

IMPLEMENTATION OF PUBLIC SERVICE REFORM IN ENHANCING THE WELFARE OF BIMA DISTRICT COMMUNITY: CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

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Abstract:

This study aims to analyze the implementation of public service reform efforts to enhance the welfare of the community in Bima District, identify the challenges faced, and propose improvement opportunities. The method used in this research is a qualitative and descriptive approach. Primary data were collected through in-depth interviews with various local stakeholders, including government officials, community leaders, and civil society activists. Secondary data were obtained from policy documents and statistical reports. Data analysis was conducted using a thematic approach to categorize findings based on themes relevant to the research objectives. The results indicate that public service reform in Bima District has brought about some positive changes, such as improved accessibility and quality of health services. However, significant failures related to management, compliance with service standards, and challenges in policy deregulation that are not aligned with community needs still exist. These challenges are exacerbated by a rigid bureaucratic system and a lack of visionary leadership capable of overcoming internal resistance to change. In conclusion, although public service reform has provided some benefits, there is still plenty of room for improvement, especially in management, transparency, and innovation in the delivery of public services. Strong commitment is required from all levels of government to continue driving innovation, addressing infrastructure and human resource barriers, and enhancing coordination among institutions to ensure the effectiveness and efficiency of public services that can directly impact the welfare improvement of the community in Bima District.

Keywords: *Community, Opportunities, Public Service, Reform, Welfare.*

1. Introduction

The implementation of public service reform in Indonesia represents a strategic endeavor by the government to enhance the quality of services extended to the public (Simangunsong & Hutasoit, 2018). This notion of public service reform is firmly grounded in the principles of good governance, encompassing transparency, accountability, responsiveness, as well as efficiency and effectiveness in resource management and service provision (Simangunsong & Hutasoit, 2018). The primary objective of this reform is to ensure universal access to quality services, devoid of discrimination, in a more accessible,

prompt, and cost-effective manner (Carey et al., 2018). Given Indonesia's intricate challenges concerning high bureaucracy, deficient integrity and professionalism among civil servants, and restricted access to fundamental services across numerous regions, (Barr, 2008) (Berenschot, 2018), such reform assumes particular significance

In practice, the implementation of public service reform in Indonesia has manifested through diverse initiatives and programs. Among the notable examples is the establishment of the one-stop service system (PTSP), consolidating various services at one location to streamline user experience (Powell et al., 2019). This system aims to diminish bureaucratic hurdles, reduce waiting times, and augment public satisfaction with services. Moreover, the government has embraced information technology through electronic-based services or e-government to streamline processes, bolster transparency, and broaden service accessibility (Steijn & van der Voet, 2019). This includes the adoption of applications and online portals for varied administrative requirements such as document submissions, tax payments, or business permit applications, all achievable online without the necessity of visiting service offices (Eriksson, 2019) (Mislawaty et al., 2022).

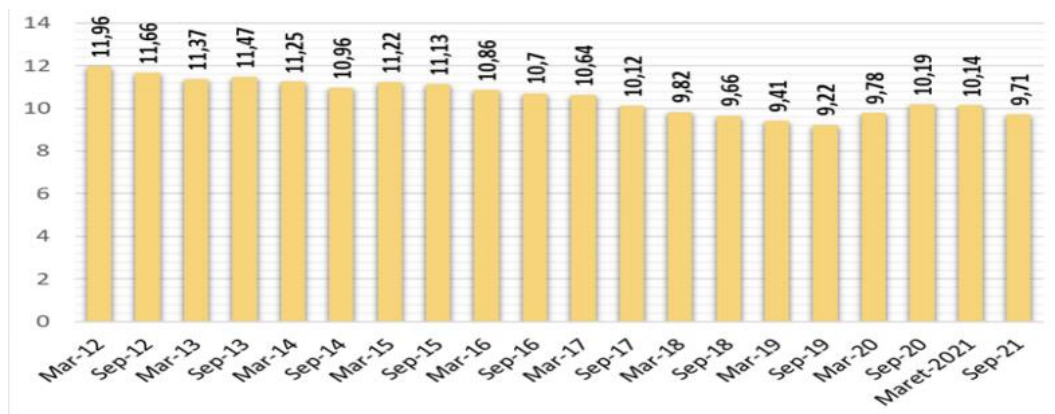
Nonetheless, the challenges associated with implementing public service reform in Indonesia remain substantial (Christensen et al., 2007) (Cinar et al., 2024). Foremost among these challenges is resistance from within the bureaucracy itself, where numerous officials and employees, accustomed to traditional work practices, perceive changes fostering transparency and accountability as threats (Umar et al., 2019). Furthermore, limitations in infrastructure and human resources, particularly in remote and border areas, persist and necessitate significant enhancements to ensure equitable service provision (Hammerschmid et al., 2019). Additionally, issues concerning the digital divide continue to hinder the full utilization of electronic-based services by certain demographics (Coates et al., n.d.) (The, 1999) (Brown et al., 2019). Addressing these challenges mandates robust commitment from all governmental tiers and support from the community and private sector to perpetuate the advancement and refinement of public service provision in Indonesia (Lapiente & Van de Walle, 2020).

Moreover, the challenges and complexities inherent in integrating public service reform with community welfare improvement endeavors necessitate concerted attention to enhance the efficacy and efficiency of public services (Edmiston & Nicholls, 2018). Notably, one of the primary challenges lies in the intricate bureaucratic structures of the government, often hindering inter-agency integration (Schou & Pors, 2019). Complex bureaucracies may result in overlapping tasks and responsibilities between agencies, as well as a dearth of coordination among various work units (Brown et al., 2019). Consequently, this impedes information flow and effective decision-making processes, thereby hindering endeavors to provide quality and responsive public services (Johari et al., 2019). Additionally, cultural and interest disparities among agencies present barriers to integration, as it proves challenging to reach consensus and agreements on cross-sectoral policy determinations (Aitken, 2019) (Moonti, 2019).

Furthermore, the inadequacy of integrating public service reform to enhance community welfare becomes evident from various perspectives, particularly in terms of achieving national development targets that have fallen short of expectations (Saxena et al., 2021). Despite concerted reform endeavors in public service provision, such as the formulation of the National Medium-Term Development Plan (RPJMN) and the implementation of Bureaucratic Reform (RB), numerous unresolved issues persist. One glaring indicator of the faltering integration and reform of public services is the failure to address core community challenges, including poverty alleviation, bolstering micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs) and tourism, stimulating investment, and other pivotal issues.

Primarily, poverty alleviation remains a formidable challenge that has not been adequately tackled despite the implementation of diverse programs and policies. Although Indonesia has witnessed a reduction in the percentage of poverty over the past decade, this decline has not reached a substantial level. Factors contributing to the failure of integration and reform in poverty alleviation encompass the lack of coordination and synergy among agencies in executing poverty alleviation initiatives, alongside the suboptimal utilization of

technology and data in identifying and disbursing aid to deserving communities. Furthermore, regional disparities persist as a hindrance to poverty alleviation endeavors, with noticeable gaps persisting between urban and rural areas, as well as between Java Island and other regions. Below is the breakdown of Poverty Rates for the period spanning from 2012 to 2021;



Source: Central Statistics Agency, 2022

Secondly, the enhancement of micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs) and tourism remains pivotal in endeavors to uplift community welfare, yet numerous challenges persist in their execution. Despite the implementation of various programs aimed at bolstering MSMEs and the tourism sector, hurdles such as restricted access to capital and technology, limited market reach, and convoluted and often cumbersome regulatory frameworks for business operators persist. Furthermore, inadequate literacy levels and skills present impediments to MSME development, curtailing the competitiveness of business operators in an increasingly cutthroat market. Within the tourism sector, issues persist concerning deficient infrastructure, ineffective promotion and marketing strategies, and insufficiently sustainable management of natural and cultural resources.

Thirdly, augmenting investment holds paramount importance in bolstering economic growth and community welfare; however, several obstacles impede investment realization.

Complex bureaucratic processes, legal uncertainties, and security instabilities are among the factors influencing investors' decisions to invest in Indonesia. Additionally, deficiencies in infrastructure, particularly in underdeveloped areas, hinder accessibility and connectivity for investors. Furthermore, the lack of coordination among institutions in furnishing services and facilities for investors further impedes efforts to attract investment in Indonesia.

Moreover, aside from these primary concerns, several other strategic issues remain inadequately addressed, including environmental and natural disaster issues, gender inequality, and food security. Environmental and natural disaster issues are particularly pressing, given Indonesia's susceptibility to natural calamities such as earthquakes, tsunamis, floods, and landslides. A lack of awareness regarding the significance of environmental conservation and the absence of coordinated disaster mitigation efforts pose obstacles to sustainable development.

Conversely, gender inequality persists as a significant challenge in Indonesia, where women encounter discrimination in accessing education, healthcare, and employment opportunities. Meanwhile, food security represents another strategic concern, considering Indonesia's status as an agrarian nation with vast potential in the agricultural sector. Nevertheless, disparities persist in terms of access to food and the absence of food security for certain communities.

Overall, the failure to integrate and reform public services to advance community welfare is evident in the unsatisfactory level of national development attainment, coupled with the prevalence of various unresolved issues and challenges. Addressing these requires more comprehensive and coordinated efforts among institutions, alongside synergy between the government, private sector, and communities to support the implementation of policies and development programs aimed at comprehensive and sustainable welfare improvement.

Moreover, in the implementation of Public Service Reform, there lies a crucial role in supporting the vision outlined in the Road Map RB 2020-2024 and the mandates articulated in Regulation Number 3 of 2023 issued by the Ministry of Administrative Reform and

Bureaucratic Reform. This regulation underscores the significance of fostering a clean, effective, and competitive bureaucracy to stimulate national development and deliver quality public services (Kementerian PANRB, 2023). A pivotal aspect of this reform involves enhancing efficiency and transparency in public service provision. By streamlining administrative systems and reducing bureaucratic hurdles, the public can access services more swiftly and conveniently, thereby saving time and costs previously associated with processing various documents or permits. Augmented transparency also enables the public to gain a better understanding of bureaucratic processes, thereby fortifying trust and fostering participation in national development.

Furthermore, public service reform prioritizes the enhancement of service quality extended to the public. Through advancements in information and communication technology, the adoption of elevated service standards, and the augmentation of service personnel's competencies, it is anticipated that the services rendered can better cater to the needs and expectations of the public. By receiving improved and more accessible services, the public will feel better supported in their daily lives and in the pursuit of their potential. Additionally, endeavors to empower communities in decision-making processes and in monitoring the performance of public services constitute integral components of this reform, ensuring that public services are delivered in alignment with the needs and aspirations of the communities served. Thus, the implementation of public service reform not only aligns with the imperatives outlined in the Road Map RB 2020-2024 but is also instrumental in enhancing community welfare through heightened efficiency, quality, and participation in public service provision (Devarajan & Ianchovichina, 2018).

In the District of Bima, the pursuit of public service reform encounters numerous setbacks and challenges, impacting endeavors to comprehensively enhance community welfare. A significant hurdle is the difficulty in achieving transparency in service provision, compounded by the overarching challenge of extending service coverage to encompass all segments of society. Integrating public service reform with community welfare proves crucial but is often impeded by the intricate structures of government bureaucracy. These

complexities complicate the integration process between agencies, leading to overlapping tasks and responsibilities among institutions (Schou & Pors, 2019).

Moreover, the lack of coordination among work units poses a serious impediment to implementing this reform. Despite these challenges, gender inequality, food security, environmental and natural disaster issues persist as major challenges yet to be adequately addressed. Poverty remains a focal point, while the enhancement of the Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) sector, along with the potential of coastal tourism and small islands, has not received sufficient attention in welfare improvement efforts. Significant obstacles such as limited access to capital and technology, lack of broad market access, and cumbersome regulatory frameworks for business operators further hinder progress. Addressing these challenges necessitates concerted efforts through enhanced institutional coordination, increased transparency, infrastructure development, and policies supporting inclusive economic growth. It's crucial to recognize that public service reform isn't solely about enhancing administrative efficiency but also ensuring that policies and services genuinely contribute to the overall welfare of the community.

The primary objective of this research is to scrutinize the implementation of public service reform in enhancing community welfare in the District of Bima, while identifying associated challenges and opportunities. By deeply understanding the constraints encountered in public service delivery, this research aims to furnish concrete policy recommendations to enhance the effectiveness and efficiency of public services and uplift community welfare. Given the complexity of issues faced by public services in the District of Bima, this research holds significant urgency. With challenges such as lack of transparency, difficulties in extending service coverage, and obstacles in integrating public service reform with community welfare, this research plays a vital role in providing deeper insights into the dynamics on the ground. Thus, the findings of this research are expected to serve as a foundation for more accurate and effective policymaking efforts aimed at enhancing community welfare.

To accomplish the objectives of this research, a qualitative and descriptive approach will be adopted. Primary data will be gathered through in-depth interviews with pertinent stakeholders, including government officials, community leaders, and civil society activists. Additionally, secondary data will be sourced from various official documents such as policy papers and statistical reports. Data analysis will be conducted using a thematic approach, where findings will be categorized according to specific themes relevant to the research objectives. Furthermore, based on the analysis results, problem-solving measures will be identified and recommended in the form of concrete and implementable policy suggestions.

This research holds relevance and novelty due to its focus on the implementation of public service reform within the specific context of the District of Bima. While numerous studies have examined public service reform in a broader sense, this research will offer a fresh contribution by analyzing specific challenges and opportunities at the local level. Consequently, this research is expected to bridge existing knowledge gaps and provide a deeper understanding of how public service reform can be effectively implemented to enhance community welfare at the local level.

2. Result

Public service reform represents a transformative process in the management and provision of government services to the public, aimed at enhancing their quality and efficiency. This reform assumes paramount importance in endeavors to bolster community welfare, as effective and quality public services directly impact citizens' daily lives (Steijn & van der Voet, 2019). Through this reform, the government endeavors to eradicate cumbersome bureaucracy and mitigate the pervasive practices of corruption in resource allocation and service delivery to the public (Eriksson, 2019). By instituting more transparent and accountable systems, coupled with leveraging information technology, the government can ensure that services are more accessible, expedient, and tailored to the populace's needs. Additionally, public service reform underscores inclusivity, ensuring equitable access to services for all segments of society, including marginalized groups. This encompasses

enhancements in healthcare, education, security, and infrastructure, thereby fostering improved educational, health, and economic opportunities for the community. Consequently, successful public service reform not only enhances efficiency and effectiveness in service delivery but also underpins inclusive and sustainable economic growth, contributing to the attainment of broader national development objectives aimed at enhancing the welfare of all strata of society (Christensen et al., 2007). In this study, the researcher narrows down the research indicators to evaluate the effectiveness of public services and welfare, alongside identifying opportunities for development improvement in the Bima District.

2.1 Public Service Effectiveness and Welfare

The concept of public service effectiveness is intricately linked to the government's capacity to provide services that not only address the basic needs of the community but also elevate the overall quality of life. The effectiveness of public services can be gauged by how well they align with public expectations, their timeliness and accuracy in availability, and the extent of their positive impact on community welfare. Effective public services must be responsive to the evolving needs of the community, accessible to all societal segments, and offer sustainable solutions to social and economic challenges. Within the welfare framework, the efficacy of public services plays a pivotal role in cultivating a healthy, educated, and productive society. For instance, proficient healthcare services can mitigate morbidity and mortality rates, quality education services can enhance competencies and skills, leading to augmented individual income levels, and adequate infrastructure facilitates economic efficiency and social cohesion (Simangunsong & Hutasoit, 2018). Consequently, enhancing public service effectiveness not only caters to individual and familial needs but also fortifies the groundwork for inclusive and sustainable economic growth, thereby advancing overall community welfare (Simangunsong & Hutasoit, 2018).

In the endeavor to bolster the effectiveness of public services and community welfare, Kabupaten Bima grapples with a web of interconnected and complex challenges,

commencing with issues in the management and organization of public services. Inefficient management often precipitates coordination chaos and resource allocation dilemmas, directly impinging on the performance of public services. Furthermore, inadequate organizational structuring engenders role and function overlap among agencies, impeding efficiency and effectiveness in service delivery to the community. These challenges are compounded by rigid bureaucratic frameworks, where prevailing policies and procedures do not invariably support prompt and adaptive responses to the evolving needs of the community. Consequently, concerted efforts are imperative to revamp management and organizational structures to foster greater agility and efficacy in addressing challenges.

Additionally, another formidable challenge lies in policy deregulation and the quality of existing policies. Local policies and regulations often exhibit rigidity and a misalignment with actual community conditions or needs. This results in ineffective and inefficient policy implementation, stifling innovation and exacerbating the quality of services rendered. A combination of policy deregulation and the enhancement of policy quality could offer a solution to these issues. Elevating policy quality necessitates an evidence-based and participatory approach, integrating inputs from diverse stakeholders, including civil society, to ensure that resultant policies are not only pertinent but also exert a significant impact on bolstering community welfare.

Regarding leadership, Kabupaten Bima necessitates robust and visionary leadership figures capable of driving and executing reforms effectively. Effective leadership assumes paramount importance in supervising legal and policy reform processes and fostering innovation in public services. A competent leader should discern the imperative for change, articulately convey that vision across all government echelons, and ensure cohesive alignment towards the shared objective. Innovations in public services, such as the adoption of digital technology to augment access and service quality, mandate unwavering support from leadership at all tiers. Furthermore, requisite legal reforms vital to buttress new policies and procedures must be executed resolutely, guaranteeing that any modifications transpire

within a robust and lucid legal framework, thereby bolstering governmental endeavors to further ameliorate the populace's quality of life in Kabupaten Bima.

Furthermore, compliance with public service standards stands as a pivotal yardstick for gauging the effectiveness of local governments in addressing community needs. In Kabupaten Bima, subpar levels of community contentment with public services denote a failure to adhere to established service standards. An array of factors contributes to this scenario, encompassing inefficient management systems, opacity, and limited access to essential services. For instance, within the healthcare and education sectors, the populace frequently grapples with protracted waiting times, convoluted procedures, and substandard facilities. This not only underscores inadequate management and coordination among departments but also signifies a dearth of concerted endeavors to enforce established service standards. These standards ought to guarantee the quality, promptness, and efficiency of services dispensed to the community, yet the reality falls short of expectations.

Moreover, the dearth of adequately trained human resources and innovation in service delivery further compounds the issue of low compliance with service standards. Many agencies in Kabupaten Bima still hew to traditional methodologies that are obsolete in coping with escalating service demand and evolving community expectations. The paucity of investments in employee training and contemporary technology curtails the capacity of public services to evolve in tandem with the exigencies of the times. Consequently, this engenders a negative perception among the populace, harboring discontent due to the incongruence between the services received and their expectations or needs. Substandard community contentment not only reflects a lapse in implementing extant service standards but also signifies a failure in endeavors to comprehend and integrate community needs and expectations into the formulation and execution of public service policies. Addressing this issue mandates heightened commitment from local governments to revamp the public service paradigm, commencing with bolstering human resource capabilities, optimizing technological utilization, and enhancing the quality of interaction between the community and the government.

2.2 Opportunities for Development Enhancement in Bima Regency

Public service reform holds significant potential to propel development across various sectors, directly impacting societal welfare. One pivotal concept in the developmental opportunities fostered by this reform is the augmentation of efficiency and effectiveness in delivering services to the public (Carey et al., 2018). Reform initiatives executed with a focus on standardizing procedures, digitizing processes, and augmenting transparency can curtail the time and cost requisite for accessing public services. For instance, by implementing online registration systems for healthcare and permits, waiting times can be substantially mitigated, consequently elevating public contentment and empowering citizens to allocate their resources more judiciously elsewhere. Furthermore, through the integration of cross-sectoral data, the government can discern community needs more accurately, thereby enabling more targeted resource allocation and infrastructure development tailored to actual community exigencies (Barr, 2008).

Alongside efficiency enhancements, public service reform presents opportunities for broader innovation and collaboration among the government, private sector, and civil society. By fostering frameworks that promote stakeholder participation, innovative solutions to public issues can be identified and implemented. For instance, governmental collaboration with technology startups can yield applications facilitating public access to information about services and participation in policy planning and evaluation. This collaborative effort not only enhances service quality but also fosters innovation, catalyzing more inclusive economic and social growth. Such reforms underscore the government's commitment to enhancing good governance and accountability, fundamental for sustainable development. By fortifying public services, the government not only improves efficiency and transparency but also fosters public trust, pivotal for long-term social and economic stability.

Research findings underscore the significant impact of public service reform on development quality across various sectors in Bima Regency, including education, socio-cultural, infrastructure, and economy. Deviations from established service standards, resulting in low public satisfaction, directly impede effective development in the region.

In the education sector, development quality is hindered by limited access to adequate facilities and a lack of innovative teaching methods, stemming from shortages in trained human resources and underinvestment in educational technology. For instance, some areas in Bima Regency suffer from insufficient quality teachers, inadequate school infrastructure, and limited learning materials, compromising the education quality and local human capital's potential contribution to economic development.

At the socio-cultural level, public service failures undermine community trust and satisfaction with the government, impeding community participation in government programs and hampering efforts to preserve cultural and social heritage that necessitate active government-community collaboration. Moreover, prolonged dissatisfaction can erode social cohesion, increase tension, and undermine the efficacy of social welfare programs.

Regarding infrastructure and economy, the failure to adhere to effective service standards leads to delays in vital infrastructure projects or their implementation below standard, impacting existing infrastructure quality and hindering potential economic growth. For instance, inadequate transportation infrastructure impedes market access, slows trade, and restricts labor mobility, essential elements for local economic growth. Additionally, ineffective legal and policy reforms impede both foreign and domestic investment, crucial for sustainable economic development.

In summary, public service failures in Bima Regency detrimentally affect education, socio-cultural, infrastructure, and economic development. Improving management, policy deregulation, enhancing policy quality, fostering strong leadership, and promoting innovation are essential strategies to address these challenges and foster more inclusive and sustainable development in the region.

3. Conclusion

This research underscores the pivotal role of transforming the management and delivery of public services as a primary driver for enhancing societal well-being. This reform initiative targets the elimination of convoluted bureaucracy, combating corruption, and

instituting more transparent and accountable systems through the strategic utilization of information technology. The primary objective of this reform is to establish services that are responsive, easily accessible, and inclusive for all segments of society, including marginalized groups, while also enhancing healthcare, education, security, and infrastructure services. The research identifies that improving the effectiveness of public services directly correlates with enhancing the quality of education and healthcare, thereby ultimately contributing to increased individual income and welfare. However, the research also reveals significant challenges persist in Bima Regency regarding the management and organization of public services. These challenges include disorder in resource coordination and allocation, as well as inefficient organizational structures leading to overlaps in functions and roles among agencies. Moreover, rigid local policies and regulations, a lack of visionary leadership, and minimal innovation in service delivery further exacerbate these challenges. Therefore, achieving the objectives of inclusive and sustainable reform and development necessitates further efforts to revamp management structures, enhance policy quality and deregulation, and fortify leadership and innovation in Bima Regency. This entails adopting evidence-based and participatory approaches in policy formulation, along with implementing supportive legal reforms, ensuring that any instituted changes yield tangible improvements in the quality of life for the entire community of Bima Regency.

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