

Villages And Coronavirus Disease (A Study on The Policies Taken by The Government of Tainsala Village in Handling and Preventing COVID-19)

Nikolaus Uskono¹, Hendrikus Hironimus Botha^{2*}, & Wilfridus Taus³

Faculty of Social and Political Sciences, University of Timor^{1,2,3}

Email: hendrabohta@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

This paper aims at finding out what policies are implemented by the government of Tainsala Village in handling and preventing COVID-19. In this study, the researchers applied the qualitative method with a descriptive analysis approach based on the facts found in the field. Furthermore, concerning the employed data analysis technique, the researchers used three main components proposed by Miles & Haberman: data reduction, data presentation, and conclusions. Results showed that the government of Tainsala Village in handling and preventing COVID-19 have implemented several policies in the form of programs/activities, namely making COVID-19 posts at the entrance and exit of the village, providing quarantine locations, procuring and distributing face masks, hand sanitizer, & hand soap, and collaborating with the Health Office of North Central Timor Regency to disseminate information about COVID-19. The policies implemented have taken into account the participation aspects of the various existing stakeholders. Another finding is the use of local wisdom to accelerate herd immunity among the people of Tainsala Village.

Keywords: Tainsala Village, policies for handling and preventing COVID-19.

INTRODUCTION

At the end of 2019, the world was shocked by the emergence and spread of a virus that until now has claimed thousands and even millions of lives in every part of the world. The virus, which was originally discovered in a seafood market or live market in Wuhan City, Hubei Province, China (Huang *et al.*, 2020 in Yuliana, 2020), was given the name *Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome Coronavirus 2* (SARS-CoV-2) by the World Health Organization (WHO). Furthermore, the disease caused by the virus is called *Coronavirus Disease-19* (COVID-19) (WHO, 2020).

Within a month, this disease has spread to other provinces in China and several other countries, such as Thailand, Japan, and South Korea (Huang *et al.*, 2020 in Susilo *et al.*, 2020). Three months later, on February 16, 2020, 51,857 confirmed cases were reported in 25 countries with 1,669 deaths (CFR = 3.2%). Those countries are China (51,174 confirmed cases with 1,666 deaths), Japan (53 cases, 1 death, and 355 cases on a cruise ship sailing from Port of Japan), Thailand (34 cases), South Korea (29 cases), Vietnam (16 cases), Singapore (72 cases), United States (15 cases), Cambodia (1 case), Nepal (1 case), France (12 cases), Australia (15 cases), Malaysia (22 cases), Philippines (3 cases and 1 death), Sri Lanka (1 case), Canada (7 cases), Germany (16 cases), France (12 cases), Italy (3 cases), Russia (2 cases), United Kingdom (9 cases), Belgium (1 case), Finland (1 case), Spain (2 cases), Sweden (1 case), UAE (8 cases), and Egypt (1 case) (WHO, 2020 in Indonesia's Ministry of Home Affairs, 2020).

The first case of COVID-19 in Indonesia was reported to have occurred on March 2, 2020, as evidenced by the presence of a confirmed patient of COVID-19, starting from an event held in Jakarta. At that event, the patient made contact with a Japanese citizen who is domiciled in Malaysia. After that, the patient complained of fever, cough, and shortness of breath (WHO,

2020). The spread of COVID-19 from human to human is the main source of transmission, thereby making the spread more aggressive in humans. In addition, COVID-19 infects cells in the respiratory tract (Susilo *et al.*, 2020).

The Task Force for the Acceleration of Handling COVID-19 for East Nusa Tenggara Province reported that the first case of COVID-19 in this province occurred on April 10, 2020 (Petrus, 2020). The rapid spread of COVID-19 and targeting various remote areas have certainly caused anxiety and even fear in almost all community groups.

Prevention efforts recommended by WHO in dealing with the COVID-19 outbreak are basic protection, which consists of washing hands regularly with alcohol or soap and water, keeping a distance from someone who has symptoms of coughing or sneezing, practicing coughing or sneezing etiquette, and seeking treatment when having complaints that fit the category of suspected COVID-19. Furthermore, the recommended distance that must be maintained is one meter (WHO, 2020).

Based on the recommendations by WHO, the Indonesian government, through the president and the relevant ministries, has attempted to take preventive steps by formulating, establishing, and implementing policies that are directed to be able to handle and prevent the spread of COVID-19. These policies are the establishment of a Task Force for the Acceleration of Handling COVID-19 through Presidential Decree No. 7/2020 dated March 13, 2020, Large-Scale Social Restrictions through Government Regulation No. 21/2020, and many others. In addition, the government has also issued policies to address the impact of the COVID-19 outbreak, such as its impact on the economy. Those policies are Presidential Instruction No. 4/2020 concerning Refocusing Activities, Budget Reallocation, and Procurement of Goods and Services in the Context of Accelerating the Handling of Coronavirus Disease-2019, Minister of Finance Regulation No. 23/PMK.03/2020 concerning Tax Incentives for Taxpayers Affected by the COVID-19 Outbreak, and Financial Services Authority Regulation No. 11/POJK.03/2020 concerning National Economic Stimulus as a Countercyclical Policy for the Impact of the Spread of COVID-19.

The stipulation and implementation of the various policies do not mean that the government's responsibility in preventing the spread of COVID-19 has been completed. In this case, the government must be able to measure the extent of the impact resulting from predetermined policies. Through studies on policy impacts, the government can obtain accurate data on the output of a policy. When the policy made has a positive impact on the community or target group, the following step is to ensure that this achievement is maintained or further enhanced in other policy-making processes. Conversely, if the implemented policy has a negative impact or does not have any impact, the government should make and establish new policies that can overcome the problems faced by the community.

A policy issued by the government essentially aims to overcome the problems that occur. The COVID-19 pandemic that is currently endemic can be classified as a problem that also requires policy. In addition to policies issued by the central government to handle and prevent COVID-19, the village government which is the front line in the governmental structure is also expected to be able to design and establish a policy that is adapted to local environmental conditions and must refer to the regulations issued by the central and regional governments. Therefore, the government of Tainsala Village which is one of the villages in North Central Timor Regency, East Nusa Tenggara Province, must pay attention to efforts in handling and preventing COVID-19. The attention given by the government of Tainsala Village can be in the form of technical policies that can embody central and regional policies. For these reasons, this paper is

intended to describe and analyze policies that have been taken by the government of Tainsala Village in handling and preventing COVID-19.

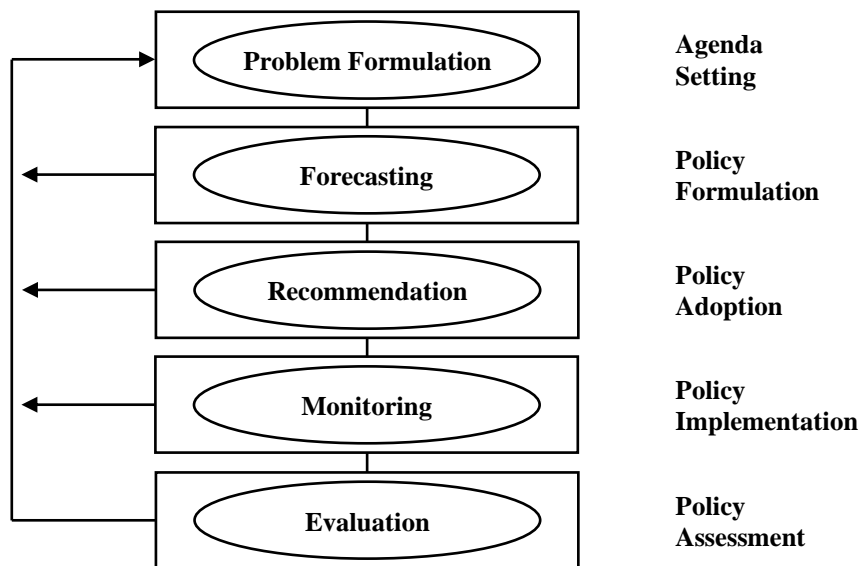
Public Policy

Many policy experts have put forward various definitions of ‘public policy’. Chandler and Plano define public policy as a strategy to use existing resources to solve public or government problems (Tangkilisan, 2003). According to Anderson in Mamud (1995), public policy is a series of directed actions taken by actors or a set of actors in dealing with certain problems. He adds that public policies are developed by governmental bodies.

The concept of policy, referred to in this paper, is those proposed by Hogwood & Gunn in Sunggono (1994), that policy is a decision taken by the government which means all steps or efforts made by the government in decision-making processes. Even if the government’s decision on something is to be silent, then the silence of the government is also a public policy because it is the government’s decision. This study focuses on all efforts made by the government of Tainsala Village which aims at preventing the spread of COVID-19 in the community. Those efforts essentially are forms of a policy aiming at overcoming existing problems.

Policies that are directed at overcoming the problems faced by the public should be formulated properly so that these policies can produce outputs as expected. A policy is not a simple thought. There need to be stages that must be passed in the policy-making process. According to Dunn (2003), the stages of the policy-making process are as follows.

Figure 1.
Stages in the policy-making process



Source: William N. Dunn, 2003.

Figure 1 presents that the policy-making process is a series of intellectual activities carried out in the process of political activities. The political activities can be seen in the stages of agenda-

setting, policy formulation, policy adoption, policy implementation, and policy assessment. Meanwhile, problem formulation, forecasting, policy recommendations, monitoring, and evaluation are stages that are more intellectual in nature (Subarsono, 2013).

METHOD

The research method is one of the important indicators in conducting a study. It is employed to facilitate researchers in finding answers to the formulated problems and achieving the research objectives. According to Sugiyono (2011), the research method is a scientific way to obtain data with certain goals and uses. In this study, in answering the formulated problems and achieving the objectives, the researchers applied a qualitative method with a descriptive analysis approach based on the facts found in the field.

As mentioned in the title of this paper, this study was conducted in Tainsala Village, Cental Insana District, North Central Timor Regency.

Furthermore, techniques in collected data applied in this study were as follows.

1. Interviews: a data collection technique carried out face-to-face, in which data collectors ask certain questions directly to the informant. In this study, the researchers used a list of questions as a guideline and a research instrument. The informants consisted of government officials from Tainsala Village (Village Head, Head of Village Consultative Body (Indonesian: *Badan Permusyawaratan Desa* (BPD), Village Treasurer, and Hamlet Heads), community figures, and representatives from the Tainsala Village community.
2. Observation: a data collection technique by observing the research object directly. In this process, the researchers used recording tools. In this study, observations were made on efforts carried out by the government of Tainsala Village in preventing and overcoming the spread of COVID-19.
3. Documentation: collecting data from documents and other written objects, such as books, daily official notes, and other official documents.

The next stage is data analysis. In technical research, data analysis is an urgent step. In data analysis, the researchers analyze the collected data to draw conclusions. In this study, concerning the employed data analysis technique, the researchers used three main components proposed by Miles & Haberman (in Sutopo, 2020), namely as follows.

1. Data reduction

It is a process of selecting, focusing, simplifying, and abstracting data from field notes. The data reduction process in this study focused on classifying 'rough' data in the data source, such as written notes found in the field, and eliminating data that were not in line with the research objectives. This stage was carried out to minimize the points of data that were not in line with the research focus so that the data presented may answer the formulated research questions. This data reduction process took place continuously throughout the research process.

2. Data presentation

It is a series of sentences that are arranged logically and systematically so that when being read, the reader may easily understand the things that are happening. In addition, it may allow the researchers to analyze the situations based on their understanding. In this study, the data presentation referred to the research problems that had been formulated as research questions so that the narrative presented was a detailed description of the conditions to answer each problem.

3. Conclusions and verification

The collected data were grouped based on certain patterns. This grouping of data was expected to be able to explain the reality related to the problem under study so that the conclusions from collected data can be drawn. Furthermore, the conclusions were then verified to check their validity (truth).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Policies Taken by the Government of Tainsala Village in Preventing and Handling COVID-19

Efforts to prevent and handle COVID-19 require synergy from various elements of society, especially from the government which is constitutionally mandated by the community to be able to organize and manage existing natural, capital, and human resources to overcome all kinds of problems faced in the community and state levels. As one of the government institutions that directly deal with the community, the government of Tainsala Village has taken concrete steps in the form of policies to overcome the problems faced by the Tainsala Village community during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The results of the study indicate that the government of Tainsala Village has taken and implemented several policies to prevent and handle COVID-19, including making COVID-19 posts at the entrance and exit of the village, providing quarantine locations, procuring and distributing face masks, hand sanitizer, & hand soap, and collaborating with the Health Office of North Central Timor Regency to disseminate information about COVID-19.

These findings show that the government of Tainsala Village has provided maximum efforts to take and implement policies for handling and preventing COVID-19. Other findings related to the policies carried out by the government of Tainsala Village are regarding the sources of financing for the implementation of these policies. The results of interviews with the Head of the Village Consultative Body of Tainsala Village reveal that the source of funds to finance all forms of policy is the Village Fund (Indonesian: *Dana Desa*) with the amount of 8% of the total village funds. This is based on the Circular of the Ministry of Finance No. 2/2021 and the Instruction of the Ministry of Villages, Development of Disadvantaged Regions, and Transmigration No. 1/2021. Furthermore, to follow up on the Circular of the Ministry of Villages, Development of Disadvantaged Regions, and Transmigration No. 8/2020 concerning the Establishment of a Village Volunteer Team against COVID-19, the government of Tainsala Village has issued a decree on the formation of a Village Volunteer Team against COVID-19.

All forms of policies implemented by the government of Tainsala Village generally refer to policies that have been set by the central government and regional governments. However, the following discussion point only specifically addresses one policy in depth, namely the use of local wisdom to accelerate herd immunity among the people of Tainsala Village.

Empowerment policy: the involvement of youths, college students, community figures, and customary figures

In simple terms, empowerment can be defined as an effort to generate and utilize the strengths and potentials possessed. In the context of this study, empowerment is policies of utilizing the potential of human resources (youths, college students, community figures, and customary figures) in the efforts to handle and prevent COVID-19 by the government of Tainsala Village.

The empowerment carried out by the government of Tainsala Village in handling and preventing COVID-19 can be seen from the actions of utilizing human resources, namely young people (i.e., youths and college students) and the community, in general, represented by the community and customary figures.

The involvement of youths and college students in the Village Volunteer Team against COVID-19 in Tainsala Village is a manifestation of the empowerment of one of the community elements by the government of Tainsala Village to realize the common goal of avoiding the Tainsala Village community from the dangers of the COVID-19 outbreak. One of the roles of youths and college students in the team is to be the guard of the COVID-19 posts at the entrance and exit of the village.

In addition to empowering human resources from youths and college students, the government of Tainsala Village also involves community and customary figures in several meetings to discuss the efforts that must be made as a response to the COVID-19 pandemic which must be adapted to the environmental conditions of the Tainsala Village community.

The synergy of various elements of society and the government of Tainsala Village in preventing and handling COVID-19 is a major force that has produced positive results, such as the absence of people in Tainsala Village who are confirmed positive or reactive to COVID-19. This can be used as the basic capital for sustainability and the implementation of other activities in the future.

Another empowerment policy carried out by the government of Tainsala Village is the utilization of local wisdom, which is a cultural element that is passed down from generation to generation. This is a medium for the Tainsala Village community as a human entity that can carry out cultural activities by expressing their belief system, especially their customs and traditions. Therefore, the government and people of Tainsala Village together carry out traditional Timorese rituals called '*Ta'eka Maputu Malala*'. Literally, it means to prevent all forms of disaster. This traditional ritual will certainly have a psychological impact on the community, such as reducing excessive fear of the COVID-19 pandemic which can be categorized as a form of disaster. The reduced fear or panic about the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic is one of the indicators of the formation of herd immunity among the Tainsala Village community.

Supporting and inhibiting factors in policy implementation

Discussions about the implementation of a policy cannot be separated from two points, namely the supporting and the inhibiting factors for the implementation of the policy. The results of the analysis indicate the presence of supporting and inhibiting factors in the implementation of policies taken by the government of Tainsala Village in handling and preventing COVID-19.

Inhibiting factors:

The main inhibiting factor in implementing the COVID-19 handling and prevention policy is the lack of information obtained by the public regarding COVID-19 in the early days of the outbreak. Furthermore, the information received by the people of Tainsala Village, which is considered to be minimal in quantity, is dominated by information whose sources cannot be trusted. The impact of limited information and unreliable sources is the emergence of protests and rejection by the community. However, this factor can be overcome by the government of Tainsala Village through socialization activities about COVID-19 in collaboration with the Health Office of North Central Timor Regency.

Supporting factors:

The main supporting factor for implementing the COVID-19 handling and prevention policy in Tainsala Village is the active involvement of all stakeholders. This can be seen from the participation of youths and college student organizations in Tainsala Village in guarding the entrance and exit of the village, participation of the community and customary figures in technical meetings to prepare for policy implementation, and the availability of funds sourced from 8% of the total Village Fund.

CONCLUSION

Based on the elaboration above, it can be concluded that the government of Tainsala Village in its efforts to handle and prevent COVID-19 has implemented several policies in the form of programs/activities, namely making COVID-19 posts at the entrance and exit of the village, providing quarantine locations, procuring and distributing face masks, hand sanitizer, & hand soap, and collaborating with the Health Office of North Central Timor Regency to disseminate information about COVID-19. In the early days of implementing the policies, it was found that there were obstacles in the form of a lack of public understanding about COVID-19 which led to the refusal and protests to apply health protocols and checks at guard posts of Tainsala Village. However, this obstacle can be resolved through socialization carried out by the government of Tainsala Village in collaboration with the Health Office of North Central Timor Regency.

To realize various forms of policy, the government of Tainsala Village certainly needs supporting factors. The results showed that the supporting factor in the policy implementation was the involvement of several elements of society (youths, college students, community figures, and customary figures). This supporting factor indicated that the government of Tainsala Village had made efforts to empower the community as a form of joint synergy to overcome problems related to the handling and prevention of COVID-19.

Another interesting finding is the collaboration between the community, customary figures, and the government of Tainsala Village in building self-confidence (community psychology) so that they may work hand in hand to prevent and deal with COVID-19 through the traditional ritual of *Ta'eka Maputu Malala*. This ritual can be considered an effort to minimize excessive fear of COVID-19 which can have a negative impact on the lives of the people of Tainsala Village.

REFERENCES

- Dunn, William N. 2003. *Pengantar Analisis Kebijakan Publik Edisi Kedua*. Yogyakarta: Gadjah Mada University Press
- Kementerian Dalam Negeri. 2020. *Pedoman Umum Menghadapi COVID-19 Bagi Pemerintahan Daerah; Pencegahan, Pengendalian, Diagnosis dan Manajemen*. Jakarta. Kementerian Dalam Negeri
- Mamud, Bustani Dj., 1995. *Studying Public Policy*, New York: Oxford University Press, Toronto
- Petrus, Ananias. (10 April 2020) Kasus Pertama Corona di NTT, 1 Orang Positif usai Pulang dari Daerah Zona Merah. Merdeka.com. <https://www.merdeka.com/peristiwa/kasus-pertama-corona-di-ntt-1-orang-positif-usai-pulang-dari-daerah-zona-merah.html>
- Subarsono, AG. 2013. *Analisa Kebijakan Publik, Konsep, Teori dan Aplikasi*. Yogyakarta: Pustaka Pelajar

- Sugiyono. 2010. *Metode Penelitian Pendidikan: Pendekatan Kuantitatif, Kualitatif, dan R&D*. Bandung: Alfabeta.
- Sunggono, Bambang. 1994. *Hukum dan kebijakan Publik*. Jakarta: Sinar Grafika
- Susilo, Adityo. dkk. 2020. *Coronavirus Disease 2019: Tinjauan Literatur Terkini*. *Jurnal Penyakit Dalam Indonesia* | Vol. 7, No. 1 | Maret 2020|
- Sutopo, H. B. 2002. *Metodologi Penelitian Kualitatif: Dasar dan Terapannya Dalam Penelitian*. Surakarta: UNS Press
- Tangkilisan, Hessel Nogi S., 2003. *Teori dan Konsep Kebijakan Publik dalam Kebijakan Publik yang Membumi, konsep, strategi dan kasus*, Yogyakarta: Lukman Offset dan YAPPI
- World Health Organization. WHO Director-General’s opening remarks at the media briefing on *COVID-19* - 11 March 2020 [Internet]. 2020 [updated 2020 March 11]. Available from: <https://www.who.int/dg/speeches/detail/who-director-general-s-opening-remarks-at-the-media-briefing-on-covid-19---11-march-2020>.
- World Health Organization. Coronavirus disease (*COVID-19*) advice for the public [Internet]. 2020 [cited 2020 March 15]. Available from: <https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019/advice-for-public>.
- Yuliana. 2020. *Corona Virus Diseases (Covid-19); Sebuah Tinjauan Literatur*. *Wellness And Healthy Magazine*. Volume 2, Nomor 1 Februari 2020