members, even in programs that have the community as a direct member. This is reflected by the fact that success of a program, especially in relation to community participation, can be affected by the manner in which people interact with one another. Interpersonal roles in village government are manifested by the village head, village official, village cadre, and village midwife in the implementation of programs that brings benefits to the society.

In Kramatsampang Village, the village government has taken a leadership role in coordinating various parties to address stunting issues. This aligns with Mintzberg's role theory, which states that a village leader has a strategic role in coordinating various social programs, including stunting prevention. Indeed, the village head adopts an interpersonal approach with the community by educating parents and optimizing the posyandu program and supplementary feeding initiatives. As a result, the village has significantly reduced stunting rates, with only 9 out of 116 infants experiencing stunting, demonstrating the effectiveness of the village head's role in addressing this issue. Thus, it can be temporarily concluded that the interpersonal role or personal relationship role carried out by the village head and village officials has a significant impact on the success of stunting prevention programs. Through good coordination, effective communication, and a direct approach to the community, the village head was able to mobilize various village elements to actively participate in health programs. The success of Kramatsampang Village in reducing stunting rates demonstrates that strong leadership and appropriate communication strategies can be key factors in resolving social issues at the village level.

External Communication

In the village, in external communications done by the government, it is crucial in the spread of information for the community on prevention of stunting as well as establishment of cooperation with several related parties. The village government also collaborates intensively with the health department, posyandu cadres, and health centers for the implementation of stunting prevention programs. "The village government disseminates materials about balanced nutrition products, interpretations together, posyandu" my quality (study,

editor) and stunting prevention promotion to the society through various activities, among others, pre school, family empowerment, posyandu.

Furthermore, to facilitate communication, village government also use multiple media, including poster, pamphlet, information board in village hall, so that the stunting prevention messages can be easily reached by community. With effective external communication, the village government can work with people and prevent stunting with clear circulating information to the public and communities or village people will be able to understand balanced nutrition, and to know how to maintain environmental cleanliness.

Internal Communication

At the level of internal communication, Regional Health Department Pendugaan Kramatsampang Village Government coordinate with health providers and village midwives to run the program of stunting prevention. This coordination takes place through periodic meetings and village fora where each party undertakes assessment and feedbacks on the program. Health cadres also serve as a bridge between the village government and its residents, transmitting information and helping families that can use extra help in ensuring their children eat well and have good health.

It also requires all village leaders to be aware of their responsibility to promote health programs. Policy transmission and task distribution are implemented smoothly without program implementation interference. Internal communications already seem to be working great, however bringing all parties in line with their understanding remains an ongoing challenge. It can be seen that the village government is still making great efforts to optimize the effectiveness of its communication work in a more orderly and data-driven manner and make each program operate in a more targeted and efficient manner.

Informational Role

The role of information orientation Information orientation is the role of collecting, digesting and supplying information within an organisation. A leader's responsibility in this regard is that of a transmitter, transmitting important data and messages to people who need to know. In this sense, the informative role is quite stunning, village government participates in the collection of health condition information within the communities, spread stunting prevention information, contact the public health department to organize health programs, and many other roles.

In Kramatsampang Village the village head plays a role as leader, not so much making decisions but more as a connector between the government and the community for stunting prevention program. It is related to Mintzberg's role theory where leader has a role of an information collector, an information processor and information distributor. In Kramatsampang Village applies to posyandu and e-PPGBM system by village head in collecting the community health data, and in cooperation with village cadres and midwives. This information is employed to formulate better stunting prevention measures. But the village government interviews suggest that community access to stunting data remains low, in part due to the fact only those with authorization access it.

The monitor of progress of children nutrition in the village is made not clear enough, so that the community could not directly observe the development of stunting in the village. It can ultimately influence their knowledge and engagement on stunting prevention. Therefore, it can be inferred that the learn role of the village head is essential in implementing stunting prevention in Kramatsampang Village. As village leaders, village heads serve as information brokers as well as conveyors and intermediaries between the community and the government. Using posyandu and e-PPGBM system data, village heads can formulate more precise policies so that information on stunting prevention reaches all circles and is easily understood.

Openness

In Kramatsampang Village, the dissemination of information is carried out through socialization both in Posyandu and at pregnant women's classes. The Government of the village is equally involved in disseminating information during any events about good diet, exclusive breastfeeding, and prevention of stunting since pregnancy. That communication is mediated through village midwives and village health workers, who work closely with both the village government and the health center. Furthermore, there are different educational activities carried out such as musdes, health workers meetings, Posyandu youth activities to build knowledge of the community about the balanced nutrition and the appropriate child care practices. The commitment to enhance transparency is also sustained across the village government, health department, and using social media and village information boards as mediums of stunting data that is easy to read and understand, to ensure that information sharing is more extended and reaches all members of the community.

Justice

In its efforts to address stunting, the village government strives to apply the principle of equity. Based on interview results, the village government has implemented several policies focused on equity to ensure that all community members, particularly vulnerable groups such as pregnant women from low-income families, can access healthcare services equitably. Programs such as supplementary food distribution (PMT), free BPJS coverage, and home visits for infants at risk of stunting are part of the village government's commitment to ensuring no residents are left behind in receiving services. The village government is also working to educate and reach the entire community regardless of the socioeconomic status. But difficulties in the disbursement of assistance persist, namely budget limitations and slow funds transfer, which affect programs' effectiveness. Hence, assessments and monitoring are still in progress to verify if all interventions are really focused and served to all villagers.

Decisional Role

The decisional role is a category of the managerial roles that managerial members play in an organization and which describe their functions. This role is about how a leader or manager impacts the decisions that the organization or institution they head makes. "It's a major determinant in making good policy and

strategy decisions to make a program successful. It calls on the institutional leader to make fast but well-founded decisions, also in the policy development, resource allocation and monitoring of program implementation to ensure the smooth and efficient operation of the programs. In the area of village administration, this policy-formulating role is crucial in building a better life for the community.

In Kramatsampang Village, the village head has been a driving force in organizing a range of stunting interventions. This work supports the idea in Mintzberg's role theory that in addition to being a decision-maker, a leader acts as a communicator that can communicate the vision and mission of the organization to the community and the applicable interest peoples of the organization. In this regard, the village head has the function to connect the role of village government, health workers, and community to be able to optimally implement programs to prevent stunting. Therefore, it can be concluded that the decisional role / decision making role in village governance which is carried out by the village head of Kramatsampang is very important in order to succeed in a strategic program, including efforts to prevent stunting. The responsibility of the village head also includes participating in decision making on strategy and resources and being a communicator that sends signals to the community and other stakeholders about the objectives and vision. With strong coordination and prompt and informed decision-making, programs to prevent stunting can be operationalized to promote the well-being of the community and yield the desired results.

Responsiveness

The Kramatsampang Village Government has been very responsive on handling stunting by immediate follow up after various findings in the field. If there were cases of children at risk of growth retardation, then rural government will work with village midwives and village cadres *mengeassati* to monitor the situation in the form of disease control and fostering care, PMT (Supplementary Feeding) and in the form of family nutritional counseling. Complaints and challenges from the community concerning health services are invariably discussed openly at village level meetings or taken up directly with the health centre.

While carrying out this program, the village government also responds to the input from many parties, from health workers to the public. Regular assessments are performed to check how well it is working, and when hurdles are found, the village government will do anything within their power to remove them, whether it's readjusting outreach approaches or securing more cooperation from related organizations. But challenges do exist, cultural reasons and social behaviors that do not pay heed on correct way of nutrition, childcare, practices are still hurdles in order to decrease stunting ratio. The community perceptions of stunting and the control of stunting are key factors for the effective of the stunting prevention program in Kramatsampang Village, which is predicted to upsurge with the quick responses and needs-based approach.

Factors Hindering the Handling of Stunting

Although stunting rates have declined, village governments still face various obstacles in their efforts to address this issue. Based on interviews with the Brebes District Health Office, the main factors contributing to the persistence of stunting in villages include:

1. Lack of public understanding about balanced nutrition; many parents do not understand the importance of nutritious food for their children's growth.
2. Stigma or negative perceptions of stunting within society; some members of society still consider stunting to be normal or not requiring serious attention.
3. Difficulties in changing family behavior; many families are not yet accustomed to implementing healthy eating habits and environmental hygiene.
4. Socioeconomic factors and economic constraints make it difficult for some families to provide nutritious food on a regular basis.
5. Inadequate sanitation, access to clean water, and suboptimal sanitation facilities increase the risk of infection and malnutrition in children.

Village Government Efforts in Addressing Stunting

The efforts made by the village government in addressing stunting include various strategic measures to prevent and reduce stunting rates in the community. The following are some of the efforts made by the Kramatsampang village government to overcome the problem of stunting

1. Conducting training for mothers on techniques for preparing nutritious meals using local ingredients. This training aims to improve housewives' understanding of the importance of balanced nutrition for child development. The food ingredients used in the training are tailored to local resources, such as moringa leaves, corn, sweet potatoes, and freshwater fish. With a good understanding, it is hoped that mothers will be able to prepare nutritious meals at an affordable cost.
2. Continuously coordinate with sub-district governments and relevant agencies to support village programs. Village governments cannot address stunting issues independently. Therefore, intensive coordination is carried out with relevant institutions such as community health centers, health offices, and food security offices. This cooperation plays an important role in providing health facilities, monitoring child development, and distributing supplementary food aid.
3. Encouraging the community to use their yards to grow nutritious vegetables. This initiative is carried out through a family food security program. The village government provides vegetable seeds and brief training on planting and plant care techniques. By utilizing their yards, the community can independently meet their family's nutritional needs while reducing household expenses.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

The results of this study indicate that the Kramatsampang Village Government has been actively involved in addressing stunting through a comprehensive approach, encompassing development programs, health initiatives, and training for Posyandu cadres. These efforts have successfully reduced the stunting rate from 16 children in 2023 to 9 children in 2024. However, there are still challenges that need to be addressed, such as a lack of community understanding about nutrition, stigma or negative perceptions toward stunting, difficulties in changing family eating patterns, economic constraints, and inadequate access to sanitation.

Based on an analysis of the village government's role using Henry Mintzberg's theory, it was found that:

1. **Interpersonal Role:** The village government has attempted to establish communication with the community through socialization and nutrition education campaigns, but community participation still needs to be improved, especially among working mothers.
2. **Informational Role:** The village government has disseminated information about stunting through various media and in collaboration with the Health Office. However, gaps in information distribution remain an obstacle, especially for underserved groups.
3. **Decisional Role:** The village government has allocated a budget for stunting prevention programs and designed policies based on community needs. However, budget constraints and cultural influences on child feeding patterns remain challenges in policy implementation.

Overall, the Kramatsampang Village Government has played a significant role in addressing stunting, but more effective strategies are still needed to improve information accessibility, community participation, and resource optimization to support the sustainability of stunting prevention programs.

ADVANCED RESEARCH

Future research could expand the study by exploring the role of other stakeholders beyond village government, such as families, community leaders, or the private sector, in stunting mitigation. Furthermore, it is important to examine the effectiveness of more inclusive, technology-based communication strategies to reach community groups that lack optimal access to information. Future studies could also analyze local culture-based approaches to changing family diets and evaluate the most effective Posyandu cadre training models for increasing community understanding and engagement. Quantitative and longitudinal approaches could also be used to assess the long-term impact of village policies on sustainably reducing stunting rates.

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